

# BUSINESS DAY WEEKENDER

EDITION 266 | 01, NOVEMBER 2025



## RANKING 10 MOST ICONIC STADIUMS FOR 2026 WORLD CUP



### INTERVIEW

The Art and Alchemy of Wingonia Ikpi: Transforming Cultural Narratives into Cinematic Experiences



### EDUCATION

Top 10 college degrees that lead to high-paying AI careers

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PUBLISHED BY

BusinessDay Media Limited  
6A George Street, off  
Mobolaji Johnson Street, Ikoyi  
01-2799100  
[www.businessday.ng](http://www.businessday.ng)

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**BUSINESS DAY**  
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# ADEDIPE AND ADEDIPE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS

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Phone: 0810 200 2000 | 0810 200 2000

**October 30, 2025.**

**The Managing Director/Editor,  
The Punch Newspaper,  
RM 14,  
Lagos State,  
Lagos State,  
Lagos State.**

Dear Sir/Madam,

**PLEASE, DEEMPTION AND BALANCE PUBLICATION ABOUT DR. SAMUEL OBIYI, THE MANAGING DIRECTOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF NIGER Delta DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (NDDC), DENYING THE ALLEGED ATTEMPT TO RAISE MONEY FOR PRESIDENT MELAKHIN TEREKI GOPE.**

### DEMAND FOR RETRACTION AND APOLOGUE

We act in concert to Dr Samuel Obiyi, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), whose conduct referred to in your article, was found to be in violation of the letter from the NDRC.

Our client's attention has been drawn to your article "Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) denies involvement in alleged attempt to raise money for President Melakhin Tereki Gope" published in your newspaper on 28th October 2025, with a front page headline "Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) denies involvement in alleged attempt to raise money for President Melakhin Tereki Gope".

All pages of the said newspaper, in a story titled by your correspondent "Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) denies involvement in alleged attempt to raise money for President Melakhin Tereki Gope" published in your newspaper on 28th October 2025, with a front page headline "Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) denies involvement in alleged attempt to raise money for President Melakhin Tereki Gope".

**"Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) denies involvement in alleged attempt to raise money for President Melakhin Tereki Gope" published in your newspaper on 28th October 2025, with a front page headline "Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) denies involvement in alleged attempt to raise money for President Melakhin Tereki Gope".**

Our client who is the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Accounting Officer of the Niger Delta Development Commission has categorically denied the above statements against him and other top officials of NDRC, while stating that he is unaware of any attempt to raise money for President Melakhin Tereki Gope, and that, neither he nor any other top official of the NDRC has been asked or investigated by any authority in relation to any alleged attempt to raise money for President Melakhin Tereki Gope. He has also categorically denied any attempt to raise money for President Melakhin Tereki Gope by himself or any other official of NDRC in pursuance of the commission's alleged attempt to raise money for President Melakhin Tereki Gope.

In your publication under reference, our client who is a highly respected and respected figure in, family and a top NDRC official was portrayed as a coup plotter, a criminal and an irreparable public officer who was paid to be a coup plotter, against the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and a person who was a coup plotter under the Nigerian law.

Our client stated in that, your publication which has caused, his family and his family members, friends and associates have been harassed, threatened with calls, and are being investigated in his, with statements expressed concern and worry over his whereabouts.

There is a general feeling that your publication has greatly injured the character of our client, tarnished and damaged his character in the eyes of the public.

Having regard to the fact that your publication was false and coupled with the fact that, you did not exercise journalistic prudence, by reaching out to our client to hear his version, as required by the ethics of journalism, our client has instructed us to demand the following:

- 1. An immediate retraction of your defamatory publication on all your news platforms and in all Nigerian newspapers, circulating nationally.
- 2. The retraction to be accompanied by an apology which must be published in at least five (5) editions of your Newspaper and in all your news platforms, including the social media platforms which your website has its presence.

Please be advised, should you fail, to comply with the above demands within a period of seven (7) days after the delivery of this letter to you, we shall, on behalf of our client, institute legal proceedings against your organization and the said legal action shall be commenced without further reference to you.

Yours faithfully,



**OLUWALOPE ADESOLA, SAN**  
Solicitor General  
adeola@adeolaadesola.com



## ADEDIPE AND ADEDIPE LEGAL PRACTITIONERS

**PORT HARCOURT:**  
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Port Harcourt.

**LAGOS:**  
4th Floor,  
Right wing, Adekunle Fajuyi Court,  
22<sup>nd</sup> Lord Lugard Avenue, Ikoyi Lagos.

**ABUJA:**  
Nusaiba Towers,  
5th floor Suite 3, Plot 117,  
Sector A, Mabushi, Abuja.

**AKURE:**  
4th Floor,  
Bank of Industry Building,  
Ado/Owo Road, Akure Ondo State.

E-mail: ifedayoadedipe@yahoo.com

October,30 , 2025.

The Managing Director/Editor,  
The Daily Times Newspaper,  
108, Kwame Nkrumah Crescent,  
Asokoro,  
Abuja.  
FCT.

Dear Sir/Madam,

**FALSE, DEFAMATORY AND MALICIOUS PUBLICATION AGAINST DR. SAMUEL OGBUKU, THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF NIGER DELTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION [NDDC], REGARDING THE ALLEGED ATTEMPT COUP D'ETAT AGAINST PRESIDENT BOLA AHMED TINUBU GCFR**

**DEMAND FOR RETRACTION AND APOLOGY.**

We act as counsel to Dr Samuel Ogbuku, the Managing Director of Niger Delta Development Commission [NDDC], who is hereinafter referred to as our client, on whose behalf and instructions this letter is written to you.

Our clients' attention has been drawn to your online Newspaper publication of Wednesday, 29th October, 2025, via a link: <https://dailytimesng.com/nddc-md-ogbuku-arrested-over-alleged-n20bn-coup-plot-financing/>, edited by Awwal Owolabi, with a caption: "NDDC MD Ogbuku Arrested Over Alleged 20bn Coup Plot Financing" wherein our client's picture was conspicuously displayed. In the said publication, it was falsely, maliciously and wrongly stated, amongst other

"Samuel Ogbuku, managing director of the Niger delta Development Commission [NDDC], has reportedly been arrested by military intelligence for allegedly co-sponsoring a failed coup plot against President Bola Ahmed Tinubu"  
According to military intelligence sources, Ogbuku, who is known to be a nominee of former Bayelsa State Governor Timpre Sylvia, was arrested for allegedly transferring a 'huge sum of money' to the ex-Minister of state for Petroleum Resources.  
Investigators are reportedly working on the theory that the funds originated from a recent NDDC contract.  
The commission just awarded a shoreline protection contract valued at over N54 billion, paying out approximately N20 billion in mobilization fees.  
Sources claim this N20 billion payment is the suspected source of the funds allegedly funneled to Sylvia, who was 'allegedly fingered as one of the financiers of the purported move to change government'.  
The reports said investigators believe the funds were meant to finance the coup in order to overthrow president Bola Tinubu.  
According to a Punch report, the MD transferred a huge sum of money to Sylvia. Investigators are working on the theory that the fund transfer was connected to the coup. He is currently answering questions about what the money was meant for"

Our client has categorically denied the above libelous statements and maintained that he knows nothing about the alleged coup plot and has not been invited or interrogated by any authority in relation to any alleged coup plot against the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, or in relation to any alleged fraudulent money transfer in pursuance of the execution of an alleged coup plot.

By your publication under reference, our client who is a highly responsible and respected Nigerian, family man and a public officer was portrayed as a coup plotter, a criminal and an irresponsible public officer who uses public funds to finance criminal activities, such as coup d'etat, against the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Our client informed us that, your publication which has gone viral, has greatly embarrassed him and his family members. Friends and associates have inundated his telephones with calls, some expressing disappointment in him, while others have expressed concern and anxiety over his whereabouts. There is no gain saying that your publication has greatly injured the character of our client, tarnished and lowered his esteemed image in the eyes of the public. Having regard to the fact that your publication was false and coupled with the fact that, you did not ensure balancing in your report, by reaching out to our client to hear from him, as enjoined by the ethics of journalism, our client has instructed us to demand the following:

- a. An immediate retraction of your defamatory publication on all your news platforms and in at least four (4) other Nigerian Newspapers, circulating nationally.
- b. The retraction shall be accompanied by an apology which must be published in at least five (5) editions of your publication, on all your news platforms, including all the social media handles to which your media House has its presence.

Please note that, should you fail, to comply with the above demands within a period of seven (7) days after the delivery of this letter to you, we shall, on behalf of our client, seek redress by pursuing both civil and criminal actions against your organization, as your conduct also runs contrary to the provisions of the Nigeria's Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc) Act of 2015, as amended in 2024. The legal actions shall be commenced without further reference to you.

Yours faithfully,

**CHIEF AYODEJI ADEDIPE, SAN**  
0803383650  
aadedipe@adedipeadedipe.com



**SUMMARY CONSOLIDATED AND SEPARATE FINANCIAL INFORMATION  
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2025**



RC: 7340

**UNAUDITED CONSOLIDATED & SEPARATE STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2025**

In thousands of naira	Group		Parent	
	30-Sep-25	31-Dec-24	30-Sep-25	31-Dec-24
<b>Assets</b>				
Cash and cash equivalents	28,380,856	35,161,542	28,197,988	19,613,904
Financial assets:				
- Debt instruments at amortised cost	174,266,805	143,833,022	106,480,253	102,125,935
- Fair value through other comprehensive income	27,239,731	19,154,638	23,221,128	16,985,572
- Fair value through profit or loss	229,721,853	178,406,331	229,721,853	178,406,331
Loans and advances	828,864	78,963	-	-
Trade receivables	3,748,744	1,573,894	3,503,519	1,224,509
Reinsurance contract assets	28,285,066	21,097,467	28,285,066	21,097,467
Other receivables and prepayments	8,231,934	4,280,355	6,165,148	3,350,597
Deferred tax assets	106,293	106,293	-	-
Investment in subsidiaries	-	-	1,334,566	1,087,317
Investment properties	-	1,080,000	-	1,080,000
Property and equipment	9,998,589	9,207,174	9,783,739	8,986,436
Statutory deposits	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
Right of use assets	118,474	142,211	68,114	83,954
Goodwill and other intangible assets	3,005,151	1,858,656	2,954,052	1,803,340
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>514,432,360</b>	<b>416,480,546</b>	<b>440,215,426</b>	<b>356,345,362</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>				
Insurance contract liabilities	338,085,258	262,019,621	337,576,900	261,574,660
Investment contract liabilities	5,342,840	4,615,131	5,342,840	4,615,131
Reinsurance contract liabilities	1,281,866	271,879	1,281,866	271,879
Other technical liabilities	1,008,716	8,809,308	1,008,716	8,809,308
Trade payables	6,200,755	3,138,521	6,200,755	3,138,521
Other payables and accruals	11,144,094	15,332,339	10,526,718	12,224,114
Fixed income liabilities	68,752,379	53,040,546	-	-
Current income tax payable	1,548,557	814,439	1,483,523	744,100
Deferred tax liabilities	628,380	628,380	628,380	628,380
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>433,992,845</b>	<b>348,670,165</b>	<b>364,049,698</b>	<b>292,006,093</b>
<b>Equity</b>				
Share capital	18,302,638	18,302,638	18,302,638	18,302,638
Share premium	64,745	64,745	64,745	64,745
Revaluation reserve	2,764,016	2,764,016	2,764,016	2,764,016
Fair value reserve	2,759,809	1,489,465	2,840,161	1,539,842
Contingency reserve	17,264,527	14,564,278	17,264,527	14,564,278
Retained earnings	38,476,724	30,047,700	34,929,641	27,103,750
<b>Shareholders' funds</b>	<b>79,632,459</b>	<b>67,232,841</b>	<b>76,165,728</b>	<b>64,339,269</b>
Non-controlling interests	807,057	577,540	-	-
<b>Total equity</b>	<b>80,439,515</b>	<b>67,810,381</b>	<b>76,165,728</b>	<b>64,339,269</b>
<b>Total liabilities and equity</b>	<b>514,432,360</b>	<b>416,480,546</b>	<b>440,215,426</b>	<b>356,345,362</b>

These consolidated and separate financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 30 October 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

**Mrs. Bisola Elias**  
Chief Financial Officer  
FRC/2018/PRO/ICAN/001/00000018839

**Mr. Babatunde Fajemirokun**  
Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer  
FRC /2015/PRO/CIIN/010/00000019973

**Mr. Kundan Sainani**  
Chairman  
FRC/2013/PRO/DIR/003/00000003622

This document is also available on our website.  
Kindly visit: [www.aiicopc.com/index.php/about-us/investor-relations](http://www.aiicopc.com/index.php/about-us/investor-relations)  
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**UNAUDITED CONSOLIDATED & SEPARATE STATEMENTS OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND  
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2025**

In thousands of naira	Group		Parent	
	30-Sep-25	30-Sep-24	30-Sep-25	30-Sep-24
Insurance Revenue	99,848,005	76,984,032	98,295,551	76,089,272
Insurance Service Expense	(66,386,738)	(63,165,868)	(65,537,403)	(62,738,337)
Net Expenses from Reinsurance Contracts	(24,898,318)	(16,274,849)	(24,898,318)	(16,274,849)
<b>Insurance service result</b>	<b>8,562,949</b>	<b>(2,456,685)</b>	<b>7,859,829</b>	<b>(2,923,914)</b>
Investment income	43,548,550	29,394,713	33,948,267	24,944,378
Loss on investment contracts	(275,382)	349,346	(275,382)	349,346
Net realised gain/(loss)	729,124	(1,946,772)	338,891	(1,817,257)
Net fair value gain/(loss) on assets at fair value	17,844,522	(7,453,198)	17,844,522	(7,453,198)
Net foreign exchange (loss)/gain	(1,378,098)	13,389,950	(1,317,513)	13,156,853
<b>Net investment income</b>	<b>60,468,716</b>	<b>33,734,039</b>	<b>50,538,786</b>	<b>29,180,121</b>
Net Finance Expense from Insurance Contracts	(45,454,294)	(13,348,406)	(45,454,294)	(13,348,406)
Net Finance Income from Reinsurance Contracts	1,439,619	892,562	1,439,619	892,562
<b>Net insurance finance result</b>	<b>(44,014,674)</b>	<b>(12,455,843)</b>	<b>(44,014,674)</b>	<b>(12,455,843)</b>
<b>Net insurance and investment result</b>	<b>25,016,991</b>	<b>18,821,511</b>	<b>14,383,941</b>	<b>13,800,364</b>
Other Income	1,952,015	1,225,583	1,330,389	938,959
Other Expenses	(11,716,189)	(6,272,060)	(11,716,189)	(1,105,957)
<b>Profit before income tax</b>	<b>15,252,817</b>	<b>13,775,034</b>	<b>14,542,789</b>	<b>13,633,366</b>
Income tax expense	(46,294)	(2,556)	(46,294)	-
Minimum tax	(1,454,279)	(1,363,337)	(1,454,279)	(1,363,337)
<b>Profit for the period</b>	<b>13,752,244</b>	<b>12,409,142</b>	<b>13,088,510</b>	<b>12,270,030</b>
<b>Attributable to owners of the parent</b>	<b>13,669,711</b>	<b>12,375,158</b>	<b>13,088,510</b>	<b>12,270,030</b>
<b>Attributable to non-controlling interest holders</b>	<b>82,533</b>	<b>33,984</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,752,244</b>	<b>12,409,142</b>	<b>13,088,510</b>	<b>12,270,030</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income, net of tax</b>				
<b>Items within OCI that may be reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods:</b>				
Fair value gain on debt instruments	898,438	1,243,895	906,724	72,457
Realised gain on sale of debt instruments	21,933	-	-	-
<b>Items within OCI that will not be reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods:</b>				
Fair value gain on equity securities	366,138	3,978	393,595	378,233
<b>Total other comprehensive income</b>	<b>1,286,509</b>	<b>1,247,873</b>	<b>1,300,319</b>	<b>450,690</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income for the period</b>	<b>15,038,753</b>	<b>13,657,015</b>	<b>14,388,829</b>	<b>12,720,720</b>
<b>Attributable to owners of the parent</b>	<b>14,959,795</b>	<b>13,534,797</b>	<b>14,388,829</b>	<b>12,720,720</b>
<b>Attributable to non-controlling interests</b>	<b>78,958</b>	<b>122,218</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,038,753</b>	<b>13,657,015</b>	<b>14,388,829</b>	<b>12,720,720</b>
Basic and diluted earnings per share (kobo)	37	34	-	-

**UNAUDITED CONSOLIDATED & SEPARATE STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS  
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2025**

	Group		Parent	
	30-Sep-25	30-Sep-24	30-Sep-25	30-Sep-24
<b>Operating activities:</b>				
Premiums received for insurance contracts	144,649,936	127,631,386	143,097,481	126,736,626
Reinsurance premium paid during the year	(39,633,049)	(35,140,488)	(39,633,049)	(35,140,488)
Acquisition cashflows received	4,562,426	3,154,554	4,562,426	3,154,554
Acquisition cashflows paid	(22,814,155)	(16,371,182)	(22,814,155)	(16,371,182)
Claims and other insurance service expenses paid	(66,296,822)	(64,847,404)	(65,447,487)	(64,419,873)
Claims and other benefits received	4,015,063	8,386,772	4,015,063	8,386,772
Cash flows on premium paid in advance and unallocated premium	742,800	3,209,628	742,800	3,209,628
Receipt from deposit administration	59,614	893,957	59,614	893,957
Receipt from other investment contract	308,293	-	308,293	-
Withdrawal from deposit administration	(2,193)	(104,761)	(2,193)	(104,761)
Withdrawal from other investment contract	(84,888)	-	(84,888)	-
Cash flows on non-attributable expenses	(465,914)	(723,928)	(374,283)	(514,009)
Other cashflow receipts/(payments)	(3,497,750)	(6,195,043)	(8,530,874)	(849,306)
Additions into fixed income liabilities	39,764,460	67,910,497	-	-
Liquidations/maturities from fixed income liabilities	(24,828,200)	(52,255,539)	-	-
Interest paid	(8,606,292)	(3,711,624)	-	-
Income tax paid	(623,389)	(4,154,549)	(571,799)	(392,262)
<b>Net cash flows from operating activities</b>	<b>27,249,931</b>	<b>31,422,276</b>	<b>15,326,950</b>	<b>24,588,655</b>
<b>Investing activities:</b>				
Interest income received	36,548,809	29,207,192	30,463,937	24,756,857
Dividend income received	635,597	187,521	483,163	187,521
Rental income	115,691	98,051	115,691	98,051
Purchase of property and equipment	(1,680,461)	(1,051,605)	(1,603,528)	(905,395)
Prepaid lease payments	89,291	-	89,291	-
Purchase of intangible asset	(1,309,816)	(6,130,320)	(1,295,705)	(607,536)
Proceeds from sale of property and equipment	46,127	1,760	46,127	52,755
Proceeds from sale of investment property	1,200,000	67,500	1,200,000	67,500
Purchase of financial assets at amortised cost	(104,112,525)	(32,117,476)	(22,435,176)	(10,273,326)
Purchase of financial assets at FVOCI	(16,755,328)	(4,850,378)	(6,901,190)	(2,925,434)
Purchase of financial assets at FVTPL	(41,949,488)	(35,623,022)	(41,949,488)	(35,623,022)
Proceed on disposal/redemption of financial assets	36,398,843	35,501,955	35,949,041	16,400,356
Proceeds from maturities	59,853,317	-	2,173,566	-
<b>Net cash flows used in investing activities</b>	<b>(30,919,941)</b>	<b>(9,192,423)</b>	<b>(3,664,269)</b>	<b>(8,771,673)</b>
<b>Financing activities:</b>				
Dividend paid to equity holders	(2,562,370)	(1,830,264)	(2,562,370)	(1,830,264)
<b>Net cash flows used in financing activities</b>	<b>(2,562,370)</b>	<b>(1,830,264)</b>	<b>(2,562,370)</b>	<b>(1,830,264)</b>
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents	(6,232,379)	20,399,589	9,100,311	13,987,718
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January	35,195,357	18,422,728	19,639,248	7,921,257
Net foreign exchange difference	(548,306)	1,838,019	(516,227)	1,838,019
<b>Cash and cash equivalents as at 30 September</b>	<b>28,414,671</b>	<b>40,660,336</b>	<b>28,223,332</b>	<b>23,746,994</b>

The Ibru family are sad to announce the passing of our beloved  
 Brother, Husband, Father, Uncle & Grandfather.  
 May his soul rest in eternal peace.



# Olorogun Dr. Oskar C. J. Ibru

August 11<sup>th</sup>, 1958 - September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Ochuko R'Ovie of Agbarha-Otor Kingdom  
 Odomese of Olomu Kingdom  
 Ochuko R'Ovie of Ogor Kingdom  
 Onekirode of Effurun-Otor Kingdom  
 Otunba Boyejo of Ijebu  
 (First non-indigene of Ijebu to receive this Otunba title)

**Service of Songs, Lagos**  
 Thursday, November 20th, 2025

**Church Service, Lagos**  
 Friday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025

**Service of Songs, Delta**  
 Wednesday, November 26th, 2025

**Funeral, Delta**  
 Thursday, November 27th, 2025

**Outing Service, Delta**  
 Sunday, November 30th, 2025

On behalf of the Ibru Family, Peter Akpovbovbo Ibru

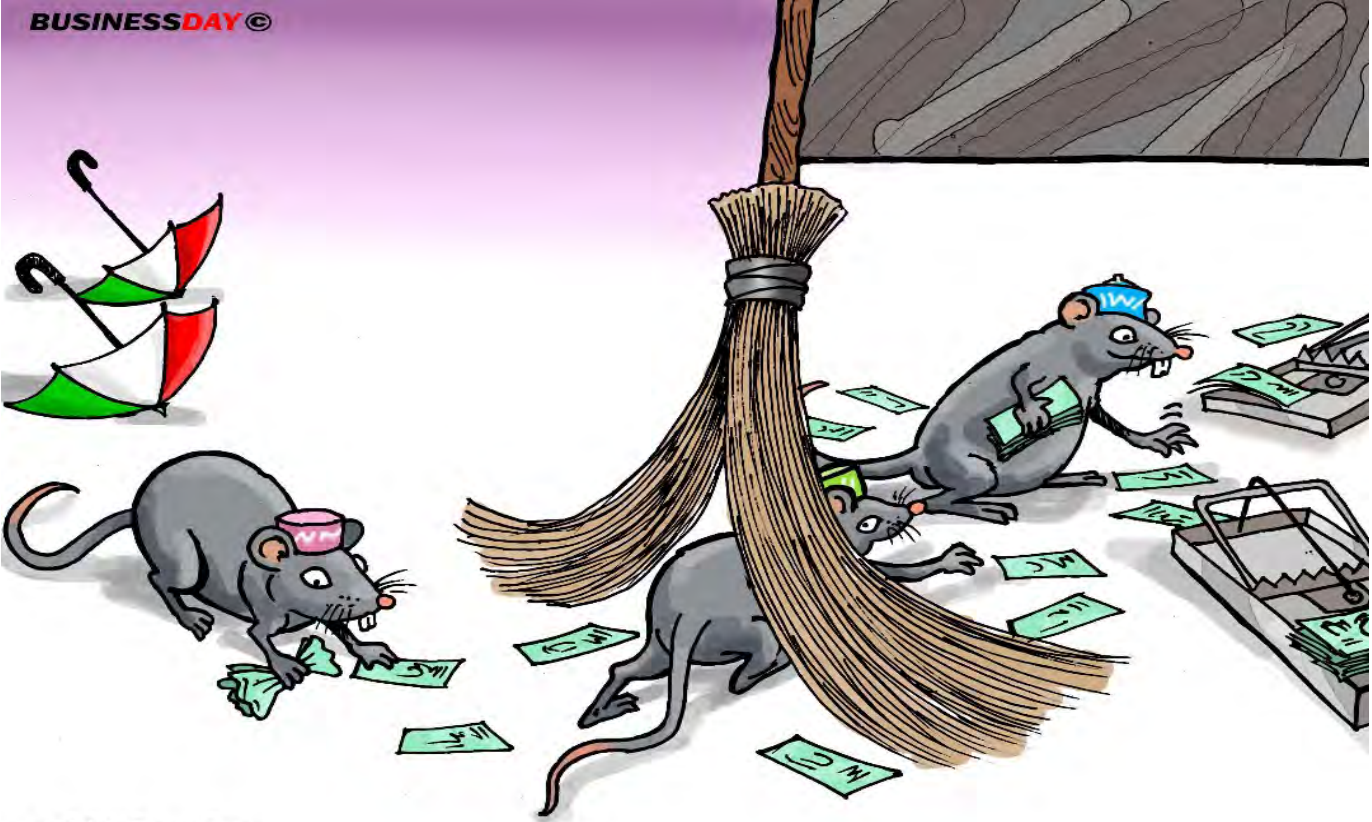




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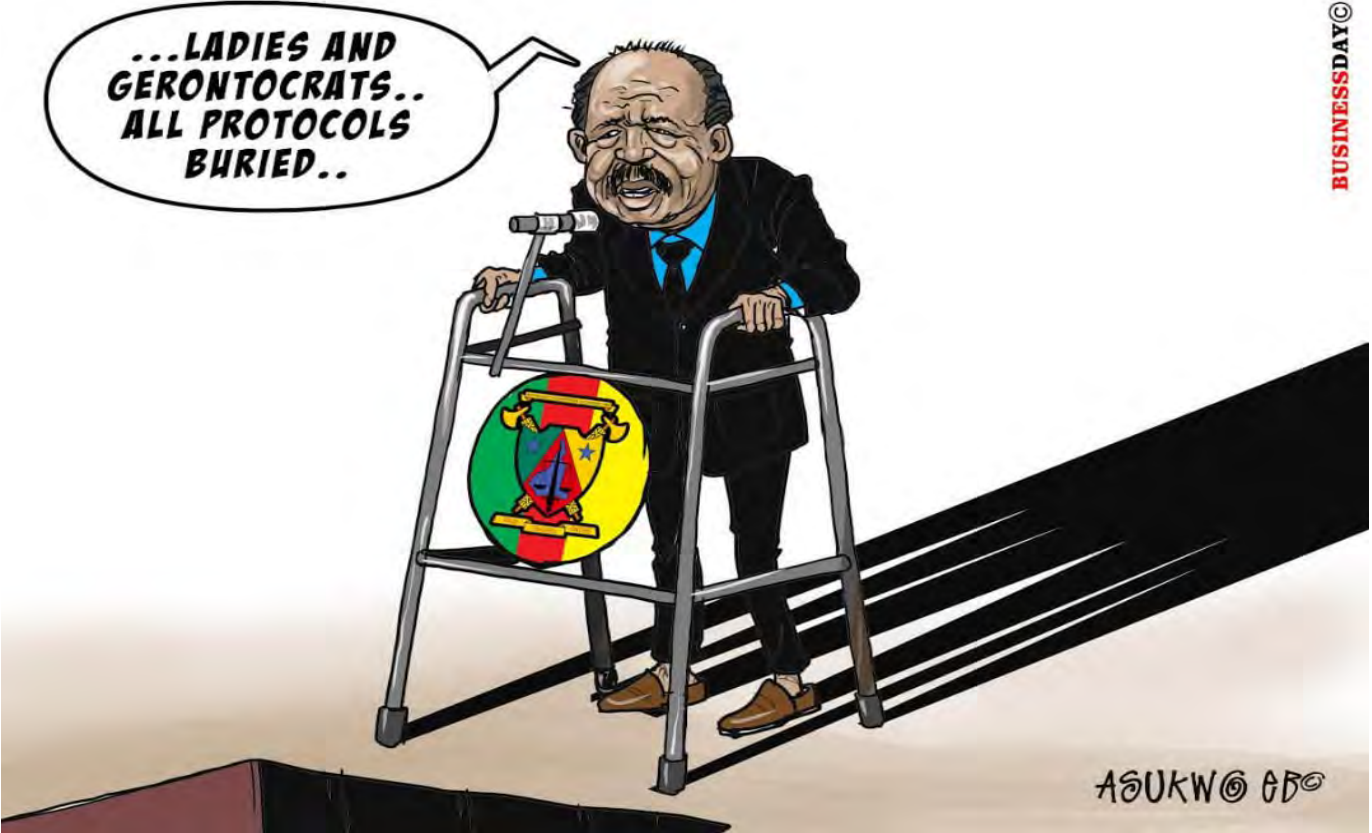
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...LADIES AND GERONTOCRATS.. ALL PROTOCOLS BURIED..



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# RANKING 10 MOST ICONIC STADIUMS FOR 2026 WORLD CUP

ANTHONY NLEBEM

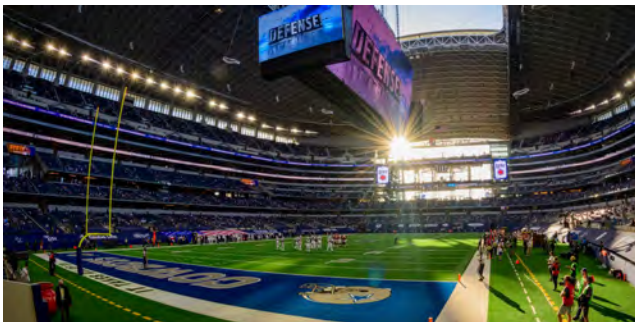
The 2026 FIFA World Cup will mark a historic first, jointly hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico. It will also feature an expanded lineup of 48 teams competing across 16 venues, the most since the 2002 edition in Japan and South Korea.

Here's a look at the ten biggest stadiums that stand out for **their size, architectural brilliance, and global appeal.**

## AT&T Stadium (94,000 capacity)

— Arlington, Texas, USA

The AT&T Stadium, home to the NFL's Dallas Cowboys, is the largest venue selected for the 2026 World Cup. Opened in 2009, the retractable-roof arena is set for a \$295 million renovation, including upgraded suites and advanced technology systems, to meet FIFA standards.



## Estadio Azteca (83,000 capacity)

— Mexico City, Mexico

The legendary Estadio Azteca will make history as the first stadium to host three World Cups (1970, 1986, and 2026). It will stage the opening match on June 11, 2026, and is currently undergoing a \$75 million refurbishment to modernise its facilities.



## MetLife Stadium (82,500 capacity)

— New Jersey, USA

Located just outside New York City, MetLife Stadium is a \$1.6 billion multi-purpose venue and home to the NFL's Giants and Jets. It is one of the frontrunners to host the 2026 World Cup final, thanks to its size and world-class amenities.



## Mercedes-Benz Stadium (75,000 capacity)

— Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Opened in 2017 for \$1.6 billion, Mercedes-Benz Stadium is known for its cutting-edge retractable roof and 360-degree video halo board. It's home to Atlanta United (MLS) and the NFL's Atlanta Falcons, and will host multiple World Cup matches.



## Arrowhead Stadium (73,000 capacity)

— Kansas City, Missouri, USA

GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium, home of the Kansas City Chiefs, is one of the loudest sports venues in the world. Its electric atmosphere will make it a perfect setting for high-stakes World Cup fixtures.

NRG Stadium (72,000 capacity) — Houston, Texas, USA  
Completed in 2002 for \$352 million, NRG Stadium was the first NFL venue with a retractable roof. The state-of-the-art arena will be a key host site for both group and knockout stage matches.

## Levi's Stadium (71,000 capacity)

— Santa Clara, California, USA

Situated in the heart of Silicon Valley, Levi's Stadium is home to the San Francisco 49ers. Opened in 2014, the \$1.3 billion venue is known for its sustainability and technology-driven fan experience.



## SoFi Stadium (70,000 capacity)

— Los Angeles, USA

The world's most expensive stadium, SoFi Stadium, cost approximately \$5.5 billion to build. With its futuristic design, retractable roof, and immersive digital displays, it's a strong contender to host major knockout stage games.



## Lincoln Financial Field (69,000 capacity)

— Philadelphia, USA

Home to the NFL's Philadelphia Eagles, Lincoln Financial Field will bring a passionate East Coast fanbase to the tournament. Its modern infrastructure and accessibility make it a key venue for group matches.



## Lumen Field (69,000 capacity)

— Seattle, Washington, USA

Known for its electric crowd and eco-friendly design, Lumen Field hosts both the Seattle Seahawks (NFL) and Seattle Sounders (MLS). Its atmosphere is expected to rival the best football environments in the world.

### A Record-Breaking World Cup Awaits

With the expanded format and massive venues spread across North America, the 2026 FIFA World Cup promises to be the largest, most attended, and possibly most commercially successful edition in the tournament's history.



# THE ART AND ALCHEMY OF WINGONIA IKPI: TRANSFORMING CULTURAL NARRATIVES INTO CINEMATIC EXPERIENCES





**W**ingonia Ikpi is a Nigerian filmmaker and creative founder passionate about telling deeply human African stories that resonate beyond continental borders. As the founder of Boxonia Blueprint, a film production company, she leads a collective of creative talents shaping authentic, fresh perspectives on African identity through film and visual storytelling.

Her work blends authentic narratives with visual poetry, a signature that defines her creative voice. With notable projects like *The Lost Days*, her directorial debut, and *Son of the Soil*, a global action thriller, Wingonia Ikpi has established herself as a talented filmmaker with a unique voice.

In this interview with IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA, she shares her insights on filmmaking, cultural relevance, and the future of African cinema.

## What drew you to the film industry, and how has your journey shaped your approach to storytelling?

My draw to the film industry was rooted in my love for stories and their power to shape perception. Growing up, I was surrounded by untapped narratives, and I felt a compelling need to be the one to tell them. My journey hasn't been a straight line. It has been a mosaic of experiences, from navigating various roles such as writing, story development, directing, producing, talent management, casting, business management, finance management to now leading a company. This path has instilled in me a holistic understanding of filmmaking. I don't see a story in isolation from its production needs or its market viability, literature does not exist in a vacuum. My approach is therefore integrated; it's about building a story from the ground up, ensuring that the creative vision is supported by a solid operational and strategic foundation.

## Can you share a pivotal moment in your career that taught you the importance of discipline in creativity and production?

A pivotal moment that truly cemented the importance of discipline for me was the production of my directorial debut film, "The Lost Days", which has earned me a nomination for Best Debut Feature Film by a Director at the forthcoming African Movie Academy Awards, (AMAA 2025). We approached it with a level of intentionality and structure that was, at the time, my most disciplined effort yet. Every detail was meticulously planned, with the schedule built around capturing the best possible performances without rushing the actors, to ensure we could achieve the desired visual and emotional appeal without compromise.

The success of "The Lost Days" and the way it connected with audiences proved to me that discipline is the ultimate enabler of creativity. It is the framework that protects the vision and allows you to deliver on the promise of your story. That experience solidified my philosophy: that the most profound creative expressions are always built upon a foundation of rigorous production discipline. Our nominations at AMAA proves this.

## How do you balance vision and execution in the Nigerian film industry, where challenges can be unpredictable?

The "Nollywood factor" is very real. You can have the most brilliant vision, but you must be prepared for the unpredictable, from power problems to last-minute location issues. The balance comes from what I call "structured flexibility." Understanding that every plan should have a contingency, whilst still maintaining structure, is the way to combat unforeseen challenges.

The vision is our non-negotiable North Star. It's the emotional core and the message we are committed to delivering.



The execution, however, must be agile. We anticipate potential hurdles in pre-production, which allows us to adapt without panicking when they arise. This way, we protect the core of the story while being smart and nimble in our approach to the challenges. The goal is to let the vision dictate the execution, not let the execution dilute the vision.

### **Your transition from production to directing seems seamless. What inspired this shift, and how do you manage both roles?**

Thank you for saying it seems seamless. I started as a writer and, over time, found myself developing a stronger point of view. I wanted to tell specific stories in specific visuals and emotional languages, and directing became the necessary next step to fully realise that.

As a producer, you are already deeply involved in the storytelling process, you are managing the resources to bring a director's vision to life. The roles are symbiotic. My producer's mind makes me a more efficient director. I am always aware of the realities of production in Nigeria, such as budget and schedule restraints. Conversely, my director's heart ensures that as a producer, I never lose sight of the creative soul of the project. It's about wearing the best hat for each different project.

### **You've mentioned that filmmaking is about structure and intention. Can you elaborate on this philosophy and how it guides your work?**

Absolutely. This is the core of the "Blueprint" in Boxonia Blueprint. Structure refers to the tangible framework that runs from ideation to principal photography, post-production, distribution and marketing phases of a project. Intention is the "why" behind every creative and operational decision. Why this camera angle? Why this colour palette? Why this character arc? Why this costume? My philosophy is that every single element in a film must be intentional and must be supported by a structure that allows that intention to be realised. A poignant scene loses its power if the sound is bad because the structure for proper sound recording wasn't in place. Instead of hoping to fix it in post-production, we start by ensuring good sound is planned for and captured during principal photography. We start every project by defining our core intentions: what do we want the audience to feel and learn? And then we build a meticulous structure around it. This ensures that our work is purposeful art.

### **What was the vision behind founding Boxonia Blueprint, and how do you see the company evolving in the next few years?**

The vision was to tell audacious, authentic and exportable art forms to global audiences through African talent. In the next few years, I see Boxonia Blueprint evolving into a formidable creative ecosystem that shapes African productions. Our expansion is focused on commanding larger budgets and more ambitious international co-productions, all while maintaining the authentic core of Africanflavoured storytelling.

The growth of our talent division is critical to this; it will become a self-sustaining engine for discovering and developing the very creatives who will drive this new chapter of global storytelling. Fundamentally, our system is designed to secure and manage funding for all aspects of filmmaking from initial content development through to post-production, ensuring our projects are fully realised to their highest potential.

## **How does Boxonia integrate creativity, operations, and cultural relevance in its productions?**

We see these three elements not as separate departments, but as a single, intertwined philosophy. It begins with a spark of creativity, a story that demands to be told. Then we ground that spark in the rich soil of our cultural relevance, asking if the narrative speaks with an authentic voice and reflects the nuanced realities of the African experience. This ensures the story has a soul and a purpose, and then we build the operational framework around that soul.

A perfect example is our project *Son of the Soil*. While directed by a British-Chinese filmmaker, the film is profoundly and authentically Nigerian in its flavour and truth. This was by design. Every logistical decision, from budgeting to scheduling, was made in service of protecting that creative vision and its cultural integrity. It's a holistic process where the production schedule is designed to capture the perfect performance, and resources are allocated to honour the cultural specifics and nuances of the story.

In this way, creativity defines our ambition, cultural relevance ensures our authenticity, and operational excellence guarantees our execution. They are the three essential threads we weave together to create a single, strong tapestry.

## **Can you share some case studies of successful projects, such as “The Lost Days” and “Son of the Soil,” and what made them stand out?**

Certainly. Our projects, though different in scale, share a common thread of intentionality. With “The Lost Days,” we set out to craft a narrative that lived and breathed in the quiet, intimate spaces of a fractured relationship. The entire production was built around this goal; our focus was on cultivating an atmosphere where raw, nuanced performances could flourish.

We prioritised the actors' process and the emotional truth of each scene above all else. Its success, I believe, comes from that unwavering commitment to emotional honesty. It's a film that proves the most powerful stories are often the quietest ones, the ones that linger in your mind long after the screen fades to black.

In contrast, “Son of the Soil” presented a different challenge: balancing a thrilling narrative with a deeply personal heart.





It is precisely these kinds of structural gaps that Boxonia Blueprint seeks to identify and fill. Our collaborations are not just about making a single project, but about building the foundational support systems, be it through production funding, talent incubation, or knowledge exchange, that will allow the Nigerian industry to compete and collaborate on a truly global scale.

### **What inspired you to establish a talent division within Boxonia, and what kind of creatives are you looking to nurture?**

The inspiration came from my own journey and the clear need for a more structured pathway for established, rising and emerging talent. I benefited from guidance and opportunities, and I see Boxonia Blueprint as a platform to pay that forward. We saw a gap not just for newcomers, but for established and rising talents who need a strategic partner to help them navigate the next phase of their careers; whether that's transitioning to larger projects, exploring international co-productions, or refining their unique voice for a global market.

We are looking for more than just skill; we are looking for voice and discipline. We are looking for creatives who are not just passionate about being in the industry but committed to the hard work of building a sustainable career and contributing to the growth of Nollywood.

### **Can you walk us through your approach to talent development, and what skills do you prioritise in emerging creatives?**

The skills we prioritise are a blend of the artistic and the professional. We also focus on strategic self-presentation, from mastering the craft to building persona. Ultimately, we are nurturing more than just performers; we are developing resilient, self-aware artists who possess the business acumen to build lasting and impactful careers.

### **What advice would you give to young creatives looking to break into the industry, and how can they benefit from Boxonia's resources?**

My advice to aspiring filmmakers would be to build a foundation and understand the business of filmmaking. Aspiring creatives can benefit from Boxonia by engaging with our online platforms, like the website and social media, to understand our standard of quality and our ethos. We have a number of interviews where our rising talents, Taye Arimoro, Durotimi Okutagidi, Cynthia Clarke, Chuks Joseph, and Miss Ezeani all share their craft journeys. We will also make a couple of announcements about open calls for submissions, internships, or workshops on these platforms.

Operationally, it was a complex undertaking with a sprawling cast, diverse locations, and dynamic action sequences. Yet, the core intention was always to anchor this scale in a profoundly Nigerian story of justice, resilience, and a man's tether to his land. The film stands out because it never allows the spectacle to overshadow the soul; the thriller elements serve a story that is, at its core, about community and belonging. It demonstrates that even with ambition and scale, the story must always be grounded in a truth that resonates.

### **How important are industry collaborations for Boxonia?**

They are vital. Boxonia Blueprint provides comprehensive production services, from ideation to marketing, but we do not operate in isolation. Filmmaking is a collaborative art form by nature, and we extend that spirit to the business side. No single company has a monopoly on talent or ideas. We actively seek collaborations with other production houses, distributors, and platforms, both within Nigeria and internationally. These partnerships allow us to pool resources, share expertise, and take on more ambitious projects that can elevate the entire industry. We believe that a rising tide lifts all boats.

This philosophy was highlighted for me during a conversation with a producer from England. She asked if Nigeria had a dedicated film fund for story development, a common resource in many territories. I had to tell her we did not.

# TOP 10 COLLEGE DEGREES THAT LEAD TO HIGH-PAYING AI CAREERS

CHISOM MICHAEL



**A**rtificial intelligence (AI) continues to change industries and job markets around the world. As more companies adopt AI tools and systems, the demand for people who understand how these technologies work has increased.

Research from Stanford University and the World Bank shows that since the launch of ChatGPT in 2022, workers in AI-related jobs have seen the biggest wage gains. Those building and guiding AI systems now hold some of the fastest-growing roles in the economy, with median salaries above \$135,000.

According to Eugene Vinitzky, a professor and AI researcher at New York University's Tandon School of Engineering, "Math and computer science skills are always helpful. But in the future, a powerful combination will be understanding AI deeply enough to avoid basic mistakes—while also having real expertise in another domain."

Experts agree that no single degree will prepare a student for every AI career. The best approach is to build technical fluency in AI while combining it with knowledge from another field, such as design, economics, or neuroscience. This mix helps graduates apply AI tools to real-world problems and adapt as technology evolves.

When choosing a university, prospective students are advised to look beyond rankings. Instead, they should focus on access to research labs, practical projects, and internships, which provide direct experience with AI systems.

According to Investopedia, here are some of the college degrees most often requested by employers in AI-related job postings. Each path offers different skills and entry points into the growing AI economy.

## 1. Cognitive Science / Neuroscience / Linguistics

These degrees prepare graduates for roles in natural language processing (NLP), human-AI interaction (HAI), and product AI. Students often study cognitive psychology, linguistics, psychometrics, and experimental design. Adding a computer science minor or taking courses in UX or ethics can improve job prospects. Graduates bring a human-centred perspective to AI development but need strong programming and statistics skills to compete for technical roles.

## 2. Computer Science / Software Engineering

This path leads to roles such as machine learning engineer, software engineer (AI/ML), and ML operations specialist. Core courses include algorithms, databases, deep learning, and distributed systems. A mathematics or statistics minor and cloud certifications can add value. Computer science remains the most direct route into AI, but may lack large-scale project work unless students seek practical experience.

## 3. Data Science / Statistics / Applied Mathematics

Graduates from these programmes often become data scientists, research engineers, or quantitative analysts. They study probability, optimisation, causal inference, and statistical learning. Combining this with computer science or SQL skills builds a strong foundation for analytics and research. While this path develops deep modelling ability, limited software engineering exposure can be a barrier.

## 4. Domain Degree + Computer Science or AI Overlay

This model combines subject expertise in areas like biology, climate science, or finance with AI knowledge. It prepares graduates for applied machine learning and analytics roles within specific sectors. Those who pursue this route gain insight into how AI can solve practical problems in their fields. However, the risk is developing shallow technical skills unless the coursework is carefully planned.

## 5. Electrical / Computer Engineering (EE/CE)

Engineering students can work in embedded or edge AI, hardware–software co-design, and AI acceleration using GPUs or ASICs. They study digital systems, control theory, and signal processing, with electives in CUDA or FPGA development. This background is valuable in robotics

and edge computing, though students may need extra AI coursework for deeper expertise.

## 6. Human–Computer Interaction (HCI) / Design + Computer Science

Graduates in this field move into AI product, UX, and prompt design roles. The curriculum includes prototyping, UX research, data visualisation, and ethics. Studio courses and industry projects are helpful. This degree bridges the gap between AI systems and users, making it useful for building tools that people interact with daily. Without a strong technical base, however, graduates may face limits in more advanced AI roles.

## 7. Mathematics (Pure or Applied)

Mathematics provides a foundation for research and algorithm design. Students study linear algebra, optimisation, and numerical methods. Adding computer science or machine learning courses helps them apply theory to AI problems. While the degree develops strong analytical ability, students must build coding experience to translate concepts into practice.

## 8. Philosophy / Ethics / Policy

This path suits those interested in AI ethics, governance, and responsible AI. Courses cover logic, philosophy of mind, and political philosophy. A computer science or public policy minor strengthens understanding of how AI affects society. Graduates often work on questions around fairness, accountability, and transparency in AI systems. Technical literacy remains key for effective collaboration with developers.

## 9. Physics

Physics students can enter AI through modelling, simulation, or quantitative research. Their training in differential equations, computational methods, and data analysis aligns with AI's focus on prediction and optimisation. However, to pivot fully into AI, additional software and ML coursework are required.

## 10. Robotics / Mechatronics / Control Theory

This path leads directly to roles such as robotics engineer or autonomy specialist. Students take courses in control theory, computer vision, and reinforcement learning. Exposure to real-time systems and simulation tools like ROS or Gazebo prepares them for designing intelligent machines and autonomous systems.



**BUILDING BRIDGES, NOT WALLS:  
ESE ELAKAMA ON REDEFINING  
ACCESS, INCLUSION, AND THE  
FUTURE OF TECH**

CHISOM MICHAEL



**E**se Elakama is a U.K. technology leader, entrepreneur, and philanthropist passionate about expanding pathways into technology and business. As Founder of DiiT Training UK Consulting Ltd, she has helped over 100,000 people transition into roles across cybersecurity, data, cloud, and project management. To close the “experience gap,” she launched the Tech Practical Internship (TPI), connecting learners directly with UK employers, and founded CyberTek Labs, a hub for emerging technologies and innovation.

The first Black woman to own an outdoor advertising company in the UK, PML Digital UK, Elakama also donates £20,000 annually to support mothers entering tech. A 2025 Black Tech Awards nominee, she continues to redefine inclusion through practical education, real-world experience, and economic visibility. In this interview with CHISOM MICHAEL, Elakama reflects on breaking invisible barriers and preparing future-ready talent in a world where technology, access, and opportunity increasingly converge.

## **Your work connects access, education, and technology. When you first started DiiT Training UK Consulting, what structural barriers were you most determined to break, and have those barriers changed over time?**

Before I started DiiT back in 2016, my mission was clear, and that was to remove the invisible gatekeeping that made technology feel out of reach for so many, especially those of colour and from minority backgrounds. The biggest structural barrier wasn't just access to education, but access to belief. The belief that people from non-traditional backgrounds, mothers returning to work, or individuals without formal degrees could thrive in tech.

Over time, those barriers have evolved. Today, access to establishments such as DiiT Training UK Consulting provides access to tools that take out the invisible barrier, as well as increase confidence and reduce systemic bias. That's why DiiT continues to challenge those norms — by building both skills and providing the hands-on-tech experience required to get job-ready.

Over 100,000 people have transitioned into tech roles through DiiT Training UK Consulting. Beyond the numbers, what shifts in confidence, identity, or mindset have you observed among those who've made that leap?

The most profound transformation I've seen is not technical but personal. People start to see themselves as capable contributors to a tech digital world that once felt foreign. Their language shifts from “I can't” to “I did.” Many go from insecurity to empowerment, and from seeing tech as a career option to embracing it as part of their identity. That mindset shift — from consumer to

creator — is what drives sustainable inclusion.

## **The Tech Practical Internship programme bridges the experience gap that many learners face. What has building that bridge revealed to you about how the tech industry defines readiness or talent?**

The internship programme has shown me that the tech industry often confuses readiness with familiarity. Employers tend to look for people who already speak the “language” of tech work, rather than those with the aptitude to learn it. By collaborating with businesses, we give DiiT Training UK Consulting learners real-world project experience by redefining readiness. It is not about having the perfect CV; it's about demonstrating problem-solving, adaptability, and curiosity. Those are the real markers of talent.



**CyberTek Labs prepares people for a digital future that's constantly changing. How do you balance teaching what's current with preparing people for what doesn't yet exist?**

We teach adaptability as much as we teach technology. Tools will change, frameworks will evolve, but critical thinking, ethical awareness, and digital curiosity are timeless. Our curriculum combines today's technical competencies like cybersecurity, data, and AI, with the mindset to learn continuously. That balance ensures our learners aren't just employable today, but future-ready tomorrow.

As the first Black woman to own an outdoor advertising company in the UK, you've redefined access to visibility. What has that journey taught you about power, representation, and economic inclusion?

Visibility is a form of power. When I entered the advertising industry back in 2010, I realised how access to public space and narrative control often shape who gets seen and who gets forgotten. Owning that space was more than business. It was about rewriting representation. It taught me that inclusion isn't just about being present; it's about owning platforms that shape perception and drive economic opportunity.

**You've personally funded scholarships for mothers moving into technology. What personal experience or realisation led you to focus this effort on women, particularly mothers?**

As a mother of 2 myself, I understand how easily women's ambitions can be paused or dismissed once motherhood begins. Yet, I've also seen the resilience, time management, and problem-solving that motherhood naturally builds, qualities every tech leader needs. Supporting other mothers is not charity; it's strategic empowerment. I wanted to create a pathway where women didn't have to choose between family and future.

**The demand for digital skills keeps changing faster than traditional education can respond. From your experience, what gaps still exist between what employers need and what training institutions deliver?**

The biggest gap is practical hands-on experience. Traditional education still moves at an academic pace, while industry moves at a technological pace. Employers want people who can solve real problems, not just pass exams. That's why at DiiT Training UK

Consulting, we continually partner directly with employers who provide our learners the opportunities to work on their projects, which in turn mirrors real work environments. The future of education must be agile, experiential, and industry-led.

**Many of your initiatives remove invisible barriers, from lack of access to lack of confidence. How do you design programmes that reach people who may not yet see themselves as belonging in tech?**

We start with belonging, not just curriculum. Our programmes are built around mentorship, practical experiences, storytelling, and community. We showcase relatable role models and create safe learning spaces



where questions are welcomed, not judged. By normalising uncertainty, we empower people to see that tech isn't an exclusive club — it's an evolving ecosystem that needs their voice.

**Recognition often follows impact, as seen in your Black Tech Awards. How do you stay grounded in purpose while navigating visibility and success?**

Recognition is humbling, but impact is what keeps me focused. I remind myself that visibility is not the destination; it's the vehicle to reach more people. My purpose has always been to create pathways, not pedestals. Staying grounded means keeping my eyes on the mission and my heart aligned with service.

**When future generations look back at your work, what conversations do you hope they'll be having about opportunity, equity, and leadership in technology?**

I hope they'll say that our generation built bridges, not walls. That we shifted the narrative from diversity as a talking point to inclusion as a practice. I want them to see that technology leadership became more human, more equitable, and more representative because we dared to challenge the status quo. Ultimately, I hope they inherit a digital world that works for everyone, not just those who built it first.

# MEET DAVID AKINFENWA, NEXT GEN PR LEGEND, SHAPING THE FUTURE OF BRAND STORYTELLING ACROSS AFRICA

**..Named among Nigeria's Top 50 Most Influential PR and Communications Professionals**





On most days, David Akinfenwa is behind the scenes shaping narratives, steering brands, and crafting stories that move audiences to action. But ask him what he really does, and he'll tell you something far simpler: "I help people and brands find their voice."

It's a statement that captures both his humility and his clarity of purpose. In an age where the lines between media, marketing, and public perception are constantly shifting, Akinfenwa's approach to public relations feels refreshingly human rooted in empathy, storytelling, and authenticity.

"I've always believed that communication is not just about visibility," he says thoughtfully. "It's about connection. People don't buy into messages; they buy into meaning."

That belief has shaped a remarkable journey that has seen him rise steadily through Nigeria's communications scene — from journalism to consulting for some of Africa's most promising startups, and now to being named one of the Top 50 Most Influential Public Relations and Communications Professionals in Nigeria, an honour conferred by GLG Communications in partnership with The Guardian and the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations.

For Akinfenwa, that recognition was both humbling and affirming.

"It was one of those moments that made me pause," he admits with a quiet smile. "You don't really think about influence when you're in the work — you just want to make impact, help brands tell better stories. But to be recognised among so many professionals I respect deeply... it felt like validation that I'm on the right

path."

Before he became one of the country's most respected communications professionals, Akinfenwa was a journalist — a background that, he says, gave him a unique lens on storytelling. "Journalism taught me curiosity," he reflects.

"It taught me to ask why and not just what happened, but why it matters. That discipline shaped how I approach PR today. Because ultimately, if you can't answer why your story matters, you don't yet have a story."

That grounding in narrative clarity and meaning would later define his work as he transitioned into public relations. Over the years, he has worked with several prominent brands in the African tech ecosystem — including Fez Delivery, Anchor, Bendada, and ALX Africa.

Today, as Head of Corporate Communications and Public Relations at Selar, Africa's leading creator commerce platform, Akinfenwa continues to bring that journalist's instinct into brand strategy — ensuring that every message is authentic, relatable, and resonant.

“At Selar, we're telling the story of Africa's creator economy,” he explains. “That's a story of innovation, resilience, and creative independence. It's powerful because it's not just about a product, it's about people redefining how they earn, create, and live.”

Beyond his corporate role, Akinfenwa is also building something deeply personal — his own communications agency, J&B Communications, a creative PR and communications outfit focused on helping businesses harness storytelling for growth and social impact.

“It's not just about running an agency,” he says. “It's about building a culture around meaningful communication. I want J&B to be the kind of place where strategy and creativity meet where we don't just help brands sell, but help them matter.”

The vision for J&B was partly inspired by what Akinfenwa saw as a gap in the industry: too many brands focusing on visibility without authenticity.

“Visibility without clarity is noise,” he says. “You can trend today and be forgotten tomorrow. But if you're clear on your purpose and communicate it consistently, you build something lasting.”

That clarity of thought also shaped his book, “The Public Relations Playbook: Doing PR on a Zero or Minimal Budget for Maximum Impact.” In it, Akinfenwa shares practical insights for startups and small businesses — demystifying PR and showing how storytelling can be a powerful growth tool even without big budgets.

“I wanted to make PR accessible,” he says. “A lot of founders think PR is something only big brands can afford. But effective communication is not about money, it's about message.”

Akinfenwa's growing influence in the communications space has also made him a voice for young professionals aspiring to build careers in PR. He often mentors emerging practitioners and speaks passionately about the need for the next generation to combine technical skill with emotional intelligence.

“PR is not a press release factory,” he says, laughing. “It's about relationships, understanding people, reading rooms, telling stories that inspire trust. The next generation of PR leaders must be as emotionally intelligent as they are strategic.”

For him, the future of the profession lies in balance between data and creativity, technology and empathy, visibility and value.

“I see PR in Africa becoming more purpose-driven,” he predicts. “We're moving past vanity metrics. The real question now is what impact are your stories creating? What change are they driving?”

If there's a common thread running through Akinfenwa's journey, it's purpose. He sees storytelling not just as a skill, but as a calling — a way to shape culture, influence perception, and inspire change.

“When I look back someday,” he says quietly, “I don't want to be remembered just for the campaigns I worked on. I want to be remembered for helping people and brands tell their truth for showing that communication, done right, can transform lives and communities.”

In an industry often defined by noise, David Akinfenwa stands out for his signal a clear, thoughtful, and purpose-driven voice reminding everyone that great PR isn't just about being seen; it's about being understood.

# AFRIFF 2025: HERBERT WIGWE TRAILBLAZER AWARD TO HONOUR VISIONARY AFRICAN TALENT



**A**FRIFF 2025: Herbert Wigwe Awards for Excellence to Honour Visionary African Talent

The Africa International Film Festival (AFRIFF) has returned in 2025 with a renewed commitment to spotlighting African creativity and innovation - this time through the Herbert Wigwe Awards for Excellence, a highlight of the festival dedicated to celebrating outstanding Africans who are contributing positively to the continent.

The AFRIFF returning in 2025 taking place from Nover 2nd to 8th with a renewed commitment to spotlighting African creativity.

This the 14th edition of AFRIFF will be themed “Rhythms of the Continent: The Afrobeats Film Movement.”

The Herbert Wigwe Awards for Excellence is named in honour of the late Herbert Wigwe, a man whose legacy continues to inspire bold leadership, innovation, and investment in Africa’s creative economy.

The awards will celebrate outstanding individuals who embody the same spirit of excellence and transformation that Wigwe championed throughout his life.





“The Herbert Wigwe Awards for Excellence is more than a tribute - it’s a movement,” said Chioma Ude, Founder and Executive Director of AFRIFF. “Herbert believed deeply in the power of African talent to compete globally.

Through this award, we’re honouring that vision by recognizing creative leaders who are breaking barriers and inspiring new generations to dream bigger.”

On the opening night of AFRIFF, Kashim Shettima, Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigerian and Peter Mbah, Enugu State Governor and, will each receive awards for their immerse contributions to growth, innovation and excellence in their respective fields , the closing night will also honor Nigerian lawyer and technocrat, Hakeem Muri-Okunola and internationally acclaimed actor David Oyelowo.

This year’s AFRIFF will also mark the launch of the AFRIFF Film and Content Market (AFCM) - Nigeria’s first and only film and content marketplace.

The AFCM will serve as a business hub connecting filmmakers, distributors, and investors, furthering AFRIFF’s mission to build a sustainable ecosystem for African content creation and monetization.

Alongside screenings, masterclasses, and workshops, AFRIFF 2025 will screen over 100 films from across Africa and the diaspora, showcasing the diversity and creativity that define African cinema today.

With its blend of artistry, commerce, and celebration, AFRIFF 2025 promises to be a landmark edition - honouring the trailblazers shaping Africa’s cultural renaissance and ensuring that Herbert Wigwe’s legacy of empowerment lives on through every frame, beat, and story told.



# MADE IN AFRICA: TOP DESIGNERS PUSH FOR BUILDING FROM THE INSIDE OUT AT AIDC 2025

...reveal how designers can TURN CULTURE AND  
CREATIVITY INTO COMMERCE



From left to right  
Jacqueline Aki - President of The Interior Designers Association of Nigeria,  
Titi Ogufero - Founder African council of Interior Architects and Designers, Founder IDAN, Nathalie Njoumba - President  
of Cameroon council of Interior Architects and Secretary General of ACIAD, George Washington - President African  
council of Interior Architects and Designers, Charisse Johnston - President South African Institute of Interior Design  
Profession. President Elect, NCIDQ.

Imagine walking into a space that does more than just look beautiful. It is designed to keep you healthy, ensure your safety, and use materials that create local jobs and boost your nation's wealth.

This is the experience and promise African interior designers are vowing to deliver across the continent. At the inaugural African Interior Design Congress (AIDC), experts gathered to create a new plan for how design can drive massive development. The industry itself is already a powerhouse and growing. According to 6Wresearch, the Africa Interior Design

Market is projected to grow at a significant CAGR of 6.7 percent from 2025-2032.

Leaders at the congress stressed that Africa must design its own future, starting from the inside out.

## The problem of outsourcing

For too long, African countries have relied on imported goods and foreign ideas. This approach often neglects local materials and rich cultural identities. George Washington Karani,

President of the African Council of Interior Architects and Designers (ACIAD), spoke clearly on the issue.

“Africa can never be built from outside. Most things that we usually do as Africans, we think about what is coming from outside, importation of furniture, importation of building materials, just importing, and we think that is the best,” he said.

Karani, in his keynote speech, urged Africans to see that what they already have is unique and holds a high value. He said when furniture is imported from countries like China, you are not just bringing in wood, but also their culture, their climate and yours starts to erode. “We have the best materials in the world, why are we importing inferior quality materials?” he added.

### The skills and quality hurdle

Despite a strong love for African products abroad, major gaps exist that slow down growth. Lilian Kiwanuka, President of the Interior Designers Association of Uganda (IDAU), shared her frustration during a panel session at the congress. “The people from the other countries, the non-Africans, already love our stuff, they’ve already started showing it in their shops and it’s not even being made in Africa.”

Speaking on, Kiwanuka highlighted two main obstacles, including the ability to produce goods at a large scale and, more importantly, the lack of quality finishing. Foreign buyers often complain that doors do not close properly, or the product lacks a final polish.

“The tile organization recently reached out to me to help our local tilers do finishing,” she said, showing that industry partners are already searching for solutions.

Titi Ogufere, founder of the Interior Designers Association of Nigeria and Co-Convener, AIDC 2025, reinforced the need for technical partners to help close this “huge” skills gap. “We need technical schools, research labs, and cross-border collaboration to train artisans and designers to meet modern demands,” she said.

“Our universities are also stepping in, Ogufere added. “The University of Lagos and Obafemi Awolowo University have introduced Nigeria’s first master’s programs in interior and product design, while

partnerships are forming with design schools in Italy, South Africa, and the U.S.”

### A new framework for growth

To solve these problems, the AIDC is creating a foundation to guide all designers. This includes new policy work, better education, and strong regulation.

Jacqueline Aki, President of the Interior Designers Association of Nigeria (IDAN) and AIDC Co-Convener, announced the launch of a new ‘charter.’

“This congress is a statement and a step to that initiative,” Aki said. She explained that the charter focuses on the “most basic things that we need to put in place and agree on to move our industry and our profession forward.”

The goal is to move beyond mere beauty and to design spaces that positively “impact the lives of the people who live within those spaces.”

The leaders also called on governments to see interior design as more than decoration. Karani reminded attendees that interior spaces affect people’s health and safety every day.

Similarly, Ogufere charged policymakers to support local production. “We have grass, sand, we have wood, we have all the things we need to be able to prosper, but no one is working on these items,” she noted.

### Designing the future we want

The theme of the congress, “Made in Africa shaping industries, shaping futures,” captures the urgent need for action. It means training designers in Africa using African context, not just importing foreign curriculum.

Karani summarised the ultimate benefit of supporting the profession, stating “Interior design as a profession is one of the greatest employers in the world.” He explained that pushing design forward immediately creates jobs for electricians, plumbers, painters, and carpenters.

“By choosing to build from within, African nations can ensure that their homes are healthier, their products are world-class, and their economies grow stronger for generations to come, Karani said.

# MANUFACTURING BUSINESS ACCELERATOR: TRANSFORMING SMALL BEGINNINGS INTO GREAT ENTERPRISES

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



L-R: Abiodun Orekoya, Member House of Representative Somolu Constituency 1; Desola Jimmy-Eboma, Founder, Small-scale Enterprises Lab (SSE Lab); Esther Obiekwe, Keynote Speaker/Group Head, Retail & SME Banking Nova Bank; Hauwa Adeeyo, Senior Special Assistant to the Lagos State Governor on Commerce Cooperative, Trade and Investment; during the MBA Business Showers Cohort 2 graduation and the unveil of the MBA Business Shower 3 tagged 'The Next Frontier' held in Lagos recently.

In the realm of entrepreneurship, countless individuals have faced the daunting challenge of elevating their businesses from humble beginnings to towering success.

The journey is often fraught with obstacles, from navigating complex regulatory frameworks to accessing markets and achieving export success.

However, amidst these challenges, a beacon of hope has emerged in the form of the Manufacturing Business Accelerator (MBA), a pioneering program founded by the visionary Desola Jimmy-Eboma.

This initiative is revolutionizing the entrepreneurial landscape by providing a supportive ecosystem that empowers entrepreneurs to overcome hurdles and unlock their full potential.

Through the MBA program, participants embark on a rigorous 90-day journey, acquiring the essential skills and confidence needed to succeed in the competitive world of business.

The results are always remarkable, with entrepreneurs experiencing significant sales and revenue growth, export triumphs, and regulatory compliance.



L-R: Founder & CEO Florence Richards Africa, Dr. Ayomide Olofinjana; Head, legal Board Secretary, LASCOPA, Arinola Momoh Ayokambi; Senior Special Assistant to the Lagos State Governor on Commerce Cooperative, Trade and Investment, Hauwa Adeeyo; Founder, Small-scale Enterprises Lab (SSE Lab), Desola Jimmy-Eboma; Founder/CEO, Moore Organics, Adebisi Odeleye and Founder/CEO, Ady's Agro Processing Ltd, Adanne Uche, during the MBA Business Showers Cohort 2 graduation and the unveil of the MBA Business Shower 3 tagged "The Next Frontier" held in Lagos recently.

The impact of this program is being profoundly felt by entrepreneurs nationwide, as they transform their small beginnings into great enterprises.

At the helm of this initiative is Desola Jimmy-Eboma, the founder of Small-Scale Enterprises Lab (SSE Lab), a business development and empowerment platform dedicated to nurturing and growing micro, small, and medium-scale enterprises (MSMEs) across Africa.

With a keen focus on practicality, sustainability, and structure, the SSE Lab provides comprehensive support to entrepreneurs at every stage of their journey, from idea discovery to full business execution and scaling.

The SSE Lab's high-impact programs are meticulously designed to be easily digestible, empowering individuals to transform their passions into purpose-driven, income-generating ventures. With a diverse community spanning multiple sectors, including product-based

businesses in food, fashion, wellness, and crafts, as well as service-based ventures in education, consulting, creative industries, and digital solutions, the platform's reach is both broad and profound.

Participants in the program have shared remarkable testimonies of how they have transitioned from humble beginnings to building thriving enterprises.

Adebimpe Jenrola, a preschool teacher and student of the Manufacturers' Business Academy, joined the program seeking clarity on which business to pursue and how to get it off the ground.

After participating in the five-day challenge with Coach Desola Jimmy-Eboma, Jenrola experienced a profound epiphany, discovering her passion, skills, and expertise. "The classes are engaging, interactive, and packed with activities and assignments that keep you on track," Jenrola enthused.



products, expressed her gratitude for the guidance she received. “Your guidance to focus on PAP and explore its potential variants-especially for fitness, babies, and as smoothies-completely opened my eyes. You helped me see possibilities I hadn’t considered, and for that, I am truly grateful.”

Speaking during the MBA Business Shower 3, tagged ‘The Next Frontier,’ Desola Jimmy-Eboma, the founder of SSE Lab, shared the inspiring story of how the initiative began.

Having ventured into small-scale manufacturing during the COVID-19 pandemic, Jimmy-Eboma achieved remarkable milestones within her first year, including obtaining NAFDAC registration, securing listings in prominent supermarkets, and selling on Amazon. Recognising the potential for others to replicate her success, Jimmy-Eboma founded the SSE Lab to provide soft landing and mentorship to small-scale entrepreneurs.

She said this experience was what she

extended to SSE Lab, trying to let people see that when they have built the right tools, the right resources and have enabling environment, they will thrive because Nigerians already are brilliant with innovative ideas.

“Everything you are seeing today was just by pitching people to say, it’s in you, let’s bring it out.

The SSE Lab’s program is carefully structured to introduce participants to entrepreneurship and product-based business, followed by business concept development, product idea validation, and prototyping.

“I’ve overcome the challenge of not knowing which business to do and carved a niche for myself. Jimmy-Eboma’s mentorship has built my confidence, changed the way I approach business, and helped me believe in my potential.”

Opeyemi Odoh, another participant, shared a similar experience, stating, “When I watched a video my daughter took of me at MBA Business Showers, I couldn’t believe how confidently I spoke. Also, when I opened my mail and saw my NAFDAC approval, I knew God was doing wonders.”

Agbanusi Hope Ogugua, a participant who had hoped to gain clarity on how to begin producing a range of



Participants are then guided through regulatory considerations, business planning, marketing, branding, and logistics, ensuring they are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to build sustainable and impactful businesses.

Through the MBA program, entrepreneurs are empowered to turn their ideas into thriving enterprises, creating a ripple effect of economic growth and development. As the SSE Lab continues to nurture and support small-scale entrepreneurs, the future looks bright for these businesses and the communities they serve. With its transformative impact and commitment to excellence, the MBA program is poised to revolutionize the entrepreneurial landscape, one small business at a time.

Also speaking at the event, Charles Odii, director general, CEO Sweden said with over 40 million small businesses in Nigeria, events like the MBA Business Shower show that a Nigeria needs more ideas to boost the MSMEs.

Odii who was represented at the event said collective efforts are needed to drive the change we seek.

“It is our collective efforts. The more we come together, the more we achieve a lot for small businesses in

Nigeria. We are always ready to support this event. We will make sure we drive this to excellent position,” he said.

Esther Obiekwe, head, retail & SME banking, NOVA Bank said the country’s economic resilience lies not in oil, but in entrepreneurial diversity, adding that every time an MSME scales, exports a product, or substitutes an import, we take a step toward self-sufficiency.

“From the local garri processor now exporting to Ghana, to digital artisans serving clients in Europe — small businesses are proof that innovation and resilience can start at the micro level and ripple across the macro economy,” Obiekwe said.

She suggested that to truly redefine the MSME space, there is a need partnerships that work — between government, financial institutions, development partners, and entrepreneurs.

“We must simplify taxation and compliance, strengthen infrastructure and logistics, promote digital adoption and capacity building, encourage MSMEs to formalise, keep records, and build trust through customer service excellence,” Obiekwe suggested.

# BUILDING A CARE-CENTERED SOCIETY: A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR NIGERIA'S FUTURE

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



Stepping into the vibrant Lagos Capital Club on a bustling Wednesday evening, the room was abuzz with individuals from diverse backgrounds, all united by a singular passion: revolutionizing Nigeria's care system.

Everyone in the room had an experience to share showing that care is not just a necessity, but the backbone of strong families, workplaces, and nations. Despite the crucial role caregivers play in nurturing loved ones, managing households, and supporting communities, the care industry remains woefully undervalued and overlooked in Nigeria.

In a bid to change this narrative, policymakers, employers, caregivers, civil society leaders, and members of the public, all converged to spotlight the importance of care and to drive meaningful change.

As they gathered under the banner of #StartWithCare, it was clear that this was more than just a campaign – it was a call to action to recognize, support, and celebrate the care

industry, and to build a system that truly values the people who care for us all.

In a bid to commemorate the International Day of Care and Support on October 29, as proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly, Caring Africa launched #StartWithCare, a nationwide activation calling for urgent recognition of care as the foundation of strong families, resilient economies, and inclusive national development.

Under the theme 'Strong Families, Workplaces, Nations – Start with Care,' the campaign brought together stakeholders to spotlight the often-invisible labor of caregiving—both paid and unpaid—and to drive meaningful investment in Nigeria's care infrastructure.

Blessing Adesiyan, Founder of Caring Africa said, "this is not just about recognizing care; it's about redesigning systems around it. From child and elder care to paid family leave and domestic work protections, we must treat care as infrastructure."



Adesiyan stressed that care is what runs the economy before the economy even wakes up every morning.

“Think about it: before any worker leaves home, there’s a mother or father who wakes up early, walks into their child’s room, wakes them, brushes their teeth, ties their shoelaces, packs their lunch, and remembers their snacks, because if you forget the snacks, you’ll get a call from school later that disrupts your workday. That’s the ripple effect of care, invisible, undervalued, but essential,” she explained.

She said care work is often unpaid or underpaid, which must change,

According to her, from cooking and caregiving, to parenting and healthcare; these are vital contributions that deserve recognition, value, and reward.

“When I think about Nigeria’s future, I think about children. I think about my dad who is no longer here. I think of the millions of children born each year into families doing their best to nurture them.

“I also think about our elders — those who built this nation with their hands and sacrificed so much, yet are now growing old in a society that hasn’t built adequate care systems for them. That’s our reality as a country,” Adesiyan said.

She said as Nigeria gets on track to become the third most populous country in the world, care is needed everywhere. Yet, support for caregivers is almost nonexistent.

“Every working mother rushing through traffic to pick up her child, every father trying to navigate a late meeting and his newborn’s cry, every nurse, teacher, or grandparent holding things together, they are the invisible backbone of our survival.

“But the truth is, too many are doing it alone, without structure, protection, or investment. Still, we talk about growth, GDP, and productivity, while ignoring the first and most important driver of all: care,” she explained.

She noted that if Nigeria truly wants to be prosperous, it must start by acknowledging that care is not just personal, but a national priority.

She hinted that private lives are public lives, and public lives are private lives and what happens in the homes shapes what happens in the economy.

Adesiyan stressed that Nigeria must become a nation where families have the care and warmth they need; where companies design policies that make space for real life; where government treats care as national infrastructure.

“Childcare, paid leave, elder care, these are the building blocks of a nation that truly values its people. Policymakers must invest in systems that make care affordable, accessible, and dignified,” she added.

Mobolaji Ogunlende, Commissioner, Ministry of Youth and Social Development, Lagos State during his keynote address said care is not sentimental or secondary; it is the foundation of the country’s economy, the very infrastructure that supports cities and national development.

“Many of us, especially when we work in the private sector, tend to ignore the government. I used to be like that, I had no business with government matters. But since crossing over into public service, I’ve realized just how critical and important the government’s role truly is. And I’m glad our “blessing” has decided to hold us as partners on this journey.

“Today, we celebrate those who dedicate their time, skills, and hearts to caring for children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups. Caring for the vulnerable is not just a moral imperative; it is the foundation of social progress and sustainable development,” Ogunlende said.

He said around the world, governments are waking up to the value of the care economy, that vast and essential system of services, workers, and relationships that sustain children, elders, and everyone at different stages of life.

“At the Lagos State Ministry of Youth and Social Development, we play a vital role in care, protection, and empowerment for vulnerable people.

“Many Lagos residents may not know much about our THEMES Plus Agenda, perhaps because they think government doesn’t concern them. But those of us in government are intentional about driving inclusion and social welfare.

“In the first administration, the THEMES Agenda focused on Transportation, Health, Education, and Making Lagos a 21st-Century Economy, with Security and Environment as key pillars. In this second administration, we introduced the “Plus” emphasising Social Inclusion, Gender Equality, and Youth Development.

“These are not just words on paper. We provide direct services to vulnerable people, support families, care for children, and assist the elderly. We also offer psychosocial support to help reintegrate vulnerable people into society,” the commissioner assured.

He said Lagos manages over 15 homes and institutions — including correctional facilities and elderly care homes, adding that there’s room for improvement.

“Care is the new oil. Not everyone will see its value immediately, but those who do and invest in it will reap its benefits,” he said.

Ayodele Renner, Consultant pediatrician and a member of the Creative Care Council said when it comes to the disproportionate burden of care in this part of the world, particularly on women, there is the immediate and obvious risk of burnout in the short term.





Burnout, he said can present in various ways, including exhaustion, acute medical conditions, increased anxiety about various things, whether it's finances or the safety of their children or the people they are caring for.

Renner said in the long term, it can lead to things like insomnia, poor sleep, difficulty processing information.

Renner noted that with provision of care, women can avoid a lot of these challenging medical conditions that can affect their productivity in the long term.

Toyosi Etim-Effiong, chairperson, Creative Care Council and Founder/CEO of That Good Media said the Creative Care Council was put together to leverage the collective influence of all the council members who are from different spheres of the creative industry.

"Our role is to amplify the importance of formalising caregiving and acknowledging caregivers.

"Strong nations start with care. It means that care is the foundation of everything that we're doing or everything that we have even done so far. There will be more productivity if care was taken more seriously and if formalising the care sector had been done a long time ago," Etim-Effiong said.

As part of the #StartWithCare movement, Caring Africa rolled out a series of initiatives including the launch of the Creative Care Council, a collective of visionaries and

storytellers reimagining the narrative of care through culture, media, and the arts; the premiere of "Strong Nations Start with Care," a moving documentary exploring caregiving experiences across Nigeria; the debut of the Caring Blocks digital platform connecting Nigerians to trusted childcare, eldercare, and community services; and the StartWithCare Roundtable, convening policymakers, corporate leaders, and grassroots voices to discuss care as a driver of economic growth and gender equity.

The campaign also honored 10 exemplary employers through the Caring Workplace Awards, recognizing organizations leading the way in paid leave, childcare support, and family-friendly work policies.

Among this year's honorees include Providus Bank, Bank Of Industry, Interswitch, MTN, and Nigerian Breweries celebrated for their leadership in promoting inclusive, care-centered workplace practices.

Caring Africa and its coalition of partners including the Lagos State Ministry of Youth And Social Development, the Lagos State Resident Registration Agency, Lagos State Safety Commission, Bella Naija, Leading Ladies Africa, Gatefield, WIMBIZ, WILAN, WISCAR, the Nigerian Governors Forum are urging public and private sector leaders, and the Nigerian public to push for a national care policy, recognize and value unpaid care work and invest in family-friendly workplace practices.

# LAGOS COCKTAIL WEEK 2025: WHERE MIXOLOGY MEETS INNOVATION ...as Lord's Dry Gin Lights Up Event



The 11th edition of Lagos Cocktail Week (LCW) delivered an unforgettable celebration of Nigeria's vibrant cocktail culture, as thousands of enthusiasts gathered at the Balmoral Convention Center, Federal Palace Hotel, from Oct.

23–24 for two days of mixology, music, and immersive experiences.

One of the festival's standout attractions was the lively Cocktail Village, where one of the key brand

partners, Lord's London Dry Gin, brought unique experiences that drew crowds with high-energy entertainment, including live salsa performances, DJ sets, and interactive tasting sessions.

Attendees were invited to mix their own cocktails, solve timed gin-themed puzzles, and explore digital menus via QR codes printed on their cups.

A major highlight of the event was the Bar Battle, a thrilling live competition that showcased some



of Nigeria's most talented mixologists. The contest kept the audience on edge as participants demonstrated creativity, precision, and flair behind the bar.

"This year's Lagos Cocktail Week wasn't just about drinks; it was about people, creativity, and culture," said Valentine Dibia, Digital Marketing and PR Manager at Nigeria Distilleries Limited.

Now in its 11th year, Lagos Cocktail Week continues to strengthen its reputation as a key platform for mixologists, hospitality professionals, and enthusiasts driving the growth of West Africa's beverage and nightlife culture.

About Lagos Cocktail Week (LCW) Founded in 2014 by Lara Rawa, Lagos Cocktail Week is Nigeria's premier cocktail and beverage festival, designed to celebrate the country's growing mixology scene and foster innovation across the hospitality industry.



Lord's London Dry Gin, produced by Nigeria Distilleries Limited, is one of the country's leading spirits. Known for its refined taste and timeless appeal, it reflects a fusion of craftsmanship and contemporary sophistication.

# CALYPSO BRINGS TROPICAL ENERGY TO LAGOS COCKTAIL WEEK 2025



Lagos Cocktail Week 2025 transformed the city into a vibrant hub of cocktail culture, bringing together mixologists, industry professionals, and enthusiasts at the Federal Palace Hotel Balmoral Convention Centre for a fantastic week long experience climaxed by a two day experience filled with creativity, delicious flavors, and lively entertainment at the cocktail village.

This year's event highlighted Nigeria's thriving bar scene with exciting bar battles, tasting sessions, and live showcases that celebrated craftsmanship and innovation.

Attendees enjoyed a dynamic blend of culture and flavor, as top mixologists and beverage brands came together to demonstrate the art of cocktail making.

A standout highlight of the festival was Calypso, the tropical liqueur that infused the event with a refreshing burst of island vibes. They hosted interactive cocktail sessions, lively salsa performances, and 'spin the wheel' to win fun and exciting gifts, creating a joyful atmosphere filled with rhythm and creativity.

The Bar Battle competition kept the excitement high as talented mixologists battled it out to create signature cocktails that amazed both judges and spectators. As visitors explored the venue, they discovered immersive booths, sampled bold flavors, and connected with Lagos' growing community of mixology lovers.



“The Lagos Cocktail Week is a space where creativity, culture, and community truly thrive,” said Gbemileke Lawal, Marketing Manager for Nigerian Distilleries Limited (NDL).

“It’s inspiring to see how the city embraces mixology not just as an art form, but as a cultural experience that brings people together.”

Throughout the celebration, the Calypso booth buzzed with activity, offering signature tropical cocktails, engaging demonstrations, and an inviting atmosphere that captured the essence of Lagos’s warm nightlife.

By the end of the festival, it was clear that Lagos Cocktail Week has secured the city’s reputation as Africa’s creative capital for cocktail innovation, a place where every pour tells a story and every flavor brings people together, celebrating connection, culture, and craft.



# MAGGIVERSE: UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFRICA'S CREATORS

The highly anticipated Creators Conference, themed “The MAGGIverse,” would again this year bring together a vibrant community of content creators, culinary innovators, digital experts, and business leaders to explore how food, creativity, and technology can drive sustainable growth and influence in the digital space

MAGGI, the leading culinary brand from Nestlé, is set to host the second edition of the highly anticipated Creators Conference, from November 1–2, 2025, at the Landmark Event Centre, Lagos.

“The creator economy in Africa is booming, and the MAGGI Creators Conference is our way of helping creators turn passion into purpose,” said Funmi Osineye, Category Manager, Culinary (MAGGI) Nestlé Nigeria.

“By connecting creative minds with experts, we’re building a community driven by collaboration, innovation, and opportunity.”

Building on the success of its 2024 debut, the MAGGI Creators Conference 2.0 aims to deepen conversations around creativity, culture, and collaboration—spotlighting the power of storytelling and innovation in shaping the food and creator economy across West and Central Africa.

The two-day experience will feature workshops, masterclasses, and interactive panels designed to help creators expand their influence, grow their audience, and build meaningful partnerships.

Among the headline speakers are Brian Nwana, Guinness World Record holder for the most

restaurants visited in 24 hours, Sisi Yemmie, award-winning food and lifestyle creator and Mrs Iquo Ukoh, a distinguished marketing advisor, expert and publisher of Memories on a Platter.

They will all share insights on how food storytelling continues to shape culture, identity, and digital engagement across the continent.

Highlights include a TikTok Masterclass on building authentic influence, leveraging SEO, and monetizing creativity. A series of panels will also explore collaboration, innovation, and content monetization, featuring top culinary voices such as The Kitchen Muse, Jamila Lawal, Kojo Junior (Ghana), Gina Ehikodi-Ojo, and Noble Igwe.

At the MAGGI-C Booths, attendees will participate in interactive sessions focused on culinary skills, digital storytelling, and brand building, offering hands-on tools to elevate their craft in an increasingly competitive creator space. “The MAGGIverse represents creativity without limits,” Osineye added.

“After the success of our 2024 edition, we’re bringing even more energy, insights, and opportunities for creators to learn, connect, and grow.”

The MAGGI Creators Conference 2.0 reinforces MAGGI’s commitment to nurturing creativity, culture, and entrepreneurship — empowering the next generation of creators to tell authentic African stories and thrive in the continent’s dynamic digital ecosystem.

# THE LADYMAKER AT 10: CELEBRATING A DECADE OF CRAFT, CULTURE AND TIMELESS FEMININITY





On November 2, 2025, The LadyMaker, one of Nigeria's most respected heritage fashion brands, will celebrate its tenth anniversary with Graffiti, an evening of legacy, craftsmanship and reflection at VICI, Lagos.

The milestone celebration marks a decade of design excellence rooted in African tradition, with The Macallan joining as the official drinks partner for the event.

Founded by Ifeyinwa Azubike in 2015, The LadyMaker was built on a vision to merge Nigerian textile heritage with global standards of refinement. What began as a quiet pursuit of craft has evolved into one of the country's most distinguished fashion houses, known for its elegant silhouettes, deliberate construction and commitment to preserving cultural artistry.

Over the years, The LadyMaker has explored and expanded its aesthetic vocabulary through collections that balance heritage and innovation.

From Indigo with its deep-dyed elegance, to Ceramica which fused hand-woven aso-oke and ceramic-inspired motifs, and the acclaimed Waste to Wonder collection made entirely from production off-cuts, each body of work reinforces the brand's devotion to craftsmanship, sustainability and design integrity.

The upcoming anniversary showcase, Graffiti, draws inspiration from the expressive permanence of street art. The event will debut a new anniversary collection, offering a glimpse into the brand's next decade, one that continues to celebrate femininity through structure, texture and storytelling.

Designed for women who value meaning as much as beauty, the collection embodies the quiet confidence that has defined The LadyMaker for ten years.

As guests raise glasses of The Macallan Classic Cut in celebration, Graffiti will stand as both tribute and transition, honouring the journey so far while setting the tone for what is to come.

In 10 years, The LadyMaker has proven that African luxury requires no translation. Built by hand, guided by heritage and sustained through excellence, it continues to champion a vision of fashion that is both timeless and unmistakably Nigerian.



# 5 WAYS TO ELEVATE YOUR LOOK

CHINONYE ISIDIENU



Style doesn't always shout. Sometimes, it's the quietest choices that leave the most lasting impressions. Elevating your outfit isn't about a complete wardrobe overhaul. It's about small, intentional choices that shift your look from simple to styled. Here are five simple ways to do just that effortlessly;

## 1. Accessorize Like You Mean It

Accessories are more than just add-ons, they're the secret sauce that can transform any outfit from simple to standout. They help define the occasion, enhance body

proportions, and keep your style. A sleek belt, minimal jewelry, or quality bag can take an outfit from casual to curated.

## 2. Know Your Body Type

Great style starts with knowing what works for you. Pay attention to your shape and how different cuts fit your body, highlight your best features and fit comfortably do not just wear the most expensive clothes, wear what fits and flatters you.

## 3. Embrace Effortless Grooming

Looking stylish isn't just about clothes, it's also about how you present yourself. Keep your hair neat, your nails clean, smell nice and your skin fresh. You don't need to spend hours getting ready; just stay consistent with basic care.

## 4. Keep It Simple

You don't need to wear complicated outfits and accessories or follow every trend to look stylish. Simple, clean looks often appear more elegant and put-together

## 5. Be Confident

Confidence is the best style tip of all. The simplest outfit can look amazing if you wear it with self-assurance. When you feel good in what you wear, you automatically look more stylish. Stand tall, walk with purpose, and carry yourself with ease, it is the best style upgrade.

# EBUKA OBI-UCHENDU'S PODCAST TO TACKLE MASCULINITY MYTHS IN NIGERIA

FAITH OMOBOYE



by She Tank Studios and Empire Mates Entertainment, features conversations with well-known guests such as Seun Kuti, Johnny Drille and Timi Dakolo.

Speaking at the launch, Obi-Uchendu said the goal was to create space for men to be open about issues often left unspoken. “Too often, men feel pressured to fit into moulds that don’t serve them,” he said. “We’re creating a space where men can speak honestly about their struggles, fears and growth.”

The podcast is co-hosted by musician and filmmaker Banky W, who said the project aims to move beyond “the noise of toxic masculinity” to encourage balance and reflection.

Blessing Omakwu, co-executive producer and founder of The She Tank, said the series fits into a wider effort to include men in conversations about gender equality. “True equality is impossible without men’s active participation,” she said.

Television host, Ebuka Obi-Uchendu has launched a new podcast series in Lagos that aims to unpack the pressures and perceptions surrounding masculinity in Nigeria.

The show, titled MENTality with Ebuka, premiered at a private event attended by actors, musicians and media figures including Banky W, Tobi Bakre and Adesua Etomi-Wellington. The series, co-produced

Guests at the event watched clips from the debut season and a panel discussion featuring radio hosts Gbemi Olateru-Olagbegi and Tolu Oniru-Demuren, who spoke on the emotional and financial pressures facing men today.

MENTality with Ebuka begins streaming on October 31 on YouTube, Spotify and other major platforms.

# NIGERIA AMONG AFRICA'S MOST COMPETITIVE COUNTRIES IN 2025, ACCORDING TO IMD RANKING

CHISOM MICHAEL



The latest World Competitiveness Ranking (WCR) by IMD Business School has revealed the most competitive countries in Africa for 2025. The new ranking highlights how African economies are navigating a period of global economic pressure marked by high inflation, tighter monetary policy, and rising debt levels.

The WCR evaluates 69 economies using data and executive surveys. It measures performance across four main areas which are economic performance, government efficiency, business efficiency, and infrastructure, offering a broad view of how countries are managing stability, innovation, and growth.

In recent years, inflation and interest rates have reached their highest levels in decades. These developments have increased the cost of borrowing, added pressure on governments with large debts, and created uncertainty across financial systems. The IMD report notes that countries and businesses must prioritise productivity, financial discipline, and innovation to remain competitive in this environment.

**Here are the most competitive African countries in 2025, according to IMD ranking**

## Kenya

Kenya tops the 2025 WCR, ranking 56th globally with a competitiveness score of 48. The country leads the continent, reflecting steady progress in business efficiency and economic management. Its performance shows an ongoing focus on improving productivity and attracting investment.

## Botswana

Botswana ranks 59th globally with a competitiveness score of 46. It is the second most competitive economy in Africa and continues to perform strongly in governance and fiscal stability, which support its resilience in a challenging global climate.

## Ghana

Ghana is ranked 61st in the world, with a competitiveness score of 44. The country's efforts to enhance its economic environment and strengthen the private sector have contributed to its standing in this year's ranking.

## South Africa

South Africa holds the fourth position among African nations, ranking 64th globally with a score of 42. Although it faces structural challenges, it remains one of the continent's largest and most industrialised economies, maintaining a significant influence across the region.

## Nigeria

Nigeria ranks 67th globally with a competitiveness score of 40. The country's large population and ongoing economic reforms aimed at improving the business climate play a central role in sustaining its position among Africa's leading economies.

## Namibia

Namibia rounds off the list, ranking 68th globally with a competitiveness score of 38. Its performance highlights continued participation in international trade and ongoing efforts to strengthen the foundations of its economy.

# VALUE MADE VISIBLE: THE ART OF WOMEN'S ASSET-MAKING

EKEMINI AKPAKPAN

I recently spoke with my friend (I hope he reads this), who cited the Bible as the source of women's purpose — when God created Eve for Adam, and women's historical nurturing role. I asked, half-jokingly, if women have a cooking gene. The truth is, while our understanding of roles has evolved, our definition of purpose has not. Support and care are expressions of purpose, but they should not confine purpose.

Women, like men, pursue purpose through self-determination in careers, family, leadership, and enterprise. Yet gender norms still dictate which parts of that potential are acceptable, distorting how women's value translates into power, ownership, and leadership. Recognizing women's worth means creating conditions for it to materialize as assets. For example, education that becomes expertise. Only when women's value is acknowledged as intrinsic, not relational, can it fully transform into assets.

Asset-making is the process of turning labor, knowledge, creativity, and networks into tangible and intangible forms of assets; in other words, building or accumulating things of lasting value.

However, when women are constrained to only socially acceptable tasks such as domestic chores, it creates what economists call time poverty — the chronic shortage of discretionary time needed to pursue education, innovation, rest, or leadership. This poverty of time traps women in cycles where survival tasks replace self-actualization. The result is a chain reaction: reduced capacity, slower asset accumulation, and diminished intergenerational wealth.

## Pathways to Asset Creation

### Reclaiming Time as a Resource

Time is the first asset available to all humans, yet one of the most under-recognized and undervalued in women's lives. Domestic tasks, caregiving, and even workplace "support roles" are necessary, but when they fall disproportionately on women or do not lead to mobility, income growth, or recognition, they become traps rather than pathways. The issue is not that these responsibilities exist or don't matter — they must be done — but when supported by equitable systems, technology, and shared labor, they free women to pursue education, innovation, and leadership. When women reclaim their time, they reclaim ownership of their choices, their growth, and their futures. When women channel their time toward growth-aligned pursuits, they convert it into the power to make choices, build expertise, and create lasting value. Time, rightly invested, is the seed of both self-determination and asset-building.

### Translating Education into Expertise

Education is potential; expertise is the asset. Therefore, education without opportunity is potential without yield. In

Nigerian universities, we are still celebrating the appointment of women as Vice-Chancellors as a "first" in 2025 — a reminder that while many women are educated, few reach the apex of leadership. As I explored in my previous reflections, occupational gender segregation reinforces patterns that limit how women's education translates into impact and ultimately shapes how their value is recognised.

True access to education lies not only in attendance but in how learning converts and compounds through skills-building, brand equity, intellectual property, financial capacity, and leadership opportunities. That is the essence of asset-making. This is how learning becomes leverage, and creates a pathway from classroom to capital.

### Ownership of Capital

Ownership is not entitlement; it is the material proof of potential fulfilled. Tangible assets — land, property, finances — remain among the foremost measures of value in our world. Expanding women's access to these assets is essential to unlocking upward mobility in careers and enterprise. Elective offices, for instance, are capital-intensive, while low-paying or unpaid roles stifle income growth and limit women's capacity to build wealth. Social norms that restrict women's access to property and inheritance rights further exacerbate their exclusion from capital. My concern is that many women are not even on a trajectory toward asset accumulation — whether through inheritance, career mobility, or enterprise — as most female-led ventures remain at the subsistence level.

This is why fewer women are breaking into the upper echelons of wealth. Financing models should prioritise women-led ventures, enforcing equitable inheritance and property rights, and valuing women's contributions beyond unpaid labour to widen the path to capital acquisition.

### Networks as Social Capital

If marrying up is a thing, which sounds very transactional to modestly put it, then admittedly, networks should be assets. How can women build connections that convert trust into tangible opportunities? Every connection that amplifies your capacity to create or influence is part of your capital base. Women's relational strength can be reframed as economic power. Women's collectives, mentorship circles, and industry associations can be structured as growth network platforms that translate trust into training, investment, and market access.

### Closing Reflection

Asset-making is not just about accumulation; it's about agency. When women's time, knowledge, capital, and networks align, their value no longer needs validation; it becomes visible, measurable, and transformative.

# HOW NECCI PULSE ESSAY COMPETITION MASTERMINDS UPSKILLING NIGERIAN COMMUNICATION STUDENTS

CHARLES OGWO



In the contemporary era, the crucial roles of effective communication and public relations in Africa's most populous country has become increasingly obvious.

Nigeria has one of the largest youth populations in the world, with estimates suggesting that about 70 percent of the population is under 30 years old and the median age is around 18.1 years.

In a bid to prepare these young minds for the demands of today's competitive public relations professional

landscape, NECCI Roundtable has unveiled Pulse Essay Prize Competition.

According to the convener/founder of NECCI RoundTable Discussions, Nkechi Ali-Balogun, the initiative is designed to equip students with vital skills in communication, analysis, and professionalism.

She emphasised that the initiative aims to cultivate knowledgeable and skilled public relations professionals who will make significant impact in the industry.

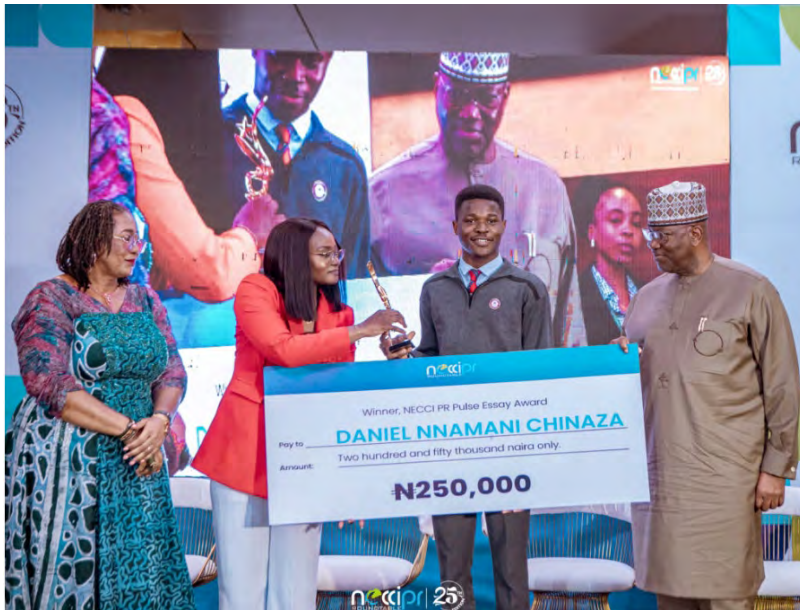
"We envision this prize evolving into a prestigious annual award that recognises and nurtures outstanding talents in public relations.

"Over time, the PR Pulse Award will expand to encompass all areas and categories within the field, ultimately establishing itself as a distinguished honour comparable to the Pulitzer Prize," she said.

This could be said to be in tandem with the views of Eleanor Roosevelt, one time first-lady of the United States, who once said, "The purpose of education must be at the heart of education and education systems. And that's the only way education can go beyond literacy, important as that is, to develop and transform societies."

With competition such as the pulse essay prize, the education sector would serve as a critical provider of human capital, equipping individuals with the requisite skills and enhancing their intellectual acumen to make meaningful contributions to their communities and nation.

Experts argue that good education works to develop not only the learner's understanding of established knowledge but also sharpens the learner's mind and enhances their capacity for thinking, creativity, and innovation so they can become active creators of new knowledge.



Obviously, that is what the NECCI essay competition is designed to achieve in Nigeria's communication space, especially amongst students in tertiary institutions across the country.

In a chat with BusinessDay, Ali-Balogun revealed that there are plans to increase the prize money to boost students' interests. However, she emphasised that beyond the prize money there is also plans to absorb young and excellent talents from the competition.

As one of the largest and most vibrant youth populations in the world, Nigeria's youth group is a key demographic that deserves thorough attention and understanding.

Experts believe that effective communication strategies help bridge the gap between the youth and diverse stakeholders, fostering mutual understanding, trust, and collaboration.

This demographic dominance in Nigeria, presents a significant opportunity for economic growth, hence, the need to catch and nurture them young for maximum economic and social benefits.

Educating the Nigerian youngsters should not be left in the hands of the government alone, a good thing NECCI RoundTable is leading by example, because education is crucial to developing human capacity.

Education, however, does not only develop people intellectually; it also

plays a vital role in the development of the social dimensions of the person and the citizenry.

Well-educated individuals are not only confident to lead fulfilling personal lives but also actively engage in problem-solving within their societal contexts, thereby elevating overall societal welfare and fostering social cohesion.

They are not equipped only with intellectual capacity for thinking and knowing, but also with a deepening sense of character, community and citizenry.

Education plays an active role in the socioeconomic development of a nation by actively contributing to educating her people about necessary character, roles, and obligations of citizenship.

Besides, education fosters social cohesion and the development of a collective identity necessary for a visionary future.

A 400-level student in the Department of Mass Communication at the University of Lagos (UNILAG), Daniel Nnam, emerged as the winner of the maiden NECCI essay contest, winning a cash prize of N250,000.

Nnam was announced as the winner of the essay competition, during the 25th edition of the NECCI PR roundtable held on October 23, 2025, at Eko Hotel & Suites, Victoria Island, Lagos.

He won the contest, defeating 24 other contestants across five higher institutions in Nigeria.



# WHY NIGERIAN HISTORY REINTRODUCTION INTO CURRICULUM IS POSITIVE, STRATEGIC

CHARLES OGWO



**A**fter years of absence, Nigerian history has finally found its way back into the revised national curriculum.

The move, applauded by educators and cultural advocates alike, is more than just a nod to the past, it is a strategic step toward shaping a more informed, unified, and self-aware generation of Nigerians.

Stakeholders believe that the policy will go a long way in instilling patriotism and good citizenship in the younger generation, making them better leaders of tomorrow.

“People who do not know their history are unlikely to learn from it, and where they do not learn from history, they will repeat it and then blame history for repeating itself,” they say.

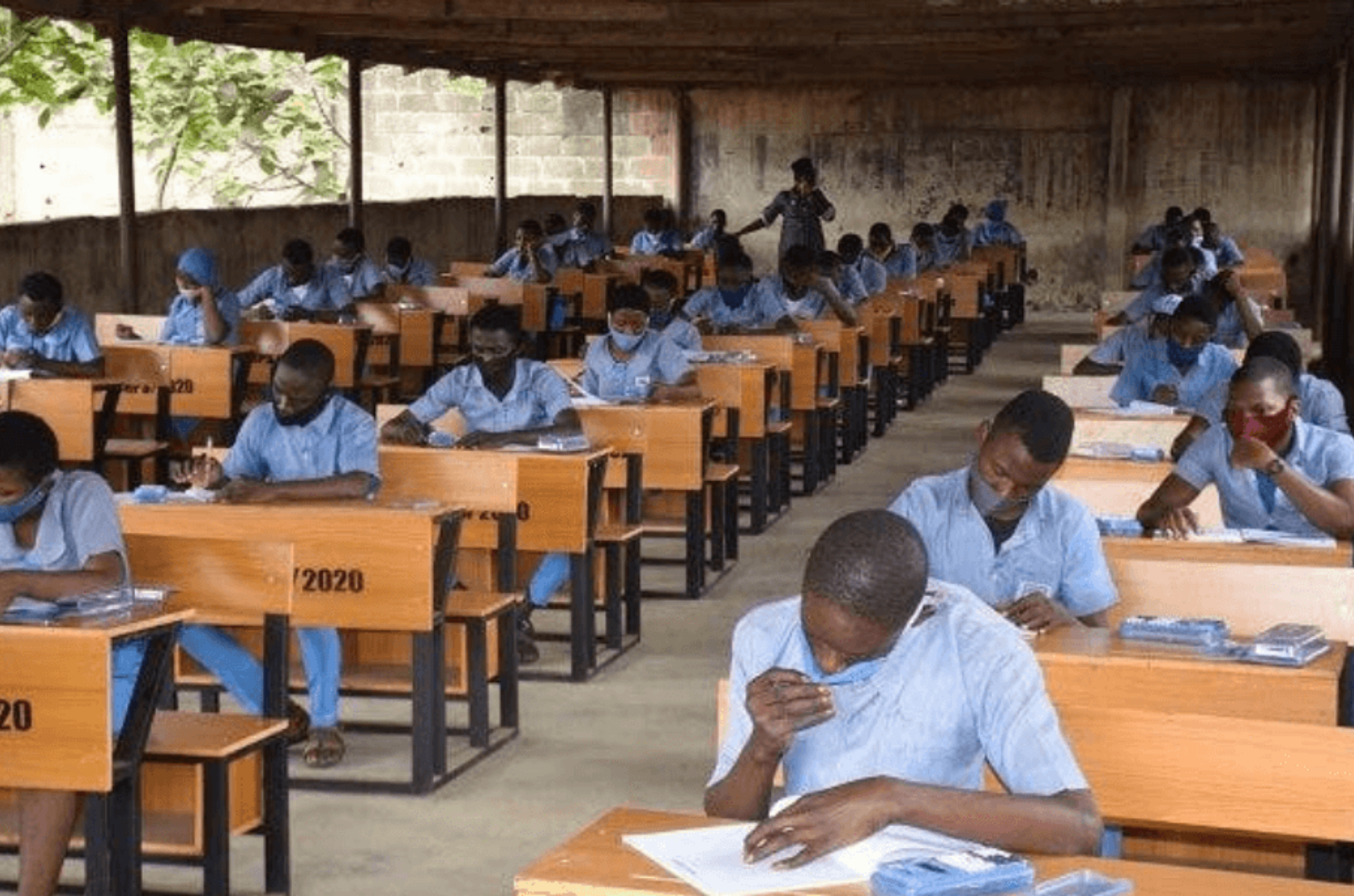
Gift Osikoya, a teacher, describes the policy as strategic and positive move by the federal government.

“History helps young learners understand the journey of their nation, its struggles, heroes, values, and achievements.

“When students learn about how Nigeria came to be, the sacrifices of nationalists, and the diversity that makes up the country, it builds a sense of identity and belonging,” she said.

Osikoya emphasised that the study of history in school can change how students perceive their country.

“Many young people today lack deep knowledge of Nigeria’s past, which affects how they connect with national values.



“By learning history early, students can develop pride in their heritage, understand the mistakes of the past, and be inspired to contribute positively to national development,” she noted.

However, she explained that inculcating patriotism through history will not happen overnight, but by consistent and engaging teaching using real-life stories, local examples, and interactive methods, this, she said can make learners appreciate the need to protect and improve their nation.

It was Benjamin Cardozo, an American jurist cum philosopher, who once said, “History in illuminating the past, illuminates the present, and in illuminating the present illuminates the future.”

There is no doubt that a nexus exists between Nigerians lack of literacy, their lack of understanding of history and where they are as a country today.

A lot of communities across the country do not know the accurate narratives of their migration to their current community or town. If you ask a man from Aguleri, and Umuneli about their history both in Anambra State, it is a different narrative that you will get.

The same lack of accurate historical knowledge is seen many other communities such as Urohob and Itsekiri, Igalla and Igarra, among others.

Little wonder philosophers believe that no country grows beyond the education or the literacy of its people.

In spite of the fact that history as a subject increased cross-cultural awareness of Nigerians, it was removed from the country’s timetable at basic schools in the 1970s and taught as part of social studies.



This did not go down well with many stakeholders, parents, and teachers as well, hence this ‘intellectual rape’ generated loud outcry.

However, the federal government took a bold step and announced a reintroduction of this subject into the new curriculum, and even made mandatory for students.

Isaiah Ogundele, an administrator, in applauding the policy, emphasised that people without history will forget their past and they would have problems with both present and future.

Ogundele pointed out that history was removed out of the curriculum initially because of fear by the policymakers.

Recall that Wole Soyinka, a Nigerian Nobel Prize winner and statesman during his interview on a television station some time ago, said that history being removed from the school’s

curriculum was deliberate and an attempt to dissuade people from learning about the country’s past.

However, Ogundele said by reintroducing it there are lots of advantages such as creating more jobs for teachers at all levels, and making the new generation to study the mistakes of their predecessors and proffer a better solution for their future.

Moreover, he said it will help people to know some beautiful things of the past that are worthy of emulation such as learning people’s culture, custom and tradition would be of help to correct the moral decadence that has been eroded by lack of knowing how things were in the past and social media menace.

“If know where you are, you will not be afraid of where you are going to. Re introducing history will help a lot to bring back the glory of the past,” he emphasised.

# HOW COLLECTORS INFLUENCE MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS

Have you ever walked into a museum and wondered how those artworks were chosen? It's easy to assume curators make all the decisions. But behind the scenes, art collectors often play a major role. Their collections, funding, and passion for art deeply influence what museums display and how they display it.

Many of the world's most famous exhibitions exist because collectors shared their private treasures with the public. Think of them as the bridge between private passion and public art appreciation. Without their vision and generosity, many museums would struggle to tell a complete story of art.

In this digest, we will discuss how collectors influence museum exhibitions — from shaping the stories told on museum walls to helping fund and promote those stories. Collectors are more than art owners; they're cultural partners who help define how we experience creativity.

## 1. Private Collections: The Hidden Heart of Public Exhibitions

Let's start with what's on display. Many museum exhibitions are built around artworks borrowed from



Tokini Peterside-Schwebig, Nigerian entrepreneur, businesswoman and art collector



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private collectors. These loans often bring rare or valuable pieces into public view — sometimes for the first time.

A report by The Art Newspaper notes that private loans make up nearly 40% of works shown in major museum exhibitions. This collaboration gives curators the flexibility to tell broader, more inclusive stories.

For instance, in Africa, collectors like Sindika Dokolo and Tokini Peterside have opened up their personal collections to museums and art fairs, allowing audiences to see African art in new and powerful ways. These collectors act as cultural custodians, ensuring that important pieces of art don't just stay behind closed doors but reach the people who need to see them.

When collectors share their collections, they also shape how history is told—deciding which artists, regions, and movements gain visibility.

## 2. Curatorial Collaboration: Building Stories Together

Collectors and curators often have a creative partnership. Curators bring scholarship and historical perspective, while collectors bring emotional insight, resources, and connections to artists.

Together, they design exhibitions that blend expertise with passion. It's not just about displaying art—it's about creating a conversation between the past and the present. For example, the collaboration between Zeitz MOCAA in Cape Town and private collectors has led to exhibitions that highlight contemporary African voices while honouring traditional craftsmanship.

Collectors also influence the themes of exhibitions. Their unique collections might focus on identity, politics, or modern culture — guiding curators toward fresh narratives that resonate with today's audiences. In short, collectors don't just provide the art; they help shape the story being told around it.

Collectors may not wear curator badges, but their influence runs deep. They provide the art, the funding, and often the inspiration behind many museum exhibitions we love. Through their vision, relationships, and generosity, they help museums tell richer, more diverse stories.

So next time you walk into a museum, take a moment to think about the unseen hands that helped bring that exhibition to life. Behind every masterpiece on the wall, there's often a passionate collector ensuring the world gets to see it.

## 3. Financial Support: Fueling Creative Possibilities

Museums need funding to bring big ideas to life. That's where collectors come in again. Many exhibitions are made possible by private donations from collectors who want to share their love of art with others.

Their financial support helps cover costs like shipping, insurance, installation, and marketing.

Without this kind of backing, some exhibitions simply wouldn't happen. According to Tate Modern, partnerships with collectors and donors make it possible to host larger and more inclusive exhibitions across the UK and beyond.

But money isn't the only form of support. Collectors also lend credibility and visibility. When a respected collector supports an exhibition, it attracts media attention, sponsors, and audiences who might not have visited otherwise.



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

# FEAR-BASED MARKETING

FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA

I have written a considerable amount on how consumer behaviour affects buying. Humans are mostly emotional beings who try to think that they are rationalising their decisions. However, our primitive brain, which is responsible for 90% of our decisions sub-consciously, still works on the ancient concept of fight-or-flight. And since emotions impact so much of a customer's purchase decisions, marketers often try to employ a variety of different emotional appeals. In fact, a study by HubSpot claims that ads with emotional appeal work two times better as compared to ads with just rational appeal.

Here are some of the most popular emotional appeals you will notice in ads and marketing campaigns;

1. Humour appeal – Using jokes and humorous stories to lighten up the mood and build affinity.
2. Sexual appeal – Most commonly employed by brands advertising adult products, and in many cases beauty products.
3. Romantic appeal – Noticed frequently in different ads. It could be one of the couples gifting the other something or asks them out. It can be found in lifestyle ads. Also, romantic appeal needn't necessarily be between couples – it can simply be anything that's overwhelmingly emotional.
4. Scarcity appeal – This is what today's generation nicknames #FOMO, or the fear of missing out. Scarcity appeal can usually be found in ads that promote limited time sales and financial incentive offers.
5. Fear appeal – This is what we are going to discuss in today's piece, so read on.

Fear appeal plays on some of our worst insecurities. That's why despite only a quarter of Americans suffering from bad breath, over 70% used Listerine. That's 120 million more people than should have. It's simply because over the years, Listerine has successfully managed to create a fearful impression that bad breath makes you a social outcaste. In fact, it all started back in the day when Listerine created a print ad which showed a pretty girl losing her guy to another girl because of apparently having bad breath. Such detachment is one of the worst fears of us humans, and therefore Listerine managed to increase its sales massively in a trend which continues till date.

Coming home to Nigeria, the fear appeal is used by toothpaste brands. Almost all ads in this category use the fear appeal. Who wants to be rejected because of perceived bad breath? Let's have a look at how fear appeal is commonly employed in the following industries:

## i.Computers and Information Technology

One of the biggest fears of daily computer / laptop users at a consumer level, and people like CTO / CIO at a business level, is data and identify theft. Anti-virus and cyber-security providers try to cash in on this fear in order to sell their products.

## ii.Insurance

There are different types of losses involved in the realm of insurance. There can be loss of money due to the lack of insurance or personal belongings. And there can be loss of life, which requires a person to have an insurance for securing their family after they are gone. And insurance companies know how to pull these strings perfectly by creating a situation in which the entire family is involved and impacted.

## iii.Cosmetics industry

Humans are so obsessed with their looks that an entire industry has formed to profit from it. We know it as the cosmetics industry, and it includes everything right from beauty products for toning your skin to cosmetic surgeons promising to fix your smile or give you hair transplant.

## iv.Public service announcements and social ads

Ads for causes like No Smoking, and Don't Drink and Drive often have to resort to fear in order to drive home a point. Instead of simply showing some numbers, they create these stories in which a person (and at times even family or friends around them) is suffering due to their irresponsible actions.

So, do fear based ads work?

It is very easy to go wrong with fear-based ads, thereby alienating your entire audience. And when this happens, brands fail to achieve the very thing that they had set out for. Fear-based advertising is very delicate and greatly relies on striking the right balance between the core message and the emotion being projected. If the emotional bit gets heavier, people can simply choose to change the TV channel or skip the ad on YouTube.

If you really want your fear-based ads to work, you have to show a value proposition. For example, instead of just saying "Cyberattacks can cause you N10 million a year", your communication can convey value by adding "Secure your business with our tool". Fear-based ads do work but if you are only using fear, your brand will be perceived by one of those shady salesmen who try way too hard to close in on a used-motorcycle which has tons of issues. You certainly don't want to come across as that person!

## Last line

Use fear meaningfully where it truly applies, but also give the customers a solution.



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

# THE EXCHANGE

UDY OSARO-EDOBOR



From the first day they met in secondary school, Nelo and Oliver were inseparable. Where you found one, you found the other. They were the kind of friends that made people believe in true friendship. Their bond was rare, pure, enviable and fiercely loyal. They had been inseparable since their secondary school days sharing secrets, laughter and dreams.

As they grew older, life took them down different financial paths—Nelo became extremely rich while Oliver lived a modest life. But Nelo never allowed wealth to come between them. He saw Oliver not just as a friend but as his own brother.

Years went by and Nelo's path led him to immense wealth, the kind of success that made headlines and turned heads while Oliver's life remained modest. But despite the glaring difference in their financial status, Nelo never treated his friend any differently. He was the kind of man who remembered where it all began, those days when both of them walked to school barefoot, laughing under the hot sun and sharing a single bottle of soft drink after football practice.

Even when wealth came, Nelo's heart never changed. He lifted Oliver up with him. He helped him establish businesses, paid his children's school fees without ever making it feel like charity and made sure Oliver's family enjoyed comfort. There were holidays abroad... Dubai, London, Cape Town, Maldives... where their wives and children bonded like family. Their Christmases were spent together, their anniversaries celebrated side by side. When one child fell ill, both fathers worried. When one business succeeded, both men rejoiced.

People often said, "If you want to understand what true friendship looks like, watch Nelo and Oliver." They had

become each other's chosen family. Their wives had grown so close that people thought they were sisters. Their children called one another cousins. Every milestone, every celebration, every challenge was shared.

Then came the season that shook everything. Nelo fell ill. At first, it seemed like something that could be easily managed, a stubborn fever, perhaps stress. But the sickness lingered and worsened. He was flown abroad, treated by the best doctors money could find. Yet, for the first time in his life, money couldn't solve the problem. Oliver stayed by his side, praying, fasting, believing for a miracle. But the inevitable happened.

Nelo passed away.

The news broke both families. Oliver's tears never seemed to stop. He handled the burial with deep reverence, ensuring that his best friend had a farewell worthy of the life he had lived... grand, elegant and filled with love. Both families leaned on each other for strength, mourning not just a friend but a brother.

Weeks later, when the tears had barely dried, Oliver received a call from a man who introduced himself as Nelo's lawyer. That was strange. Oliver thought he knew every business associate and confidant Nelo had ever worked with. The man requested a private meeting, saying he had something to deliver, something Nelo had instructed him to give only after his death.

Curious and uneasy, Oliver agreed.

At the meeting, the lawyer handed him a sealed envelope. Inside was a flash drive and a short handwritten note from Nelo that read: "Watch this alone."

Oliver's heart pounded as he drove home. When he got there, he locked himself in his room and sat on the edge of his bed. With trembling hands, he inserted the flash drive into his laptop and pressed play.

Nelo's face appeared on the screen... calm and handsome. The sound of his deep voice filled the room and instantly Oliver felt a wave of emotion.

"Oli boy," Nelo began, calling him by the name only he used. "If you're watching this, it means I'm gone. I'm sorry, my brother. I'm sorry I never told you this while I was alive. I just didn't know how. But I owe you the truth."

He paused, took a deep breath, and continued. "Please, don't be angry. Everything I did, I did for both our good."

Oliver paused the video, his heart racing. He wiped his sweaty palms on his trousers, confused and scared. What could this possibly mean? His chest tightened. He pressed play again.

Nelo went on. "Do you remember that weekend you spent at my father's house when we were still boys? My father's spiritual seer came visiting and the moment he saw you, he said something that none of us expected. He said you had a bright star, a destiny so great, it could light generations. But he also said that you wouldn't be able to handle it, that your greatness would destroy you if something wasn't done. You were destined for abundance but not discipline. And I, on the other hand, had the strength to carry wealth but not the destiny for it."

Nelo's eyes softened. "So the seer made a suggestion... a destiny exchange. He said he could switch our fates. That I would carry your star and you would carry mine. But there was a condition: I must never mistreat you. I must never cheat you or look down on you. If I ever did, everything I had would vanish. The wealth, the influence, the name... gone."

Tears rolled down Nelo's cheeks on the screen. "That's why I always took care of you, Oli. That's why I made sure you were never left behind. I never wanted you to feel small. I gave you more than I took...60% for you, 40% for me always. Because my father and the seer warned me never to cheat you, never to let pride blind me. My wealth came from your star but my peace came from our friendship."

He paused and swallowed hard. "Please, don't see this as betrayal. See it as the only way I could protect you. You trusted me with your friendship but heaven trusted me with your destiny and hope I didn't fail either. I love you my brother, my blood."

Then the screen went black.

Oliver sat still, unable to move. His mind spun in circles. His heart was heavy, torn between gratitude and disbelief. So many memories came flooding back, the days when Nelo

pushed him to be better, the times he'd insisted on covering expenses, the quiet way he'd always lifted him up. It all made sense now.

He stood and paced the room, tears blurring his vision. Should he be angry that his destiny had been taken from him? Or thankful that his friend had carried it so honorably?

After deep thoughts, he came to the conclusion that Nelo had not stolen from him.. he had protected him. He had turned a spiritual exchange into a brotherhood that no power could destroy. He hadn't hoarded the blessings; he had shared them, honored them and nurtured them.

Oliver sank to his knees and wept, not tears of bitterness but of gratitude. "You took my star," he whispered, "but you never dimmed my light."

From that day, Oliver made a promise to live differently. He would honor Nelo's memory by continuing the kindness, generosity and loyalty that had defined their friendship. He took care of Nelo's family as his own, ensuring their children never lacked love or guidance. He united both families in celebration every year, keeping the bond alive.

And in quiet moments, he would look up at the night sky and whisper, "Thank you, brother. You lived my destiny well."

In life and in death, Nelo and Oliver remained bound not just by friendship but by fate, sacrifice and an eternal covenant of love.



### Udy Osaro-Edobor

Udy Osaro-Edobor is the Content Creator for SoTv (Supernatural Online TV) Nigeria. She is a movie/ scriptwriter, editor, and proofreader.

She has several stories to her credit which she posts for free on her Ebook called Udy's Chapter. She is currently working on two short movies. Udy is also a wife, mother, and a "serial entrepreneur".

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# COURAGE TO BE DIFFERENT

THE MAKING OF A LEADER WITH INTEGRITY



Olusola Oyewole

Of Professors, Principles, and Principalities-A Review of  
Olusola Oyewole's Courage to be Different

Title: Courage to be Different

Author: Olusola Oyewole

Year of Publication: 2025

Number of Pages: 312

Category: Memoir

# COURAGE TO BE DIFFERENT

TITILADE OYEMADE

The title *Courage to Be Different* speaks for itself. If you have no intention of standing out or challenging the norm, you might as well drop this book and save your time. Professor Olusola Adewole clearly means business, one look at his cover photo and you can tell he's not someone to approach with any form of shady behaviour.

In this review, let's just call him Prof and that's probably what most of his colleagues call him anyway.

At its core, this book unpacks leadership and integrity through a deeply spiritual lens. Prof presents leadership from an angle you may not have encountered before, offering fresh insights that set his ideas apart from the many leadership books out there. Even though it sometimes reads more like a textbook than a memoir. Well, what else would you expect from a professor? It still manages to reveal the man behind the title. By the time you turn the last page, you'll feel as though you know him personally.

The book is both captivating and unsettling. Having endured so much as a child, Prof's story makes you wonder how he managed to rise above it all. His story stands as a powerful testament to resilience and will no doubt inspire anyone navigating difficult times. You can feel his pain, the sting of betrayal from family, and the strength that emerged from those experiences. At moments, the story feels almost unreal, even haunting yet deeply relatable, especially for readers who have faced similar childhood challenges.

One clear takeaway? Avoid polygamy. Just a few pages in and you'll understand why.

Prof has held several leadership positions, so he certainly speaks from experience, after all, you can't give what you don't have. Being the head of a university is no small feat, and if you aspire to become one, this book will either scare you or inspire you. He doesn't hold back; his honesty is refreshing. Some revelations will make you smile, others might shock you.

For those dreaming of leading a university in Nigeria, this is a goldmine. Grab a pen and paper, Prof shares practical tips that can guide and save you from the principalities sometimes known as colleagues. You'll also find creative, workable ideas on how to manage a university effectively without having to reinvent the wheel.

There are moments when Prof takes a well-deserved opportunity to blow his own trumpet and rightly so. Who else but him can proudly speak of his many accomplishments during his years at the helm of a university? If you know him personally or are related to him, you can't help but feel proud of his numerous achievements, both locally and internationally.

Integrity, which is hard to come by these days, shines through every page. Prof's honesty and consistency inspire readers to stay true to themselves. Through his words, he encourages, teaches, and motivates leaving you wishing he were your mentor.

If you were a staff member or student under his leadership, you'll likely recognize some of the stories he shares. Some readers

might nod in agreement; others, perhaps not. But this is his story, told from his perspective as it should be.

At times, you'll find yourself sighing deeply as you read, the kind of sigh that comes from recognizing hard truths or familiar struggles.

The book is eye-opening in many ways. Long before vision boards became trendy, Prof was already practicing the principle. His story brims with lessons, simple yet profound principles for succeeding in life. Despite his many achievements, he humbly attributes every success to his Maker.

If you're in the education field, this book will definitely capture your interest. And if you aspire to grow in academia or leadership, it serves as an invaluable guide.

Even readers who are less spiritually inclined will still connect when Prof discusses mentorship and how having the right mentors shaped his journey and the vital role they play in leadership growth.

For anyone passionate about human capital, leadership development, or institutional renewal, *Courage to Be Different* offers timeless wisdom and practical insight.

Whether you're already in the education sector or aspiring to grow in it, this book is an engaging, insightful, and deeply motivating read, one that reminds us all of the true meaning of courage, conviction, and character.



Titilade Oyemade is a business executive in a leading organisation and holds a degree in Russian Language. She's the convener of the Hangoutwithtee Ladies Event and the publisher of Hangoutwithtee magazine. She spends her weekends attending women conferences, events and book readings. She loves to have fun and to help other women have the same in their lives. Email: titi.oyemade@gmail.com Social: @tipreeofficial

# WEEKENDER

## MOVIE REVIEW

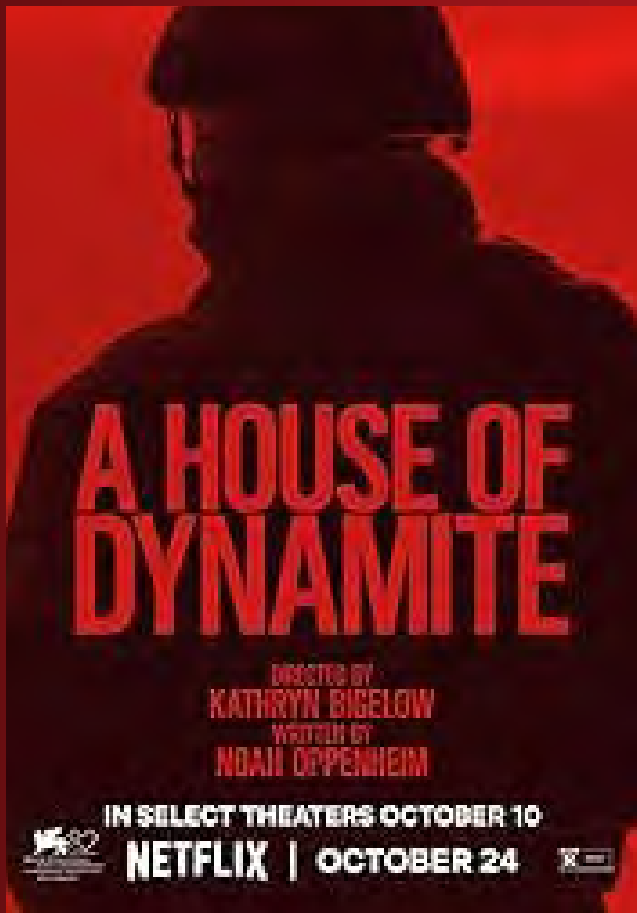
### TRUE SPIRIT (2023)

**P**edro was a young Jessica Watson was a young teenage girl who had a very big dream, bigger than what her parents could imagine. From a very little age, Jessica wanted to be the youngest girl at 16 to sail around the world solo, nonstop, she decided to take a year's gap after she failed her first attempt. She must face her fear, all the obstacles and challenges that will confront her if she must complete the journey this second time. You must watch this life changing, inspirational movie to find out how Jessica prepared for the journey, the challenges she faced along the journey, how the ship almost sank, confirm is she finally got to the end of the journey and if she succeeded in breaking the record. The 109 Adventure, sport movie was directed by Sarah Spillane, they featured actors like Ayla Browne, Teagan Croft, Cliff Curtis, Josh Lawson, Anna Paquin, Bridget Webb, Vivien Turner, Stay Clausen, Freya Callaghan, Chris Hiller and many



## A HOUSE OF DYNAMITE (2025)

Oliver Walker woke up that day like every normal day, she hugged and husband and son and said her usual good bye, not knowing if that it could be the last, she had reminded her hubby to take the son to the hospital since he was down. What started as a usual work shift quickly took a 360-degree twist, on arrival at work captain discovered that a nuclear missile had being released and was set to kill millions of people in Chicago, an emergency meeting was set up and all hands must be on deck to shoot down the missile before it hits Chicago. Although the entire teams have being trained for this, they all panicked because this wasn't a drill but a reality about to unfold, you will need to go check out this heart bumping thriller movie to see how they managed the day. The 115m thriller, drama movie was directed by Kathryn Bigelow, they featured actors like Idris Elba, Rebecca Ferguson, Gabriel Basso, Jason Clarke, Greta Lee, Jared Harris, racy Letts, Anthony Ramos and many more.



## DAD WANTED (2020)

Bianca Daiz was a little child who loved riding her bicycle, but had to do that without her mother's consent. She recently lost her dad and blamed her mom for it, thinking that it was as a result of the argument they had, that killed her dad that night as he rode his bicycle, on the other hand her mom felt that it was the bicycle that killed her husband, both assumed wrongly and lived in enmity in the house for years, until aa stranger came along. To compete in the famous BMX competition for children, Bianca will have to hire a dad to help sign her in before she competes, since her mom would never allow her compete or chase her dreams, you will need to go check out this movie to find out if she was able to compete or not. The 103m family films, Mexican, drama, comedies movies was directed by Javier Collins, they featured actors like Natalia Coronado, Juan Pablo Medina, Silvia Navarro, Roberto Quijano, Vicoria Viera, Aranrtxa Servin, Omar Fierro and man more.



# WEEKEND QUOTES



1

Suffering may come for a very little while but with a promise that you will be restored, made strong, firm and steadfast very soon. Rejoice!  
.....WhispersbyTEN

3

Set things in their order.  
Refuse to walk in frustration and stumble  
.....WhispersbyTEN

2

Decrees are either written or spoken. Ensure you are making decrees that sharpen your life  
.....WhispersbyTEN

4

Why are you crying? Stretch forth; speak forth and move forward. No more tears!  
.....WhispersbyTEN