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**FROM RIDING 'OKADA' TO FLYING PLANES:
The Remarkable Rise of Captain Callistus Ifeanyi**



FASHION

Outfits that graced the Eid al-Fitr celebration



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The 50 Club: Fastest Players to Reach 50 UCL Goals

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A man in a dark blue pilot's uniform, including a cap with a crest and sunglasses, is seated and speaking into a microphone. The background features large, stylized letters in blue and yellow.

FROM RIDING 'OKADA' TO FLYING PLANES: The Remarkable Rise of Captain Callistus Ifeanyi



In an industry often perceived as the exclusive area of the elite, Captain Callistus Ifeanyi—widely known as “Captain Update”—stands as a living testament to the transformative power of grit and grace. His journey from the rugged streets of Nigeria, where he once rode an “Okada” (motorcycle taxi) to fund his university education, to the flight deck of Air Peace, is more than just a personal triumph; it is an inspiration.

In this interview with IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA, after ‘the fireside chat with African aviators’ put together by Embraer, the captain fondly called the ‘Pidgin Pilot’ reveals how a chance encounter with Air Peace Chairman Allen Onyema turned a dream he never dared to have into a soaring reality.

Beyond the glamour at the cockpit, Captain Callistus has carved out a unique “signature” in the Nigerian skies, using the relatable cadence of Pidgin English to soothe the nerves of anxious passengers and humanize the flight experience.

I want you to just talk a little bit about your journey. How did you develop the initial passion of wanting to fly?

Like my story always goes, I have never seen an aircraft before. I have never been to an airport before. This

opportunity called. But when I was growing up, I always had that mindset that if a human being can do it, I can do it.

So when the opportunity called, Allen Onyema, the Air Peace chairman asked me that question, ‘would you like to be a pilot?’ First of all, I was surprised. ‘A pilot?’ I remembered him saying, ‘I’m talking about pilot flying an aeroplane.’ I have never thought of me entering an aircraft before, not to talk of flying one. I just finished school, I was just interested in getting a job. But I told myself that if any human being can do it, then I can do it. That was the answer I gave him. If human beings are doing it, I can do it. That was how it started. I now developed the interest while I was on the journey.

I would like you to share your inspiring story of how you moved from petty trade and even rode ‘okada’ at some point, to now becoming an airline pilot?

I fly for Air Peace Airlines. Becoming a pilot is a very capital-intensive venture, but I was privileged to be among those that were sponsored. I got a sponsorship through our Chairman and CEO, Allen Onyema. So, I give him kudos on that and I appreciate this any day, any time.

My parents were not financially buoyant but made sure I did not give up on my dreams. I didn’t have expensive possessions or enough food while growing up. At some point, I had to save some money to buy my first motor cycle to start Okada riding business. I knew I did not come from a rich family, so I worked hard just to survive. The money I made from Okada riding helped with picket money in school. I also did other small businesses.

During my university days, I was the Student Union Association President for my community. So in the middle of that, I had the opportunity to be at the right place at the right time when I met with Allen Onyema who asked me if I was interested in studying as a pilot. So it was intentional from him and I also positioned myself by being at the right place, at the right time. I had already finished my university. He was the grand patron of the association at the time, in our community. We just went to meet him and in the course of our discussion, he came up with this offer.

That was how it all happened. Because everybody who is a pilot, has this initial drive, because it’s not an easy area, there are a lot of challenges.



Can you talk of the cost of training a pilot in Nigeria and how you managed these costs. Or was your scholarship a full scholarship?

So, I won't really delve more in terms of how I was able to manage the costs, because I was under full scholarship. So, for the younger generations who might want to come into the field, but the costs or the financing is an issue for them, my advice to them always is start small and grow big.

Start from the least cost-effective field in the industry. For instance, cabin crew training cost around N300,000 to N400,000, flight dispatch is around N600,000 to N700,000. So, people can easily come up with these. After you come into the industry, God willing, you can you get a job. Once you get a job, you will have the opportunity of meeting people and talking to them. From there, you could get a scholarship through anybody. It could be an individual, through government, through any government partner or through organisations. But it will be difficult for you when you are not in the industry and you are seeking scholarship from anybody from the scratch. The organisation or individual might think, you could be looking for money for house rent or something else. But when you are already into the system, it's very easy to convince anyone you approach for support because you have already set the ball rolling, it's just to give it a push.

In Air Peace as of today, we have like five or even more of our flight dispatchers that are in flying school and they are sponsoring themselves from the little money they get from the job they are doing and from other little sponsorship that they are getting; N50,000, N100,000, and they keep pushing.

It might take time, but at the end of the day, you will definitely get to your destination.

What prompted you to start using the language that most Nigerians are in tune with 'pidgin English' on board and how receptive are the passengers to this ?

While I was flying as a co-pilot, I always noticed that people are scared of flying. Then, once in a while, I notice that the captains sometimes use English and a touch of Pidgin. After the flight, passengers would be complimenting the pilots.

So once in a while, when I'm flying with those captains, I'll be like, 'would you mind if I brief the passengers in Pidgin and English?' They would say, no problem, go ahead. So I do that and at the end of the flight, we still get the accolades. So when I became a captain, I tried it a few times and I saw that people were liking it. It now went viral. So in fact, currently, any day I try to brief passengers in normal English, as they are disembarking, they will all be frowning. It has now become like my own signature. Pidgin English keeps passengers calm when they are flying, especially for those who are nervous or afraid of flying.



OUTFITS THAT GRACED THE EID AL-FITR CELEBRATION

CHIOMA ONUH



The Eid al-Fitr celebration this year really shows how fashion is evolving.

This year's celebrations showed how deeply fashion is tied to the occasion. In many parts of northern Nigeria, men wore flowing Babban Riga with detailed embroidery and caps that completed the look.

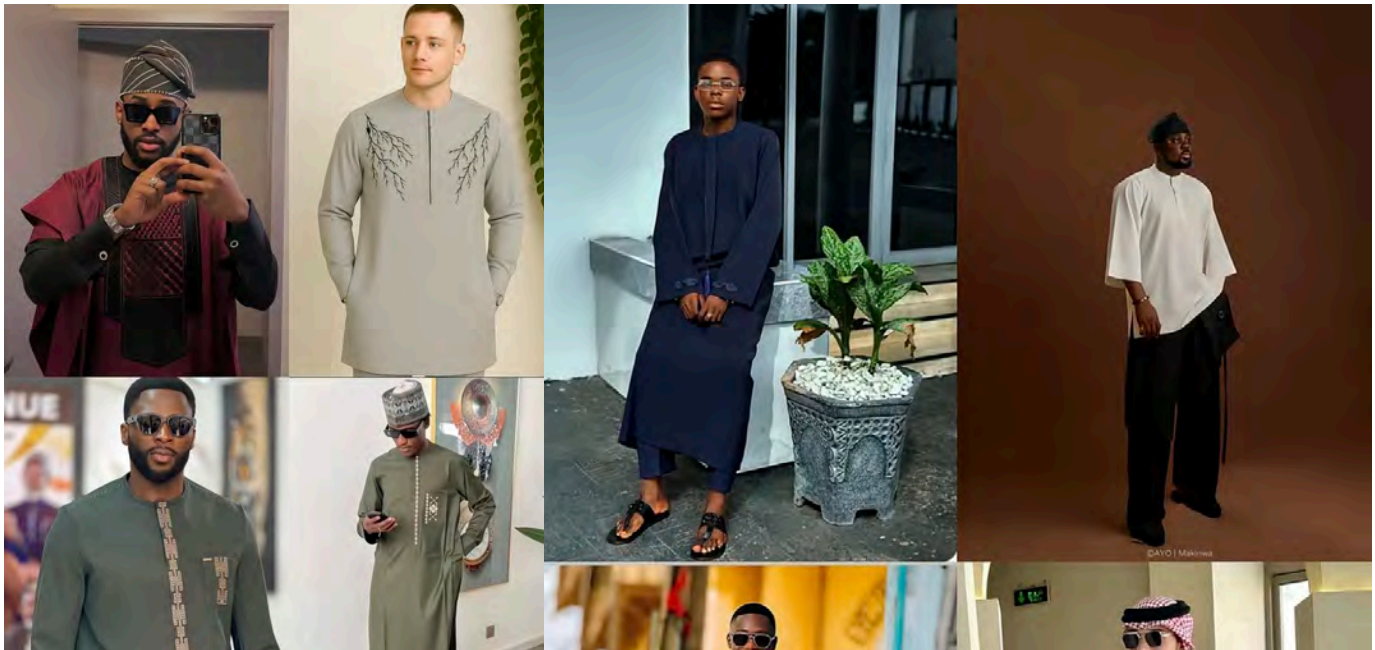
Many women made clothes with lace, ankara, brocade and other fabrics. Many were refined to modern styles.

Family coordination also remained strong, with many households choosing fabrics and colours that allow them to appear unified.

There was also a clear shift in how modest fashion is being expressed. Flowing abayas, kaftans and long dresses dominated, but with more creative touches. Statement sleeves, layered fabrics and bold cuts gave many outfits a fresh feel. Colours moved from the usual whites and neutrals to deep greens, gold, purple and burgundy.

Muslims took to social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok to showcase their outfits. They shared photos and videos of their looks.

For designers and tailors, Eid is one of their busy periods as demand for custom outfits rises sharply in the weeks leading up to the celebration.



Many fashion businesses work under pressure to meet deadlines while maintaining quality. Delivering on time has become just as important as creating beautiful pieces.

Attention to detail was another defining feature of this year's looks. Embroidery, beadwork, sequins and lace were widely used to elevate outfits.



THE 50 CLUB: FASTEST PLAYERS TO REACH 50 UCL GOALS

ANTHONY NLEBEM



A historic night in European football saw two former Premier League icons join the most elite scoring circle in the world. Harry Kane and Mohamed Salah both reached the 50-goal milestone in the Champions League on Wednesday, March 18, 2026.

Kane's brace in Bayern Munich's 4–1 demolition of Atalanta and Salah's clinical strike in Liverpool's aggregate win over Galatasaray have rewritten the history books. Here are the 10 fastest players to reach 50 goals in the competition's history.

1. Erling Haaland – 49 Games

The Norwegian "Cyborg" didn't just break the record; he shattered it. Reaching the milestone in under 50 matches, Haaland averaged a goal every 80.82 minutes, putting him

on a trajectory to eventually challenge Cristiano Ronaldo's all-time scoring crown.

2. Ruud van Nistelrooy – 62 Games

The Dutch master held this record for nearly two decades (2007–2025). Despite his prolific nature for PSV, Manchester United, and Real Madrid, he remains one of the greatest strikers to never lift the actual trophy.

3. Lionel Messi – 66 Games

Messi reached the half-century mark in staggering time during his prime at Barcelona. Before moving to Inter Miami in 2023, he amassed 129 goals, including five different campaigns where he hit double digits.



4. Harry Kane – 66 Games

By reaching the mark last night in his 66th appearance, Kane officially ties Lionel Messi for the third-fastest ever. After starting his European journey with Tottenham, his move to Bayern has accelerated his output, netting 11 goals in just 13 games this season.

5. Robert Lewandowski – 77 Games

The Polish marksman is a model of consistency. Since his debut in 2011, “Lewy” has been a terror for defenders and is one of only three players in history to have surpassed the 100-goal barrier in the competition.

6. Kylian Mbappé – 79 Games

Mbappé became the second-youngest player to reach the 50-goal landmark in 2024. Like Van Nistelrooy, he is one of the few names on this list still hunting for his first Champions League winner’s medal.

7. Karim Benzema – 88 Games

The 2022 Ballon d’Or winner took a little longer to reach 50, often playing a selfless role for Real Madrid. However, his five UCL titles and a legendary 15-goal haul in the 2021–22 season cemented his status as a competition legend.



8. Cristiano Ronaldo – 91 Games


The “King of the Champions League” actually had a “slow” start, taking 91 games to reach 50 goals because he played as a traditional winger early in his career. He eventually finished his European career as the all-time top scorer with 140 goals.

9. Raúl – 97 Games

The original Real Madrid icon, Raúl was the first player to ever reach 50 goals in the Champions League era. A three-time winner, his most famous contribution was scoring in the 2000 final against Valencia.

10. Mohamed Salah – 97 Games

Last night, the “Egyptian King” became the first African player in history to reach 50 Champions League goals. Joining Raúl at the #10 spot, Salah reached the milestone in 97 games, further solidifying his legacy as Liverpool’s greatest modern attacker.

A portrait of Adeola Akinwunmi, a young woman with dark, wavy hair, wearing a white long-sleeved top. She is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a dark, solid color.

MEET ADEOLA AKINWUNMI: A YOUNG FORCE SHAPING NARRATIVES FOR BRANDS IN NIGERIA

CHISOM MICHAEL



In a world where perception is reality, the art of corporate communications and branding has become a crucial differentiator for businesses and organisations.

For nearly two decades, Adeola Akinwunmi, who holds a Master of Science in Corporate Communication from Rome Business School, Italy, has mastered the craft of brand campaigns with the aim of shaping such brands into becoming household names.

She is a senior brand manager, overseeing portfolios across Fast Moving and Consumer Goods (FMCG) healthcare, travel, and technology, and is quietly shaping the narratives of some of Nigeria's most iconic brands.

Akinwunmi, who started her professional journey unconventionally, worked in broadcasting at Crown FM in Ile-Ife while still in her first year at Obafemi Awolowo University, studying English Language. Over the next five years, she developed her skills as a newscaster, presenter, sports host, and newspaper analyst, gaining first-hand experience in storytelling, audience engagement, and the dynamics of live media.

Following her time in broadcasting, she transitioned into content writing at Angeliksa, a luxury home store, before moving into branding and communications within the technology sector. Her subsequent role in PR and communications at an AgriTech

company proved to be a defining moment in her career. While she had always been drawn to communications, her experience at

AgriTech sharpened her focus and deepened her understanding of the strategic role brand messaging plays in shaping perception and driving impact.

Throughout her career journey, Akinwunmi has had the privilege of working across nearly every sector of the economy, ranging from FMCG, healthcare, and travel to fintech and asset management, with each step shaping her perspective on strategy, communications, and brand impact.

She served as Marketing Communications Manager for a leading African travel brand before transitioning into agency life. Across each stage of her journey, Akinwunmi has combined creativity with strategic thinking, driven by a passion for crafting narratives that connect meaningfully with audiences and deliver measurable impact.

Through her engagement in the FMCG sector, Akinwunmi learned firsthand what it takes to lead brand strategy at scale. She managed campaigns that strengthened category leadership, enhanced consumer engagement, and elevated brand visibility on a national level. Many of these initiatives were recognised across the industry for their creativity and effectiveness, reflecting not just marketing execution, but a deep alignment with business objectives and market trends.

To her, the common thread across all sectors has been the need to understand the business, identify strategic opportunities, and craft communications that are both impactful and purpose-driven. This breadth of experience has not only honed her skills as a strategist and storyteller but also given her a unique perspective on how brands can thrive in diverse economic landscapes.

Regarding her career challenges, she insists that transitioning between industries, understanding different audience dynamics, and adapting to highly regulated environments were all moments that tested her adaptability and strategic thinking.

According to her, she overcame these challenges by staying curious, seeking mentorship, and treating each hurdle as an opportunity to learn rather than a setback. Over time, this approach has allowed her to navigate complex business landscapes, lead high-impact campaigns, and continue expanding the influence of strategic communication.

These experiences reinforced a core lesson for her: challenges are opportunities in disguise. Every obstacle sharpened her ability to see the bigger picture, anticipate change, and use communication as a tool to create real impact.

Her vision is to continue to demonstrate the real power of communication by leading strategies and campaigns that not only grow brands but also inspire, educate, and influence people in meaningful ways. She wants to be in a role where she can shape how organisations communicate, create impact across industries, and show that communication isn't just a business tool, it's a force that can change perceptions and drive real-world outcomes.

For Adeola Akinwunmi, the goal isn't just personal success; it's about leaving a legacy of influence, impact, and measurable change through purposeful communication. With a career spanning multiple industries, Akinwunmi has quietly operated behind the scenes. Her intelligence, articulateness, and humility across several campaigns have demonstrated that purpose-driven communication can deliver measurable social impact while reinforcing organisational goals.

9 MOST NOTABLE WATCHES AT THE 2026 OSCARS

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



The 98th Academy Awards, held on 15 March 2026 at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles, saw celebrities arrive wearing watches from across the range of fine watchmaking. Rolex, which has been an official sponsor of the Academy Awards since 2017, again organised the Oscars Greenroom backstage. On the red carpet and on stage, pieces from Rolex, Cartier, Audemars Piguet, Vacheron Constantin, Chopard, Urban Jürgensen and H. Moser and Cie were spotted, spanning current catalogue references, off-catalogue commissions and limited editions.

Below are nine of the most talked-about and distinctive watches of the night.

Conan O'Brien — Rolex Land-Dweller

Conan O'Brien, who hosted the ceremony for the second time, wore a Rolex Land-Dweller during the show. The Land-Dweller is one of Rolex's newest models, introduced in 2025, and it looks noticeably different from the brand's usual designs. It features a more angular case, a bracelet that flows directly into the case without visible lugs, and a dial with a repeating honeycomb pattern. The watch drew attention because it is still a new addition to Rolex's line-up and not yet widely seen in public. Its design signals a shift towards a more modern, integrated style, which is less common for the brand. O'Brien is usually seen wearing his Omega Seamaster No Time To Die at public appearances, so this switch to a Rolex made the choice more noticeable.



Zendaya — Rolex Lady-Datejust 28

Zendaya, who has been a Rolex brand ambassador since October 2025, presented on stage alongside Robert Pattinson wearing the Rolex Lady-Datejust 28 Ref. 279459RBR. The 28mm watch is made from 18ct white gold and features a fully pavé diamond dial, a diamond-set bezel, and a President bracelet also set with diamonds. It runs on an automatic movement and displays time and date. Introduced in 2021, it sits within Rolex's high jewellery category and retails between \$174,000 and \$177,400.



It is the second consecutive awards season in which Jordan has chosen a vintage piece, having worn a vintage Audemars Piguet Bamboo at an earlier event this year. No current retail price applies to the piece; value depends on condition and provenance.



Shaboozey — Chopard L'Heure du Diamant

Shaboozey, who performed the Oscar-nominated song "I Lied to You" from *Sinners*, wore a fully diamond-set Chopard L'Heure du Diamant in 18k white gold on the red carpet, paired with diamond lapel pins and pearl earrings. The L'Heure du Diamant is marketed by Chopard as a women's collection with an estimated value of \$100,000. During his on-stage performance, he changed to an H. Moser and Cie Streamliner Tourbillon Vantablack in red gold.



Kumail Nanjiani — Vacheron Constantin Overseas Tourbillon Skeleton

Nanjiani, attending as a presenter, wore the Vacheron Constantin Overseas Perpetual Calendar Ultra-Thin Skeleton in rose gold. The case measures 41.5mm and the movement is 8.1mm thick. The watch displays the day, date, month and moon phase through an open-worked perpetual calendar movement. At last year's Oscars, Nanjiani wore a white gold version of the Overseas Perpetual Calendar. This wristwatch sells for approximately \$300,000 in boutiques.



Michael B. Jordan — Vintage Piaget Protocole

Jordan, who won Best Actor for his role in *Sinners*, wore a vintage Piaget Protocole from the 1970s. The reference 9297 has a rectangular 18k yellow gold case measuring approximately 23.5 by 29mm, a diamond-paved dial and a black leather strap.

Corey Gamble — Patek Philippe Grandmaster Chime

Gamble wore the Patek Philippe Grandmaster Chime reference 6300/401G-001, an "off-catalogue" piece reserved for the brand's most elite collectors. The watch is in white gold with an ebony black opaline dial on the time side and a second ebony black opaline dial on the calendar side. The total gem-setting comprises 118 baguette-cut sapphires and 291 baguette-cut diamonds across the piece. The case is double-sided and reversible via a patented rotation mechanism, measuring 49.4mm in diameter.

The watch contains 20 complications, including a grande sonnerie, petite sonnerie, minute repeater, alarm and date repeater, as well as a perpetual calendar, making it one of the most complex wristwatches ever produced. The wristwatch has an estimated market value between \$12 million to \$15 million.



Leonardo DiCaprio — Rolex Perpetual 1908

DiCaprio, a Rolex brand ambassador, nominated for Best Actor for his role in One Battle After Another, wore the Rolex 1908 reference 52506 in platinum with an ice-blue guilloché dial and a matte black alligator leather strap with a current market value of \$65,000. The 1908 is Rolex’s dress watch line, relaunched in 2024. The wristwatch is a move away from his usual sports models and he personalized the look with a Boucheron bee brooch pinned to his lapel.



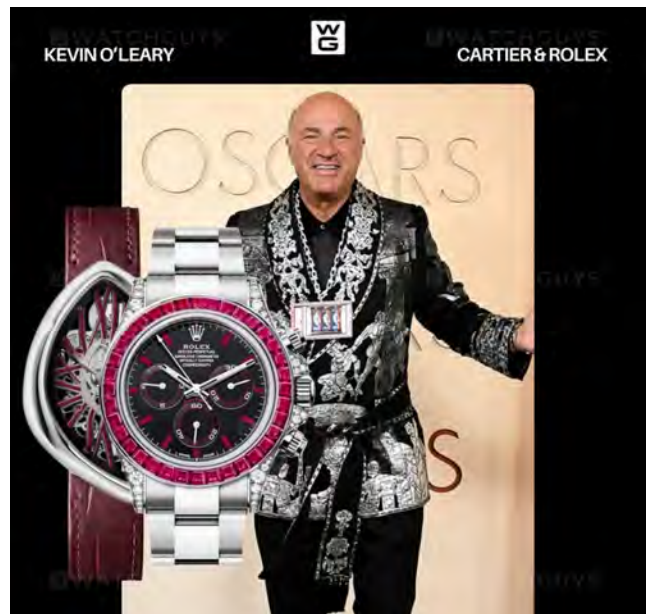
Timothée Chalamet — Urban Jürgensen UJ-2

Chalamet, nominated for Best Actor for his role in Marty Supreme, wore the Urban Jürgensen UJ-2 on a white strap paired with an all-white tuxedo. The UJ-2 features a double-wheel natural escapement, a hand turned guilloché dial and signature flame- blue hands and requires approximately 565 hours of work by a master watchmaker. It retails at approximately \$131,500.



Kevin O’Leary

At the 2026 Academy Awards, Kevin O’Leary made a high-stakes horological statement by “double-wristing” two ultra-exclusive timepieces featuring his signature red accents. On one wrist, he wore a white gold Rolex Daytona “Eye of the Tiger” (Ref. 126599TRU) valued at \$1.5 million, which boasts a bezel set with 36 baguette-cut “pigeon blood” rubies. On the other, he sported a rare platinum Cartier Crash Skeleton worth approximately \$350,000, customized with burgundy red lacquered bridges. He paired these with a custom Tiffany & Co. necklace featuring a one-of-a-kind Jordan-LeBron-Kobe trading card valued at \$30 million, bringing his total accessory value for the night to an estimated \$32 million.



5 PEPPERS THAT SHAPE THE TASTE OF NIGERIAN COOKING

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



Pepper is one of the foundations of Nigerian cooking. Almost every savoury dish relies on it in some form. But not every pepper works the same way. Some deliver heat quickly and disappear. Others bring flavour before the heat arrives. A few add colour more than spice.

Choosing the right pepper can change how a meal tastes. It can deepen a stew, brighten a soup or give grilled food the sharp finish it needs. Understanding which pepper suits which dish is part of what shapes the character of Nigerian food.

Here are some of the peppers most commonly used in Nigerian kitchens and the meals they suit best.

Red bell pepper (Tatashe)

Tatashe is a bell pepper, but not quite the perfectly shaped specimen you see in supermarkets. The Nigerian market variety tends to be longer in length and thinner in width than the typical imported bell pepper, and is spicier with a more teeming flavour. On the Scoville scale, Tatashe scores 0 units which means it brings essentially no heat to a pot. What it brings instead is volume, natural sweetness, and the deep rust-red colour that defines Nigerian stew and jollof rice.

With it, you get body. Blend it in generous quantities with your tomatoes and atarodo, fry it low and slow, and you get that characteristic thick, deep-red stew base. It is important in stew, and ofada sauce, and was historically the only bell pepper variety widely available in Nigerian markets.





Scotch Bonnet / Habanero

Known as Atarodo in Yoruba and Ose Oyinbo in Igbo, the Scotch bonnet is one of the most widely used peppers in Nigerian cooking. It is closely related to the habanero, and the two are often used interchangeably because they share a similar level of heat, typically ranging between 100,000 and 350,000 Scoville heat units. Both peppers are small and brightly coloured, usually appearing in shades of red, yellow, orange, or green. Despite their cheerful appearance, they pack a serious punch. However, beyond the heat, Scotch bonnets are also known for their distinct fruity flavour, which adds depth to many traditional dishes. Because of this combination of heat and subtle sweetness, these peppers play a key role in building the flavour base of many Nigerian soups, stews, and sauces. Whether blended into pepper mixes or added whole during cooking, Scotch bonnet or habanero peppers are commonly used in dishes such as egusi, banga soup, ofe onugbu, and pepper soup, helping to create the bold, layered flavours that define Nigerian cuisine.



Cayenne pepper (Shombo)

Long, slender, and moderately hot, Shombo, also called Bawa or Ata Ijosi in Nigeria, is a staple in many kitchens. With a Scoville heat rating of around 25,000 to 50,000 SHU, it delivers noticeable spice without overwhelming a dish, making it incredibly versatile. Shombo has a smoky, earthy aroma and a straightforward heat that blends beautifully with other ingredients. In Nigerian cooking, it is often combined with tatashe (red bell pepper) and tomatoes to make rich stews, or used to season meats and fish, giving them depth and warmth. Its mild-to-moderate heat allows it to shine as a primary pepper in dishes, offering spice without the intense fruity punch of ata rodo (Scotch bonnet). When dried and ground, shombo becomes a key component of yaji, the spice mix used for suya. Its steady, lingering heat provides the signature warmth and subtle smokiness that makes suya so addictive.



Ose Nsukka

This one deserves more attention than it usually gets outside of Eastern Nigeria. Ose Nsukka is the only yellow pepper in tropical Africa, growing in the Nsukka area of Enugu State. It is aromatic in a way that atarodo simply is not — bright, almost floral, with a heat that is notable but not punishing. Many believe the species can only grow on Nsukka soil, which is why it attracts buyers from across the country and internationally. Its uses are specific and intentional. Ose Nsukka is popularly used in Igbo native soups like ofe oha, ofe onugbu, ofe Owerri, and ofe akwu, as well as in ugba, and achicha. It also excels in okro soup, where its aroma carries through the grated okro base in a way dried pepper cannot replicate. It is a seasonal pepper, commonly found in the rainy season from April through to September, so buy it when you see it. Dried and ground, it becomes what the market sells as Cameroon pepper — smoke and air dried, delivering exceptional heat and a slightly woody, aromatic flavour used in sauces, pepper soup, and for marinating meat.



Uziza (Piper guineense)

Uziza is not a Capsicum pepper at all, but any article about Nigerian pepper that leaves it out is incomplete. West African black pepper, or *Piper guineense*, is used widely in Eastern Nigeria. Its spiciness comes from the alkaloid piperine, not capsaicin, and it has a peppery scent with a woody, clove-like flavour. It adds depth and a specific aromatic bitterness that no other spice replicates. You will find uziza seeds in ofe akwu, pepper soup, and certain varieties of ofe onugbu. The leaves are used separately as a vegetable. Both are available dried in most markets, often sold alongside ehuru and ogiri as part of the native soup spice bundle. A little goes a long way, it is a supporting actor, not a lead, but its absence in the right dish is immediately felt.

4 PLACES TO GET THE BEST SUYA IN LAGOS

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



Suya is one of Nigeria's most popular street foods, made by seasoning thin slices of meat with a spiced mix called *yaji* and grilling it over an open flame. It is commonly served with sides like onions, tomatoes, and cabbage, and is available in different varieties including beef, chicken, ram, and offal. In Lagos, suya is sold across the city, from quiet residential streets to busy commercial areas, with each location offering its own style and flavour profile

If you are planning to enjoy suya this weekend, here are four spots well known for the quality of their meat, seasoning, and preparation, offering reliable options for both first-time visitors and regular customers.

Glover Court Suya- Ikoyi

Glover Court Suya has been operating on Glover Road, Ikoyi for over two decades and is widely considered one of the best suya spots on the Island. They serve beef, ram, chicken, gizzard, and liver, alongside northern Nigerian sides such as *masa* and *kilishi*. The spot tends to get busy on weekends and evening hours, so expect a queue. Online ordering is available through their website, which is a useful option if you would rather not wait.

Zanzan Suya - Ikoyi

Zanzan Suya is located within the Lagos Polo Club grounds in Ikoyi. You do not need to be a club member to access

it, you can let the gate know you are there for suya. The spot is known for its chicken and gizzard suya in particular, and the setting is calmer and more open than a typical roadside stall. There is also a small shop nearby where you can pick up drinks. It operates Monday to Sunday from 3pm to midnight.

Akerele Suya- Surulere

Akerele Suya is one of the most well-known suya spots on the mainland. It is a grab-and-go setup — there are no seats — but the operation is organised. Multiple people typically work the station at the same time, and the grilling is done fresh per order in view of customers. They serve beef, liver, kidney, and gizzard, and the accompaniments include the usual onions and tomatoes as well as cabbage.

Belton Suya- Gbagada

Belton Suya operates in Gbagada and draws customers from the surrounding areas of Somolu and Bariga as well. One notable difference from most suya spots is the opening time — they start from 10am, well before the typical evening hours most spots operate. The menu covers chicken, beef, gizzard, kidney, and tripe, and the chicken suya is particularly recommended by regulars. They also sell suya spice for customers who want to cook at home. There is a small bar attached to the spot.

BEYOND BORDERS: FRANCOPHONIE DAY 2026 HIGHLIGHTS FRENCH AS A GATEWAY FOR NIGERIAN CAREERS



Returning for the third year in a row, this year's highly anticipated International Day of Francophonie in Lagos, drew hundreds of guests and visitors to Alliance Francaise in Ikoyi, Lagos, the venue of the annual celebrations to mark the global day.

Organised by the Consulate General of France in partnership with Alliance Francaise, the Consulate General of Switzerland and the Embassy of Canada in Nigeria, the celebration was marked with three film screenings, culinary experiences, musical performances, poetry renditions, networking and a competition.

The selected films screened were, *Un monde merveilleux* (A Wonderful World) by Giulio Callegari (French); *Une Colonie* (A Colony) by Genevieve Dulude-De Celles (Canada) and *Tambour battant* by Francois-Christophe Marzal (Switzerland).

Speaking, the Consul General of France in Lagos, Laurent Favier, reiterated that the day and language as a whole, is

celebrated yearly on March 20 and holds a special place in history. He said the three movies earmarked to commemorate the day was a celebration of the French language and culture through film and the media.

Adding that there are about 400 million speakers of the language around the world, he revealed that about 65 per cent of its speakers live in Africa and reiterated the need for Nigeria to embrace the language more.

Touching on the theme for this year, 'Un Monde a Venir' (imagine the world of tomorrow), he said the aim is "to create today, the future we wish to see tomorrow. Our target is students who are the future of tomorrow and we are focused on five states for now, Enugu, Abuja, Lagos, Plateau and Oyo."

The Francophonie he said, has four missions- promote French as a language; foster peace, democracy and human rights; support higher education and research; as well as develop a sustainable cooperation for future generations.



Adding that it is an important language spoken at international organisations, he pointed out that it can assist Nigerian speakers that intend to pursue an international career.

Revealing some of their activities over the last three years, he noted that they have equipped schools and trained hundreds of teachers to make them more proficient.

He further revealed that they recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the University of Caen located in the Northwest of France and the French village in Badagry, to award master degrees from that university locally.

“We now have 22 Nigerian universities who are a part of our French Research Centre and the goal is to add more. Besides getting people to enjoy French books and films, we want to equip people with the language because I believe it can shape not just careers but every aspect of life.”

Adding that Nigeria is already surrounded by French-speaking countries, he said mastery of the language would afford even more opportunities for business expansion, grow the film, music and media industry as well as foster stronger relationship regionally and internationally.

Carlos Rojas-Arbulu, Deputy high commissioner of Canada in Nigeria, noted that the Francophonie day unites 90 states

and governments and is central to their national identity. “Our participation aims to promote diversity, sharing of culture and so many other values that fosters a sustainable future and makes the Francophonie as rich as it is.”

Highlighting the importance of the day to Nigeria, he said interest in the French language and culture is real and vibrant, especially among young people, in academic circles and among business people who wish to expand to the Francophonie market in West Africa and beyond.

On her part, the Consul General of Switzerland in Lagos, Conny Camenzind, expressed excitement as the interest and passion the language was generating, especially among young Nigerians and conveyed hope that it expands and becomes more mainstream.

The evening climaxed with the presentation of gifts to the schools that participated in the ‘La Compete’, an inter-school competition showcasing student’s talents in French poetry, music and debate. Greensprings Secondary School Lekki came third place while Riverbank Secondary School came second position with the top spot going to Wellspring College to the delight of all present.

FASHION'S NEW POWER DUO: MISKAY DEBUTS 15-LOOK SIGNATURE COLLECTION WITH HILDA BACI





The intersection of culinary influence and high-street retail reached a new peak on Saturday, March 14, 2026, as Nigerian fashion powerhouse MISKAY unveiled its highly anticipated collaboration with cultural tastemaker Hilda Baci.

Hosted at the brand's flagship store in Lekki Phase I, the launch of "The Signature Collection" drew an elite crowd of fashion insiders, creators, and media personalities, all eager to witness a partnership that redefines how celebrity influence can be woven into the fabric of domestic retail.

Music, food and conversation set the tone for the afternoon as the store buzzed with activity. Guests moved through the space exploring the displays, trying on pieces from the collection and purchasing their favourites while enjoying the celebratory atmosphere alongside Hilda Baci.

The Signature Collection reflects Hilda's personal approach to dressing: effortless, confident and feminine. Developed with the MISKAY design team, the collection features 15 looks created to transition easily between day and evening while balancing elegance with comfort.

Co-founded in 2012 by Oluwaseun Akerele (Sean Ashley), CEO, and Kofoworola Ahmed, COO and Creative Director, MISKAY has grown into one of Nigeria's most recognisable high street fashion retailers.

The brand now operates stores across several Nigerian cities including Lagos, Abuja, Ibadan, Port Harcourt and Benin City.

Following the successful launch event, shoppers can now explore MISKAY x Hilda Baci: The Signature Collection at

the MISKAY flagship store located at 13 Emma Abimbola Cole Street, Fola Osibo Road, Lekki Phase I, Lagos.

The collection is also available online via the MISKAY website and through the MISKAY mobile app, which can be downloaded on both Apple and Android devices.

MISKAY x Hilda Baci: The Signature Collection is now available in all MISKAY stores nationwide from Monday, 16 March 2026.



TOP 5 AFRICAN COUNTRIES WHERE TOURISM DRIVES GROWTH

CHISOM MICHAEL



Tourism continues to play a pivotal role in shaping African economies, driving employment, income, and foreign exchange earnings across the continent.

Globally, the sector is projected to contribute \$11.7 trillion to GDP in 2025, representing about a tenth of total economic output, based on data from the International Monetary Fund and UN Tourism.

In Africa, Seychelles stands out as the most tourism-dependent economy, with the sector accounting for 46.6% of its GDP. This places the island nation 8th globally, underscoring its heavy reliance on international visitors.

Here are five countries where the sector contributes a significant share of national output:

1. Seychelles

Tourism contributes 46.6% of GDP, ranking 8th globally. The country relies on visitor spending to sustain employment and public revenue. With a limited domestic market, the sector remains critical to economic stability.

2. Cabo Verde

Tourism accounts for 23.8% of GDP, placing it 14th globally. The economy depends on international arrivals to support jobs, aviation, and hospitality services.

3. The Gambia

Tourism contributes 19.0% of GDP, ranking 21st worldwide. The sector supports small businesses and provides income across local communities, especially during peak travel periods.

4. Mauritius

Tourism makes up 15.4% of GDP, placing it 26th globally. The country has diversified its economy, but tourism continues to drive employment and foreign exchange earnings.

5. Morocco

Tourism contributes 8.3% of GDP, ranking 45th globally. The sector supports jobs and regional development, while also strengthening foreign exchange inflows.

FIXING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT: WHY NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES MUST BUILD ENTREPRENEURS, NOT JOB-SEEKERS

CHARLES OGWO



When Blessing Udeh left university, she had a degree and big dreams, but no clear path forward.

Months turned into years of job hunting, until she was convinced by her aunt to try fashion business, a small business idea that grew into a brand with clients across the country.

Her experience raises a critical question: why are not more Nigerian students taught to think business even while on campus?

As Nigeria grapples with rising unemployment and a widening gap between graduates' skills and industry needs, experts emphasise the need for targeted-skills education to equip graduates with practical and in-demand skills that align with the evolving job market.

According to a World Bank report, one of the striking signs of failure of the skills development system in place is reflected in the inability of many educated Nigerians to find productive work, a problem that appears to be worsening.

Sunday Adébisi, director of the Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Centre at the University of Lagos, explained that beyond taking entrepreneurship as a course, there is a great need for specialisation, hence, the establishment of the centre in the institution.

Adebisi emphasised that the centre has created a 'Fireside Chat,' where students will sit at the feet of big chief executive officers to learn the possibility of creating what lasts.

He noted that this is because many of the students at their young age, are innocent, looking for what to do with their time, and do not even know their rights from the left, hence, do not know that failure can be part of business success.

No fewer than 1,000 students of the University of Lagos have benefited from the trainings and financial support by the institution's Entrepreneurship and Skills Development Centre, in efforts to nurture entrepreneurs and encourage job creation among undergraduates.



Experts argue that Nigeria can upskill its workforce through targeted education by focusing on industry-academia partnerships, integrating practical, real-world learning into curricula, leveraging available platforms such as entrepreneurship, and vocational training, among others to foster a culture of business, development and management.

Olajumoke Familoni, a professor of entrepreneurship/president of ICLED Business School, emphasised the need to fix the surging graduate unemployment and employability.

“Nigeria needs a training system that transforms students into confident, skilled professionals who are prepared to compete in today’s global workforce, and/or become job creators, contributing to Nigeria’s economic development,” she said.

Experts believe many youth lack entrepreneurial training and the financial enablement to get their dreams off the ground and to transform their dreams into reality.

Educationists believe that the reality of Nigerian education is that the country boasts of a vibrant youth population, with over 60 percent of its people under the age of 35.

However, the discourse on human capital extends beyond the mere presence of people to encompass their productivity and capacities to generate socioeconomic outputs.

It is sometimes disturbing that Nigerian youth are lacking in entrepreneurial skills, because looking backward to the pre-colonial era and even during the colonial regime,

in every community, before you walk half a kilometer, you will see a market.

In every family either the mother or father, was doing one or two things in terms of enterprise; experts say, that is what really make a community, a country to build sustainable enterprise.

Going back to the basis requires that learning institutions should begin to expose the youngsters to what it takes to run a successful business, backed with academic knowledge.

Developed countries such as the USA, UK, Germany and Canada, commerce has gone beyond the informal level, and has become a way of life, people can use to build the society

These countries leveraged SMEs to develop their economies, and not the Rockefellers. About 80 percent of businesses in these advanced countries that are creating wealth and making people to pay taxes and get jobs are the small businesses, such as the coffee shops.

Reimagining Nigerian universities as hubs of innovation will require investment, curriculum reform, and strong partnerships with the private sector.

However, the payoff is clear: a generation equipped not just with degrees, but with the mindset and tools to build sustainable ventures.

In a country where jobs are scarce, the ability to create them may be the most valuable skill of all.

FROM MICRO TO MAINSTREAM: HOW THE MTN, BOI N1BN FUND IS SET TO TRANSFORM FEMALE MSMES



Recent insights highlight a strong entrepreneurial drive among Nigerian women, with 85 percent identifying as entrepreneurs and 90 percent expressing intent to start their own businesses.

This growing ambition underscores the need for targeted financing and structured support systems to enable scale and strengthen women-led enterprises across multiple sectors.

In a bid to achieve this, the MTN Foundation, in partnership with the Bank of Industry (BOI), has launched applications for the Y'ellopreneur 3.0 programme, a N1 billion matching-fund initiative implemented through the Enterprise Development Centre (EDC) of the Pan-Atlantic University.

This third edition focuses on enabling women-led micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) across Nigeria to scale through structured access to financing, capacity development, mentorship, and business advisory support.

Speaking at a media parley hosted at MTN Headquarters in Lagos, Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu, the First Lady of Lagos State, represented by Oyinlola Agoro, wife of the Lagos State Head of Service, highlighted the importance of initiatives like the MTN Y'ellopreneur which provides women with access to the skills, financing, and networks necessary to grow sustainable businesses.

She said "The Lagos state administration remains deeply committed to initiatives that transition our women from the margins of the economy to the mainstream of industrial growth. I am immensely proud of the past Y'ellopreneurs who have stepped up to transform their skills into scalable enterprises. This partnership with MTN and the BOI is a testament to what we can achieve when the public and private sectors align to champion the African woman."

Also speaking was Mosun Olusoga, Chairman, MTN Foundation, who underscored the importance of collaboration in supporting women entrepreneurs and highlighted the significance of the Foundation's partnership with the Bank of Industry.

She stated: "At the MTN Foundation, we have moved far beyond the era of viewing women's empowerment as 'social good' or a checkbox in a CSR report. We see it as a cornerstone for nation-building. Because when a woman thrives, the circular economy is no longer a theoretical concept. It becomes a reality that feeds families, educates children, and stabilises communities."

She continued: "It is with my distinct honour to announce our partnership with the Bank of Industry as we launch the MTN x BOI Y'ellopreneur 3.0 Matching Fund, a N1 billion intervention.



This fund is specifically designed to provide equipment financing for 200 deserving women, enabling them to transition from small-scale operations to industrial-strength businesses. We are looking for innovators, disruptors, and builders- women who are ready to take their seat at the table of the digital economy.”

Representing Olasupo Olusi, Managing Director and CEO of the Bank of Industry, Oluwatoyin Ahmed Edu, Executive Director, MSME, emphasised BOI’s commitment to gender-focused financing and entrepreneurship development.

He noted: “This initiative aligns strongly with BOI’s strategic priority areas: gender balance, MSME growth, financial inclusion, and entrepreneurship development. Today represents more than a financial partnership; it symbolizes our collective belief in the power of women to drive inclusive and sustainable economic progress.”

During her presentation, Odunayo Sanya, Executive Director, MTN Foundation, also highlighted the programme’s impact and encouraged broader industry participation to accelerate support for women-led businesses.

She remarked: “Y’ellopreneur 3.0 is designed to deliver measurable impact by equipping women with the skills, networks, and financial support required to grow resilient businesses that contribute meaningfully to Nigeria’s economy.”

The launch event featured a market activation at the MTN Nigeria Rooftop Event Centre for past Y’ellopreneurs and a panel session with Oreoluwa Finnih-Awokoya, Special Adviser to the Lagos State Governor on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Princess Adesola Ogunleye, National President, Country Women Association of Nigeria (COWAN) and Hansatu Adegbite, National Consultant, Private Sector Partnerships, UN Women.

Speaking on the theme “Beyond Empowerment: Building Resilient Women-Led Businesses in Nigeria’s Emerging Economy,” the panel highlighted the need for strengthened support systems, improved access to financing, and enabling policies that empower women entrepreneurs to scale sustainably.

Applications are now open to women entrepreneurs across sectors including agriculture, energy, trading, fashion, ICT and digital services, waste management, recycling, food processing and manufacturing in Nigeria.

10 HIGH-PAYING CAREERS WHERE WOMEN LEAD THE WORKFORCE

CHISOM MICHAEL



Women are increasingly taking the lead in several high-paying careers, particularly across finance, healthcare, and corporate management, even as broader progress toward gender parity remains gradual.

A recent report by Resume Genius, published Mar. 3, highlights 10 professions where women make up at least half of the workforce while also offering strong growth prospects. The findings, based on data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, point to a steady shift driven by improved access to education and greater participation of women in specialised roles.

“All of these roles are very high-paying, and require specialized knowledge and skills,” says Resume Genius career expert Eva Chan. “For

women who are very ambitious [and] want to go up the career ladder, those are very good roles to aspire to.”

Many of the roles identified are concentrated in the healthcare sector, including positions such as physician assistants and nurse practitioners. According to career coach Colleen Paulson, these professions have historically attracted women because they can be “a little bit more flexible” with scheduling, which “helps to keep women in the workforce through life changes like having kids.”

Beyond flexibility, healthcare careers also offer structured advancement paths, competitive benefits, and long-term stability due to growing demand.

Chan notes that these factors make it easier for women to plan and sustain long-term careers.

Despite these gains, challenges remain in other high-paying fields where women are still underrepresented, such as engineering and surgery. While participation is gradually increasing, workplace culture and inclusion continue to play a significant role in attracting and retaining female talent.

“It starts with welcoming younger women in a real way and making it so that they want to stay in the field,” Paulson says.

Overall, the trend signals growing “leadership, influence and progress” for women, though experts agree that “there is always going to be more work to be done.”

Here are 10 high-paying careers where women lead the workforce

1. Financial manager

Women make up 53% of financial managers. The role involves overseeing budgets, investments, and financial planning. Job growth is projected at 15%, with entry typically requiring a bachelor’s degree.

2. Human resources manager

Women account for 76% of this workforce. The role focuses on recruitment, employee relations, and workplace policies. It requires a bachelor’s degree, with 5% projected growth.

3. Pharmacist

Women represent 60% of pharmacists. They are responsible for dispensing medication and advising patients. The role requires a Doctor of Pharmacy degree and has a projected growth rate of 5%.

4. Physician assistant

Women hold 73% of these positions. Physician assistants support diagnosis and treatment in healthcare settings.

The role requires a master’s degree and is expected to grow by 20%.

5. Public relations and fundraising manager

Women make up 70% of professionals in this field. The role involves managing communication strategies and fundraising efforts. It requires a bachelor’s degree, with projected growth of 5%.

6. Nurse practitioner

Women account for 88% of nurse practitioners. They provide advanced patient care and clinical services. The role requires a master’s degree and is projected to grow by 35%.

7. Veterinarian

Women represent 69% of veterinarians. They provide medical care for animals in clinical and field settings. The role requires a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree, with 10% projected growth.

8. Medical and health services manager

Women make up 74% of this workforce. They oversee the delivery and coordination of healthcare services. The role requires a bachelor’s degree and is projected to grow by 23%.

9. Occupational therapist

Women account for 88% of occupational therapists. They help patients regain daily living skills after illness or injury. The role requires a master’s degree, with projected growth of 14%.

10. Speech-language pathologist

Women represent 95% of professionals in this field. They assess and treat speech and communication challenges. The role requires a master’s degree and is expected to grow by 15%.

WHEN BEAUTY BECOMES CURRENCY: RETHINKING HOW WE VALUE WOMEN

EKEMINI AKPAKPAN

Recently, a friend and I found ourselves in an unexpected debate about identity and appearance. The discussion left me reflecting on a deeper question that often goes largely unexamined: why has appearance become such a powerful currency of value for women in the first place?

For many girls, this negotiation begins early. I remember my own teenage years vividly. I was what people often call a “late bloomer.” In an environment where certain body types seemed to attract attention and admiration, it was easy to feel that a girl’s value and worth were quietly being measured against superficial standards of beauty. Yet even then, something in me resisted the idea that a woman’s value could be defined primarily by how she looked. I found myself drawn instead to spaces that celebrated intellect, discipline and excellence — environments where intelligence was rewarded, debates sharpened thinking, and hard work and character mattered more than appearance.

Looking back now, I realise that many girls are quietly forming similar perception - internalising the idea that appearance is a currency of worth. So, this conversation is not simply about beauty; it is about value.

When Beauty Becomes a Currency of Worth

Gender norms are the product of socialisation — the gradual process through which societies teach girls and boys what is expected, rewarded and valued. From childhood, girls absorb subtle signals about femininity, attractiveness and desirability. These messages emerge through repetition: what receives attention, what attracts admiration, and what society chooses to celebrate.

Over time, appearance can quietly become a form of social currency. When certain looks consistently attract praise, visibility and validation, it is only natural that young girls begin to associate beauty with worth. Media, entertainment and advertising play a powerful role in reinforcing these signals, often presenting a remarkably narrow aesthetic template — particular body shapes, specific facial features and limited standards of attractiveness.

Norms themselves are not inherently harmful. The tension arises when those norms begin to reduce human value to a single dimension.

When appearance becomes the primary lens through which women are assessed, worth becomes tied to something inherently fragile.

Physical appearance can change for many reasons — age, illness, injury, disability or simply the natural course of life. The psychological consequences are often subtle but profound. Many girls grow up with an internal scorecard, quietly measuring themselves against an ideal they did not create. Am I attractive enough? Do I look like the girls who receive admiration? These comparisons can shape confidence and identity long before adulthood begins. In the song *Pretty Hurts*, Beyoncé’s lyrics reflect the quiet pressure many girls experience to prioritise appearance over what lies “in your head.” It is a cultural reminder that the pursuit of beauty, when elevated above all else, can carry hidden emotional costs.

This is why conversations about beauty are rarely just about aesthetics. They are about value systems — about the signals societies send regarding what matters most. The challenge arises when beauty becomes the dominant measure of a woman’s value.

The Hidden Costs of Reducing Women’s Value to Appearance

A Narrow Pipeline of Possibilities

One of the most immediate consequences is the narrowing of how opportunities are structured and perceived. When physical appearance is repeatedly rewarded, certain professions can begin to appear more accessible or desirable — not because of the work itself, but because of how they are socially framed.

There is nothing inherently wrong with industries such as entertainment, hospitality, marketing or other customer-facing roles. The challenge arises when physical appearance becomes an unspoken currency within them, subtly reinforcing the idea that a woman’s professional value is linked to how she looks. In such environments, competence and expertise can risk being overshadowed by aesthetic expectations.

This is not a reflection of the professions, but of the norms surrounding them. Over time, these signals can influence who is encouraged, selected or visible within certain roles, shaping the distribution of women across industries.

When Potential Becomes Narrowly Defined

Beyond shaping opportunities, these signals also shape perception. When society consistently elevates appearance as a pathway to admiration, many girls begin to internalise the idea that beauty is one of the most reliable routes to recognition.

This does not eliminate other aspirations, but it can quietly compete with them. Intellectual curiosity, leadership potential, creativity and technical ability may receive less cultural reinforcement compared to physical attractiveness.

Over time, this imbalance does not just influence where women end up — it influences how they see themselves. The range of what feels possible, desirable or worth pursuing becomes narrower, not by ability, but by what has been consistently valued.

The Psychological Cost to Identity

There is also a deeply personal cost. When appearance becomes central to a woman's sense of worth, identity can become fragile. Physical beauty is not a permanent asset.

When self-worth is anchored too heavily to appearance, even normal changes can trigger feelings of inadequacy or loss of confidence. Many women carry a quiet internal pressure to maintain an ideal that may never have been realistic in the first place. The result can be persistent self-comparison, anxiety about appearance, and a diminished sense of intrinsic worth.

A System That Profits From Insecurity

Perhaps the most troubling aspect is that entire industries profit from maintaining narrow beauty ideals. From advertising and entertainment to cosmetic products and digital filters, enormous economic systems are built around reinforcing the message that women must continuously improve their appearance in order to remain valuable.

This creates a cycle in which insecurity is not merely a by-product but a driver of consumption.

The cost of such a system is not borne by individuals alone. It is borne by society as a whole. When half the population is subtly encouraged to invest disproportionate energy into meeting aesthetic standards, the collective potential of that society is quietly diminished.

Redefining Value in a System That Rewards Appearance

Redefine What Society Celebrates

Every society signals its priorities through what it chooses to celebrate. The goal is not to diminish beauty, but to correct an imbalance where it has been allowed to overshadow more substantive forms of value. A meaningful shift requires a more deliberate celebration of substance. When appearance is repeatedly elevated above it quietly directs attention and aspiration toward investing in aesthetics. When intellect, discipline, creativity, leadership and impact are made more visible and more desirable, the definition of success expands.

Expand Representation

Representation plays a powerful role in shaping perception. When representation is narrow, aspiration becomes narrow. A limited portrayal of beauty reinforces the idea that only certain forms of appearance are worthy of visibility and admiration.

Expanding representation is not about eliminating beauty standards, but about pluralising them. It is about making room for variation — in appearance, in identity, and in the ways women are seen and valued. More importantly, it is about expanding representation beyond appearance altogether, so that women are equally visible as thinkers, builders, leaders and creators.

Re-anchor Value in Substance

At its core, this conversation is about a more sustainable foundation which lies in re-anchoring value in substance — in character, competence and contribution. This shift must be reinforced in families, schools, workplaces and communities. Young girls must consistently encounter spaces where they are recognised not just for how they look, but for how they think, what they build, and how they show up in the world. Identity is shaped by repetition.

Final Thoughts

The opportunity before us is not to reject beauty, but to reposition it as one expression of identity, not the foundation of it. Because when value is anchored in something deeper than appearance, we do more than expand opportunity for women. We redefine what society chooses to recognise, reward and respect.

SHOWING WITHOUT WALLS: THE RISE OF POP-UP EXHIBITIONS IN AFRICA

There is a quiet shift happening across the continent, one that doesn't announce itself with grand openings or institutional backing but with borrowed keys, short leases, and word-of-mouth invitations.

Pop-up exhibitions in Africa are not just filling gaps; they're actively redrawing the map of where and how art can exist. They move quickly, appear unexpectedly, and often disappear before they can be fully documented, leaving behind a sense that something vital just passed through. In this digest, we look closely at how these exhibitions are reshaping contemporary African art exhibitions from the ground up.

TOP PICKS FROM OUR COLLECTION



Title: Like a seed • Artist: Abrifor Silas
 • Medium: Mixed media on canvas •
 Dimensions: 40 x 40 in | 102 x 102 cm •
 Available on Request



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Title: Like a seed • Artist: Abrifor Silas
 • Medium: Mixed media on canvas •
 Dimensions: 40 x 40 in | 102 x 102 cm •
 Available on Request



Title: The spotlight • Artist: Emmanuel Dudu • Medium: Oil on canvas • Dimensions: 12 x 16 in | 30.5 x 40.6 cm • Available on Request

Breaking Away from the White Cube

Across cities like Lagos, Nairobi, and Johannesburg, artists and African curators are stepping outside the white cube, not as a rejection alone, but as a recalibration. Traditional galleries and museums remain important, but they can be limited: geographically concentrated, financially exclusive, or structurally slow to respond to new ideas. For many, access isn't just about entry; it is about participation.

Spaces like 16/16 in Lagos or The Nest Collective's interventions in Nairobi show how independent art spaces in Africa are evolving beyond fixed addresses. Pop-ups offer elasticity. A rooftop becomes a screening room; a living room becomes a salon; a disused storefront transforms into a site of dialogue. These choices aren't just logistical; they shape how the work is read. Without the neutrality of white walls, context seeps in, and meaning shifts.

Curators Without Permission

There's a distinct energy when exhibitions are organised without institutional backing. It is not just independence; it is immediacy. A new generation of African curators is working outside formal systems, often self-funded or collaboratively produced, driven by urgency rather than approval cycles. Platforms like 32° East in Kampala or artist-led initiatives like CCA Lagos's satellite projects have long hinted at this model, but today's African art pop-up shows push it further. Curators are experimenting with looser narratives, cross-disciplinary formats, and more intimate scales. The result is often less polished but more alive.

Without the pressure to conform, these exhibitions can take risks politically, aesthetically, and emotionally. Audiences

feel it. You are not just viewing a curated selection; you are entering a conversation mid-sentence.

Temporary Spaces, Lasting Impact

There is a certain urgency to contemporary African art exhibitions that exist briefly. You hear about them through a message, a flyer, or a friend. You show up because if you do not, you might miss it entirely. And often, that is the point.

Pop-ups thrive on proximity. The distance between artist and audience shrinks, sometimes literally. You can ask questions, linger, and return the next day. The informality creates a different kind of attention, one that is harder to replicate in institutional settings.

Many of these exhibitions travel, morph, or disappear altogether, living on through photographs and memory. Yet their impact lingers, shaping networks, sparking collaborations, and redefining what an exhibition can be within the broader ecology of independent art spaces in Africa.

What these pop-ups suggest is simple but profound: art doesn't wait for permission. It finds its own architecture, its own audience, its own rhythm. And once you have experienced a show in a place not meant for art, it becomes harder to believe that art belongs anywhere else.

It makes you wonder, what is the most unexpected place you've ever encountered it?



Keturah Ovio

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

HOW BRAND DESIGN SHAPES CONSUMER PERCEPTION

FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA

In today's fast-paced, competitive world, branding isn't just about logos and colours—it's the story, the values, and the experiences that resonate with your audience. Strong branding can make a product or service stand out, create lasting emotional connections, and influence purchasing decisions.

The essence of branding

Branding is much more than a visual identity—it's the perception your audience has of your business. It is the final result of each and every encounter a customer has with your business. From your website design to social media posts and customer service, everything contributes to your brand's image. But perhaps the most vital aspect of branding is the feeling it evokes. It's the emotional connection consumers have when they see your logo, hear your tagline, or interact with your brand story.

At its core, branding is about defining who you are as a company, what you stand for, and how you communicate that message consistently across all channels. A well-crafted brand identity can transform your business from just another name on a shelf into a memorable experience that resonates with your target audience.

How design influences consumer perception
Design is the visual representation of your brand identity, and it plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perception. Everything from your logo to your website design, social media content, and even the typography you choose can influence how customers perceive your brand.

1. Brand identity and first impressions

First impressions are powerful—and they're often made through design. Whether consumers are browsing your website, seeing your ad on social media, or walking by your shopfront, they're forming an opinion about your brand within seconds.

Your brand identity—comprising your logo, colour scheme, fonts, and overall visual style—sets the

tone for how people engage with your business. It's the first step in conveying your brand ethos. A cohesive and well-executed design creates a sense of familiarity, making consumers feel more confident in their decision to engage with your brand.

2. Storytelling through design

Excellent design tells a story in addition to being aesthetically pleasing. Your brand's story is an integral part of your identity, and the design plays a significant role in communicating that narrative. Every colour, image, and layout on your website or social media should serve a purpose in telling the story of your brand. Ultimately, design helps tell your brand's unique story, making it easier for consumers to connect emotionally.

3. User Experience (UX) design: The heart of consumer perception

User experience (UX) design is central to how customers interact with your brand online. A smooth, intuitive UX not only enhances customer satisfaction but also builds brand trust. Think of it this way: if consumers visit your website or mobile app and find it difficult to navigate, they'll likely leave—and fast. A poorly designed website can create frustration, damaging your brand perception before consumers even engage with your content.

On the flip side, an intuitive and responsive website or app can make all the difference in building long-term brand loyalty. Ensuring that your website loads quickly, is easy to navigate, and provides relevant information in a user-friendly way will ensure that consumers have a positive experience, making them more likely to interact with your brand again.

4. Social-media and brand perception

In today's digital age, social media is a key touchpoint where branding and design intersect. Social platforms allow brands to interact directly with consumers, so your social media presence should reflect the same

cohesive design as your website and other marketing materials.

When your social media posts, ads, and updates share the same visual language as your brand's website and logo, it creates a seamless experience for your audience.

5. Transparency and trust

Today's consumers value transparency. How a brand presents itself can either build trust or erode it. A design that communicates transparency and openness can significantly shape consumer perception. For example, a clean, straightforward website design with clear calls to action, transparent pricing, and easy access to information builds trust and credibility.

On the other hand, a cluttered, confusing design that hides important information or makes users work hard to find answers can create doubt in the minds of potential customers. Simplicity and clarity are crucial in demonstrating that you are approachable and have nothing to conceal.

The impact of branding on consumer decisions Design influences more than just aesthetics—it affects purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. Customers are more inclined to interact with, and buy from, your brand when they believe it to be reliable, professional, and consistent with their beliefs. Let's break down how strong branding impacts consumer decision-making:

1. Differentiation in a crowded market

In a competitive market, standing out is key. Great branding design ensures that your business doesn't get lost in the noise. A well-designed brand will differentiate you from your competitors and help customers quickly recognise your brand among many others.

2. Emotional connection and brand loyalty

When design successfully reflects the essence of your brand, it creates an emotional connection with your audience. Consumers are more inclined to develop close relationships with brands that share their values. For example, if your brand aligns with a customer's eco-conscious mindset, your design will communicate those values through visual cues, like green tones, nature-inspired graphics, or sustainable practices. This emotional bond eventually builds loyalty.

3. Consistency across all touchpoints

Building a solid brand perception requires consistency. Whether a customer interacts with your brand via your website, social media, or physical store, they should have a unified experience. Consistent branding across all touchpoints—coupled with high-quality design—reinforces the perception of reliability and professionalism.

Last line

Design is at the heart of every successful brand. A carefully crafted brand identity, informed by compelling storytelling, seamless user experience, and consistent design, shapes how consumers perceive your brand. When done right, branding has the power to differentiate your business, build trust, and foster long-term loyalty.



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 THINGS WE PUT OFF

UDY OSARO-EDOBOR

Akpenvwogene Oghenevwogagan had never been lucky with women.

It wasn't because he lacked value. He was a decent man, well put together, stable and capable of love but somehow, the women he gave his heart to never stayed long enough to understand him.

Take Sandra for instance, she had come into his life with ease and warmth. She enjoyed his presence, his attention and the quiet stability he offered. For a while, it felt real. But over time, her interest shifted. She began to outgrow what she once seemed to value. One day, she left, leaving him behind without any explanation. She just stopped picking his calls. By the time he understood what was happening, she was already gone.

Then there was Amaka. She was different. Or so he thought. Her story was different but the ending was the same. With her, he had been deeply involved, not just emotionally but in her growth. She leaned on him emotionally, financially and mentally. He became her support system. He helped her pay rent. Helped her with business ideas. He encouraged her when she wanted to give up. He had been her steady ground while she figured herself out. But when her business finally picked up, she changed. She said he was "too slow, too ordinary and he was not driven enough." She moved on, leaving him behind with an ache in his heart.

After that, Akpenvwogene became careful with his heart. Then he met Tina.

It happened one Tuesday at the bank, when he went to open a new account. She was the one who attended to him.

"Full name?" she asked.

He hesitated as usual. Then he said it. "Akpenvwogene Oghenevwogagan." She paused. Then she chuckled. Not loudly. Just a small, surprised laugh.

"Wow... that's a mouthful." she said with a smile on her face but he didn't smile. Her smile faded immediately.

"I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to..." she said quickly

"It's fine," he replied. But it wasn't. He was upset.

A week later, he returned to the bank because he needed to fix something with the account. She saw him and stood up. Then she walked over to him.

"I owe you a proper apology," she said. "Not the quick one I gave you the other day."

He said nothing.

"Please let me take you to lunch," she added. He almost said no. But something about her made him pause. Then he nodded.

Lunch was nice. She asked about his name properly this time. She tried to pronounce it. Failed. Tried again. Laughed at herself. This time, he smiled. And from that day, something began.

Tina was intentional. She paid attention to the little things. She called when she said she would. She listened. If he sounded tired, she knew. If he was quiet, she asked why. She was attentive in ways he had never experienced. She didn't use him and she didn't leave either.

Their relationship grew naturally. Two years later, Tina became his wife. She was everything that made his life simple. She was a nurturer in every sense. As a wife, she loved with intention. As a mother, she gave her whole heart. As a person, she carried warmth that filled every space she entered. Their home reflected her orderly and peaceful nature.

She had a way of making things work. Where there were problems, she found solutions. Where there were gaps, she filled them. Where Akpos (as she fondly called him) was slow, she was quick. Where he delayed, she acted. Where he waited, she solved. He believed most things could wait. He moved at his own pace. He was not careless, just unhurried.

It was the only thing Tina struggled with. She believed in handling things immediately but he believed there was always time.

He would nod. He would promise but he would still delay.
This caused small but frequent tension between them.

So they had planned their annual leave together and they made a list... movies, outings, small trips, quiet days at home and some other fun activities.
That morning began like every other day in their home. It was day one of their leave. They had their devotion together. Prayed. Talked. Laughed. Then he sent her back to bed while he took over getting their daughter ready for school.
He did everything. Bathed her. Packed her lunch. Even sent the school bus away.
"I'll drop her myself," he said.

When he returned home, something felt odd. The house was too quiet. He went upstairs.
"Tina?" he called. No answer.

He checked the bedroom. It was empty.
Then he walked into the kitchen. And stopped. She was lying on the floor.
Still.
Lifeless.
The refrigerator stood slightly open.

The realization came slowly, then he remembered. The refrigerator had been faulty for weeks. It gave small electric shocks when touched. It had become a problem in the house, something uncomfortable, something dangerous, but somehow something he postponed.
Tina had wanted it fixed. She had complained many times.

"Akpos, this thing is dangerous. We need to change it. Please don't delay this one."

He had said he would call an electrician.
He had said he would check it.
He had said later but later never came.

By afternoon, the house was full. People everywhere. Voices, prayers, whispers.
Akpos sat in the middle of it all, feeling empty, carrying a weight that no one else could feel or understand.

Then Tina's phone rang. It was a delivery company. Tired of waiting, she had acted. She had made the purchase.

A new refrigerator. A new deep freezer.
She had stopped waiting and fixed the problem.

As Akpos watched the delivery take place, his body could not hold the weight of what was happening. He collapsed. When he came back to himself, the reality was even heavier. Her voice filled his mind. The several warnings. The urgency. The need to act. All the times she had pointed out what needed to be done but he chose to delay.

His grief was not just loss. It was guilt. Deep, unrelenting guilt because this was not something fate had taken. It was something that could have been prevented. He lost the best part of his life because he chose to be careless.

The pain was not just in losing her. It was in understanding how easily it could have been avoided. How something so small, so ordinary, had been allowed to remain unresolved until it became irreversible.

Some tragedies do not come as surprises. They come from the things we ignore. The things we delay. The things we believe can wait just a little longer.

Akpos would never delay again. But the one person who needed that change was no longer there to see it.

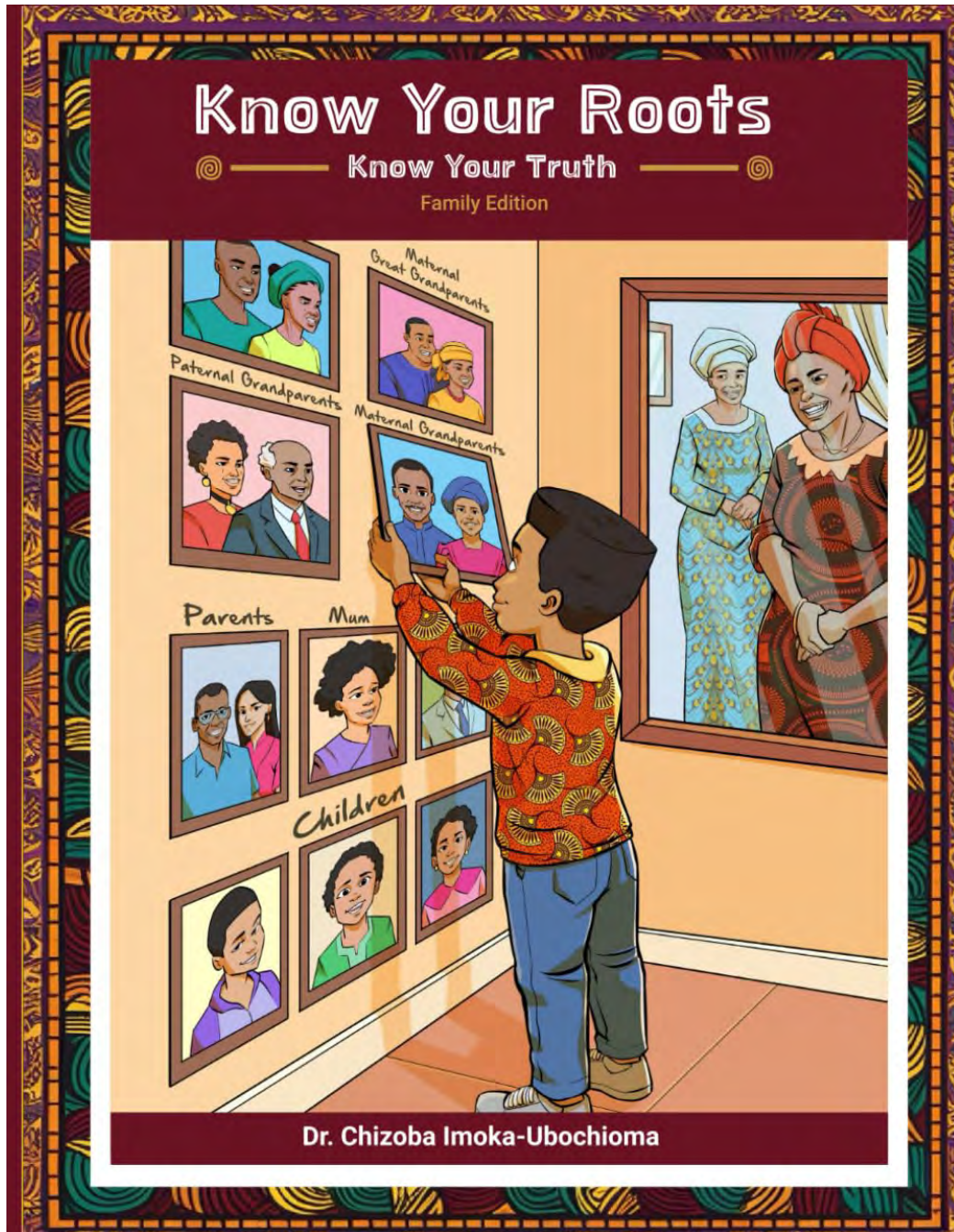


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A Journey into Heritage-A Review of Dr. Chizoba Imoka-Ubochima's Know Your Roots

Title: Know Your Roots, Know Your Truth (Family Edition)
Author: Dr. Chizoba Imoka-Ubochima
Year of Publication: 2025
Number of Pages: 73
Category: Children's Book

KNOW YOUR ROOTS, KNOW YOUR TRUTH (FAMILY EDITION)

TITILADE OYEMADE

In a time when many children are growing up far from their cultural roots, especially as African families are scattered across the world, often not by choice but in search of survival, there is no better moment to introduce them to Dr. Chizoba Imoka-Ubochima's Know Your Roots.

The book's beautiful cover which even inspires ideas for arranging family photographs at home immediately draws you in and signals the start of a meaningful journey. But do not be fooled, this is not a storybook. It is a workbook, thoughtfully designed to guide children and families in discovering, documenting, and celebrating their heritage.

It is clear that the author has poured deep thought and care into every aspect of the book. Readers may naturally wonder what inspired her to create it, and the answer becomes apparent as they continue reading the book.

From the outset, the reader is invited to pick up a pencil or biro. The author immediately puts them to work, creating the feeling that she is sitting right beside them, asking thoughtful and personal questions. This interactive approach ensures that the journey is not only educational but also deeply engaging.

For parents, however, the workbook demands time, patience, and attention. Many questions will require guidance, and the book is not suited for those unable to dedicate themselves to supporting their child. Rooted in history, culture, and purpose, the author notes that the book is intended for people of African and Caribbean heritage.

The process may also be emotionally challenging. Parents who have cut ties with certain family members may find some questions difficult to answer. Yet, committed parents can find ways to seek answers and even reconnect with parts of their family history. This workbook tests not only a child's curiosity but also the patience and knowledge of family members, including their understanding of local languages.

Some activities may uncover uncomfortable truths, prompting reflection and deeper conversations. Parents may even need to call grandparents or other relatives, as many adults may not fully know their own roots. As the book progresses, challenges increase, and children may feel stressed at times, but the sense of accomplishment and insights gained make every effort

worthwhile. The author thoughtfully provides guidance to help manage these challenges, though some spaces for answers may feel limited, just imagine trying to list the names of twenty siblings in one section, as we know how Africans often have large families.

This book does more than educate, it encourages readers to confront their family history. Some discoveries may be unexpected or uncomfortable, and the emotional weight may be significant for children and parents alike, especially for those who have never met a parent or have experienced loss.

Yet, Know Your Roots is designed to be treasured over time, preserved as a meaningful record to share with future generations. At the end of the journey, it has the potential to spark a family revival, reconnecting generations and strengthening bonds through shared stories and reflections.

In short, this workbook is challenging, thoughtful, and deeply rewarding, a must-have for families seeking to preserve their heritage and foster meaningful connections across generations.



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WEEKENDER

MOVIE REVIEW

SAND CASTLE (2017)

I was super excited when I saw this action movie on Netflix, although it was from way back, I really haven't this movie before and I was happy to jump right at it. In this war movie, Henry Cavill "Justice League" and Nicholas Hoult "Mad Max; Fury road" played lead roles in this brilliant drama movie based on true experience an Iraq war veteran. PVT Matt Orce was an inexperienced American private, he tried everything he could avoid going to war, but his wish didn't come true as he still had to join his team in going to war in Iraq, during this mission he found the true cos of war, when his unit is sent on a very dangerous and impossible mission. They were to go to a nearby town and repair a water pumping station in a rural Iraqi village, the biggest issue was that despite the fact that they were on a mission of a good task to help the people, some people didn't like them nor want them around. You will need to go check out this fantastic action movie, to discover how they were able to manage the different scenarios, provide water daily, fix the water station and fight to stay alive, it was a brilliant movie I must say. The 113m war, action, adventure, drama movie was directed by Fernando Coimbra, the featured actors like Nicholas Hoult, Henry Cavill, Logan Marshall-Green, Glen Powell, Gonzalo Menedez, Beau Knapp, Tommy Flanagan, Neil Brown Jr., Navid Negahban, Samm Sheik, Zaid Abaza and many more.



THE SEIGE OF JADOVILLE (2016)

This is my lucky week, when I get to see 2 to 3 action packed movie in a week, I am super happy and excited. So let us dive right into it, in this movie Jamie Dornan and Mark Strong play lead roles in this fantastic action-packed movie. In this movie a group of Irish soldiers were sent to Congo on a peace keeping mission, to ensure that no war breaks out, these men chosen and sent on this mission have never been on a mission, war or battle before in their lives and on arriving on this mission, they were expected to come up with a strategy and know exactly what to do. On arrival they discovered that their camp for resting, was porous, open to attack and wasn't save in any way, little did they know that was actually the least of their problems. You will definitely need to check out this brilliant movie to see how these naïve men, were able to work together, stay together and fight to the very end, check it out to see if they all stayed alive and those who lost their lives, I totally enjoyed this war movie. The 108m Irish, Military films, Drama, Films based on books, based on real life, action movie was directed by Richie Smyth, they featured actors like Jamie Dornan, Guillaume Canet, Emmanuella Seigner, Jason O'Mara, Mikael Persbrand, Mark Strong, Michael McElhatton, Danny Sapani, Sam Keeley, Ronan Raftery and many more.



SKATER GIRL (2021)

This was a very simple Indian movie, I had saved this movie on my list for ages, and yet couldn't make out time to see it, I was glad I finally made out time to see it, having seen it trend for a while some time last year, it was indeed a struggle for me as it took me days finally complete it. In this movie Prena was a teenage girl from a rural area in India. One day a young lady called Jessica visits the village and changes the entire cause of the village. She introduces Prena to Skating and that changes her life for good. Prena believes that one day she could be a champion, go to school and be somebody. Prena had her dreams and her father had his for her and they were absolutely not heading in the same direction. You will need to go check this movie out to find out if her dreams became a reality or that of her father. The 108m family films, kids & family, Indian, social issues, sport, drama movie was directed by Mamjari Makijany, Vinati Makijany, they featured actors like Rachel Saachia Gupta, Amy Maghera, Shafin Patel, Ambrish Saxena, Swati Das, Jonathan Readwin, Ankit Yadav, Anuraag Arora, Vinayak Gupta, Vivek Yadav and many more.



WEEKEND QUOTES



1

Preparation can be improved,
tweaked and polished
.....WhispersbyTEN

2

God will make it happen once
the time is right - that means
when you are prepared
.. Just prepare
.....WhispersbyTEN

3

If you want to know what God
said and how He works, dive
into His word!
.....WhispersbyTEN

4

Move the mind to a new
frequency of optimism and
you will witness the results
.....WhispersbyTEN