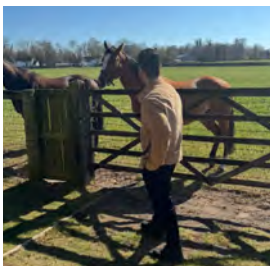


BUSINESS DAY WEEKENDER

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JEUNPELUMI: HOW A NIGERIAN WHO FLED UKRAINE'S WAR BECAME A FOOD CONTENT GIANT



TOURISM

Kings and commerce:
Inside Lagos's high stakes
world of Polo and power



EDUCATION

Screens in classrooms:
Sweden's 21-yr lesson
for Nigeria

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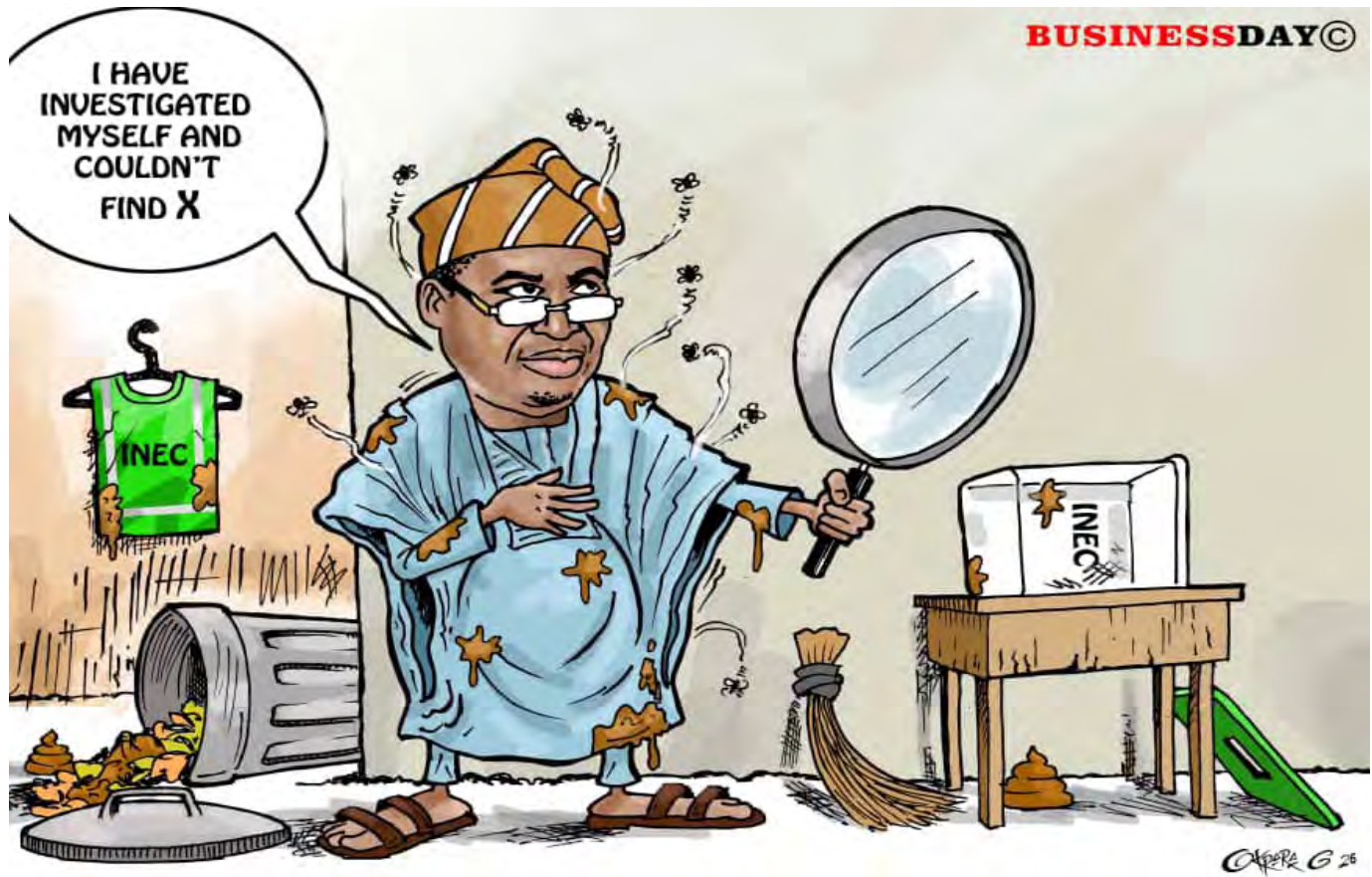
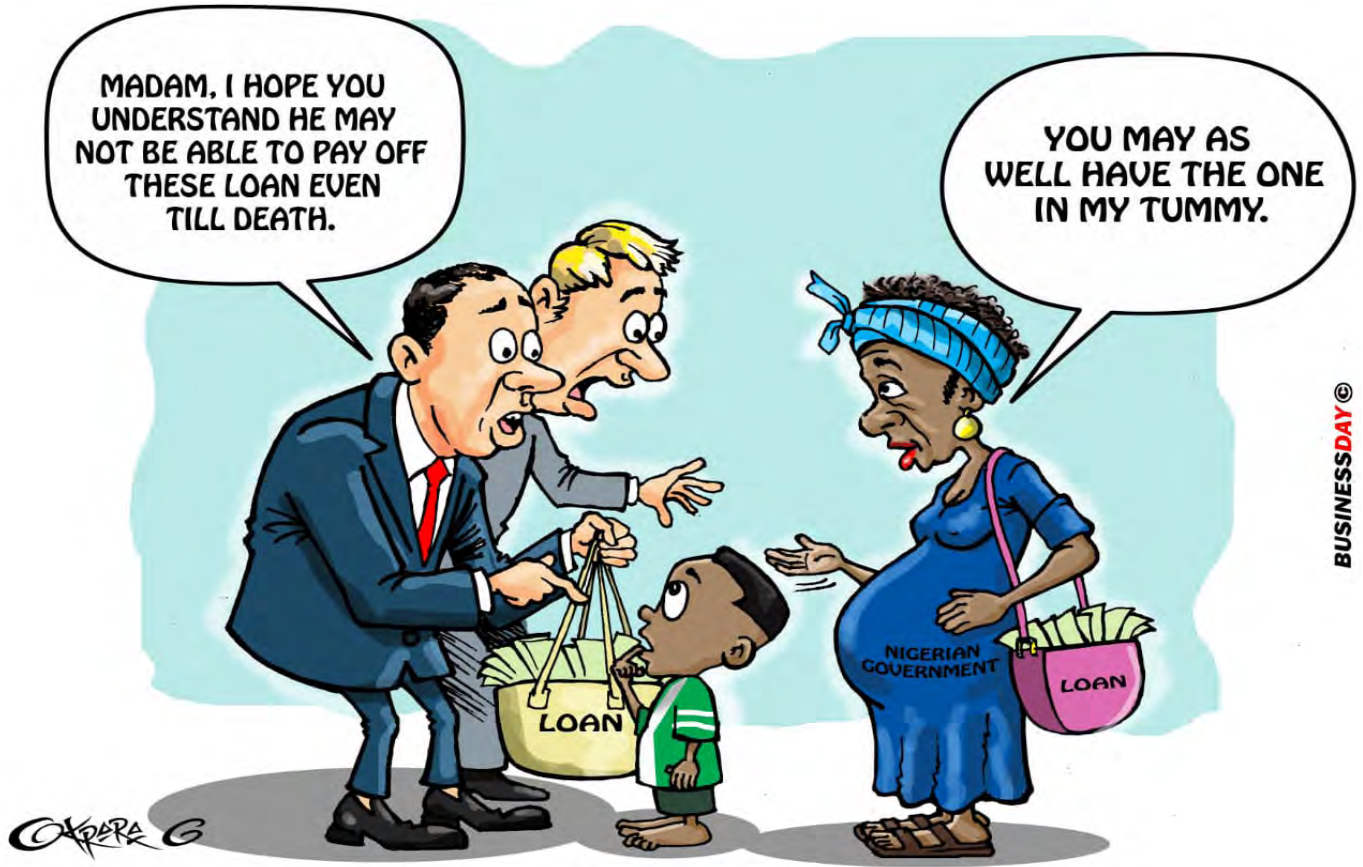
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JEUNPELUMI: HOW A NIGERIAN WHO FLED UKRAINE'S WAR BECAME A FOOD CONTENT GIANT

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



Every food creator has that one recipe that shifts everything. For Tolulope Fadare, it came in early November 2024, when he drove back out into a Warsaw winter to buy the cow liver he had forgotten at the shops, because Nigerian fried rice without liver is not Nigerian fried rice. He made the dish, filmed it, and posted it. That video now has over 40 million views across platforms and more than one million saves, and it belongs to a man who was, not long before, driving for four days to flee a war just to stay alive.

Tolulope Fadare, who creates under the name Jeunpelumi, is from Ifaki-Ekiti and studied Philosophy at Adekunle Ajasin University in Akungba-Akoko. He was living in Ukraine when Russia invaded in 2022. After crossing the border, he was denied a Canadian visa twice, treated poorly in Switzerland because of his nationality, and spent years moving between countries before settling in Warsaw two years ago. He describes the decision to stay as a deliberate one, a choice to build something purposeful from where he was rather than wait for conditions that might never come.



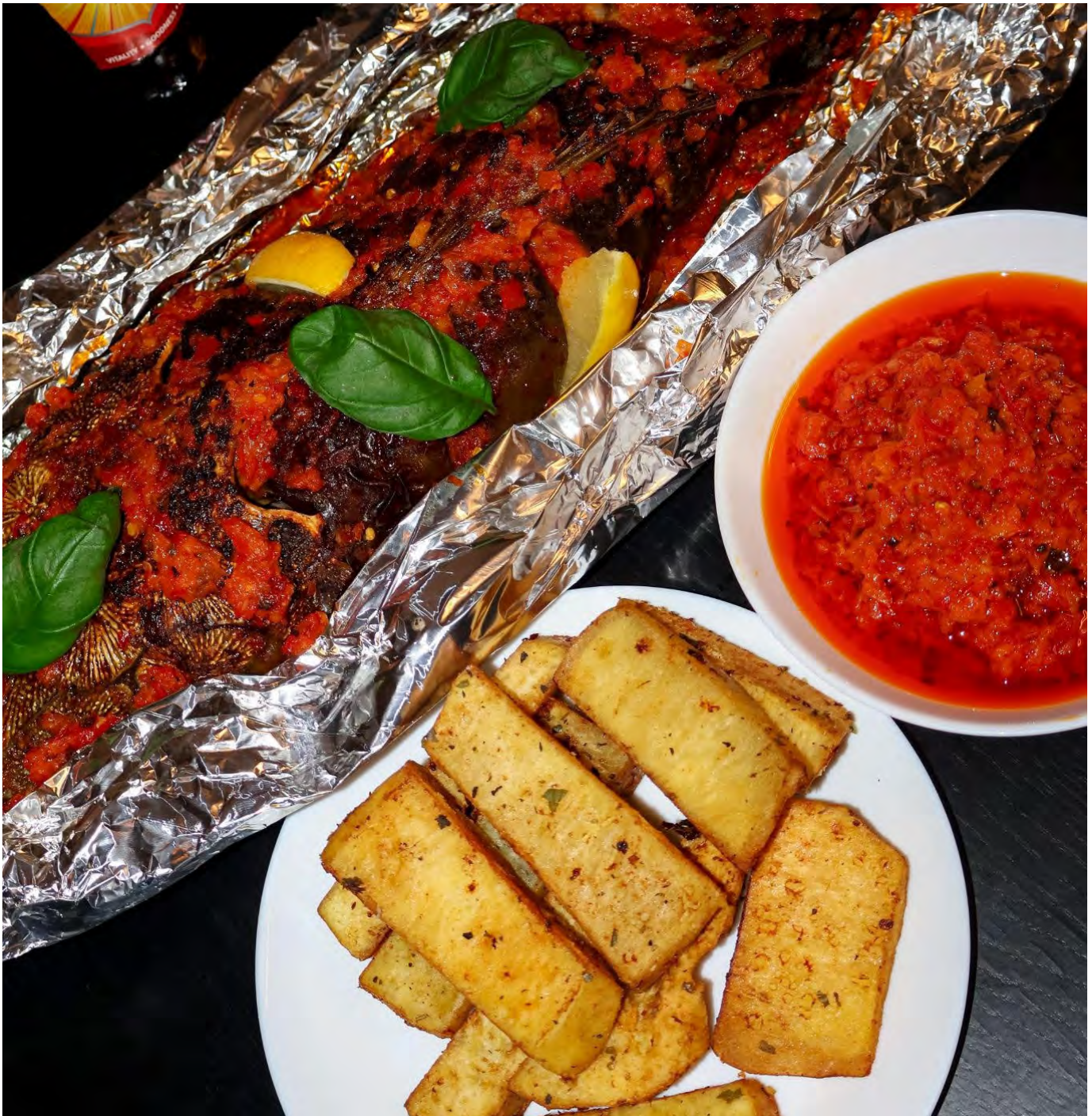
What he built is Jeunpelumi, a food content brand with over one million combined followers on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube. Jeunpelumi means eat with me in Yoruba, and it was chosen with intention. His grandmother cooked with an open door, different pots of soup almost every day, always with extra for whoever needed it. She sourced fish from Igbokoda and a particular breed of goat called Rago from Northern Nigeria because quality was not negotiable for her. She took him to the market as a child, and both the habit and the hospitality followed him everywhere he went.

The content started quietly. Fadare had been making food videos for three years before he began sharing them formally in February 2024, building a backlog that gave him material from day one. Growth came, but the real turning point was not a viral moment. It was a language decision. He stopped narrating in English, which felt scripted and distant to him, and switched to Yoruba. When he re-edited older videos with Yoruba voiceovers and posted them to TikTok, one reached nearly one million views without any paid promotion. He had not changed what he was cooking. He had changed how he was presenting it.

Narrating in Yoruba did something no amount of polished production could. It told a specific audience that this content was theirs, made from inside the culture, while also carrying Nigerian food to a global audience that had never encountered it that way before. In a space crowded with food creators chasing the same aesthetic, Fadare's unscripted voice became his signature. He narrates the way you talk through a recipe with someone standing beside you, and his viewers feel it. Some have gone as far as buying whole goats to recreate his Asun fried rice at home, a dish he considers his go-to when teaching someone a recipe worth replicating.

Food, to Fadare, is not just something you make. He studies heat variation, texture, and shelf life with the same seriousness he brings to sourcing ingredients. He reads other culinary traditions and borrows from them thoughtfully, applying techniques from other parts of the world to recipes that remain Nigerian in soul. Less is more is the philosophy he returns to consistently, and it shows in food that lets its ingredients speak.





Success on that scale creates its own demand, and Fadare has met it by expanding what Jeunpelumi offers. Beyond his content, he coaches food creators on how to build scroll-stopping, value-driven videos, covering everything from structure to narration to the small decisions that determine whether someone watches or moves on. He runs one-on-one cooking consultations and a cooking class covering more than 30 dishes, both focused on technique and understanding rather than instruction alone. He is also developing a multi-volume Nigerian cookbook. All of it grew from what his audience asked for, and all of it carries the same belief: that knowledge passed on is hospitality in another form.

That hospitality is also where his faith lives. He speaks about God the way he speaks about his grandmother, as a foundation rather than a flourish, and often says that God is the master chef and simply shows off through him.

Jeunpelumi is a success story, but it is also something quieter than that. It is what happens when a person decides that what they have is enough to begin with. Forty million views later, the invitation remains the same. "Wa jeun". Come and eat.

KINGS AND COMMERCE: INSIDE LAGOS'S HIGH STAKES WORLD OF POLO AND POWER

OLUWATOSIN OGUNJUYIGBE AND ESTHER EMOEKPERE



On any given Saturday in Ikoyi, on a grass field that most Lagosians have never seen and could not easily locate, a small group of men and women are on horseback, chasing a ball across a pitch with wooden mallets, watched by a tent of people drinking champagne at eleven in the morning. For most of the city, it might as well be on another continent.

Polo sits so far outside Lagos's ordinary leisure that most people would struggle to describe it as a Lagos thing at all. The horses fly in from Argentina, the professional

players often from the same place, the champagne from France. And yet the sport has been here since 1904, older than Nigerian nationhood, longer-rooted than most of what the city calls tradition. What has changed is who holds the reins, and what they intend to build.

In the north, the horse was never a sport. It was a statement. For centuries before colonialism, horses in northern Nigeria were instruments of war, royal ceremony, and political authority. That history made the north fertile ground when polo arrived.

In the 1920s, the Emir of Katsina, Muhammadu Dikko, visited England, returned captivated, and built the game among the northern elite. His son and successor, Emir Nagogo, reached a handicap of +7, still the highest achieved by a Nigerian player, and his team dominated national competition for decades. Emirs played. The military played. Governors played. The sport followed those lines and largely stayed within them.

Lagos received it on different terms. The Lagos Polo Club was founded in 1904, when British naval officers introduced the sport and played it on an airstrip shared with what is now the Ikoyi Club. By 1914, the game had already acquired international stakes, with Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany donating a silver trophy for a championship between Nigeria and German Cameroon, a cup renamed the Independence Cup after 1960 and still contested today. When the British departed after independence and the colonial clubs lost their original membership, it was young businessmen and affluent Nigerians who stepped in to sustain the sport. Commerce filled the space that authority had vacated, and that substitution has defined Lagos equestrian culture ever since.

Among the people shaping it today is Prateek Suri, chairman of Maser Group and among the wealthiest figures in the Lagos business community. He did not grow up riding. His serious engagement came through years operating in Britain, where he attended Royal Ascot and Windsor, and observed what the sport looks like when it has had centuries to bed in. What he noticed was that its power as a social institution had nothing to do with the horses themselves. It had to do with what gathering around horses allowed people to become one another. He brings that understanding to Lagos now. His horses are fed on raw oats imported from Australia, and when he talks about what the scene here could become, he does not sound like someone with a hobby. "Instead of replicating European traditions," Suri says, "Lagos has the opportunity to define its own equestrian identity." He is talking about training academies, breeding programmes, and infrastructure built to last.

Others are already operating at that level of commitment. Prince Albert Esiri's Ashbert Raiders are the only African team that regularly competes at the prestigious British Open at Cowdray Park, and Usman Dantata's team became the first African side to win the USA Gold Cup. At its most committed, Lagos polo can hold its own anywhere in the world, and the people inside it know exactly what that means for what comes next.

To understand where the culture is actually heading, you have to leave Ikoyi and drive east. In Epe, a 220-hectare estate called Isimi Lagos describes itself as Nigeria's first wellness and polo country estate, offering forest villas, wellness trails, a farm shop, and a polo field. What the estate is selling, underneath the polo, is the idea of a different pace, weekends away from Lagos's noise and eventually, for some buyers, something more

permanent. The Isimi Lagos Polo Festival launched in 2024, and its 2025 edition was opened by Lagos State Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, with the King's Cup match played in honour of the Ooni of Ife. One executive present captured its appeal plainly: "Everyone I'm trying to reach as a business partner is here today." This year, the Lagos Polo Club announced a partnership to build a private polo ground within the Isimi estate, its first formal expansion beyond Ikoyi in 121 years, signalling that the sport is beginning to understand itself not as a fixture of one neighbourhood but as the foundation for a broader way of life.

None of this is accessible, and that, partly, is the point. Argentine horses are imported for upwards of \$30,000 each, and a competitive player needs at least six to eight to field a serious team, before stabling, veterinary care, specialist feed, and a full seasonal circuit of tournaments. The Lagos International Polo Tournament earlier this year drew sponsors from the top of Nigerian and international corporate life: GTCO, Dangote, American Express, and Veuve Clicquot. You know roughly who will be under the tent before you arrive, and that predictability is engineered rather than incidental.

In England, equestrian culture exists inside an institutional structure so old it no longer needs to justify itself. Lagos has no such structure, and that absence is precisely what makes the current moment interesting. There is no existing order to defer to and no template inherited from a colonial administration or a royal court. What gets built here will be shaped entirely by the people building it, widely travelled, commercially sharp, and increasingly convinced that Lagos does not need to look anywhere else for permission to belong in this conversation. In that sense, they are doing what the Emirs of the north did a century ago when they took a British sport and made it the language of northern power. They are taking something from elsewhere and making it entirely their own.

The Lagos Polo Club's riding academy now trains over 200 students annually, which is progress. But turning students into players, and players into a sport that sustains itself, takes generations. The dependence on imported horses and foreign expertise has not changed, and what exists today still rests on the commitment of a small number of wealthy individuals rather than institutions strong enough to outlast any one of them.

What those people share, beyond the money, is patience. The conversations happening inside the tent at Ikoyi and on the grounds at Epe carry a quiet certainty that Lagos belongs in this conversation, whether the infrastructure is ready or not. The polo ground in Epe is planned. The academies may follow. Whether what is happening now leaves something lasting behind, or simply passes through, will depend entirely on that.

SCREENS IN CLASSROOMS: SWEDEN'S 21-YR LESSON FOR NIGERIA

CHARLES OGWO



For more than two decades, Sweden stood at the forefront of digital education, embedding screens into classrooms with the promise of modern learning and improved outcomes.

Laptops, tablets, and interactive tools became central to teaching, shaping how students read, write, and engage with knowledge. But after 21 years of experimentation, the results are far more complex than the early optimism suggested.

According to Tunji Alausa, minister of education, the Nigerian education system is being repositioned to meet the demands of the digital economy and build a globally competitive, knowledge-based society.

“The shift from chalkboards to smartboards marks a transition from traditional, one-directional learning methods, characterised by repetitive teaching, to dynamic, interactive, and technology-enabled active learning, where students learn by engaging, exploring, and creating,” he said.

As Nigeria accelerates its own push toward digital classrooms, Sweden’s experience offers a timely and

cautionary lens, one that raises critical questions about balance, effectiveness, and what truly drives learning in the modern age.

In the late 2000s and early 2010s, laptops became mainstream in Swedish classrooms. By 2015, around 80 percent of pupils at municipal state-funded high schools had individual access to a digital device, according to official data.

The compulsory use of tablets in pre-schools was included in the curriculum in 2019, as part of the previous Social Democrat-led government’s mission to prepare even the youngest children for an increasingly digital work and private life.

However, the current right-wing coalition, which came to power in 2022, is moving teaching in a different direction.

Joar Forsell, an education spokesperson for the Liberal party whose leader is Sweden’s education minister, said, “We’re trying, actually, to get rid of screens as much as possible.



“With higher ages in school, you might use them a little bit more, but with lower ages, or in school, I don’t think we should use screens at all.”

The Swedish government is championing a renewed focus on physical books, paper and pens in classrooms, designed to reverse falling literacy levels.

Schools have already been allocated more than \$200 million (£157 million) in grants to invest in textbooks and teacher guides, and a new curriculum designed to enforce textbook-based learning is due in 2028.

The government argues, “Reading real books and writing on real paper, and counting with real numbers on real paper, is much better if you want kids to get the knowledge they need.”

No doubt, some stakeholders argue that the incorporation of technology in education has become a need rather than a choice in the fast- changing scene of the global labour market.

For Nigeria, they say, this goes beyond mere speed to include changing the educational system to equip a generation capable of flourishing wherever.

Be that as it may, a fact remains that a lot of devices and technology in classrooms without clear pedagogical intent, without clear goalposts, amounts to mutilating a child’s academic future.

While technology has transformed classroom teaching and learning, it also comes with some negative impacts, such as excessive dependence on technology, digital divide, distraction, and health challenges, among others.

Evidence indicates that indiscriminate digital expansion has weakened learning environments rather than strengthened them.

Sola Kayode, a parent, argues that the introduction of smart schools in some states has created a gulf among learners.

“Unequal access to digital tools intensifies scholastic inequalities, with some students not having the necessary

facilities and reliable internet access for learning,” she said.

Isaiah Ogundele, a parent, does not see anything wrong with adopting digital classrooms, but urged policymakers to learn from the mistakes of other countries in adopting tech-classrooms.

“Nigeria should learn from the mistakes of others to check the excesses that may originate from it.

“There is nothing bad in digital classrooms and learning, which is different from the analogue that we all passed through,” he said.

In the fore of this, one question that comes to mind is how digital education has fared in Nigeria since its introduction.

The digital policies are mainly statements of intention; the implementation of such an ambitious intention has not been achieved.

Many schools are faced with physical and pedagogical challenges, such as a lack of electricity, poor technology infrastructure, low bandwidth, a lack of internet connectivity, insufficient and inappropriate software, and insufficient human capital to impart these digital technologies, which means those with skills in digital technologies are insufficient in numbers.

There is also the question of funding. The government has not sufficiently funded education, let alone funding digital technologies in the educational system.

Sweden’s 21-year journey with screens in classrooms shows that technology alone is not a silver bullet for better education. While digital tools can expand access and enhance learning, their impact depends heavily on how, when, and why they are used.

For Nigeria, the lesson is clear: adopting screens should be guided by evidence, balanced with strong teaching practices, and supported by investments in teacher training and foundational skills like reading.



BEYOND TAPPING AND SWIPING: JUSTIN UKAEGBU'S VISION FOR MOVEMENT-BASED LEARNING

CHISOM MICHAEL





Justin Ukaegbu is a design leader working across product, interaction, and brand systems, with over a decade of experience spanning the UK, Nigeria, and international markets. His work examines how design influences behaviour at scale, with expertise across digital products, communication systems, and innovation-led programmes. He holds an MA in Graphic Design with Distinction from the University of Hertfordshire and is a member of the Design Research Society. His portfolio includes large-scale international programmes, fintech product leadership, and award-winning digital platforms. More recently, he has developed Draw in the Air, a browser-based learning system that enables children to trace letters and shapes using hand movement in front of a webcam. In this interview with CHISOM MICHAEL, he discusses how movement-based learning can improve children's writing development, why current screen-based tools may be limiting physical skills, and how Draw in the Air is redefining digital learning through gesture and accessibility.

You argue that early learning begins with physical movement rather than screens.

What did you observe that led you to question the current direction of digital learning?

It wasn't one single moment. It built up over time. My first degree was in Computer Science and Education at Enugu

State University of Science and Technology. So I've had both of those worlds in my head for a long time, technology and how people learn. I went on to study Graphic Design, MA level at the University of Hertfordshire, and that's where I really started thinking about interaction as a design problem. After that, over twelve years of professional practice across products, brands, and platforms. I've designed interfaces that people tap, swipe, and scroll through. That's what most of my career has looked like.

But when I started paying closer attention to how young children interact with screens, something felt off. I watched kids using educational apps, and they were completing tasks, getting the right answers, and moving through levels. On paper, it looked like learning. But if you really watched them, their hands weren't doing much. A tap here. A drag there. The whole body was still. The whole experience was passive.

And then separately, I started reading about declining handwriting ability in young children. Teachers are talking about weaker grip strength. Kids are struggling to hold a pencil properly. I'm someone who studied education and then spent a career designing how people interact with things. That combination made it hard to look away from the problem. That's where the question started. Not from theory. From watching.

How has the shift toward tapping and swiping-based tools affected children's development of writing skills?

Think about what a tap actually requires from a child. Almost nothing physically. You touch a

surface, and something happens. There's no resistance. No effort. No control needed.

Now think about what writing requires. Grip. Pressure. Direction. Coordination between what the eye sees and what the hand does. Those are skills that develop through repetition and physical practice. You can't shortcut them.

When the primary mode of interaction becomes tapping, children get very good at tapping. But the muscles and coordination needed for writing don't develop at the same pace. It's not that screens are harmful in some dramatic way. It's that they're replacing time that used to be spent doing things that built those physical foundations.

The tool became easier. But the child didn't get stronger.

Teachers are beginning to notice changes in fine motor skills. How serious is this issue, and what does it mean for early literacy?

It's serious enough that whole countries are changing policy over it. Sweden reversed parts of its screen-first approach in schools. France tightened restrictions on devices in classrooms.



SATURDAY 2, MAY 2026

These aren't small decisions. Governments don't change education policy on a hunch.

What teachers are describing is consistent. Children arriving in classrooms with less hand strength, less coordination, less confidence with a pencil. And that feeds directly into literacy. If forming a letter feels difficult or uncomfortable, a child hesitates. If they hesitate enough, they disengage. It's not that they can't learn. It's that the physical entry point has become harder because they haven't had enough practice with that kind of movement.

I don't think this is a crisis in the dramatic sense. But it is a real, measurable shift. And it's one that the tools we design are contributing to.

What happens to a child's learning process when movement becomes central again through gesture instead of touch?

Something changes in the child's attention. That's the first thing you notice.

When a child taps a screen, the feedback is instant, and the effort is minimal. They move through things quickly. With a gesture, they have to slow down. They have to think about the shape before they move. They raise their hand, they commit to a direction, they adjust mid-movement.

There's a real sense of trying.

I've watched children use Draw in the Air, and the moment that strikes me every time is the

pause before they start. They look at the letter. They think. Then they move. And when they get it right, you can see it register physically. Their posture changes. There's this small moment of pride that you don't get from tapping the correct answer on a screen.

That's what movement does. It makes the learning feel earned.

5. How important is accessibility in shaping the future of learning tools like Draw in the

Air that remove the need for hardware and installation?

It's everything. Honestly. If this only worked on expensive tablets or needed specialised equipment, it wouldn't matter how good the idea was. Most schools don't have a spare budget for new hardware. Most families aren't buying dedicated learning devices.

That was a design decision from the start. It had to run in a browser. It had to work with a standard webcam. No app store. No installation. No IT department needed to set it up. A teacher opens a browser, points a webcam at the child, and it works.

I grew up in Nigeria. I studied there. My first degree was from Enugu State University of Science and Technology. I know what it looks like when technology requires infrastructure that isn't there. I've seen brilliant tools that never reach the children who need them most because the barrier to entry is too high. I wasn't going to build another one of those.

If a school has a laptop with a camera, they can use it easily.

What trade-offs were made to keep a system described as simple by design so focused?

A lot of saying no.

There's a temptation when you're building something like this to add more. More features. More content. More gamification. Leaderboards, rewards, characters, storylines. All of that is standard in edtech, and all of it would have diluted what actually matters.

The core of this is hand movement and letter formation. That's it. The moment you start adding layers on top, the child's attention shifts from the movement to the reward. And then you're back to the same problem. The child is engaged, but not in the part that develops them.

I also chose not to build a native app. That would have given me more control over the experience, but it would have created a barrier. Browser-first was harder to design for in some cases, but it was the right call for reach.

The trade-off is that it looks less impressive on a feature list. But it works better in a classroom.

I'll take that every time.

How do you see the relationship between formal education and home learning evolving, given a product that works in both classrooms and at home?

The gap between school and home has always been there. But the tools have never really bridged it well. Schools use one set of systems. Parents use whatever they can find on the app store. There's very little continuity.

What I find interesting about Draw in the Air is that the same experience works in both settings without adaptation. A teacher uses it during a phonics session. A parent opens it on a laptop in the living room. The child does the same thing in both places. The learning carries over.



That's not something I designed deliberately at first. It came from the simplicity. Because there's no complex setup, no login system, no curriculum integration required, it just works wherever there's a screen and a webcam. And that accident turned out to be one of the most important things about it.

I think the future of early learning tools is exactly this. Things that don't belong to school or home. They just belong to the child.

Some countries are rethinking screen use in education. How does your work fit into this wider shift in learning policy and practice?

I think the policy shift validates the instinct I had when I started building this. The conversation is moving away from "more screens, more apps, more digital" and toward "what kind of digital interaction actually helps?"

Draw in the Air fits into that because it doesn't ask you to choose between digital and physical. It uses a screen, but the interaction is physical. The child isn't sitting passively.

They're standing, moving, forming shapes with their body. The screen is just a mirror.

I'm not anti-screen. That's a lazy position. Screens are tools. The question is what you ask the child to do with them. And right now, most tools ask very little physically. I think the next generation of learning technology will ask more. Not less digital. Better digital.

What specific behaviours in young learners are you trying to reshape through your design-focused work?

Three things, really.

First, the physical passivity. I want children to move when they learn. Not sit still and tap. Movement is how the body learns. If we design tools that remove movement, we're working against how children naturally develop.

Second, the relationship with effort. Tapping gives you instant success. There's almost no failure state. But learning to write is full of failure. You get the shape wrong. You try again. Your hand doesn't do what your brain wants. That friction is where growth happens. I want to keep that friction in the experience, not design it out.

Third, and this is more personal, I want to change the assumption that digital learning has to look a certain way. Bright colours, cartoon characters, reward sounds. That's not learning design. That's attention design. There's a difference. I want to build tools where the learning itself is the thing that holds the child's attention. Not the packaging around it.

Looking ahead, what would success mean for Draw in the Air, not just as a product, but as part of a broader change in how children learn to write?

Success for the product is straightforward. Schools are using it. Children are benefiting from it. Teachers are seeing results. That's measurable, and I'm working toward it.

But the bigger success would be if this changes the conversation about what early learning tools should do. Right now, the default assumption is that digital learning means screen interaction.

Tapping, swiping, watching. If Draw in the Air helps shift that default, even slightly, toward movement-based interaction, that matters more than any single product.

I'd like to see gesture-based learning become a category, not just a novelty. Not just Draw in the Air, but other designers and developers are looking at this space and asking the same question:

What if the child moved?

Ultimately, I didn't build this to win a market. I studied computer science and education. I spent over a decade designing products, brands and systems. Then I did a master's in design and started asking harder questions about interaction. All of that led here. I built it because I looked at how we were teaching children and thought we could do better. If it pushes even a few people to rethink that, it's done its job.



BEYOND THE HIDE: LLF 2026 CHARTS PATH FOR AFRICA'S MULTI-BILLION DOLLAR LEATHER VALUE CHAIN

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



The Lagos Leather Fair (LLF), Africa's leading platform dedicated to the leather value chain, has announced its 9th edition, scheduled to take place from June 27th to 28th, 2026, at the Ecobank Pan African Centre (EPAC), Victoria Island, Lagos, with an exclusive VIP Opening on June 26th, 2026.

Since its inception in 2017, LLF has evolved from a local exhibition into a continental movement. This year's edition marks a pivotal milestone in the fair's journey, which has already seen over 25,000 visitors, 300+ exhibitors, and a measurable 50–200 percent revenue growth for participating brands.

Ecobank Joins as Official Partner & Host. In a major boost to the continent's creative economy, Lagos Leather Fair is proud to announce Ecobank Nigeria as Official Partner & Host for LLF2026.

This strategic partnership underscores Ecobank's commitment to supporting African SMEs and the creative manufacturing sector. As part of this collaboration, the 9th edition will be hosted at the state-of-the-art Ecobank Pan African Centre (EPAC), providing a world-class backdrop for the convergence of Africa's finest leather artisans and global industry stakeholders.

Reflecting on the evolution of the platform and the vision for the future, Femi Olayebi, Founder of Lagos Leather Fair and Creative Director of FemiHandbags, stated:

“LLF was born out of both frustration and possibility -frustration with the structural gaps holding the industry back, and a firm belief in the immense, untapped potential of the African leather ecosystem.

“For nearly a decade, we have worked to change the narrative. LLF2026 is a bold declaration that we are moving beyond raw potential into structured growth. It is a space where artistry meets strategy, where creativity is sharpened by business acumen, and where we provide our designers with the tools to not just survive, but to compete and thrive on a global scale.”

The theme for LLF2026 is ‘BEYOND THE HIDE: Scaling Value. Building Industry. Driving Growth.’ This theme signals a strategic shift from viewing leather merely as a raw material to treating it as a comprehensive, multi-billion-dollar value chain.

The 2026 edition will focus on transforming every stage of production from sourcing and compliance to manufacturing and global export readiness into a driver of sustainable economic prosperity.

What to Expect at LLF2026

The 9th edition promises an immersive experience for designers, investors, and the general public:

Exhibition - LLF2026 will bring together a beautifully curated selection of leather creatives, not just from Nigeria but across the continent, to showcase leather goods ranging from footwear, handbags, small leather goods, furniture, apparel, raw materials and accessories etc.

Conversations: interactive sessions with industry leaders focusing on collaboration over competition, strategic partnership and regulations governing the exportation of exotic skins.

Workshops: interactive workshops designed to equip leather designers with the tools needed to grow sustainability and leverage emerging technologies.

The LLF Signature Piece Challenge: Applicants are asked to create two extraordinary leather pieces that represent their highest level of craftsmanship and creative voice.

There are no category restrictions; bags, home decor, objects, footwear, accessories, or art pieces are all welcome. The top 6 participants will display their pieces in a Signature Pieces Gallery during LLF2026.

Runway Shows: These will feature cutting-edge collections from established and emerging designers, celebrating the versatility of leather.

The Maker’s Bench: This is an interactive space where pre-registered visitors - adults and young kids alike - will create simple leather pieces by themselves under the supervision of skilled experts.

The LLF Atelier: In partnership with Ananse Centre for Design, this immersive activation will serve as a live mini manufacturing hub where experts will offer attendees a rare behind-the-scenes experience of craftsmanship, technical processes, and the skills required to transform raw materials into finished products in real time throughout the two days of the Fair.

Awards: The awards will honour outstanding contributions within the African leather industry and celebrate brands, artisans, and visionaries who have made a significant impact.

HOW JUSTIN KANIFE IS PIONEERING DATA-DRIVEN FINANCE TRANSFORMATION AND DIGITAL ACCOUNTING INNOVATION



As global economies continue to evolve under increasing technological disruption, regulatory complexity, and competitive pressure, finance functions within large-scale enterprises are undergoing a fundamental transformation.

At the forefront of this shift is Justin Tobechukwu Kanife, a finance and accounting professional whose work focuses on developing and implementing data-driven finance transformation and digital accounting systems to enhance operational efficiency, strengthen financial governance, and improve enterprise-wide decision-making.

With extensive experience across finance operations, accounting, and advisory services, Kanife has built a career centered on addressing structural inefficiencies within traditional finance systems. His work is distinguished by its focus on integrating financial data, automation, and advanced analytics into cohesive platforms that move organizations beyond manual, fragmented processes toward real-time, insight-driven financial management.

A central component of Kanife's contribution is the development and application of structured finance transformation frameworks that unify financial and operational data from enterprise systems and apply analytical models to improve reporting accuracy, forecasting, and performance monitoring. Through this approach, organizations are able to transition from retrospective reporting to forward-looking financial intelligence, enabling executives to anticipate risks, optimize costs, and make more informed strategic decisions.

Kanife's work has been applied across large and complex organizational environments, where finance functions must manage high transaction volumes, regulatory requirements, and multi-layered operational structures. By supporting the design and implementation of standardized financial reporting processes, automated reconciliation systems, and enhanced internal control frameworks, he has contributed to improving the reliability and timeliness of financial information used by senior management and stakeholders.

His contributions have also supported organizations in strengthening their compliance posture and governance structures. By promoting the adoption of integrated digital accounting platforms and structured control mechanisms, Kanife has helped reduce financial reporting inconsistencies, improve audit readiness, and enhance transparency across finance operations.

These improvements are critical in highly regulated industries where accurate financial reporting and strong internal controls are essential to maintaining stakeholder confidence and meeting regulatory expectations.

In addition Kanife 's work emphasizes the role of predictive analytics and performance modeling in modern finance functions. By incorporating

data-driven forecasting and scenario analysis into financial systems, he has supported organizations in improving capital allocation, identifying operational inefficiencies, and responding more effectively to changing market conditions.

This shift toward analytics-enabled finance enables organizations to operate with greater agility and resilience in dynamic economic environments. Beyond implementation, Kanife has contributed to advancing professional understanding of finance transformation through thought leadership, technical engagements, and knowledge-sharing initiatives.

He has addressed topics such as finance modernization, digital accounting systems, data governance, and enterprise performance optimization, providing practical frameworks that organizations can adopt to improve their financial operations.

His work aligns with broader economic and industry priorities focused on digital transformation, financial system modernization, and the adoption of data-driven decision-making across enterprises. As organizations increasingly rely on technology to improve productivity, manage risk, and maintain competitiveness, the development of robust, scalable finance systems has become a critical component of sustainable business performance.

Observers note that Kanife's approach is particularly impactful because it bridges technical accounting expertise with strategic business insight. Rather than treating finance as a back-office function, his work positions it as a central driver of enterprise performance, capable of influencing growth, efficiency, and long-term value creation.

As businesses continue to navigate an increasingly complex and data-driven global economy, Justin Tobechukwu Kanife's work provides a practical model for how finance functions can evolve to meet modern demands.

Through his focus on data integration, automation, and analytical decision-making, he is contributing to the advancement of more efficient, transparent, and strategically aligned financial systems across large-scale enterprises.



Every three Eke market days, you will hear me shouting about “soft life.” I’ve told my friends who care to listen that my ‘independent woman’ era was nothing but childish bravado. These days, if someone wants to come and share – or even shoulder – some of these bills, I will not argue. I’m tired, abeg.

Honestly, at some point over the last few years, “soft life” became the goal. We were all over the survival, the hustle, the “by fire, by force.” We want the soft life. Ease. Comfort. Financial stability. Good food, restful sleep, stress-free holidays, and a calendar that doesn’t feel like punishment.

And to be honest, that’s fair enough. Deserved, even. We have tried.

After years of glorifying burnout and calling it ambition, many people, especially women, are choosing a different path. A softer one. A more intentional one.

But somewhere along the way, we’ve started confusing desire with design. Because creating soft life is hard work.

And I had a rude reminder of that fact a week ago.

For years, I’d had my “old reliable” client – a brand I had worked with for seven years, managing their social media and digital technology needs for a substantial monthly fee. It was consistent, comfortable income – I had come to know their brand almost as well as mine. The work was predictable and, if I’m being honest, it also made me...relaxed.

I still worked. I still had other clients. But I wasn’t as aggressive with business development as I could have been. I wasn’t chasing as hard. I wasn’t pushing as intentionally.

Because in the back of my mind, as long as thirty days hath September, there was always that cushion.

This month, however, the client packed up. Just like that. Bless them, they didn’t even have a drawn-out exit plan. Life just happened as it has been lifing for so many SMEs recently, and that was that.

When I tell you it spun me.

I had become so comfortable with something that was never guaranteed.

I had to rally, so I opened spreadsheets and vision boards with the quickness.

I started reviewing income streams, projections, gaps. I revisited the goals I had set at the beginning of the year – all the targets I had nodded at confidently in January were now staring at me unfulfilled at the end of April.

And I had to ask myself a very sincere question: Was I truly building the life I say I want, or was I coasting on what had been working?

Because soft life? It is not a game for small children. It takes years to build. Planning. Strategy. Pensions. Property. Stocks. Investments.

Coasting feels like progress because things are moving. Money is coming in. Work is happening. You're busy.

But long-term stability asks a different question: Is this sustainable? Is this intentional? Is this leading somewhere?

There's a version of soft life that social media sells us, one that looks like aesthetics and ease. The brunches. The travel. The "rich aunty" vibes. The "I've figured it out" energy.

But what people don't see is the backend. The spreadsheets, the uncomfortable reviews, the sleepless nights, the disciplined decisions, the diversification of income streams. The constant learning – gosh!

Dreams don't build themselves.

And they certainly don't sustain themselves.

If anything, dreams are expensive. Not just financially, but mentally. They require planning and a willingness to confront reality, even when reality is inconvenient.

That was my lesson.

I had to wake up this April.

I realised that I had unintentionally allowed stability to reduce my sharpness. I had leaned on something reliable without asking whether it was enough or secure long-term.

And that's a trap many professionals fall into.

A good job. A steady client. A consistent income stream. It creates a sense of safety.

That's not to say that safety is a bad thing. But unexamined safety is risky. You still have to come to the table periodically because industries change. Businesses pivot. Clients leave. Roles evolve.

And if your strategy hasn't evolved alongside those changes, you will feel the impact more than you should.

As for me, I went back to basics.

What are my actual income goals for the year?

What percentage of my income is dependent on one source?

Where are the gaps?

What have I been avoiding because "things were fine"?

What needs to be built now so I'm not scrambling later?

Soft life, in its truest form, is not the absence of effort. It is the presence of structure that allows your life to feel lighter. It's knowing your finances are not fragile. It's having options. It's being able to absorb shocks without everything falling apart. It's waking up without that quiet anxiety in your chest that something unexpected could undo everything.

And that kind of ease is built.

So if you're reading this and things are currently "fine," I'll offer you the same nudge I had to give myself: Don't wait for disruption to force clarity.

Audit your life now.

Review your numbers.

Revisit your goals.

Strengthen the areas you've been neglecting.

Because soft life is not luck.

It is something you design, maintain, and protect.

With intention.

With discipline.

With strategy.

With sense.

Rachel Onamusi is the CEO of VN Sync, a UK-based tech company and full-service marketing firm with expertise in all aspects of media and a strong focus on digital strategy development and implementation. Dedicated to creating lasting impact, Ms. Onamusi is a sought-after speaker, thought leader, writer and frequent media contributor.

TIGHT LACING TO MODERN STYLING: HOW NIGERIAN FASHION REIMAGINES CORSET STYLE

CHINONYE ISIDIENU





Long before it became a modern fashion statement, corset defined European style and feminine culture.

Emerging in the 16th century and dominating the Victorian era, its historic, structural undergarment designed to sculpt the body into socially accepted ideals cinched waists, structured posture, and controlled silhouettes giving women confidence.

It was a must for all the women precisely adding pride and dignity to their everyday clothing reaching the zenith of its popularity in the Victorian era.

The corset which was typically worn as an undergarment, has occasionally revolved into an outer garment; blending the historic structure and versatile statement pieces to slim the body and make it conform to a fashionable silhouette.

The corset in Nigerian fashion is originally a Western import, introduced through colonial influence and global trade. In Lagos, which emerged as a center of cultural and social influence, elite women were exposed to Victorian and Edwardian dress styles.

This exposure encouraged the adoption of structured garments and inspired new ways of styling existing traditional attire such as iro, gele, ipеле, and aso-oke.

At the same time, the return of Afro-Brazilian communities brought additional influences, including lace fabrics and Catholic-inspired embroidery.

These layered interactions helped shape a distinct fashion identity, positioning Lagos as a key epicenter of style in Nigeria.

Post-independence era, came with Nigerian tailors adapting western cuts and infusing it with their traditional cuts on new fabrics like wax prints from Netherlands, laces from Switzerland and their own locally woven textiles making them desirable for middle class women. What once started as defined drapery, layering, beadings, symbolic silhouettes and tailored seams evolved from the skirt and blouse style inspired from their cultural way of styling their traditional wrappers to the six piece skirts, mermaid cut skirt, the peplums, off shoulder necklines, ruffles top and the 'Corset'.

These designers have not simply borrowed the corset; they have reimagined it.

Historically worn as an undergarment to sculpt the body into an hourglass figure with a narrow waist and upright posture the corset has been transformed in contemporary fashion.

In the 2010's era, the corset wave started with one woman, Deola Sagoe. Who reimagined bridal styling.

The corset was not the star of the brand's collection but she experimented the infusion of corsets for Nigerian brides with lace patterned Aso-oke, slimmer cuts, and Western-inspired silhouettes this was as a stirring to reach global audience and elevate Nigerian fashion market and it was successful, Nigerian weddings became a global exhibition driven by the sudden rise of blogs like bella naija, Nigerian designers caught the flu like Veekee James, Turbo and the rest.



It evolved more and more from bridal styling to Aso-Ebi for Owambe's to churches, red carpet, boardrooms and influencers using it for photoshoots to everyday garments design.

In the past, the gele crowned Nigerian occasionwear; today, the corset is taking on that role in a new way.

It is more than a style choice, it reflects how modern Nigerian women see themselves and want to be seen.

Shaped by social media, everyday fashion markets, and a mix of local tradition and global influence, the corset tells a bigger story about identity. It shows a shift toward fashion that works with the body, not against it. where culture, confidence, and modern taste come together.

Today, it is worn as an outer garment and an under garment, often cut lower at the bust and seamlessly integrated into gowns, allowing its structure to blend with and elevate the overall design.

Rather than forcing the body into a rigid ideal, the modern corset is made visible as a central design element. It enhances the natural form, complementing and beautifying richly textured traditional fabrics.

In doing so, the corset shifts from an instrument of restriction to one of expression where structure supports, rather than suppresses, the wearer's individuality. It spreads across all norms if you are not snatched yet you are definitely not ready to party .



LMUF18 SPRING EDITION IGNITES BEAUTY, INNOVATION AND EMPOWERMENT



The Nigerian beauty industry recorded another significant milestone as The Makeup Fair Series (TMUFS) hosted the 18th Lagos Makeup Fair (LMUF18) on the 18th and 19th of April 2026 at Classique Events Place, Oregun, Ikeja.

The Spring Edition brought together a broad cross-section of the beauty ecosystem, including entrepreneurs, makeup artists, content creators, industry professionals and consumers, further reinforcing the fair's role as a leading platform for trade, visibility and industry advancement in Nigeria.

Since its inception in 2012, TMUFS has grown into one of the most consistent beauty trade platforms in the country, with over 135 editions delivered across multiple cities. LMUF18 reflects the continued evolution of that vision, positioning the fair not just as an event, but as a structured marketplace for growth within the beauty sector.

This edition featured over 60 exhibitors across key categories, including makeup, skincare, fragrance, jewelry, beauty tools and accessories.

The fair provided a strong commercial platform for both emerging and established brands.

New participants, including Bellazuri Nigeria, Beauty by Daz, Summer All Year, Orion 9ja, amongst others, leveraged the platform to introduce their products to a wider audience and establish market presence.

Alongside them, several brands including Yanga Beauty, Paula Beauty, Deegutu Beauty and Jayde Cosmetics used LMUF18 as a strategic moment to introduce new products to the market. From fresh skincare releases to new makeup lines, these launches added a layer of excitement and discovery across the exhibition floor, using the fair to test, validate and directly sell new offerings to a highly engaged audience.

One of the most notable highlights came from Omaricode Beauty, which introduced a new sister brand called Summer All Year. The launch was a clear reflection of how brands within the TMUFS ecosystem are evolving, not just growing in scale, but expanding in vision.



Industry observers noted that one of the defining strengths of LMUF18 was the level of interaction and connection among participants, as well as product discounts and gift items. The event created an environment where brands engaged directly with consumers, creatives connected with opportunities and collaborations were initiated in real time.



TMUFS has consistently positioned itself as a platform that delivers value across multiple levels. For brands, it provides visibility and access to target markets. For creatives, it offers opportunities for exposure and growth. For consumers, it creates direct access to products and experiences within a dynamic marketplace setting.



The success of LMUF18 further highlights the growing structure and commercial potential of Nigeria's beauty industry. As the sector continues to expand, platforms like TMUFS are playing a critical role in shaping its development and driving sustainable growth.

With each edition, The Makeup Fair Series (TMUFS) continues to reinforce its relevance as a key meeting point for the business of beauty in Nigeria.

It speaks to a broader shift within the industry. Brands are no longer just maintaining presence; they are building portfolios, exploring new categories and creating multiple entry points into the market.

Returning exhibitors such as Nuban Beauty, Msmetics, Soopro Cosmetics, Zikel Cosmetics, Reng Beauty Cosmetics, BuyBetter, Sylvimak and Dhoopy Dhoopy returned to the fair with stronger brand presence, deeper market insight and a clear focus on strengthening their connection with customers.

Beyond its commercial impact, LMUF18 maintained a strong focus on creativity and skill development. Live demonstrations and brand activations took place throughout the venue, offering attendees hands-on insight into product application, techniques and trends shaping the industry.

A major highlight of the fair was the Beauty Face Off Competition (BFOC), which continues to serve as a platform for showcasing talent within the Nigerian beauty space. The competition attracted strong audience engagement and spotlighted both emerging and established makeup artists.



HOW FAITH, GRIT POWERED ONOBIREN'S CINEMA SUCCESS

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



Before Onobiren reached cinema screens, its music had already begun to move. The theme song, gentle, haunting and deeply emotive, found its way across social media, carried by its melody and quiet intensity. People shared it in fragments, replayed it, hummed along, even before they fully understood the story it belonged to. By the time the film arrived in theatres, the music had already done its work.

Laju Iren is not the kind of Nollywood figure you instantly recognise. She is not on screen, not the face on posters, not the one drawing crowds by sheer celebrity. Yet as a filmmaker, writer and founder of Laju Iren Films, she has quietly built a body of work around faith and emotionally grounded storytelling. With Onobiren, she and her team have done what many with far more visibility struggle to pull off.

The numbers tell part of the story. Within three weeks of release, the film crossed ₦100 million. By the end of seven weeks, it had pulled in ₦138.1 million, holding the number one spot in West Africa for two consecutive weeks and becoming the highest grossing film of March 2026. That is when you call it a standout cinema success.

Produced with support from Africa No Filter and CcHub Creative Economy, the film reflects a blend of creative vision and institutional backing. But ask Iren how it all came together, and she doesn't reach for strategy first.

"The strategic move was God. When I look at our journey since we started making films in 2020, I know that everything that led us to this moment was largely because of His orchestration. He gave us the ideas and the technical know how to make the film in the first place, and I am very grateful for that."

Faith, for her, is not separate from the work. But neither is craft.

"It is more difficult to sell a bad film than to sell a good one. It is difficult to sell any film, but when a film is good, it makes it easier to sell."

That thinking carried into how the film was rolled out. The groundwork started long before opening day, teasers, music, social media, all carefully timed.

"By December, we already had a teaser and the song out, and everybody was in love with it. We were very intentional about social media marketing, telling our story, taking pre orders and staying in people's faces constantly."

What followed felt less like a typical cinema run and more like a shared experience. Women's groups organised outings. Business communities bought out entire halls. Schools showed up in numbers.



And then there were the quieter moments, the ones that carried the film furthest.

"I would just see people say, 'My girlfriends and I' or 'My women friends and I.' I loved that so much. It brought a lot of camaraderie."

The film may have been aimed largely at women, Onobiren means 'woman,' and it released during Women's Month, but it didn't stay in that box.

"We really did target the female audience, and that's because most of our work has been largely consumed by women. But we also have a healthy male audience, and the faith based community really took this as their film."

Online, the energy continued.

"There were people who would not normally post on social media collaborating with us after seeing the film."

The user generated content extended the marketing budget further than money alone could have.

She also praised the cast and crew for their contributions to the film's success.

"I would also like to take this opportunity to appreciate our cast and crew, who went above and beyond to ensure the success of Onobiren."

For someone at the centre of it all, Iren remains almost indifferent to the spotlight. She laughs off the idea of acting.

"I am not an actor. Acting is not my specialty, even though I have done a few cameos. I don't have the patience for it, and I don't even remember my lines, even when I wrote them."

Her focus stays where it has always been, on the story, and on the audience that shows up for it.

"We cannot talk about the success of Onobiren without the audience. People came out en masse, old and young, the Christian community, women, so many communities came together to support the film."

For those who missed it on the big screen, the film's journey is not over. Following its cinema run, Onobiren will be available on virtual cinema from May 1 to May 5, 2026, a final window to catch one of the year's most talked about releases before it moves on.

As for Iren, the lesson the journey has most reinforced is a simple one.

"I am not famous enough to relax. Even those who are very famous are consistently working."

The journey has only reaffirmed what she has always believed, that success is not a cue to slow down, but a call to keep building.

And so, with faith as her anchor and grit as her drive, she isn't relenting just yet.



BEYOND COMMERCE: OJAJA MALL EMERGES AS LAGOS' NEWEST HUB FOR CULTURE, AI, AND COMMUNITY



Shopping malls in Lagos are changing. They are no longer just places to buy things. In a city where public infrastructure is stretched, they are becoming self-contained systems, combining retail, power supply, security, and even community space in one location.

Ojaja Mall, on the Ogombo-Ajah axis, is one of the latest examples of that shift. Owned by Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, the Ooni of Ife, the development sits on about 18,000 square metres. It brings together shops, a hotel, leisure facilities, and a small technology hub within the same complex.

A PRIVATE SOLUTION TO PUBLIC GAPS

Running a business in Lagos is expensive. Power alone can take a large share of operating costs, with many shop owners relying on diesel generators for most of the day. An electronics retailer running a generator in Lagos can spend 30,000 to 50,000 naira daily on fuel alone, depending on the model and load.

At Ojaja Mall, electricity is managed centrally. The complex combines generator power with supply from Eko Electricity Distribution Company. The facility gets 18 hours of guaranteed power from EKEEDC daily, with synchronised generator backups covering the remainder. For tenants, that means fewer interruptions and more predictable costs.

“That allows businesses to stay open longer and plan better,” Adebimpe told BD Weekender during a media tour of the facility.

She led the project from construction to opening, after a career that began in banking and finance. The build took about two and a half years.

“With the grace of God Almighty, I started with my team of engineers. I have mechanical engineers, structural engineers, electrical engineers, and architects,” she said. “There were no deaths or injuries during construction, a significant achievement on a Lagos project of this scale.”



PRICING IN A TIGHT ECONOMY

Nigeria is dealing with high inflation and weaker consumer spending. Nigeria's inflation rate hit 15.38 percent in March 2026, with consumer spending weakening significantly. In that context, Ojaja Mall is trying to position itself as a lower-cost retail option within its area.

According to management, some goods are priced below what is available in nearby outlets. "It's not just about profit," Adebimpe said. "It's about helping people grow and creating opportunities."

Furthermore, the mall's philosophy, rooted in what the Ooni calls "Ojaja Moore", a Yoruba phrase meaning "the more we are together, the happier we shall be", extends to its structure.

The complex houses 295 retail shops in total, with an additional 30 standard rooms, three one-bedroom maisonettes, and two deluxe apartments within Ojaja Suites.

JOBS AND LOCAL SUPPLY

About 1,000 people work within the mall's ecosystem, according to its operators. That includes retail staff, cleaners, security workers, and service providers. This represents one of the project's most direct economic impacts on the Ajah neighborhood.

There is also a significant focus on local sourcing. Much of the furniture and interior work was produced in Nigeria, supporting carpenters and small-scale manufacturers.

As Adebimpe explained, "We are based on made-in-Nigeria products. Most of the products sold in the shopping center, artworks, picture frames, most of the chairs were made here." This commitment to local procurement strengthens the economy beyond the mall's immediate operations.

LIVING, WORKING, AND STAYING IN ONE PLACE

Attached to the mall is Ojaja Suites, a boutique hotel designed to operate as part of the same environment. Guests can access a swimming pool, cinema, lounge, and business centre without leaving the complex.

"The idea is convenience," said Ikegwune Endurance, operations manager of Ojaja Suites. "You can stay, work, and relax in one place." In Lagos, where traffic can take hours each day, that kind of setup can be a strong selling point.

The mall also includes an AI centre. Management says it is intended as a space for learning and digital skills.

OPERATIONAL DISCIPLINE

Operating a facility of this scale demands relentless attention to detail. Adebimpe acknowledged the challenge openly: "It's a 24 hours work. My team and I work around the clock. It's a Monday to Sunday thing."

Fire safety protocols are built in, with some rooms designated as non-smoking and smoke detectors installed throughout. Other rooms accommodate smokers while maintaining safety standards.

EXPANSION AND VISION

The vision extends far beyond Lagos. There are already plans to expand the model to other locations, including Ibeju-Lekki near the Dangote Refinery and across the Southwest. "The plan is to have Ojaja Mall in all parts of the Southwest," Adebimpe confirmed, with international expansion to Ghana, Cameroon, and Dubai following soon after.

The mall offers a snapshot of how retail is evolving in Lagos, as a mix of commerce, services, and community.

For a city wrestling with power shortages, high business costs, and a shortage of community gathering spaces, this model presents a practical solution built by private capital but designed around public benefit.



JHOMES AIMS TO EASE NIGERIANS' RENT BURDEN - ADEBIYI



For many Nigerians, the search for a home begins with a familiar strain—raising one to two years' rent upfront.

In cities like Lagos and Abuja, this long-standing structure continues to limit access to housing, even for individuals with stable monthly incomes. For many, the challenge is not a lack of earnings, but the difficulty of mobilising large lump sums at once.

JHomes, a proptech platform founded by Oluwasegun Adebisi, is seeking to challenge that model by introducing a system that allows tenants to pay rent monthly.

"The problem isn't always income. It's how the system is set up. Many Nigerians earn monthly, but the system expects them to pay in bulk," he said.

The platform connects landlords, tenants, and property vendors within a digital system designed to replace bulk payments with structured monthly plans. It also incorporates features such as verified listings, digital contracts, and real-time payment tracking.

Nigeria's rental market has long been characterised by informality, with verbal agreements, inconsistent pricing, and limited tenant protections still common. These conditions have contributed to a lack of trust between landlords and tenants, reinforcing the preference for upfront payments.

"The market is fragmented and largely unregulated. Landlords demand bulk payments because they don't trust the system, and tenants often feel disadvantaged because there's no transparency," he said.

JHomes is built on the premise that technology can help address these gaps. Rental agreements on the platform are standardised and digitally generated, while transactions are processed through secure payment channels. Communication between parties is also integrated into the system, reducing reliance on intermediaries.

“What we’ve done is to build trust into the process. Instead of relying on assumptions, both parties can see everything clearly—payments, agreements, timelines,” he added.

For tenants, one of the immediate attractions is cost reduction. The platform removes agency fees—expenses that often add significantly to the cost of securing a home—and does not require subscription payments.

“Accessing housing in Nigeria often comes with too many extra costs. We believe those barriers can be reduced,” he said.

However, the shift to monthly rent raises questions about adoption, particularly among landlords who rely on upfront payments for financial security.

“Landlords are not wrong to want security. What we are offering is a different kind of assurance—consistent, trackable payments backed by enforceable agreements,” he said.

Even so, changing long-established practices in Nigeria’s housing market may take time.

“This system has been around for a long time, so change won’t happen overnight. Adoption is always the biggest challenge,” he said.

The broader economic context may also shape acceptance. With rising living costs and increasing pressure on household incomes, the ability to spread rent payments over time is likely to appeal to a growing segment of the population.

“This is about flexibility. Instead of locking up large sums of money in rent, people can manage their finances more effectively,” he said.

Beyond rent payments, JHomes is positioning itself as a wider rental management platform, offering tools for property listing, contract management, and tenant-landlord communication within a single system.

“Our goal is not just to make payments easier. It is to make the entire rental process simpler, clearer, and more efficient,” he said.

As Nigeria’s housing challenges persist, technology-driven solutions like JHomes reflect a gradual shift towards more structured alternatives. Whether such models can achieve widespread adoption will depend on how quickly both landlords and tenants are willing to adapt.

“We are building a system that reflects how Nigerians actually live and earn,” he said.



SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST: HOW 8 STARTUPS TURNED A 100-HOUR FESTIVAL INTO A N45M PAYDAY



What started as a 100-hour marathon of youth culture and creativity in Surulere ended as a life-changing event for eight Nigerian startups.

At The Gathering on 100, the atmosphere at the National Stadium shifted from festival vibes to the winner spirit intensity as emerging founders competed for a slice of a N45 million funding pool backed by MTN Nigeria.

The message from the judges was loud and clear: In 2026, a 'good idea' is not enough. To win, you had to prove you could execute.

Out of 30 hopefuls who entered the arena, only eight survived the final round of scrutiny.

The Big Winner: Hubpharm Africa didn't just walk away with the top prize of N15 million; they secured a golden ticket—a strategic enterprise partnership with MTN. Led by Sesan Kareem, the health-tech firm proved that solving pharmaceutical gaps is both big business and high impact.

The Runners-Up: Coconoto Ltd claimed the silver spot with N10 million, followed by Rava Send, whose cross-border payment solution earned them N5 million.

The Growth Squad: Five startups—URI Social, Dulces Jams, Kindly Book, Africa Medical Marketplace, and MyFund—each bagged N3 million to fuel their next phase of growth.



The 'Pitchathon' offered a glimpse into the future of Nigerian commerce, where Artificial Intelligence has now become a tool for survival.

Smart Commerce: Jakuta turned heads with an AI assistant that handles everything from customer calls to transactions. While the tech was impressive, the judges issued a challenge: Show us the traction.

Beauty & Wellness: Kindlybook proved that even local salons need automation, showing how a seamless booking and payment platform can transform a "small" business into a scalable engine.

Digital Management: Uri Social showcased how AI can take the heavy lifting out of social media for SMEs, while RavaSend tackled the complexities of moving money across African borders.

It wasn't all about code and algorithms. Dulces Jams brought a tangible solution to the table, demonstrating how locally sourced Nigerian produce can be transformed into high-value consumer goods. By turning agricultural potential into processed food, they addressed two of Nigeria's biggest hurdles: food waste and value chain creation.

The real takeaway for the ecosystem was the shift in investor DNA. Omotayo Ojutalayo, General Manager of Enterprise Business at MTN Nigeria, emphasized that they aren't looking for "cool" tech—they are looking for market-ready solutions.

The judges ignored the fluff and dug into the fundamentals: How do you acquire customers? Where is the revenue? Can this scale tomorrow? This funding round signals that Nigeria's startup scene is maturing, moving away from hype and toward hard evidence of execution.

UNLOCKING NIGERIA'S YOUTH CREATIVE ECONOMY THROUGH STRONGER IP LAWS

CHARLES OGWO



Nigeria is brimming with young creative talents such as musicians, filmmakers, designers, writers, and digital innovators shaping culture at home and commanding global attention.

Yet for many of these creators, turning originality into sustainable income remains an uphill climb. Weak enforcement, piracy, and limited awareness of intellectual property rights continue to erode the value of their work.

Strengthening intellectual property laws, and, crucially, making them effective in practice, offers a clear path to changing that reality.

Hassan Bala, managing director at Learn Africa Plc, emphasised that piracy is thriving in Nigeria due to a lack of strong institutions to fight and scotch the menace.

“If the Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC) had the strength it requires to fight piracy, just like the NDLEA or NAFDAC in the days of Dora Akunyili, it certainly would not have thrived,” he said.

Experts argue that creativity is the engine that drives economic progress in a country; however, with knowledge and creativity comes the responsibility to protect intellectual property.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Nigeria's creative sector, encompassing media, entertainment, beauty, lifestyle, visual arts, tourism, and hospitality, is projected to reach a staggering \$15 billion by 2025.

Nigeria's creative economy is vast and diverse as it houses creatives from different ethnic groups and can be described as ‘the interface between creativity, culture, economics and technology.’

In today's digital age, where information is easily accessible and widely shared, issues of copyright, plagiarism, and ethical use of information have become more critical than ever.

Emeke Iwerebon, chairman at Learn Africa Plc, said, “The widespread unauthorised distribution and counterfeit copies negatively impact the viability and profitability of legitimate publishers.

“Piracy stifles creativity as there can be no incentive to renew or innovate. Besides, it distorts pricing as pirates do not invest in origination, pay taxes, or royalties, and are not legitimate employers of labour.

And since this criminal enterprise is of an international dimension, and requires security agencies, the Department of Security Services (DSS) or other related agencies should be drafted in to help investigate the international conspirators.”

Experts argue that by protecting ownership and rewarding innovation, a more robust intellectual property framework can help transform creativity from passion into economic power.

“If we have people in the creative industry gaining as much as they ought to, most of them will not go for white-collar jobs. Most people will prefer to be creative writers.



Hence, anything impeding the citizens from getting the maximum returns on their investment should be viewed as sabotage and economic crime,” they emphasised.

Protecting intellectual property can help attract investment, formalise informal sectors, and give young Nigerians the confidence to create, distribute, and monetise their work at scale.

John Asein, the director-general at the Nigerian Copyright Commission, disclosed that the commission is ramping up efforts to unlock the economic potential of Nigeria’s youth population by turning creativity into a viable source of wealth.

Asein, speaking at the 2026 World Intellectual Property Day in Lagos, said, “With a significant proportion of Nigerians under the age of 30, the country is uniquely positioned to harness the creative and innovative potential of its youth.

“This milestone affirms the central role of intellectual property as a strategic driver of innovation, youth empowerment, and sustainable wealth creation.”

He emphasised that the theme, “IP and Sports: Ready. Set. Innovate”, is both timely and compelling.

“It reflects the growing importance of sports as an economic sector and underscores the role of IP in transforming talent into tangible value.

“It also resonates strongly with Nigeria’s national character, defined by energy, resilience, discipline, and ambition, qualities that are most evident in our youthful population,” he said.

However, he said the ecosystem faces significant challenges. “Piracy, counterfeiting and other forms of intellectual property infringement, particularly the unauthorised streaming of live sports content, continue to undermine legitimate markets, discourage investment and threaten the long-term sustainability of the sector.”

To mitigate these challenges, he said the commission has intensified its enforcement efforts to combat digital piracy and related infringements.

“Leveraging the provisions of the Copyright Act, 2022, the NCC is deploying modern enforcement mechanisms to address illegal streaming, cable piracy, and unauthorised public exhibitions,” he said.

Asein noted that, by embarking on stronger intellectual property protection, Nigeria would not only safeguard ideas but also unlock an entire generation’s potential to drive growth, jobs, and global influence.

Toyosi Alabi, partner in charge of Olaniwun Ajayi LP’s intellectual property practice, believes awareness is essential to curbing piracy.

“I think it’s important for people to be aware that the fact that something is free and readily accessible doesn’t mean that it is right,” she said.

Alabi revealed that NCC has upscaled, “They now have a protective mechanism for monitoring and enforcing and shutting down digital sites that are violating this right by illegal broadcasts.

“They have a monitoring unit specifically for digital infringements, and we’re letting people know that this is there,” she said.

Unlocking Nigeria’s youth creative economy depends not just on talent and innovation, but on a legal framework that recognises, protects, and rewards originality.

Stronger intellectual property laws can serve as the backbone of this transformation, giving young creators the confidence to produce, share, and monetise their work without fear of exploitation.



BHUTAN OPENS A NEW CHAPTER IN TOURISM WITH AIRPORT AND PLANNED CITY IN GELEPHU

CHISOM MICHAEL



Bhutan is preparing for one of the biggest shifts in its tourism and economic strategy in decades, as the Himalayan kingdom moves ahead with plans for a new international airport and a large-scale urban development in its southern region.

For a country known for limiting visitor numbers and carefully managing foreign access, the project signals a notable step toward wider global engagement while keeping its long-standing commitment to controlled tourism.

At the centre of this transition is Gelephu, a lowland town near Bhutan's border with India. There, a new international airport is scheduled to open in 2029. The airport is expected to become the country's main aviation hub and a gateway to the proposed Gelephu Mindfulness City (GMC), a planned administrative and economic zone designed to attract residents, businesses and travellers.

Earlier this year, Bhutan's King, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, joined thousands of volunteers to help clear

land for the airport project. The development has already gained global attention after receiving the Future Project of the Year award at the 2025 World Architecture Festival.

The airport's design reflects Bhutan's cultural identity, with a timber terminal built from local wood and intended to regulate humidity naturally. Plans also include spaces for yoga, meditation and wellness activities. However, beyond its design, the airport's significance lies in its role in expanding access to Bhutan.

For years, Bhutan has remained one of the world's least accessible destinations.

The kingdom only began welcoming tourists in 1974, when it introduced a "High Value, Low Volume" policy aimed at protecting its heritage and environment. Until the Covid-19 pandemic, most international visitors had to book through licensed Bhutanese tour operators and pay a daily package rate that covered accommodation, transport, meals and a guide.

Since 2022, Bhutan has revised that structure, replacing the all-inclusive tariff with a Sustainable Development Fee of \$100 per adult per night, while allowing travellers to arrange their own logistics separately.

Even with these changes, Bhutan has retained its focus on regulated tourism.

The country's only international airport has been in Paro, in western Bhutan. The airport is served by two airlines and handles a limited number of flights each day. Due to its location in a narrow mountain valley, landings require pilots to navigate visually without radar support. Fewer than 50 pilots are qualified to land there.

As a result, reaching Bhutan often involves long layovers in cities such as Bangkok, Kathmandu or Delhi, with travel costs remaining high.

The new airport in Gelephu is expected to change that.

With a projected capacity of 123 flights a day, it could significantly increase the number of international arrivals and reposition Bhutan as a more connected destination in South Asia.

But the airport is only one part of a wider national strategy.

The Gelephu Mindfulness City is intended to serve as an independent city within Bhutan, blending investment incentives, environmental planning and cultural principles. Officials say it could eventually house up to one million Bhutanese and foreign residents by 2060.

The idea was first conceived more than a decade ago, but the pandemic accelerated its urgency.

Bhutan's prolonged closure during Covid-19 weakened the tourism sector and added pressure to an ongoing youth migration trend. Policymakers now see GMC as a way to create employment, attract international business and broaden the country's economic base.

"GMC will create a lot of job and investment opportunities," Dr Lotay Tshering, former prime minister and current governor of GMC, said. "But we must have flights coming in... we must have passengers."

For tourism officials, the project is also about changing how visitors experience Bhutan.

Most international tourists currently follow routes through western and central Bhutan, visiting destinations such as Thimphu, Punakha and Bumthang. Southern Bhutan, by contrast, has remained less visited.

That may soon change.

Officials want Gelephu to become both a destination and a transit point for travellers.

"We envision Gelephu as a stopover for international visitors," said Tshering Dolkar, the region's tourism director.

"Instead of flying through Hong Kong or Bangkok, travellers will opt to fly through Gelephu and spend some days on a jungle safari or in meditation."

Southern Bhutan offers a different tourism profile from the mountain monasteries and alpine routes that define the country's global image.

The region includes subtropical forests, rivers, farmland and access to Royal Manas National Park, Bhutan's first national park. The reserve is home to elephants, rhinos, tigers, clouded leopards and hundreds of bird species, including the critically endangered white-bellied heron.

"Southern Bhutan, where mountains give way to jungle, is a hidden sanctuary for the natural world," said Matthew DeSantis, founder of MyBhutan. "The south has become a haven for endangered species. It's one of the wildest places on our planet."

Tourism development in the region will also include spiritual and cultural experiences.

Plans are underway for retreat centres, temples and a proposed dzong with guest accommodation and spaces for Buddhist study and cultural performances.

A new 168km route known as the Lotus-Born Trail is also expected to open in 2028. The eight-day journey will connect southern Bhutan to central regions, following the path of Guru Rinpoche, who introduced Buddhism to Bhutan.

In addition, travellers will have access to rafting, birdwatching, eco-camps, homestays and fly-fishing facilities.

Local authorities are also revitalising Gelephu's Old Town through a cultural and culinary programme designed to showcase southern Bhutan's communities. Food offerings will include thali platters, dal and ema datshi, while a Heritage Village will present Bhutan's traditional arts and crafts.

For Bhutan, the developments in Gelephu represent more than infrastructure expansion.

They reflect a balancing act between preserving identity and opening new pathways for growth.

"There aren't too many raw jungles left in the world," said Tshering. "This area is home to raw jungle with natural untamed tigers. That is the jewel we have."

As construction continues, Bhutan is positioning itself to redefine its role in regional tourism and global investment, without abandoning the values that have long shaped the kingdom's approach to development.

"We have an opportunity to try new things," King Wangchuck said. "I hope this work will generate merit for generations to come."

NEW RAIL ROUTE TO CONNECT FINLAND, SWEDEN THIS SUMMER

CHISOM MICHAEL



Two Nordic countries will be connected by passenger rail for the first time this summer, marking a shift in how northern Europe links people, trade and tourism across borders.

From late June, travellers will be able to move between Finland and Sweden by train through a new cross-border arrangement centred on the towns of Tornio in Finland and Haparanda in Sweden. The development follows a signed agreement and financing plan between both countries aimed at improving rail traffic and reducing reliance on road transport.

For years, rail passengers moving between the two towns had to continue their journeys by bus or private car, even though railway tracks existed on both sides of the border. The missing link was not infrastructure alone, but a technical divide rooted in history.

Finland uses a rail gauge of 1524mm, a legacy of its time under the Russian Empire in the 19th century. Sweden, like most of Europe, operates on the standard 1435mm gauge. This difference has long prevented seamless rail operations across the border.

The new arrangement avoids the need for costly gauge conversion. Instead, authorities have restored the historic train station in Haparanda, first built in the early 1900s,

to serve as the transfer point between both rail systems. Passengers will disembark from one train, pass through the station, and board another service on the other side.

The project carries significance beyond regional travel. Once operational, it will form part of what could become the European Union's longest continuous rail journey, stretching from Finland's northern region to Portugal's Algarve.

For rail operators and tourism stakeholders, the route offers a wider opportunity. Cities such as Rovaniemi and Oulu in Finland will gain direct rail access into Sweden, expanding travel options for residents and visitors. It also presents an alternative to the long-standing Helsinki–Stockholm ferry route, with travellers able to choose a rail journey lasting just over 24 hours.

The timing is also notable for Finland. Since cross-border rail services with Russia were suspended in 2022 following the invasion of Ukraine, the country has had fewer international rail connections.

This westward link signals a new chapter. It strengthens Finland's connection to Europe, supports low-emission transport goals, and reflects growing demand for long-distance rail travel across the continent.

THE GLOBAL MARKET LOVES AFRICAN ART, BUT DO ARTISTS BENEFIT?

Visibility does not pay rent or fund materials

When a painting sells for a million dollars or more in London, it makes headlines. What does not make headlines is that the artist most times receives little or nothing from the record transaction. That gap, between the price a work commands and what returns to the person who made it, is the defining tension of the African art market today.

Over the past decade, African art has moved from the margins of international collecting to its centre. Sotheby's and Bonhams launched dedicated Modern and Contemporary African Art sales. The 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair expanded from London to New York and Marrakech. Zeitz MOCAA opened in Cape Town. The Museum of West African Art in Benin City broke ground. These are not small developments. They represent a structural shift in how global institutions perceive and trade African creative work.

Yet structural shifts at the top of a market do not always reach the people who produce the work. Visibility is not the same as equity, and demand is not the same as sustainability.

In this digest, we examine who is actually profiting from the boom in African art globally, what artists experience behind the auction headlines, and what a more equitable ecosystem might look like.

The Numbers Behind the Boom

The African art auction market grew from about \$33 million in 2016 to \$87 million in 2022, a 160% increase in six years, according to ArtTactic. Julie Mehretu's Walkers With the Dawn and Morning sold for \$10.74 million at Sotheby's New York in November 2023, setting the verified auction record for an African-born artist. Benedict Enwonwu's FESTAC '77 fetched £444,900 at Bonhams London in October 2024. Auction values pulled back in subsequent years, but lot volumes increased, suggesting the market is widening even as top-end prices cool.

These numbers attract attention, investment, and new collectors. They also create a perception that African artists are thriving. That perception deserves scrutiny.



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Who Profits When the Gravel?

The art market has a chain. The gallery sells first. The dealer places the work. The auction house handles the secondary sale. Every link in that chain takes a cut. In most cases, the artist sits outside it entirely. There are no resale royalties in the United States.

South Africa's Aspire Art Auctions introduced its own voluntary royalty scheme as far back as 2016 and was invited to present the model at a WIPO summit in Geneva, but legislation across the continent remains inconsistent and largely unenforced.

Artists based on the continent face an additional layer of difficulty. Many lack long-term gallery representation, legal support, or financial literacy around secondary-market dynamics. The international market can discover an artist, drive up demand for their work, and generate significant wealth for collectors and dealers — all without materially improving the artist's life.

Building from the Ground Up

Where institutions have been slow, artists have moved quickly. Amoako Boafo opened dot.ateliers in Accra, a studio, gallery, and community space designed by David Adjaye. Kehinde Wiley launched Black Rock Senegal. Michael Armitage founded the Nairobi Contemporary Art Institute to address a shortage of exhibition spaces in East Africa. Kaloki Nyamai built an art library in Nairobi because, as he said plainly, there was no art library in Kenya, and the government had removed art from the public school curriculum.

These artist-led initiatives are doing the work that state institutions and international art bodies have not prioritised. They are building archives, running residencies, and creating local validation systems that do not depend on auction calendars set in London or New York.

A Market Still Answering to Itself

The conversations are shifting. Resale royalties are being debated. Ethical collecting is entering gallery discourse. New models of artist partnership and profit-sharing are being tested. But these remain conversations, not structures. In 2025, Sotheby's folded its dedicated Modern and Contemporary African Art department into its broader international sales programme — a cost-cutting decision that, whatever its commercial logic, removed a public signal of value the ecosystem had come to depend on. The specialist Hannah O'Leary described it as "a natural progression in a market that has come of age". Others in the industry called it a blow.

The market has found African art. However, the harder question, whether African art has found a market that actually serves it, remains, stubbornly, open.



Julie Mehretu's Walkers With the Dawn and Morning



The Studio Museum in Harlem: Championing Artists of African Descent for 50 Years



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

CUSTOMER LOYALTY VS BRAND LOYALTY: HOW TO MASTER BOTH

FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA

When it comes to building a successful business that generates consistent profits, few factors matter as much as customer and brand loyalty. Fostering a dedicated base of loyal customers can help to boost revenue, maximise your marketing efforts and give you a valuable edge in even the most competitive industries. However, not all customer relationships are built the same, and understanding the distinction between brand and customer loyalty is crucial to optimising your approach to both.

Defining customer loyalty

Customer loyalty refers to a sustained positive relationship between your audience and your brand. As a metric, it uses past customer experiences to gauge the likelihood that they will engage with your brand in the future.

Unlike brand loyalty, customer loyalty is primarily concerned with earning allegiance through discounts, rewards and other transactional incentives. While it does require a certain level of emotional connection to your audience, the main indicator of successful customer loyalty is the attraction of repeat purchases. Quality products, exceptional customer service, competitive pricing and a convenient user experience are all indispensable elements of an effective customer loyalty programme.

Defining brand loyalty

While it can be tricky to find a single brand loyalty definition which adequately summarises this complex idea, a lot can be explained by understanding customer emotions. Whereas customer loyalty revolves around repeat business and commercial preferences, brand loyalty is far more concerned with customer experiences, perceptions and emotions.

In simple terms, brand loyalty can be defined as a deep, sustained allegiance to a particular brand due to the quality and service they provide. Brand-loyal customers stick with their chosen company because they believe that no competitor can outperform them.

Once a business acquires customers who are loyal to its brand, it has a far easier time retaining them than those who rely on customer loyalty alone.

Customer loyalty can therefore be understood as a more commercially-focused subset of brand loyalty — which is wider in scope, emotional in nature and a more reliable indicator of long-term success.

Customer Loyalty vs Brand Loyalty: Which is more important?

Given that brand loyalty involves forging a deeper emotional relationship with your audience than customer loyalty, it seems clear that brand loyalty should be the more important metric for business leaders. However, this isn't necessarily the case.

One of the most crucial aspects of this discussion to understand is that brand and customer loyalty are inherently connected, with the success of one naturally reinforcing the success of the other. If you begin to acquire loyal customers through sales, discounts and the provision of a quality service, for example, they will be far more inclined to engage with your business at the brand-loyal level.

Similarly, if you have a dedicated customer base which is emotionally loyal to your brand, they are far more likely to make repeat purchases and support your business commercially.

5 ways to improve customer and brand loyalty in your business

Whether you're working on improving customer experience, maximising brand visibility or just want to boost profits for your business, establishing an effective customer and brand loyalty programme is always a worthwhile venture. From consolidating your brand messaging to building an engaged customer base and optimising your customer service offering — here are our top 5 tips for attracting and retaining loyal customers.

1. Improve your online content

Establishing a powerful online presence is essential to the success of any business in today's world. However, if the digital content you produce isn't catered to your target audience, you could be losing out on a lot of potentially loyal customers.

Creating content that is helpful, relevant and informative will not only engage the kind of customers you're looking for, it will also help to retain them when produced on a consistent basis.

2. Create a consistent brand identity

In a world where we are bombarded with a constant stream of online and out-of-home advertising, making your brand stand out from the crowd has never been more vital. Creating a recognisable brand identity that customers can relate to is all about consistency, ensuring that your target audience feels a sense of connection and familiarity at every touch point. To achieve this, you'll need to ensure that all channels within your business are guided by the same core principles.

3. Focus on customer service

The most seemingly-obvious methods are often the most effective in creating brand loyalty for your business. Few elements of a brand encourage customers to stick around quite like quality customer service. Everyone loves a brand that prioritises and genuinely cares about their needs, which is why optimising customer service across every channel is so valuable when it comes to cultivating loyalty.

While this may seem like an obvious area to improve in, refining your customer service offering to an industry-leading standard doesn't come easy. However, the brand loyalty your business will develop is more than worth the extra cost.

4. Launch a loyalty programme

Loyalty programmes offer an extremely effective method of fostering customer loyalty in a way that benefits and feels natural to your audience. Whether you choose to go with a points-based system or allow your customers to progress through tiers, loyalty programmes create a meaningful incentive for your audience to continue engaging with and making purchases from your business.

While this may seem like a fool-proof strategy, it's important to remember that a successful loyalty programme needs to work for your business, too. Avoid being overly generous with your rewards, and make sure to constantly improve your programme by making adjustments based on customer insights and data.

5. Cultivate a community

Having constant, instant access to a community of your most loyal customers is something that business owners once only dreamed of. But with the modern ability to share your brand on social media, gathering all of your most loyal customers in one place has never been easier.

Establishing a strong brand community gives your customers a sense of belonging, while providing cost-effective marketing and building a strong brand identity for your business.

The beauty of developing a community for your customers is that it truly does benefit everyone involved. Whether through social media, email newsletters or a dedicated community platform — bringing your customers together is indispensable to any brand loyalty programme.

Last line

Customers are looking for brands they can trust. And, they want to have similar brand experiences time and time again. Consistent messaging and alignment around common goals will help drive brand loyalty.



FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA

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WEEKENDER

MOVIE REVIEW

180 (2022)

If you enjoy South Africa crime movies, then you would need to check this out, quickly as this brand-new movie that just got added will be worth your while. Zak was a very handsome guy who suffered from bad anger issues, his brother had already taken jail time for him earlier because of his temper, and would not allow him ruin his life and that of his family this time, but despite all admonition and advice, Zak would listen to no one; Zak's son was wrongfully murdered by some bad guys at the traffic light, Zak was right and wanted to prove a point, one that wasn't necessary, if only he had listened to his son things would have gone differently. You will need to check out this movie to find out if he was able to bring all the bad guys to book. The 94min South African crime, thriller, drama movie was directed by Alex Yazbek, they featured actors like Prince Grootboom, Noxolo Dlamini, Danica DelaRey, Warren Masemola, Desmond Dube, Fana mokoena, kabelo tkai, Bongile Mantsai and many more.



MIGRATION (2023)

It was nice to see something totally different from my usual action-packed movies and I was glad I did, I could watch this over the weekend. The movie was centered around a family of ducks, "father, mother, father, and 2 kids, the mother and 2 kids wanted to see the world, but the father wanted somewhere that they were used to and safe, he wanted them to remain in the small pond, but they wanted to see the world. The mother said it not a migration rather, it's an adventure. She wanted to leave the pond and go see the world with the kids. You will need to go check out this sweet interesting movie to see how they started and ended their adventure to Jamaica. The 83min family films, kids & family, comedy movie was directed by Benjamin Renner, they featured cast Kumail Nanjiani, Elizabeth Banks, Casper Jennings, Tresi Gazai, Danny DeVito, Keegan Michael Key, Awkwafina, Carol Kane, David Mitchell, Isabela Merced and many more.



DON'T TELL MOM THE BABYSITTER'S DEAD (2024)

What was supposed to be a very simple 2months vacation quickly turned into a catastrophic holiday. Tanya's mom was going through a lot and so her office asked her to take 2 months break to get better. She decided to get a babysitter to take care of the kid while she was a way. A few days into her trip the babysitter dies unexpectedly leaving the kids all by themselves with no funds for feeding. In order to survive Tanya will have to find a proper grown-up job to enable her earn enough to feed herself and her siblings. After she discovered that being an Uber driver won't cut it. You need to go check out this movie to find out how she got the job, if she was able to sustain it and how the holiday ended for everyone. The 99mins comedies, language, feel good, goofy movie was directed by Wade Allain-Marcus, the actors included Simone Joy Jones, Patricia Williams, Danielle T. Handley Jr., Miles Fowler, Iantha Richardson, June Sawbb, Nicole Richie and many more.



WEEKEND QUOTES



1

Falling in love is a choice.
Holding onto hatred is a
choice. Choose the less
painful experience
.....WhispersbyTEN

2

Ease and speed are your
experience this half
.....WhispersbyTEN

3

What you call shame or
disgrace is some person's
desired escape route.
Hahaha!
.....WhispersbyTEN

4

Choosing to stay in pain
doesn't show the intensity of
the hurt. It only deprives you
of a good, forward-thinking
start time. Shake it off
.....WhispersbyTEN