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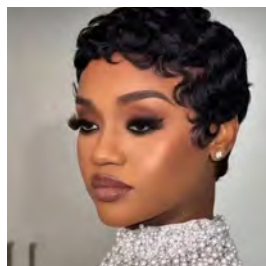


How Nigerian Harvard Alumna, Yinka Ogunbiyi Secured \$7M for the World's First Hair-Braiding Robot



PROFILE

Meet Onyekachi Egejorum, the 11-Year-Old Nigerian Who Just Conquered World Math



FASHION

How Chioma Adeleke Made Short Hair the Ultimate Luxury Statement

PUBLISHER/EDITOR IN CHIEF
Frank Aigbogun

EDITOR
Lolade Akinmurele

FOUNDING EDITOR BD WEEKENDER
Lehlé Balde

DEPUTY EDITOR BD WEEKENDER
Ifeoma Okeke-Korieocha

CHIEF SALES AND MARKETING OFFICER
Ijeoma Ude

ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER
Queen Nkwocha

COPY SALES MANAGER
Florence Kadiri

DIGITAL SALES MANAGER
Linda Ochugbua

HEAD OF DIGITALS
Nduka Asoh

DESIGN AND ART DIRECTION
Emmanuel Odo
(officialedenis@gmail.com)

CONTRIBUTORS

Linda Ochugbua
Chisom Michael
Feyisitan Ijimakinwa
Ekemini Akpakpan
Chinonye Isidienu
Ekaette Okon-Joseph
Tomilayo Imade
Charlse Ogwo
Royal Ibeh

ENQUIRIES

weekender@businessday.ng

ADVERTS

Ijeoma Ude
+2348033225506

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LEGAL ADVISERS

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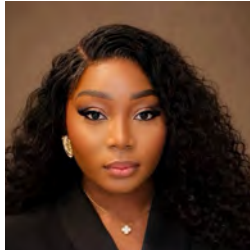
BUSINESS DAY
WEEKENDER

C O N T E N T



6

LAUGHTER IN THE MIRROR



13

INTERVIEW

Why trust is the most valuable currency in fintech — Perkins Ogedengbe



24

FOOD

Discovering Hungry Lion through Swoop

34

FEATURE

Adire Renaissance drives strategic growth across Nigeria's adire value chain

37

WOMEN

Reimagining Education: Where Do All the Brilliant Girls Go?

41

EDUCATION

How Germany's 'tuition-free' hides financial gate, filters out capable students

52

BOOK REVIEW

From Ashes to Air: Poems on Love, Loss and the Life After

54

MOVIE REVIEW

56

BD QUOTES



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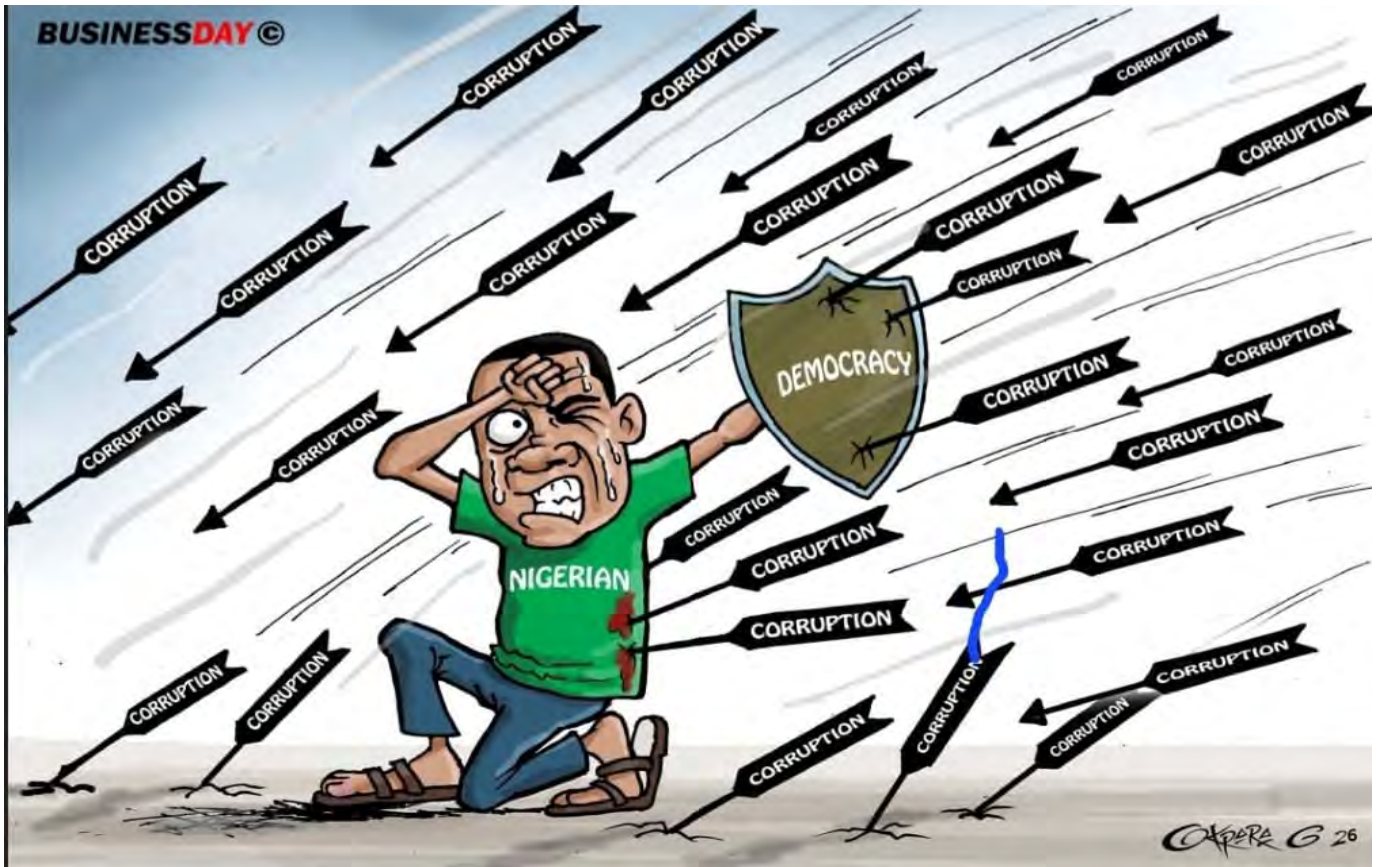
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HOW NIGERIAN HARVARD ALUMNA, YINKA OGUNBIYI SECURED \$7M FOR THE WORLD'S FIRST HAIR-BRAIDING ROBOT

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



The multi-billion-dollar Black hair and protective styling market is experiencing a profound technological disruption.

Yinka Ogunbiyi, a Nigerian-American biomechanical engineer and Harvard graduate, has successfully raised \$7 million in seed funding to commercialize HaloBraid, the world's first patented braid-assist robot.

The funding round was led by Seven Seven Six—the venture capital firm anchored by Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian—with heavy institutional backing from AlleyCorp and Bling Capital. Far from a speculative tech gimmick, the robotics startup launches with massive market validation, boasting a commercial

waiting list of over 7,000 professional salons eager to deploy the infrastructure.

Ogunbiyi's trajectory bridges top-tier academic research with real-world consumer problems. Holding a joint MS/MBA from Harvard Engineering School and Harvard Business School, her early career focused on building smart kitchen appliances and connected IoT (Internet of Things) devices.

The concept for HaloBraid emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic when Ogunbiyi spent four grueling days installing her own knotless braids at home. Recognizing an untapped innovation vacuum in a booming global

industry, she teamed up with co-founder David Afolabi to engineer a scalable solution.

Human-Robot Collaboration in the Salon Chair

Unlike blunt automation projects designed to displace human labor, HaloBraid operates strictly as a cobot (collaborative robot). It is engineered to sit beside professional braiders, taking over the labor-intensive, repetitive mid-shaft braiding movements that eat up 80 percent of salon appointments.

“I don’t think anything will get lost from the experience. If anything, it enriches it. Technology simply assists with the repetitive movements that consume the most time and place the greatest strain on the body,” Yinka Ogunbiyi, Founder & CEO, HaloBraid said.

The workflow keeps the human artisan firmly at the center:

The Foundation: The professional stylist manually parts the scalp, sections the hair, and weaves the foundational anchor knot to preserve natural edge tension.

The Automation: HaloBraid attaches to complete the repetitive down-shaft weaving motion, cutting standard knotless braid appointment times roughly in half.

The Finish: The stylist unhooks the unit to seal, trim, and style the ends to the client’s custom preference.

Mitigating the Occupational Hazard Deficit

Beyond the undeniable economic benefits of doubling a salon’s daily customer volume, HaloBraid targets a severe health crisis among Black hair professionals. Decades of continuous braiding leave a high percentage of stylists suffering from early-onset carpal tunnel syndrome, chronic arthritis, and severe spinal strain.

By offloading the mechanical toll of the braid-cycle to automated components, the device directly extends the career longevity of independent beauty entrepreneurs.

With 95 percent of Black women surveyed stating they would wear protective styles more frequently if appointments weren’t an all-day endurance test, Ogunbiyi’s \$7 million seed round isn’t just an investment in a machine—it is the financial unlocking of billions of hours of productivity for the global Black consumer economy.



MEET ONYEKACHI EGEJURUM, THE 11-YEAR-OLD NIGERIAN WHO JUST CONQUERED WORLD MATH

CHARLES OGWO



In another remarkable feat for Nigerian academic excellence, mathematics prodigy Onyekachi Egejorum has emerged as a gold winner at the International STEM Olympiad, reinforcing the country's growing reputation for producing world-class young talents in science and mathematics.

Egejorum, 11-year-old, pupil of Diamond Special College, Owerri, is already making his mark at a time when many children are just discovering their love for numbers.

He was announced the best in Mathematics in the world in the primary category of the International STEM Olympiad held in Rome, Italy, recently.

Speaking about his feat, Alex Onyia, the CEO of Educare and convener of South-East Maths Olympiad, said, "This is the beginning of greatness for the country."

Recall that Egejorum emerged the winner of the 2026 Southeast Primary School Maths Olympiad, scoring an impressive 13 out of 15 points in the grand finale.

He was declared the overall best student in his category after defeating over 11,500 other participants; hence emerging the winner of the maiden edition of the competition in the Southeast for the primary category, clinching the N2 million prize money.

This great feat qualified him to represent Nigeria at the international level of the competition.

Being sponsored by Onyia, a renowned education advocate, through his Intervention for South East Education (ISEE) initiative, Egejorum and other Nigerian geniuses excelled, clinching gold medals.



Stakeholders believe that Onyia's intense regional efforts to nurture STEM talent in Nigeria's Southeast are yielding great dividends; hence, they say, "The future of STEM in Nigeria is looking very bright with minds such as Egejorum leading the way."

Speaking to the media on Saturday, Egejorum credits his success to dedicated teachers who drilled him until midnight and his own shift to enjoying mathematics from basic four, underscoring how early passion and rigorous preparation can elevate underdogs in competitive academics.

His victory attracted several attentions, signifying regional pride amid Nigeria's education challenges, and highlighting the school's dual wins and contrasting Southeast's academic focus against national divides in youth development.

The South East Maths Olympiad 2026 was the inaugural edition of a major regional mathematics competition organised for students in the Southeast geopolitical zone, which comprises Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo states.

The goal is to promote mathematical excellence, critical thinking, and STEM skills among young students, with plans to make it an annual event and potentially increase prize money significantly in future editions.

The competition featured various categories, such as Primary school, Junior Secondary (JSS), and Senior

Secondary (SS1–SS3); and the competition format involved fully computer-based testing (CBT), no calculators allowed, emphasising pure problem-solving and logic.

The competition had over 11,500 participants from across the five states, making it one of the largest academic contests in the region.

The prizes range from N2 to N5 million for top winners in each category. The winner in the primary category went home with N2 million, while the winner in the junior secondary category received N3 million, and the winner in the senior secondary category went home with N5 million.

According to the organisers, there are additional rewards for outstanding teachers, including N1–2 million bonuses; one teacher from the winning school reportedly earned N2 million, with students from the same school collectively winning N8 million across categories.

The competition sparked massive interest, with reports of students advancing far ahead in their school syllabus due to preparation. Imo State performed strongly overall, with multiple top wins and the highest points tally.

Besides, it highlighted growing efforts to invest in education and talent development in the Southeast amid broader national challenges.

Chimdiebube Onwubiko, a 13-year-old, and Don Munachimso, a 17-year-old student, also won gold medals in their various categories.

HOW CHIOMA ADELEKE MADE SHORT HAIR THE ULTIMATE LUXURY STATEMENT

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



For decades, the standard fashion hair look for high-society African glamour was explicitly clear: the longer, fuller, and more voluminous the hair, the higher the status. Multi-directional bone-straight bundles, sweeping frontals, and intricate, waist-length braids have long reigned supreme as the ultimate luxury markers for the continent's elite women.

But a profound aesthetic shift is underway. Across Africa's fashion capitals, a growing cohort of high-profile tastemakers are deliberately shedding the weight of heavy extensions, choosing instead to chop it all off.

Leading this quiet revolution is none other than Chioma Adeleke (née Rowland), chef, style icon, and wife of Afrobeats megastar Davido, whose recent embrace of an ultra-sleek, minimalist short hair has completely rewritten the narrative on modern African beauty.

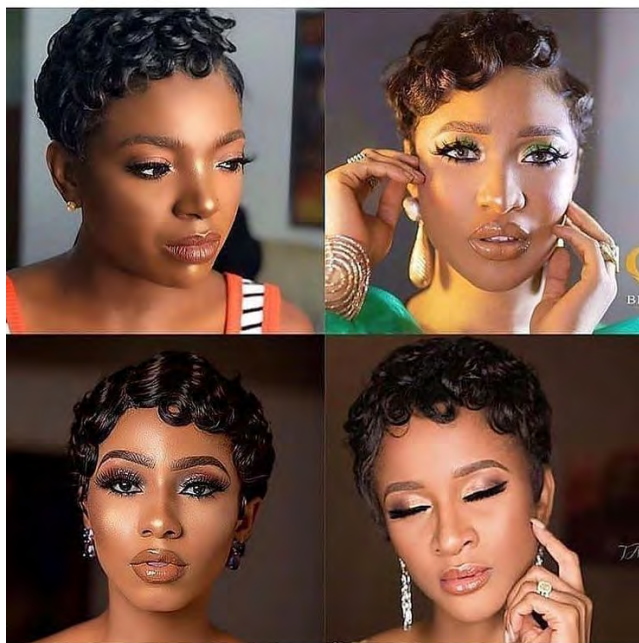
The 'Chioma Effect': Redefining the Billionaire Wife Aesthetic
When Chioma debuted her chic short pixie cut for her white wedding, it sent shockwaves through the digital landscape.

As the partner of one of the world's biggest music exports, her style choices are meticulously scrutinized and instantly emulated. Historically, women in her social stratum were expected to sport gravity-defying luxury wigs to match their haute

couture ensembles.

Instead, Chioma's power chop signals a new era of effortless luxury. By pairing a closely cropped, perfectly tailored short hair with high-end designer statement pieces, she has proven that femininity and status do not hide behind inches of hair.

Her wedding hair acted as a facial frame, pushing her natural features, her flawless skin, and her quiet-luxury wardrobe into sharp, unfiltered focus.



The Psychology of the Chop:

Confidence Over Concealment

What is driving this widespread movement among modern women? In beauty psychology, short hair carries an entirely different energetic weight than long hair. Long hair can often function as a safety blanket—a visual screen to hide behind. Short hair, conversely, is an act of radical exposure.

When a woman wears short hair, she is telling the room that her confidence is completely self-contained. It shifts the gaze away from the product on her head to the structure of her jawline, the posture of her neck, and the clarity of her expressions. It is an aesthetic that commands attention precisely because it refuses to try too hard.

The Liberation of Time and Motion

Beyond the undeniable style statement, the short-hair movement is rooted in a desire for lifestyle liberation. The modern African woman is moving faster than ever before—navigating corporate boardrooms, launching venture-backed startups, traveling globally, and managing households.

Spending four to six hours in a salon chair every two weeks for touch-ups, gluing down frontals, and managing heavy synthetic or

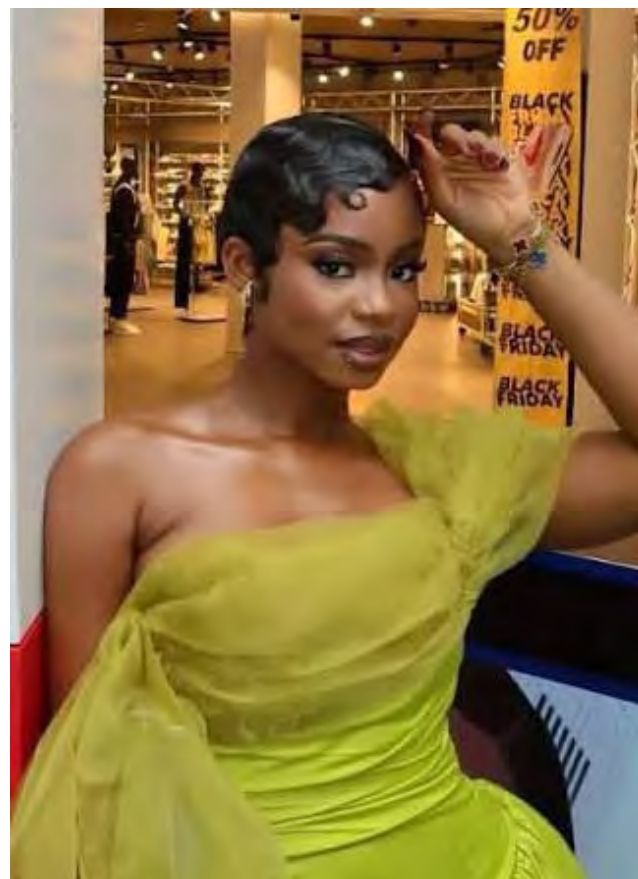
human bundles is increasingly viewed as an unnecessary drain on productivity.

“Short hair isn’t a compromise on glamour; it’s an optimization of it. It takes away the performance of beauty and leaves behind pure, unadulterated style.”

A precision cut allows a woman to wake up, wash, moisturize, and step out the door looking meticulously put together within five minutes. In an era where time is the ultimate luxury asset, short hair is the ultimate life hack.

Setting the New Pace

From edgy, dyed pixie cuts on the runways of Lagos Fashion Week to the regal finger-waves seen at elite luxury launches, short hair has officially shed its old association with schoolgirls or financial lack. Today, it is the definitive uniform of the chic, self-assured African woman who defines luxury on her own terms. By stripping away the noise of the bundles, icons like Chioma are proving that true glamour isn’t something you buy and sew on - it’s something you project.



WHY TRUST IS THE MOST VALUABLE CURRENCY IN FINTECH

— Perkins Ogedengbe

CHISOM MICHAEL





Perkins Ogedengbe is a global partnerships, market expansion, and commercial strategy leader with experience scaling platform ecosystems across Africa, Europe, and North America. She specialises in building enterprise partnerships, launching products in regulated markets, and driving platform adoption and revenue growth across emerging economies. With a background in fintech infrastructure, growth strategy, and founder-led operations, she has helped organisations expand into new markets while delivering sustainable commercial growth. In this interview with CHISOM MICHAEL, she discusses building trust in global partnerships, balancing growth with regulatory compliance, scaling fintech across emerging markets, cross-border payments in Africa, AI's role in financial services, leadership, and the future of financial infrastructure.

You have worked across Africa, Europe, and North America. What differences have shaped the way partnerships are built and sustained in these markets?

One of the biggest lessons I've learned is that while payments are global, trust is still built locally.

Across Europe and North America, partnerships are typically built on institutional maturity. The conversations

begin with regulatory compliance, operational resilience, cybersecurity, governance and how your infrastructure integrates into existing financial systems. There is an expectation that these foundations already exist, so commercial discussions focus on scale, efficiency and long-term value creation.

Across much of Africa, those same principles matter, but the context is different. Financial infrastructure is evolving at different speeds across the continent, regulatory frameworks are becoming increasingly sophisticated, and customer behaviour varies significantly from one market to another. A payment solution that succeeds in East Africa may require an entirely different commercial and regulatory approach in West or Central Africa.

What has always impressed me about Africa is its willingness to innovate around infrastructure constraints. Mobile money, agency banking and digital wallets didn't emerge because they were fashionable; they emerged because they solved real economic problems.

Ultimately, sustainable partnerships are not determined by geography but by alignment. Whether you're working with a financial institution in London, Lagos or Toronto, the same questions eventually arise: Can we trust your infrastructure? Can we rely on your governance? Will this partnership still create value five years from now?

Technology may open the first door, but trust is what keeps partnerships alive.

Expanding financial infrastructure across regulated markets often comes with operational and policy challenges. What has been the most difficult balance to maintain between growth and compliance?

There is often an assumption that growth and compliance sit on opposite sides of the table. I don't see them that way.

The strongest financial institutions recognise that compliance is not simply about satisfying regulators; it is about protecting customers, preserving market confidence and creating sustainable businesses.

When you're expanding across multiple jurisdictions, every market presents a different regulatory philosophy. Some regulators prioritise innovation, others prioritise consumer protection, while others focus heavily on financial stability and anti-money laundering controls. The challenge is building operating models that can accommodate those differences without creating unnecessary complexity for customers.

I've learned that the organisations which scale most successfully are rarely those that move the fastest. They are the ones that invest early in governance, transaction monitoring, risk management and regulatory engagement.

That discipline becomes increasingly important as payments become more instantaneous. Faster settlement should never mean weaker oversight.

In many respects, compliance has become a competitive advantage. Financial institutions want partners they can trust, regulators want participants they can supervise confidently, and customers want assurance that their money is secure.

Many fintech companies focus on scaling quickly. In your experience, what separates sustainable expansion from short-term market entry?

The fintech industry has, understandably, celebrated speed. But speed alone has never been a durable competitive advantage.

Market entry is relatively easy. Building relevance is considerably harder.

I've always believed that expansion should be measured less by the number of countries entered and more by the depth of participation within those markets. That means active merchants, reliable transaction volumes, strong customer retention, healthy unit economics, and trusted local relationships.

Before entering any new market, I believe every leadership team should ask three questions.

Does this solve a meaningful customer problem?

Can we operate within a clear regulatory framework?

Do we have the partnerships required to sustain growth once the initial excitement fades?

If those questions cannot be answered confidently, expansion often becomes an expensive exercise in geography rather than value creation.

Sustainable growth is patient. It requires investment in people, infrastructure, compliance, customer education and local partnerships. The companies that endure are usually not those that launch first; they are the ones that remain relevant long after others have exited.

You have led partnerships with banks, PSPs, and enterprise platforms. What qualities do you look for before committing to a long-term strategic partnership?

Technology compatibility is important, but it is rarely the deciding factor.

The first thing I assess is strategic alignment. Are we solving the same problem, and are we committed to creating value beyond the first commercial agreement?



The second is operational discipline. Payments operate on trust, and trust is reflected in settlement performance, system resilience, fraud controls, customer support and transparency during operational incidents.

Third is regulatory maturity. Financial services are ultimately a confidence industry. Organisations that invest in governance tend to become stronger long-term partners because they understand that reputation compounds over time.

Finally, I pay close attention to leadership. Markets change. Regulations evolve. Technologies become obsolete.

Strong leadership determines whether a partnership adapts successfully when those inevitable changes occur.

The most successful partnerships I've experienced have never been purely commercial relationships. They became shared commitments to solving increasingly complex problems together.

They create value not simply because contracts exist, but because both organisations continue investing in the relationship.

Cross-border payments remain a major conversation in African fintech. What structural gaps still need to be addressed to improve the movement of money across the continent?

When people discuss cross-border payments in Africa, the conversation often centres on speed. In my view, speed is no longer the primary challenge. The more fundamental issue is connectivity between financial systems.

Africa is home to 54 countries, more than 40 currencies, multiple regional economic communities, and diverse regulatory frameworks. While domestic payment systems have advanced significantly over the past decade, moving money across borders still involves fragmented settlement infrastructure, correspondent banking dependencies, foreign exchange constraints, and varying compliance requirements. The result is higher costs, slower settlement and increased complexity for businesses operating across the continent.

This has real economic implications. According to the World Bank, Sub-Saharan Africa remains one of the most expensive regions globally for remittances, with transfer costs still significantly above the UN Sustainable Development Goal target of 3%. For SMEs and corporates alike, these frictions increase the cost of doing business and limit access to regional markets.

This is precisely why the success of the African Continental Free Trade Area will depend not only on reducing tariffs but also on modernising the financial infrastructure that supports trade.

A manufacturer in Ghana should be able to pay a supplier in Kenya with the same confidence and efficiency as a domestic transaction. Until payments move as seamlessly as goods and services are expected to, the full economic potential of AfCFTA will remain constrained.

Encouragingly, we're beginning to see progress through initiatives focused on regional payment interoperability and local currency settlement. These developments have the potential to reduce dependence on hard currencies for intra-African trade, improve liquidity efficiency, and shorten settlement cycles. But achieving scale will require sustained collaboration between central banks, regulators, commercial banks, payment providers and policymakers.

Ultimately, cross-border payments are not simply about moving money. They are about enabling trade, attracting investment, empowering African businesses to expand beyond national borders and accelerating economic integration. The institutions that will shape the next decade are unlikely to be those processing the highest number of transactions. They will be those building the trusted infrastructure that allows commerce to flow effortlessly across the continent.

Your work involves platform ecosystems and merchant adoption. What have you learnt about trust when introducing new financial products into emerging markets?

One of the biggest misconceptions in financial services is that customers adopt innovation because it is new. In reality, customers adopt innovation because it reduces uncertainty.

Trust is rarely created by advertising or product demonstrations. It is built through consistent execution. For a merchant, trust is remarkably practical. Can I receive my settlement on time? Are transaction failures resolved quickly? Is pricing transparent? If something goes wrong at midnight, will someone respond?

Those questions often matter more than the sophistication of the technology itself.

This becomes even more important in emerging markets, where many businesses have experienced service interruptions, regulatory changes or inconsistent financial infrastructure. In those environments, reliability becomes a competitive advantage.

I've also learned that trust extends beyond the customer relationship. Financial products succeed when regulators, banking partners, merchants and technology providers all have confidence in the ecosystem. If one part of that chain loses confidence, adoption slows considerably.

Another important lesson is that education should never be underestimated. Launching a new payment product is not simply about deploying technology; it is about

helping businesses understand how that technology improves cash flow, operational efficiency and customer experience. Technology creates access, reliability creates confidence, and consistency creates long-term adoption, with those three elements remaining inseparable in payments.

You moved from business development into leading global sales and partnerships. How has your leadership approach changed as your responsibilities expanded across multiple regions?

Early in my career, success was largely defined by personal performance, winning partnerships, negotiating commercial agreements and delivering revenue growth.

Leadership changed my perspective entirely.

Today, my role is far less about being the person with the answers and far more about creating an environment where talented people can make good decisions consistently, even when I'm not in the room.

As organisations expand across regions, complexity increases exponentially. Different regulatory environments, customer behaviours, cultural expectations and commercial priorities mean that leadership can no longer rely on proximity. It relies on clarity.

I've become much more intentional about building operating principles rather than directing individual actions. If people understand the purpose behind a decision, they make better decisions independently.

Another lesson has been the importance of cross-functional leadership. Payments is one of the few industries where commercial success depends on legal, compliance, product, engineering, finance and operations moving together. Sales can generate demand, but sustainable growth only happens when the entire organisation executes as one.

I've also learned that leadership becomes less visible as organisations mature. The objective is not to be involved in every decision but to build systems, governance and culture that continue delivering results without constant intervention.

Ultimately, leadership is measured less by what you achieve personally and more by the capability you leave behind in the organisation.

As a board advisor for a leadership programme focused on AI-driven engagement, how do you see artificial intelligence reshaping leadership and decision-making in fintech?

Artificial intelligence is often discussed as a technology story. I believe it is fundamentally a leadership story.

The greatest impact of AI will not simply be automation; it will be the quality and speed of decision-making.

Financial institutions generate extraordinary amounts of data every second, including payments, customer interactions, fraud signals, liquidity movements and

operational metrics. Historically, much of that information has been analysed retrospectively. AI enables leaders to move from hindsight to foresight.

Imagine being able to identify emerging fraud patterns before losses occur, predict customer churn before accounts become inactive, optimise liquidity positions in real time, or detect operational bottlenecks before customers notice them. Those capabilities fundamentally change how organisations allocate resources and manage risk.

However, the introduction of AI also raises important governance questions. Transparency, explainability, data quality and accountability become increasingly critical as more decisions are supported by machine learning.

One principle I hold strongly is that AI should enhance judgment, not replace it.

Leadership will continue to require empathy, ethics and accountability qualities that algorithms cannot replicate.

The organisations that benefit most from artificial intelligence will not necessarily be those with the most advanced models. They will be those that combine technological capability with strong governance, clear values and responsible leadership.

In financial services, trust remains the currency that matters most. AI should strengthen that trust, never compromise it.

You have worked closely with founder-led operations and scaling businesses. What lessons have you learned about leadership during periods of rapid growth?

One of the most important lessons I've learned is that growth amplifies both strengths and weaknesses. What works for a company of twenty people rarely works for an organisation of two hundred, and certainly not for one operating across multiple markets.

In the early stages of a business, founders often succeed through speed, intuition and personal involvement. They are close to every customer, every decision and every challenge. But as organisations grow, leadership has to evolve from being the person who solves every problem to building systems that enable others to solve them consistently.

That transition is often the most difficult. It requires leaders to become comfortable with delegation, governance and standardisation without losing the entrepreneurial culture that made the business successful in the first place.

I've also found that rapid growth places enormous pressure on alignment. Revenue may grow quickly, but unless product, compliance, operations, finance and commercial teams are growing together, the organisation eventually reaches a point where complexity begins to outpace execution.

Leadership during scale is therefore less about managing growth and more about managing clarity. People perform better when they understand not just what is expected of them, but why those expectations matter.

Ultimately, sustainable growth is not measured by how quickly a business expands. It is measured by how well the organisation continues to execute as that complexity increases. Great leadership is about building institutions that can thrive beyond the founders themselves.

You advise on women's leadership programmes while operating at a senior level in fintech infrastructure. What do most leadership conversations still get wrong?

I think many leadership conversations still focus too heavily on preparing individuals for leadership and not enough on preparing organisations to benefit from diverse leadership.

We often speak about confidence, resilience and personal development, and those are important. But capability has never been the only barrier. Access remains equally significant.

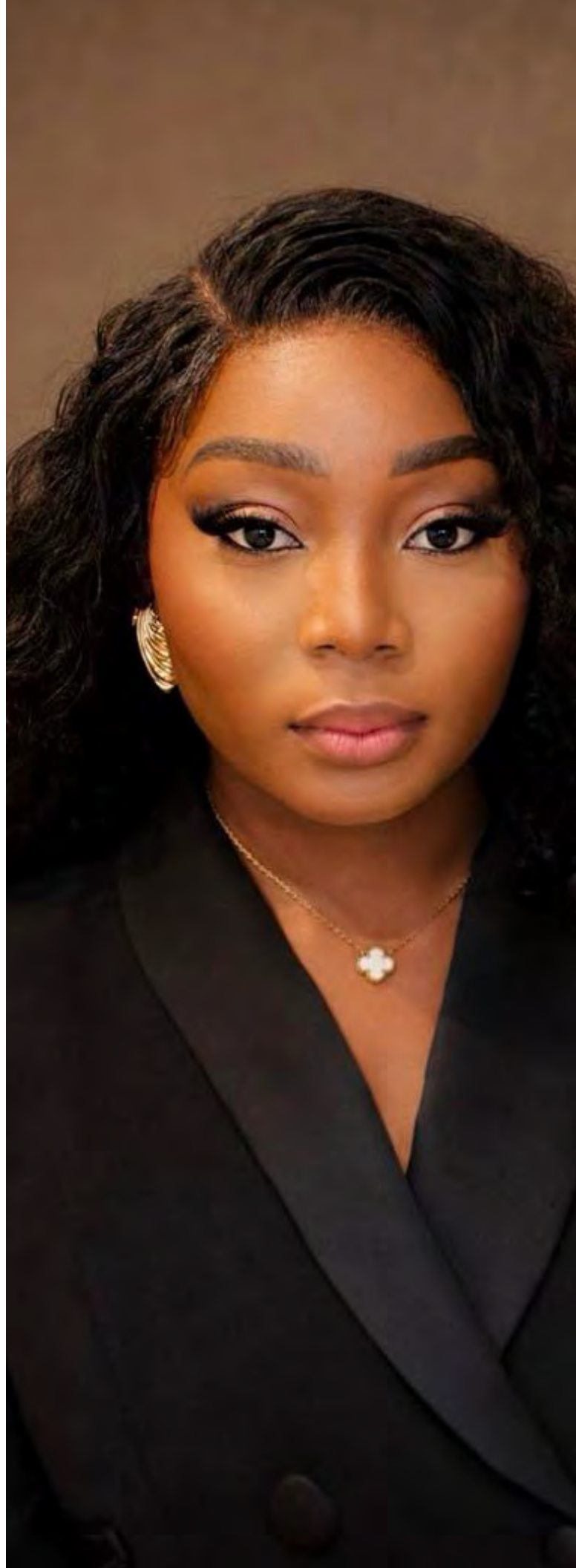
Access to strategic projects. Access to executive sponsorship. Access to commercial responsibility. Access to boardrooms where decisions are made.

In financial services, careers are often shaped by exposure as much as experience. Leaders grow when they are trusted with complexity, not simply when they attend leadership programmes.

Another misconception is that diversity initiatives should be viewed as social programmes rather than business strategy. Organisations with diverse leadership teams are often better positioned to understand different

customer segments, challenge conventional thinking and make more balanced decisions in increasingly global markets.

For me, leadership has never been about occupying a seat at the table. It is about creating environments where different perspectives improve the quality of decisions.



That is particularly important in fintech, where the customers we serve represent different cultures, income levels, geographies and financial behaviours. If leadership does not reflect that diversity of experience, innovation inevitably becomes narrower.

The future of leadership is not about creating more leaders who think alike. It is about creating institutions that recognise different perspectives as a competitive advantage.

According to your profile, you led a revenue growth of 25% in under 12 months. Walk us through the decision that made it possible, not the outcome itself.

People often assume that revenue growth begins with sales. In my experience, it begins with focus.

The most important decision we made was to stop thinking about revenue as the objective and start thinking about customer problems as the objective. That may sound simple, but it fundamentally changed how we prioritised opportunities.

Rather than pursuing every available market or customer segment, we became more deliberate about where our infrastructure could create the greatest value. We spent more time understanding payment friction, settlement challenges, regulatory requirements and operational pain points before discussing commercial terms.

That approach also changed how we worked internally. Sales became more closely aligned with product, compliance, engineering and customer success because solving complex financial problems rarely sits within one department.

Equally important was recognising that not all revenue is equal. Sustainable growth comes from customers who continue to transact because the solution has become embedded in their operations, not because they were acquired through aggressive commercial incentives.

I've always believed that commercial leadership is about making decisions that remain valuable long after quarterly targets have been achieved. Revenue is an outcome of trust, operational excellence and relevance.

The decision that drove growth was therefore not a pricing decision or a sales campaign. It was choosing to build relationships around long-term value creation rather than short-term transactions.

Looking at the future of fintech across Africa and Europe, what opportunities do you believe are still underestimated by global investors and operators?

I believe one of the most underestimated opportunities is the convergence of financial infrastructure across continents. For many years, fintech has been discussed in terms of individual products, payments, lending, wallets or remittances. Increasingly, those categories are becoming

interconnected through shared infrastructure, open banking, digital identity, artificial intelligence and real-time payment networks.

Africa is particularly well-positioned in this transition because many markets are building modern financial infrastructure without the burden of extensive legacy systems. Combined with one of the world's youngest and fastest-growing populations, increasing smartphone adoption and expanding digital connectivity, the continent represents an environment where financial innovation can scale rapidly when supported by the right infrastructure.

At the same time, Europe brings regulatory maturity, capital markets and deep institutional expertise. The greatest opportunity is therefore not Africa in isolation or Europe in isolation, but the increasing integration between the two.

As trade relationships deepen, particularly under initiatives such as the African Continental Free Trade Area, the demand for efficient cross-border payments, embedded financial services, and interoperable digital infrastructure will continue to grow.

I also believe investors are beginning to shift their attention from consumer-facing applications to foundational infrastructure. The next generation of value creation is likely to come from businesses that enable financial institutions, enterprises and governments to connect more efficiently rather than simply offering another customer-facing payment experience.

Looking ahead, the future of fintech will be defined less by who builds the next app and more by who builds the trusted infrastructure that allows global commerce to move more seamlessly. Those who recognise that shift early will shape the next decade of financial services.





**INSIDE NSIBIDI FABLES' BET
THAT AFRICA CAN LEAPFROG
HOLLYWOOD**



Lagos-based Nsibidi Fables is doing something few African creative companies have attempted at scale: fuse entertainment, education and technology into a single business, and convince investors it isn't three separate bets dressed up as one.

The company's flagship animated project, a series on Amanirenas, the one-eyed Kandake of Kush who defied Rome, is meant to prove the model works.

In a discussion with BD Weekender, Tony Effik, a global managing director at Google and founder of Nsibidi Fables explains the company's leadership to press on the numbers, the infrastructure, and whether "sovereign" African AI is not just a slogan, but a strategy. Dipo Oladehinde brings excerpt:

You're building at the intersection of entertainment, education and technology. Which of those three is actually generating revenue today, and which is being subsidised by the others?

Today, our entertainment division, Nsibidi Fables, and our education division, Nsibidi Academy, are the primary

revenue anchors, through outsourced content production, monetisation of content on social platforms, and fees from teaching AI and content production in schools.

Our technology platform, Nsibidi Zip, is earlier stage. It's a cloud-hosted set of agentic production tools that we use internally first, what Silicon Valley calls dogfooding, before taking it to market as a business-to-business product: white-label production automation, infrastructure for ad agencies and production companies, tiered enterprise licensing. We don't see these as three units competing for capital. Entertainment aggregates volume, technology optimises production speed, and education scales a certified user base. Each feeds the others.

That sounds like a flywheel pitch. What's the actual business case for treating these as interdependent rather than separate agendas competing for the same attention and capital?

Today's most valuable companies, Amazon, Apple, Google, scale on intangible capital: software, IP, data, algorithms, brand equity. When those elements are functionally integrated, the effect compounds. Africa needs that kind of integrated operating system, and that's what we're building.

Who better to teach students AI than a company using AI in its daily workflow? Who better to license production technology than a studio already running on it? Our creative output gives us real-world validation data to improve our engineering; our software tools cut the cost of that same content production. That interdependency is what should reassure investors, it moves us from a volatile creative studio toward something closer to a vertically integrated software and IP business.

Industrialised nations built global recognition of their history through decades of investment in film and media. What would it take for African studios to compete at that scale rather than just participate in it?

The old playbook is obsolete. AI is as fundamental a shift as electricity was. Three things matter. First, Africa needs a new model, the 20th-century route of industrialisation through cheap labour doesn't hold when global robot installations are hitting record highs and physical labour demand is falling even as Africa's working-age population grows by an estimated 740 million people between 2025 and 2050. Second, we need to pivot from one-off productions to high-volume "content factory" models, building franchises with longevity rather than isolated flagship films. Third, Africa should invest in AI's application layer: cloud-hosted tools for coloring, upscaling, cleanup and in-betweening that make production sovereign rather than dependent.

How much of your budget currently goes to diesel, inverters or backup power rather than content production, and does that change where African studios should physically build?

Our headquarters stays in Lagos deliberately, to stay close to Nollywood, music and the contemporary art scene here. But our compute is fully decoupled from the local grid — we run resource-heavy processing through Google Cloud Platform and Vertex AI, managed remotely by our technical director. That structurally changes our budget: capital goes toward cloud infrastructure and creative talent, not generators or fuel workarounds.

So is growth capped by Lagos's energy infrastructure, or would you consider co-locating near dedicated power?

Our office and teams do struggle with the grid, like everyone else here, people working remotely lose hours to poor light and pay real money running generators. It's a genuine headache to still be facing in 2026. But because our production pipeline is cloud-based, our ability to deliver compute isn't hostage to the local grid the way physical hardware would be.

You describe AI as a creative partner, not a replacement, but most of the infrastructure sits outside Africa. How do you build genuine narrative ownership when you depend on tools you didn't build?

That anxiety comes from treating AI as a black box and handing it full creative autonomy, that's how you lose ownership to the biases baked into Western training data. We avoid that with a strict human-in-the-loop system we call the Three-Zone Production Protocol. The Green Zone is full automation, repetitive, mechanical tasks like frame cleanup or upscaling, where foreign compute does the heavy lifting. The Yellow Zone is supervised support, background passes, ambient rendering, shot ideation, where machine output is tightly constrained by human direction from Lagos. The Red Zone is absolute human sovereignty: character acting, facial expression, storyboard pacing, dialogue rhythm, hero design. Zero AI intervention. That's where ownership is locked in.

Young Nigerian animators are watching AI reshape the industry. Is the honest picture opportunity or disruption?

We can't afford to be fearful, our slogan is "leapfrog to lead." Traditional hand-painted 2D animation trapped African creators in an asymmetrical economic loop: a single five-minute short can require up to 7,200 individual drawings, which buries small teams in low-

leverage mechanical work. By automating line cleanup and repetitive coloring, we remove that friction and free young animators to become directors, visual designers and showrunners, giving a lean team the throughput of a legacy international studio without losing cultural context.

Amanirenas is your proof of concept. What has that production taught you about scaling the model across a slate, not just one film?

Amanirenas, the one-eyed Kandake of Kush who defied Rome and overlapped historically with Cleopatra, is a story every African child should know, and one we think the diaspora should know too. Our challenge was dramatising that history within real budget and timeline constraints. Our first episode, made with traditional techniques, took six months. Our second, using what we call the Nsibidi Zip Content Factory Model, took six weeks. Internally, we've found that off-the-shelf text-to-video tools fail often, succeeding under 40% of the time for environments and under 30% for illustration fixes, which creates expensive retry loops. We built automated Quality Evaluator Agents into our backend to catch failures before they burn through compute budget, which makes our cost per minute far more predictable and fundable.

Nigeria's creative economy found global scale through music and film. Animation hasn't had that moment. What's actually missing?

It isn't a shortage of stories or storytellers — this is the country of Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Ben Okri. The real bottleneck has been the absence of original IP ownership, paired with long, expensive production pipelines. A 60-minute film at 24 frames per second is enormously labor-intensive; even 12 frames per second is slow going. Production costs were too high and technical talent too constrained. Compressing that pipeline with hybrid automated tools lets African creators build, own and export original character worlds instead of working for hire.

What would meaningful government or private-capital support actually look like here, and what happens if it doesn't come?

Basic infrastructure, power, roads, foundational education, has to come first; without it, costs rise for everyone. But that's table stakes, not a winning strategy. Winning requires an educated population using reliable infrastructure with frontier technology. One area we're focused on through Nsibidi Academy is the teacher shortage: UNESCO estimates Sub-Saharan Africa needs roughly 15 million additional teachers by 2030, on top of an existing 8-9 million, accounting for close to a third of the global shortfall. We've built a tutoring marketplace,

one-on-one sessions, group classes, recorded video to help address that. If support doesn't arrive, the risk is a new wave of extraction, where international companies capitalise on African culture and talent while local creators stay outside the economic loop. Building our stack as sovereign from day one is how we guard against that.

A year from now, what's the measurable evidence African studios have moved from consuming global narratives to exporting their own?

Nollywood is really two markets. A premium tier serving the domestic middle and upper class and the diaspora, with higher budgets and theatrical-to-streaming release patterns. And a high-volume, mass-market tier descended from the 1990s straight-to-video boom, now living on social media and monetised through views and ad revenue rather than upfront sales.

I expect that mass-market tier to become dominant, with breakout African stars using AI and strong storytelling to go global. The remaining challenge isn't proving demand — it's infrastructure, and cracking monetisation on ad-supported platforms.

You're asking investors to underwrite a category the market hasn't proven yet. What's the actual unit economics — cost per minute versus revenue — and when does this stop being a passion project?

This is a passion project, and honestly it will stay one even after we scale. But the market's cold logic will decide it, which is why Hollywood and Silicon Valley are pouring money into this space. Disney, the industry's pioneer, is already integrating AI across its animation pipeline, speeding up 2D and 3D frame generation, in-between, and other labour-intensive steps.

African AI-based animation is a genuinely new category, so there's still a fact base to build. But given the scale of capital already flowing into AI globally, the unit economics case is compelling. I think we'll look back and be proud of the bets we made here. Africa is ready to stand shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the world.



DISCOVERING HUNGRY LION THROUGH SWOOP

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



“Will I be ordering from Swoop again? I have not decided. But I have not deleted the app either.”

That was how I ended my first Swoop experience.

As it turns out, I did open the app again.

Not because I was craving another meal, but because I was curious. My first order had answered one question: Can Swoop get good food to me? This time, I wanted to answer another: Can it introduce me to a restaurant I probably

would not have discovered on my own? While scrolling through the app, I came across Hungry Lion, one of the newest restaurants on Swoop.

I had seen the announcement on Swoop's social media page a few days earlier, so when it popped up on the app, I decided to give it a try. I ordered jollof rice, grilled chicken and plantain.

Once again, the ordering process was straightforward. The rider picked up the food less than 20 minutes after I placed my order. The entire delivery took about



45 minutes, with most of that time spent getting the food to my location.

Then came the important part: the food.

The jollof rice was packed with flavour, nicely spiced and had that rich, smoky taste that makes good jollof stand out. Some people might say it was a little too flavourful, but I like my jollof rice with plenty of flavour. It was not overly oily, and every bite was satisfying.

The grilled chicken was tender, well-seasoned and paired really well with the rice. It had just enough of that grilled taste to make me keep reaching for another bite.

The plantain did exactly what good plantain should do. It was soft, slightly sweet and balanced the savoury flavours of the rice and chicken.

By the time I finished the meal, I realised that the most interesting part of this experience was not the food itself. It was the discovery.

If I had not been browsing through Swoop, I probably would not have come across Hungry Lion when I did. Like many people, I tend to rotate between the same restaurants and the same meals. It is comfortable, but it also means you miss out on places that might become favourites.

Hungry Lion may be new to Swoop, but based on this first experience, it made a strong impression.

My first Swoop order got me to keep the app. My second introduced me to a restaurant I would happily order from again.

Maybe that is the point of food discovery after all.

7 TIPS FOR HANDLING LONG WAIT TIMES AT A RESTAURANT

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



You arrive at a restaurant looking forward to a good meal, only to find yourself waiting longer than expected. Ten minutes turn into 20, then 30, and before you know it, you are wondering if your order has been forgotten.

Long wait times can be frustrating, but they're not always a sign of poor service. A busy kitchen, a large group ahead of you or an unexpected rush can all slow things down. The key is knowing how to handle the situation without letting it spoil your dining experience.

Here are seven practical tips for dealing with long waits at a restaurant.

Find out the expected waiting time
Before placing your order, or as soon as you notice a delay, ask your server how long the wait is likely to be. Knowing whether your meal will take 15 minutes or 45 minutes helps you decide whether to stay or make other plans. It also sets realistic expectations and reduces frustration.

Be patient during peak hours

Restaurants are often busiest during lunch, dinner and

weekends. During these periods, longer wait times are sometimes unavoidable. If the restaurant is full and staff are clearly attending to many tables, a little patience can go a long way.

Politely follow up if the wait becomes excessive

If you have been waiting well beyond the time you were given, don't sit in silence. A simple, polite question like, "Excuse me, I just wanted to check on my order," is usually enough. Most servers appreciate a courteous reminder and will check with the kitchen or update you on the delay.

Pay attention to communication

Good restaurants keep customers informed. If there is a delay because an ingredient has run out, a dish is taking longer to prepare or the kitchen is unusually busy, staff should let you know rather than leave you guessing. Clear communication often makes a

long wait feel more manageable.

Decide when it is no longer worth waiting

Patience has its limits. If you have waited far longer than promised, received no updates and your concerns are ignored, it is reasonable to reconsider whether you want to stay. If you decide to leave, inform the staff politely, especially if your order has not yet been prepared.

Stay calm if there is a genuine mistake

Restaurants are run by people, and mistakes can happen. Your order may have been delayed, misplaced or sent to the wrong table. If that is the case, raising your voice rarely speeds things up. Explaining the issue calmly gives the staff a better chance to correct it quickly.

Share your feedback after the experience

If the delay significantly affected your experience, let the restaurant know before you leave or leave a constructive review afterwards. Mention what happened, how long you waited and whether the staff communicated well. Honest, respectful feedback helps restaurants identify areas for improvement and helps other diners know what to expect.

AS NIGERIA EXPANDS SOCIAL PROTECTION, AKWA IBOM IS BUILDING A GRASSROOTS HUMANITARIAN ECONOMY

EKAETTE OKON-JOSEPH



When the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction, Dr. Bernard Doro, travelled through the waterways of Eastern Obolo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom state, the visit was expected to assess the humanitarian realities confronting one of Nigeria's most strategically important coastal communities. Instead, it evolved into something much broader: a demonstration of how humanitarian policy, infrastructure investment and public-private collaboration can work together to drive inclusive economic development.

Across Iko Town, Edowik Village, Olokpong, Emoruke, Otunene and Akaze, the minister encountered communities whose livelihoods depend largely on fishing and marine resources but whose development has long been constrained by environmental vulnerabilities, limited connectivity and inadequate social infrastructure.

These challenges are not unique to Eastern Obolo. They reflect the development paradox confronting many resource-producing communities across the Niger Delta, where significant economic activity has not always translated into corresponding improvements in living standards.

It was against this backdrop that Dr. Doro's visit highlighted the importance of Akwa Ibom State's evolving humanitarian framework under Governor Umo Eno's ARISE Agenda.

The visit comes at a period when Nigeria is expanding its social protection architecture.

The Federal Government recently commenced the distribution of N4.2 billion under the Renewed Conditional Cash Transfer Programme to 56,402 vulnerable beneficiaries across Akwa Ibom State,



with each beneficiary receiving N75,000 through preloaded debit cards over three months. The programme is designed to cushion the effects of inflation, rising food prices and declining household incomes while improving household resilience.

Akwa Ibom has deliberately complemented this national intervention with state-led programmes that extend beyond direct financial assistance.

Through the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, programmes such as the ARISE Share and Care Initiative deliver food directly to vulnerable households across the state's 31 local government areas.

Instead of expecting elderly citizens, widows, persons living with disabilities and indigent families to travel long distances to access government support, humanitarian assistance is taken directly to their communities.

According to Princess Emem Ibanga, the Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs, the state has already reached more than 650,000 households through food security and palliative interventions, making humanitarian support one of the central pillars of the ARISE Agenda.

The state's humanitarian philosophy extends beyond food security. The ARISE Compassionate Homes Initiative is providing permanent housing for vulnerable families across Akwa Ibom, replacing temporary relief with sustainable support that restores dignity while improving household stability.

Other interventions, including the ARISE Initiative for the Elderly, disability inclusion programmes and grassroots empowerment schemes, recognise that poverty reduction requires coordinated investments in human capital rather than isolated welfare programmes. Dr. Doro's visit offered an opportunity to evaluate how these interventions are being implemented in communities where development challenges remain significant.

Community leaders acknowledged ongoing state government investments in road infrastructure, housing projects, educational support, empowerment programmes and food security initiatives. They particularly highlighted the access road connecting Eastern Obolo to other parts of Akwa Ibom, describing it as one of the most transformative infrastructure projects for the area.

Improved connectivity has implications far beyond transportation. Better roads reduce travel time, lower logistics costs, improve access to healthcare and education, facilitate agricultural and fisheries value chains and expand market opportunities for rural communities. Infrastructure, therefore, becomes an economic intervention as much as a physical one.

The minister's engagement also drew attention to another critical pillar of sustainable development: partnership with the private sector.

Eastern Obolo remains an important oil-producing area, making collaboration between government and operating companies essential to improving living conditions within host communities.

During his visit, Dr. Doro engaged with Sterling Oil Exploration and Energy Production Company (SEEPCO), emphasising the need for stronger Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives that directly improve the welfare of host communities.

His position reflects a growing consensus that resource extraction should generate measurable social and economic benefits for the communities where production takes place.

Corporate Social Responsibility is increasingly viewed not as philanthropy but as a strategic investment in sustainable development. Beyond statutory obligations, investments in education, healthcare, vocational training, environmental sustainability, clean water, community infrastructure and youth empowerment help create more stable operating environments while contributing to long-term local economic growth.



The minister's engagement with SEEPCO therefore reinforced an important policy objective: sustainable development requires governments, communities and the private sector to work within a shared framework of responsibility.

Equally significant was Dr. Doro's recognition of Governor Umo Eno's development initiatives and his emphasis on stronger coordination between federal and state governments in tackling poverty.

The experience in Akwa Ibom illustrates how complementary interventions can produce greater impact than isolated programmes. While the Federal Government injects purchasing power into vulnerable households through conditional cash transfers, the state government addresses food security, housing, community welfare and social inclusion through institutional programmes tailored to local realities.

Rather than duplicating efforts, both levels of government are gradually building a more integrated social protection ecosystem. The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs has emerged as the coordinating institution linking these interventions

under the ARISE Agenda, extending its mandate beyond emergency response to include food security, elderly welfare, disability inclusion, humanitarian partnerships, women's empowerment and poverty reduction.

The next phase of this strategy is expected to deepen economic inclusion through targeted support for women's cooperatives across all 31 local government areas, strengthening access to capital and expanding livelihood opportunities for rural women.

Taken together, these interventions reflect a broader understanding of humanitarian governance.

Effective social protection is no longer measured solely by the volume of relief distributed or the size of budget allocations. It is increasingly measured by whether vulnerable citizens gain improved access to food, housing, healthcare, education, economic opportunities and the infrastructure necessary to participate productively in society.

For Eastern Obolo, Dr. Bernard Doro's visit brought national attention to both the challenges and the opportunities that define Nigeria's coastal communities. It also demonstrated that when humanitarian policy is supported by infrastructure development, strategic partnerships and responsible private sector participation, compassion becomes more than a moral obligation—it becomes an economic development strategy.

As Nigeria continues to refine its approach to poverty reduction and inclusive growth, Akwa Ibom's experience offers an important lesson: sustainable development is achieved not through isolated interventions, but through coordinated policies that place people at the centre of governance while mobilising every stakeholder, government, communities and industry, to contribute to shared prosperity

CHILDBIRTH IN CHURCHES IN NIGERIA: FAITH SHOULD SAVE LIVES, NOT END THEM

TOMILAYO IMADE



Every expectant mother deserves the opportunity to give birth safely. Tragically, in Nigeria, some women and their babies are still dying from preventable complications because deliveries take place in unlicensed churches and prayer centres instead of properly equipped health facilities.

This is not a criticism of Christianity or religion. It is a call to protect life.

Many Nigerians are deeply religious, and prayer is an important source of strength during pregnancy and childbirth. But prayer should never replace skilled medical care.

Faith and medicine are not competitors—they are partners. Even the Bible teaches that “faith without works is dead” (James 2:17).

Seeking professional healthcare during childbirth is an act of wisdom, not a lack of faith.

Nigeria continues to record one of the highest maternal mortality burdens in the world. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the country accounts for a disproportionately large share of global maternal deaths.

Thousands of women lose their lives each year from complications such as severe bleeding, obstructed labour, infections, eclampsia, and other emergencies that trained health professionals can often prevent or treat when women receive timely care.

Sadly, many of these deaths occur because women are kept in prayer houses or unlicensed maternity centres until complications become critical. By the time they are rushed to a hospital, it is often too late.

Doctors across Nigeria continue to recount heartbreaking stories of women arriving in irreversible shock or with babies who could no longer be saved after prolonged labour in facilities that lacked qualified personnel and emergency equipment.

This problem is not confined to one state. It has been reported over the years in Lagos, Ogun, Rivers, Cross River, Kano, Anambra, Enugu, and many other parts of the country. Behind every statistic is a grieving family, orphaned children, and a community left asking whether the tragedy could have been prevented.

Several years ago, Dr Linda Ayade—a medical doctor and former First Lady of Cross River State—warned about the dangers of childbirth in churches after witnessing too many women arrive at hospitals when nothing more could be done. Her message remains just as relevant today.

Nigeria urgently needs stronger enforcement of existing healthcare laws and, where necessary, new legislation to close dangerous gaps.

Any religious organisation that wishes to operate a maternity facility should be required to:

Employ licensed doctors, certified midwives, and qualified nurses.

Register and comply with the standards of the appropriate health regulatory authorities.

Maintain essential medical equipment and emergency obstetric services.

Have clear referral systems for complications requiring specialist care.

Any facility—religious or otherwise—that conducts deliveries without meeting these standards should face appropriate legal sanctions. Freedom of religion should never extend to practices that endanger lives.

Religious leaders also have an important responsibility.

Churches should encourage pregnant women to attend antenatal clinics, receive regular medical check-ups, and deliver in accredited hospitals while continuing to provide spiritual support through prayer and counselling. Protecting life is one of the highest expressions of faith.

Every preventable maternal death is one too many.

No woman should lose her life while giving life because she trusted an unlicensed facility instead of receiving skilled medical care. No baby should die because emergency treatment was unavailable.

Our lawmakers, health authorities, religious leaders, and communities must work together to ensure that childbirth is safe for every Nigerian woman.

Faith should inspire us to preserve life—not unintentionally put it at risk. The time to act is now.

Tomilayo Imade is a Nigerian writer and project management professional based in England. Passionate about social justice and human-interest stories, she writes thought-provoking articles on culture, mental health, gender, and public affairs. Through her writing, she seeks to challenge harmful social norms, amplify everyday experiences, and inspire meaningful conversations that drive positive change.

THE 'OLODO' UPRISING: WHAT NIGERIA'S SOCIAL MEDIA WARS REVEAL ABOUT OUR BROKEN DEFINITION OF INTELLIGENCE

TOMILAYO IMADE



The Nigerian economy is changing faster than our mindset. A generation ago, success followed a familiar script: earn good grades, obtain a university degree, secure a white-collar job and climb the corporate ladder.

Today, that script has been disrupted. Young Nigerians are building million-naira businesses from smartphones, exporting creativity to global audiences, earning foreign exchange through digital platforms and creating jobs in industries that barely existed two decades ago.

Yet, while the economy evolves, many of our attitudes remain trapped in the past.

Every day on social media, successful content creators, entrepreneurs, comedians and influencers are dismissed with one word: "Olodo."

In Yoruba, *olodo* means a dull or unintelligent person. In contemporary Nigeria, however, the word has taken on a broader and more damaging meaning. It has become a label for anyone who did not attend university, struggles to speak polished English or fails to fit society's narrow definition of being "educated." The irony is striking.

Many of the same people mocked as *olodo* are generating wealth, employing graduates, paying taxes and contributing to Nigeria's growing digital economy. Perhaps it is time to ask a difficult question.

Who exactly is the *olodo*?

Nigeria has spent decades confusing education with intelligence. Education is invaluable. It transforms lives, drives innovation and remains one of the strongest tools

for national development. But education and intelligence are not identical. A university degree is evidence of formal learning—not a complete measure of wisdom, creativity, resilience or entrepreneurial ability.

Around the world, innovation rarely comes from one mould. Some of the most influential entrepreneurs and creators built extraordinary careers outside traditional academic pathways. Their achievements were driven by vision, discipline and the ability to solve problems—not merely by certificates hanging on a wall.

Nigeria, unfortunately, often celebrates credentials while ignoring competence. This mindset has become particularly visible on social media.

A young creator produces comedy in Yoruba or Hausa, builds an audience of millions and signs endorsement deals worth tens of millions of naira. Instead of celebrating Nigerian ingenuity, many rush to the comment section to ridicule the creator's English or educational background.

It is an astonishing contradiction. We applaud economic success until we discover that its owner does not fit our preferred social class.

Language prejudice is another expression of this problem.

Many Nigerians still equate fluent English with intelligence and imperfect English with ignorance. Yet English is neither our mother tongue nor the only language capable of expressing intelligence.

The average Nigerian who speaks Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, Tiv, Efik, Kanuri, Fulfulde and English is multilingual—a cognitive strength recognised globally. Meanwhile, millions of native English speakers communicate in only one language, yet no one questions their intelligence.

Why, then, do we continue to shame our own people for speaking English with an accent while overlooking the remarkable linguistic diversity they possess?

Perhaps the answer lies in a colonial mindset that still shapes our understanding of status and success. The tragedy is that this mindset carries economic consequences.

Nigeria's creator economy is no longer a fringe industry. Thousands of young Nigerians now earn incomes through YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook and other digital platforms. They produce films, comedy, fashion, music, educational content and cultural exports consumed across Africa and beyond. These creators attract advertising revenue, promote Nigerian brands, generate foreign exchange and employ videographers, editors, graphic designers, marketers and business managers.

In other words, they are entrepreneurs. Yet many continue to face ridicule simply because they do not speak Queen's English or possess university degrees.

This attitude discourages innovation.

A society that mocks unconventional success will struggle to produce unconventional thinkers.

None of this diminishes the importance of higher education. Nigeria urgently needs more doctors, engineers, architects, lawyers, scientists and teachers. Universities remain indispensable to national progress.

But a degree should expand our perspective—not inflate our ego. Likewise, fluency in English should improve communication—not become a weapon for humiliating others.

The measure of intelligence should not be how elegantly someone speaks English but whether they create value, solve problems, uplift others and contribute meaningfully to society. Nigeria's greatest resource has never been oil.

It is the ingenuity of its people. If we continue judging talent through the narrow lenses of certificates, grammar and social status, we will keep discouraging precisely the kind of innovation our economy desperately needs.

The real danger is not that some Nigerians cannot speak flawless English.

The real danger is that too many educated people still mistake academic credentials for intellectual superiority. Perhaps the greatest olofo is not the young creator building a business from a smartphone.

Perhaps it is the society that still cannot recognise intelligence when it speaks with a different accent, follows an unconventional path or wears no academic gown.

Until we redefine intelligence to include creativity, enterprise, emotional intelligence, craftsmanship and innovation, Nigeria will continue wasting one of its greatest assets—its people.

Tomilayo Imade is a Nigerian writer and project management professional based in England. Passionate about social justice and human-interest stories, she writes thought-provoking articles on culture, mental health, gender, and public affairs. Through her writing, she seeks to challenge harmful social norms, amplify everyday experiences, and inspire meaningful conversations that drive positive change.

ADIRE RENAISSANCE DRIVES STRATEGIC GROWTH ACROSS NIGERIA'S ADIRE VALUE CHAIN

CHARLES OGWO



In a bold move to reposition Nigeria's indigenous textile industry for sustainable growth, Adire Renaissance has intensified efforts to strengthen the country's adire value chain through strategic partnerships, innovation, skills development, and market expansion.

The initiative brings together key stakeholders across the production, design, distribution, and policy ecosystem, such as the Asian African Chamber of Commerce, Wessy College of Arts and Technology, Abeokuta, and Ecobank, among others, to enhance the global competitiveness of authentic Nigerian adire, while creating economic opportunities for artisans, entrepreneurs, and local communities.

The maiden Adire Renaissance conference themed: 'Girls in STEM, Innovation, and Creative Arts' is aimed at empowering girls, inspiring solutions, building a creative, innovative and inclusive future.

Olajumoke Familoni, the founder of ICLED and the Adire Renaissance programme lead, informed BusinessDay that the maiden edition was born out of the fact that the

Nigeria has not taken full advantage of its native textile industry.

"This year's girl child conference is to bring the young girls and students into the Adire value chain. Stir up their interest in creativity of designs, ideas on dye production for the Adire market and other items needed in the Adire value chain," Familoni said.

The Innovation Centre for Leadership and Entrepreneurship Development (ICLED), a 23-year-old institution of higher learning in Nigeria, plays a crucial role in ensuring that the 2026 conference, which focuses on STEM, with the goal of stirring creativity in the girl child and encourage girl-child to become an active participant in the Adire value chain.

Familoni explained that about three years ago, His Royal Majesty, the Alake of Egbaland, charged the ICLED, Business School Consultancy Unit with addressing the issue of Adire adulteration.

"Since then, we have been working diligently to ensure that the correct knowledge and authentic practices



are preserved while laying the foundation for the establishment of the Adire Hub in Abeokuta.

“We are not leaving our girls behind. They are creative, brilliant, and innovative. They can create beautiful patterns and designs, and they can experiment to produce the Aro dye used in Adire fabric production,” she noted.

Oluyinka Kufile, the Aro of Egbaland, and the head of Global Adire Egba Development, speaking about the conference, emphasised that Nigeria as a nation, cannot continue to import everything it needs.

“We must manufacture and produce our own goods, not only food but also textiles and other valuable products. That is why our students are here today: to acquire knowledge and practical skills.

“We want to take the girl child off the streets, inspire productive thinking, and prepare her to become the very best she can be as she grows into adulthood,” he said.

Famoloni throwing more light on the Adire mission, said, “About 39 years ago, I worked as an apparel designer and manufacturer in the United States, supplying Adire skirt suits to department stores and designing uniforms for hotels, airlines, restaurants, and other organisations.

“We envision Adire becoming a fabric of choice for corporate wear, school uniforms, security uniforms, and many other professional applications.”

During the research her team found that the cotton fabric for dyeing was scarce and that businessmen and women, who use the products in Ogun State had to wait for Aba or import.

Hence, the committee formed the Global Adire Egba Development company to establish the Adire Hub in Abeokuta.

“We found a factory to produce the 100 percent cotton ethic is being stored and ready for marketers at the Ake Palace Museum in Abeokuta

“The Alake himself invested funds into the production, and this has helped solve the problem of the scarce white materials for dyeing,” she stressed.

The Global Adire Egba Development Initiative’s believe that the government will recognise the importance of strengthening this valuable sector within Nigeria’s national value chain, is the push behind movement.

Recall that recently, the federal government announced an intention to change the NYSC uniform with Adire outfits; hence, the group is set to proudly model Adire uniforms as part of its vision.

“We want to share the rich history of Adire, and showcase quality cotton fabrics that can be purchased and transformed into unique Adire designs by textile producers and creative entrepreneurs.

“Our students will participate in a competition, while our team of chemical engineers evaluates and tests the Aro dyes they produce. By the time our Adire Hub is established, it will feature everything related to the heritage and future of Adire, including the Adire Museum, original Adire patterns, the history of Adire, different Adire products, exhibition displays, and Adire bags, shoes, and home décor, among others,” the group emphasised.

Besides, Famoloni explained that the efforts are geared towards reducing unemployment and idleness.

“Every one of us has a role to play. Kabiyesi has demonstrated remarkable commitment by continuously ensuring that his people have access to knowledge and opportunities.

“The government alone cannot do it all. Together, we must build a future that empowers our youth and preserves our cultural heritage,” she said.



NORWAY'S OIL FUND PASSES \$2TN, GIVING EVERY CITIZEN A PAPER STAKE NEAR \$400,000

CHISOM MICHAEL



Norway has 5.5 million people. Through one state fund, it now owns a share of nearly every listed company on Earth.

The Government Pension Fund Global, known at home as the Oil Fund, held assets above \$2 trillion by early 2026. It spans roughly 7,200 companies and stands as the largest sovereign wealth fund in the world. Divide the total among Norway's population, and each citizen holds a notional claim of about \$385,000. No one can withdraw that sum. It sits inside a shared national asset, not a personal account.

Oil turned up off Norway's coast in 1969, part of one of the largest offshore finds known at the time in the North Sea. Lawmakers passed legislation to build a fund in 1990, and the first deposit went in during 1996.

From the start, managers chose to invest only outside Norway. Money kept abroad cannot push up the value of the krone or squeeze the parts of the economy unrelated to oil, a pattern economists label Dutch disease.

Size matters less than restraint here. A fiscal rule passed in 2001 lets the government spend only the fund's expected real return in a given year, so the underlying capital stays intact for future generations. That ceiling started at 4 per cent. In 2017, an expert commission

recommended a cut to 3 per cent, judging the older figure too high for an era of lower returns.

This limit explains why the fund kept expanding instead of being drawn down. Analysts point to Norway whenever a nation wants to sidestep the resource curse, the tendency for sudden mineral wealth to fuel corruption and instability rather than steady prosperity.

The fund's scale means it holds stakes in companies most readers would recognise, including Apple, Nvidia and Microsoft among its top positions. Returns reached 15.1 per cent in 2025, a profit near 2.36 trillion kroner, or about \$247 billion — its second-best year in krone terms, trailing only 2024.

Technology, finance and mining stocks drove much of the gain.

One detail carries less weight in headlines but matters more in practice: even in a strong year, the fund fell short of its own benchmark by 28 basis points, the third year running it has trailed that measure. A fund of this size tracks global markets closely. Gains look impressive. Losses, when they come, will look just as large, because \$2 trillion parked in global equities offers no shelter from downturns.

A common assumption holds that any oil-producing nation could build something similar. Evidence points the other way. Norway's low corruption, established institutions and habit of political consensus existed before oil arrived, the fund reflected that foundation rather than creating it. Other nations that struck oil without similar institutions have rarely built anything comparable.

Strain is building inside the system. Withdrawals from the fund now cover more than a quarter of the annual state budget, a record share, meaning growth in the fund brings growth in reliance on it. In 2025, the country's Fiscal Policy Committee proposed studying a shift away from the return-based rule toward one tied to the fund's cash flow, warning that the current approach leaves the budget exposed if the fund's value drops sharply.

REIMAGINING EDUCATION: WHERE DO ALL THE BRILLIANT GIRLS GO?

EKEMINI AKPAKPAN

I find myself asking one question: where do all the brilliant girls go? I will tell you. Boys and girls sit in the same classrooms, they are taught the same curriculum, and they write the same examinations. Yet somewhere along the way, their life outcomes begin to diverge. So I began to wonder: are the things girls are learning, or perhaps not learning, betraying their future outcomes?

The question really hit me during the COVID-19 pandemic when women, who were once those girls sitting in our classrooms, seemed to bear the 'professional brunt' of the crisis.

They carried the burden of unpaid care work at home and at work as nurses and frontline health workers. Many also worked in the informal economy as necessity entrepreneurs, so when economies shut down, their livelihoods disappeared almost overnight. Then the world announced that the future of work was digital, yet women were disproportionately excluded because the gendered digital divide was real. And while there was food glut, the people we often associate most with food production, women, remained concentrated at the subsistence end of agriculture instead of participating across the value chain in ways that truly create wealth. Should I go on?

That period left me with far more questions than answers. Around the same time, I proposed a solution that was selected as one of the 35 winning ideas for solving global challenges for Our Future, Our Voices, an initiative by the International Youth Foundation and FedEx. I was invited to present my idea, Transforming Education: Making Girls Masters of Their Destiny and World. While that idea has evolved considerably since then, and I still think it has the makings of a TED Talk, one conviction has remained with me: if we are serious about changing women's professional and economic outcomes, then we must fundamentally rethink what it means to educate girls

What Should Fulfillment Look Like for Women and Girls?

Even though my parents gave me the gift of a traditional education, personal agency drove me towards self-education. Personal circumstances demanded self-reliance, and looking back now, I believe those were the moments my purpose was

birthed. They shaped my lifelong commitment to raising purpose-driven women.

But the more I pursued fulfilment, the more I found myself questioning education systems and their intersection with harmful gender norms. I began to notice something that troubled me. School is supposed to be where children discover their gifts, develop their thinking, refine their talents, and learn to solve problems. Yet alongside the formal curriculum, girls are often enrolled in another curriculum altogether: the hidden curriculum of gender norms.

It teaches lessons that never appear on the timetable or lesson plan. Through classroom interactions, textbooks, and school culture, girls slowly learn who society expects them to become. They see men portrayed as leaders, inventors, scientists, and decision-makers, while women are more often shown as caregivers and homemakers. They learn that appearance matters as much as, if not more than, intellect; that STEM and engineering somehow belong to boys; that being quiet, helpful, and agreeable is rewarded more readily than being bold, curious, or assertive. They learn to seek permission instead of exercising agency, to avoid risk instead of embracing it, and to shrink themselves so they fit comfortably within expectations.

These lessons are rarely written into the curriculum, yet they become some of the most enduring lessons girls receive. By the time we begin worrying about occupational segregation, leadership gaps in the boardroom, or the shortage of women in STEM, many of those outcomes have already been rehearsed in classrooms. To me, that is one of the greatest betrayals of girls' education. Because what is the value of educating a girl if, somewhere along the way, she learns to negotiate away her own potential?

So, What Would It Take to Educate Girls for Fulfilment? For many girls, education prepares them for competence, while gender norms prepare them for compromise. Schools do not simply reflect society; they reproduce it. The same biases we later complain about as glass ceilings in boardrooms, parliaments, and workplaces are often rehearsed years earlier inside classrooms. At the same time, we tell adult women to "lean in," their childhood socialization has already trained them to step back. Until those

two systems begin speaking the same language, we should not be surprised that education reforms continue to produce limited gains in women's economic participation and leadership.

I often say I excelled in spite of these systems. As a young girl, I navigated an education system with social realities girls carry into the classroom, including body shaming, unrealistic standards of beauty, and the quiet psychological battles that rarely feature in education policy but profoundly shape how girls see themselves and who they believe they can become.

If education is helping to reproduce gender norms, then education can also become one of the most powerful places to interrupt them. That is good news because systems are designed. And whatever is designed can be redesigned. Around the world, countries are already redesigning education systems in ways that deliberately expand what girls believe is possible.

Starting with what girls see.

Imagine if every textbook that entered a classroom underwent a gender audit before approval. What if governments required girls to be represented as scientists, engineers, innovators, and political leaders just as often as boys? What if boys were equally represented as caregivers, teachers, and fathers actively participating in domestic life?

Countries are already doing this. Kerala, India, redesigned school textbooks to deliberately challenge traditional stereotypes by portraying fathers cooking, cleaning, and sharing care responsibilities. Sweden goes even further. The national curriculum requires schools to actively counter traditional gender roles, ensuring learning materials present girls and boys in diverse occupations and life roles. Representation is not cosmetic. It is curriculum.

Then rethink how we teach, not just what we teach.

Teachers unconsciously shape confidence every day through who they call upon, who they encourage to lead, whose mistakes they tolerate, and whose curiosity they reward. If girls are consistently praised for being compliant while boys are encouraged to take risks, schools are producing very different adults long before graduation.

Across Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania, the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) has demonstrated that this can be changed through Gender-Responsive Pedagogy. Teachers are trained to examine their own classroom practices, ensuring

girls receive equal opportunities to lead experiments, answer complex questions, manage equipment and occupy positions of responsibility. In Viet Nam, gender-responsive career guidance has intentionally encouraged more girls to consider engineering and technology careers.

Schools should also stop treating girls' biology as an interruption to learning.

Far too often, menstruation remains surrounded by silence and stigma, with girls paying the price through absenteeism and diminished confidence. Schools should treat menstrual health as educational infrastructure rather than a personal problem.

Scotland recognised this by becoming the first country to guarantee free period products in educational institutions. Meanwhile, India's Gender Equity Movement in Schools (GEMS) brings girls and boys together to discuss gender, puberty, and relationships, helping replace embarrassment with understanding while challenging harmful stereotypes before they become lifelong beliefs.

Finally, perhaps we have underestimated what sports teach girls.

Sports are not simply about physical activity. They teach resilience, teamwork, competition, confidence, and leadership; the very capabilities we later expect from executives, entrepreneurs, and public leaders.

The United States demonstrated the power of this through Title IX, legislation that transformed girls' access to school sports by requiring educational institutions to provide equitable athletic opportunities through federal funding for girls and boys educational programs.

Decades later, its impact extended far beyond playing fields, contributing to higher female participation in leadership and the workforce.

Perhaps this is the education reform conversation we should be having. How to intentionally raise women who leave school, believing they have both the potential and opportunity to lead, build, invent, negotiate, create wealth, and solve problems.

Because if we keep educating girls for competence while socialising them for compromise, we should not be surprised when brilliant girls disappear somewhere between the classroom and the boardroom. Maybe the real question was never where all the brilliant girls went. Maybe the better question is this: what kind of education would have allowed them to stay?

TOP 7 HIGHEST-PAID CREATORS OF 2026



... How digital content became a \$1.02 billion business

The creator economy has reached another milestone, with the world's 50 highest-paid creators earning a combined \$1.02 billion between March 2025 and March 2026, according to Forbes.

The annual ranking reflects how digital creators have evolved from social media personalities into business owners, building companies around their audiences through consumer products, podcasts, subscriptions, live events,

licensing agreements and other ventures.

Leading the list is MrBeast, who earned an estimated \$300 million, around 4.6 times more than second-placed Dhar Mann, whose earnings reached \$65 million.

The gap between the two highlights the scale that a handful of creators have achieved as they expand beyond online content.

Forbes' ranking is based on more than estimated earnings. It also considers audience size, engagement and entrepreneurial success,

offering a picture of how creators are building businesses that compete with traditional media companies.

The list also reflects the diversity of today's creator economy. Alongside entertainers are educators, gamers, podcasters and business creators, showing that digital audiences are willing to support a wide range of content. Where the money comes from.

For many of today's leading creators, online content is only one part of the business.

While advertising revenue remains important, many have diversified their income through consumer brands, merchandise, books, courses, subscription platforms, live events, sponsorships and licensing deals. This shift has reduced their dependence on social media algorithms and advertising payouts while creating businesses that continue to generate revenue across multiple channels.

The ranking also shows that audience size alone does not determine earnings. Creators with smaller but engaged communities are increasingly building profitable businesses by focusing on specialised content and products.

Here are the seven highest-paid creators in the Forbes ranking.

1. MrBeast — \$300 million

MrBeast, whose real name is Jimmy Donaldson, retained the top spot after earning an estimated \$300 million. With 873 million followers, he also has the largest audience among the creators on the list.

His business extends beyond YouTube through consumer products, brand partnerships and other commercial ventures. His success illustrates how creators are turning online influence into businesses that generate income beyond advertising.

2. Dhar Mann — \$65 million

Dhar Mann ranked second with estimated earnings of \$65 million and 171 million followers.

Known for producing short stories centred on life lessons and personal choices, Mann has built a media company around scripted digital content while expanding into other business activities.

3. Steven Bartlett — \$52 million

Entrepreneur and podcast host Steven Bartlett secured third place with estimated earnings of \$52 million and 38.7 million followers.

His ranking highlights the growing commercial value of podcasts. Through interviews with entrepreneurs, business leaders, athletes and public figures, Bartlett has built multiple revenue streams including publishing, investments and speaking engagements.

4. Markiplier — \$38 million

Gaming creator Markiplier earned an estimated \$38 million, placing fourth on the list. He has 76.8 million followers.

His business has expanded beyond gaming videos into entertainment projects, collaborations and digital media production, showing the continued strength of gaming as one of the largest segments of the creator economy.

5. Rhett & Link — \$37 million

Comedy and entertainment duo Rhett & Link ranked fifth after earning \$37 million. Together they have 45.6 million followers.

Their business includes online shows, podcasts, merchandise and production activities, demonstrating how long-established creators continue to grow by expanding beyond video content.

6. Codie Sanchez — \$31 million

Business educator Codie Sanchez earned an estimated \$31 million, despite having the smallest audience among the top seven at 10 million followers.

Her position shows that earnings do not always correspond with follower numbers. Through educational content, business investments, courses and subscription products, she has built a business around a focused audience.

7. IShowSpeed — \$30 million

Streaming personality IShowSpeed completed the top seven with estimated earnings of \$30 million and 184 million followers.

His live streams and gaming content continue to attract large audiences across digital platforms, reflecting the growing commercial opportunities in livestreaming and interactive entertainment.

HOW GERMANY'S 'TUITION-FREE' HIDES FINANCIAL GATE, FILTERS OUT CAPABLE STUDENTS

...places €11,904 cost for foreign students

CHARLES OGWO



Germany's tuition-free public universities continue to attract thousands of Nigerians and other international students each year, but prospective applicants must first overcome a significant financial hurdle.

According to the GrandRoyal Travel report, for 2026, the standard amount is €11,904 (about N19 million) for one year. That works out to €992 per month.

"This is the figure most students must show, usually through a blocked account. The number is not random. It is tied to the German government's own student support rate, known as BAföG.

"When that rate rises, the required proof of funds rises with it. This is why the amount changes every year or two. In 2023, it was €11,208; in 2024 and 2025, it settled at €11,904; and it has stayed at that level for 2026.

Non-EU students are required to deposit at least €11,904 into a blocked account, or Sperrkonto, to demonstrate they can cover their living expenses during their first year of study.

BusinessDay finding indicates that Germany markets its public universities as tuition-free, which is true, but non-EU students, such as Nigerians, still cannot get a visa without proving they can fund themselves upfront, and that is where the real barrier lies.

Besides the blocked account, a student is required to provide health insurance, the visa fee, and provider charges, which pushes the real upfront cost past €12,000 (about N20 million).

Going by the prevailing exchange rates, over N20 million is a huge amount for a Nigerian family to pay and lock away before the student sets foot in Germany.



For a Nigerian who wants to pursue an academic future in Germany, here is the detailed breakdown for the tuition gate angle.

For 2026, the student must show a blocked account (Sperrkonto) of €11,904, deposited and locked before the visa is approved.

Besides, he or she must provide health insurance, which runs roughly €120 to €160 per month, a visa fee of about €75, and blocked account provider charges.

That pushes the real upfront cost past €12,000, which at current rates is well over N20 million.

Research shows that Nigerian applicants face one of the highest visa rejection rates, near 46 percent, against a global average around 18 percent, so many families raise this money and still get refused, losing the

visa fees on top.

According to Study in Europe report, between 2023 and 2025, over 14,000 Nigerian students were enrolled at German universities, with annual new study arrivals growing consistently due to zero tuition fees.

Germany grants thousands of Schengen visas to Nigerians for short-term tourism and visits annually, though official country-specific totals for visit visas are aggregated by the German Federal Foreign Office and remain dynamic.

Recall that in 2024, Annett Gunther, the German ambassador to Nigeria, said there are no fewer than 4,000 Nigerians schooling and working in Germany.

According to her, the German government is trying to make it easier for prospective Nigerian students to get visas to Germany.

However, schooling in Germany is not as free as many believe, intending foreign students must navigate the drawback of parting with about N20 million in a blocked account.

For many Nigerian families, gathering N20 million is the hardest part. Besides, they are to pay for provider fees, and moving money out of Nigeria involves transfer costs and exchange rate risk.

What is a blocked account?

A blocked account, or Sperrkonto in German, is a special bank account where you deposit the required amount before your visa. The money is “blocked,” meaning you cannot take it all out at once. Instead, it is released to you in monthly portions after you arrive in Germany. This proves to the embassy that you have living expenses for your whole first year.

The blocked account that Nigerian students use is the most widely accepted and most reliable form of financial proof at the German Embassy in Abuja and the Consulate in Lagos. If a student is self-funded or his/her family is sponsoring him/her, the German student visa blocked account is the cleanest way to prove his/her finances.

However, the blocked account is not the only accepted proof of funds. There are a few situations in which a student may not need one, or can combine it with something else.

If a student has a recognised scholarship, such as DAAD or one of the political foundation scholarships, the award letter can serve as his/her financial proof.

In that case, such a student may not need a full blocked account, because the scholarship body confirms it is covering his/her living costs.

How it works

A student cannot withdraw the full balance in one go. The point of the block is to spread the money across the year. Each month you receive about €992, which is meant to cover your rent, food, insurance, transport, and daily life. This monthly rhythm is exactly what the embassy wants to see.

The main issue

So, the core issue, is not that Germany is expensive to study in; rather, it is that ‘tuition-free’ hides a serious financial gate that filters out capable students who simply cannot raise the deposit.



WHERE POVERTY MEETS HOPE: INSIDE THE OSUN FREE SCHOOL GIVING DROPOUTS A SECOND CHANCE

ROYAL IBEH



For 18-year-old Yemisi Ayoola, dropping out of school was never part of her dream.

After finishing Junior Secondary School, her parents could no longer afford to continue her education. Instead of moving closer to her future, she stayed at home, watching her dreams slowly fade.

Today, she spends her mornings learning hairdressing and makeup at the Princess Ruth AINU Ataiyero Skills Acquisition Centre in Ilesa, Osun State, a place she says has restored her hope.

“If government can help me go back to school after this training, I will be very happy,” she told BusinessDay.

For 22-year-old Janet Yemi, who has spent the past few years working as a salesgirl after secondary school, the centre represents a bridge to a better future.

She is learning fashion design while preparing to continue her education.

“If admission doesn’t come immediately, I want to become a professional fashion designer and own my own shop,” she said.

Perhaps the most inspiring student is 62-year-old Victoria Olushola.

Decades ago, she abandoned tailoring because her parents could not afford to complete her apprenticeship.

More than 40 years later, she is back in the classroom.

“When I heard the training was free, I came back. I want government to help us with more sewing machines,” she said.



The centre is now becoming part of a wider digital education drive led by the Osun State Ministry of Education and UNICEF.

Yemisi, Janet and Victoria are part of hundreds of thousands of young people in Osun State, battling against an education crisis.

According to the latest Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS-6) conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), about 297,000 children in Osun State are out of school, representing 13 percent of the state's school-age population. Although the percentage has fallen from previous years, it remains the highest in Nigeria's South-West region, with boys more affected than girls.

For state officials, the figures represent more than statistics as they are children whose futures remain uncertain without education or employable skills.

That reality is driving a new strategy that combines free vocational training with digital learning and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to help vulnerable children and young people find a pathway back into education and employment. Unlike many vocational schools that charge fees, students at the Princess Ruth Aina Ataiyero Skills Acquisition Centre pay nothing.

Registration is free. Training is free. Practical materials are free.

The centre, established last year by philanthropist Sir Prince Chief Samson Ataiyero in memory of his late wife, was created to give young people, especially those forced out of school by poverty, a second chance.

The school offers training in fashion design, ICT, catering, beauty therapy, plumbing and entrepreneurship.

Its doors are open to everyone.

"We have Christians, Muslims, Yoruba, Igbo and people from different backgrounds. This is not about religion or ethnicity. We only want to empower young people," said Akindu Ajayi, the bishop's administrative assistant of the Ilesa Anglican Diocese.

The impact is already becoming visible.

According to the centre's director, Gladys Olanubi Fadahunsi, about 70 percent of the first 48 graduates were young people who had dropped out of school, while the remaining students were waiting for admission into higher institutions.

"We don't want them roaming the streets or getting into trouble while waiting," she said.

The current session has about 28 trainees, many of whom are learning skills that could become lifelong careers.

Among them is 16-year-old Adekunle Iseoluwa, who recently completed junior secondary school. Rather than spending months idle at home, his parents enrolled him to study ICT.

"It is better than staying at home doing nothing," he said.

Through the Nigeria Learning Passport, students are beginning to combine practical vocational training with online learning, AI tools and digital content.

The platform contains more than 15,000 learning resources, giving learners access to educational materials beyond the classroom.

Officials say the goal is to ensure that young people who missed formal education are not left behind as technology reshapes the future of work.

Speaking during a media dialogue on Digital Learning, Artificial Intelligence and Skill Development for Out-of-School Children in Osogbo, Murtala Adekilekun Kehinde Jimoh, the permanent secretary of the Osun State Ministry of Education, described the out-of-school crisis as one of the state's biggest education challenges.



“Education remains the most powerful tool for human development, social transformation and economic growth. Digital technology and artificial intelligence now offer opportunities to bridge educational gaps and reach vulnerable children who would otherwise remain outside the education system,” he said.

Jimoh said the government has established learning centres and alternative schools in communities such as Osogbo, Ilesa, Ile-Ife and Ede to help children return to learning.

The Nigeria Learning Passport is one of several programmes being implemented by UNICEF in partnership with the Federal Ministry of Education, UBEC, the National Commission for Almajiri and Out-of-School Children Education, state education ministries, SUBEBs and development partners including the World Bank, Education Cannot Wait, GPE, Microsoft, Airtel, IHS Towers, TECNO and SONY.

For 17-year-old Salvation Arimorn, the digital platform has completely changed how he learns.

He now uses AI to design graphics, edit images, generate ideas and even create music.

“I can talk to AI like I am talking to a person. It has changed the way I learn,” he said.

But UNICEF officials warn that access to school alone is no longer enough.

Celine Lafoucriere, chief of UNICEF's Lagos Field Office, said only one in four Nigerian children who attend school can read properly and perform basic mathematics by the age of 14.

“The children who know how to use these technologies will have a chance. The ones who don't will be left out. Right now, out-of-school children in Nigeria are the ones being left out,” she said.

Harold Kpojime, UNICEF education specialist, said Nigeria now has nearly 20 million out-of-school children, the highest number in the world.

He noted that poverty, insecurity, gender inequality, culture and geography continue to keep millions of children outside classrooms.

“If you do not know how many children are out of school, it becomes difficult to solve the problem,” he said.

Back in Ilesa, however, statistics give way to human stories.

Despite limited funding, unreliable electricity and insufficient equipment, the centre continues to welcome anyone willing to learn.

Last year, only a few graduates received start-up kits because of financial constraints. Two of the poorest beneficiaries were supported with fully equipped shops to start businesses.

“We want to give every graduate start-up kits, but we don't have the capacity. That is why we are appealing to government, organisations, philanthropists and partners to support us,” Ajayi said.

Church announcements, radio campaigns and community outreach continue to bring new learners through the gates.

Some arrive after dropping out of school. Some come while waiting for university admission. Others are teenage mothers trying to rebuild their lives.

A few, like 62-year-old Victoria, are simply returning to dreams that poverty interrupted decades ago.

For all of them, the Princess Ruth AINU Ataiyero Skills Acquisition Centre offers more than free training.

It offers a second chance and in a state where nearly 297,000 children are still out of school, every second chance matters.



TOP 5 KIT BRANDS DOMINATING THE FIFA 2026 WORLD CUP

ANTHONY NLEBEM



The FIFA 2026 World Cup is not only showcasing the world's best footballers but also the biggest battle among global sportswear brands. With the expanded 48-team tournament serving as a worldwide marketing platform, kit manufacturers are competing for visibility before billions of fans across the globe.

Adidas, Nike and Puma continue to dominate the tournament, supplying kits to more than 75 per cent of the participating nations, while a growing number of independent manufacturers are also making their mark.

Here are the top five kit brands dominating the FIFA 2026 World Cup and the teams wearing them.

1. Adidas – 14 Teams

Adidas remains the leading kit supplier at the tournament, outfitting 14 national teams and reinforcing its long-standing association with the FIFA World Cup.

Teams wearing Adidas:

Argentina
Belgium
Germany
Spain
Italy
Japan
Mexico
Morocco
Sweden
Scotland
Wales
Venezuela
Peru
Algeria

2. Nike – 12 Teams

Nike is Adidas' closest rival, supplying kits for 12 nations, including several tournament favourites and global football powerhouses.



Teams wearing Nike:

Brazil
France
England
Portugal
Netherlands
United States
Nigeria
South Korea
Croatia
Canada
Australia
Poland

3. Puma – 11 Teams

Puma completes football's "Big Three" by supplying kits for 11 national teams, including several of Africa's leading sides.

Teams wearing Puma:

Senegal
Ghana
Ivory Coast
Egypt
Switzerland
Austria
Serbia
Czech Republic
Uruguay
Paraguay
Ecuador

4. Kelme – 2 Teams

Spanish manufacturer Kelme is the standout among the independent brands, supplying kits to two national teams.

Teams wearing Kelme:

Jordan
Bosnia and Herzegovina

5. Umbro – 1 Team

Umbro remains one of football's most recognisable heritage brands and is represented by one nation at the tournament.

Team wearing Umbro:

El Salvador

Other Kit Brands at the FIFA 2026 World Cup

Several other manufacturers are represented by one national team each, reflecting the growing diversity of football apparel brands on the world's biggest stage.

Kappa
Reebok
Jako
Capelli Sport
7Saber
Majid
Saeta
Marathon Sports
The "Big Three" Still Rule

Despite the growing presence of independent manufacturers, Adidas, Nike and Puma remain the undisputed leaders at the FIFA 2026 World Cup, supplying 37 of the tournament's 48 participating teams, more than 75 per cent of the field.

However, the expanded format has also created greater opportunities for smaller brands. A total of 11 teams are wearing kits produced by independent manufacturers, up from just six at the 2022 World Cup, underlining the increasing diversity of football's global kit market.

BRAND STRATEGY VS. MARKETING STRATEGY: UNVEILING THE KEY DIFFERENCES FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS

FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA

Marketing and brand strategies overlap in some aspects but serve distinct purposes in promoting your company. A brand strategy is a long-term blueprint that focuses on shaping a brand's identity and establishing continuity.

It integrates the brand's core values, mission, and emotional connection with its audience. In contrast, a marketing strategy deals with short-term tactics and plans designed to drive sales and communicate key messages effectively.

Pairing brand and marketing together for business growth

When brand and marketing strategies are effectively integrated, they can support each other and ultimately put your company in the strongest position. The brand strategy provides a long-term vision and identity, while marketing focuses on tactical, short-term actions to engage customers.

Together, they enable a company to build a solid, lasting relationship with its audience, fostering loyalty and recognition. This alignment ensures that the brand remains top-of-mind, driving higher sales and establishing the company as the 'go-to' choice when customers are ready to make a purchase.

The risks of focusing only on one strategy
If you focus only on one strategy, you may struggle to pivot when market conditions change. For instance:

Companies need a strong brand and effective marketing to stand out in a competitive market. A sole focus on marketing might not help you in the long term, while relying only on brand identity may leave you unnoticed by new customers.

During economic downturns or shifts in customer preferences, a balance between maintaining your brand's integrity and adapting your marketing approach will be crucial. Companies that focus too much on one or the other may find it harder to adjust and stay relevant.

Step-by-step guide to aligning brand and marketing strategies

Aligning your brand and marketing strategies ensures a cohesive and impactful presence in the marketplace. Follow this guide to synchronize both strategies for maximum growth and customer engagement.

1. Create a consistent message across all platforms

Consistency in messaging is vital to maintaining a strong brand presence across marketing channels. Ensure your marketing materials reflect your brand identity.

Brand story: Craft a compelling brand story highlighting your company's mission, vision, and values. Use this narrative as the backbone of your marketing content.

Tone of voice: Maintain a consistent tone in your marketing, whether you post on social media, write blog articles, or run ad campaigns.

Visual identity: Align your marketing visuals with your brand's design elements, including your logo, colour palette, fonts, and imagery.

Consistency helps your audience recognize and remember your brand, building trust and loyalty.

2. Consistency helps your audience recognise and remember your brand, building trust and loyalty.

Not every marketing channel may suit your brand. Choose platforms that align with your brand's identity and where your audience is most active.

Social media: Choose platforms that resonate with your audience and match your brand's tone (e.g., LinkedIn for B2B brands or Instagram for creative, visual-focused brands).

Content marketing: Create blogs, white papers, videos, or podcasts that reflect your brand's values and expertise.

E mail marketing: Personalise your messaging to reflect your brand's voice, providing value to your audience that aligns with your brand's mission.

SEO and paid advertising: Ensure your digital campaigns echo your brand's identity while targeting keywords and audiences that align with your marketing goals.

3. Align your marketing campaigns with brand positioning

Once you've chosen your channels, create campaigns that reflect your brand strategy while achieving marketing objectives.

Campaign themes: Ensure the themes of your campaigns highlight core brand attributes, such as your company's unique value propositions, customer-centric approach, or industry leadership.

Storytelling: Use marketing campaigns to tell your brand story, ensuring your messaging reflects your brand identity.

Emotional connection: Your brand strategy should resonate emotionally with your audience. Ensure your marketing content appeals to those feelings through authentic and relatable messaging.

4. Track and adjust both strategies using data Measuring performance is crucial to aligning and refining your brand and marketing strategies.

Brand metrics: Track customer perceptions, brand awareness, loyalty, and reputation through surveys, social media monitoring, and brand sentiment analysis.

Marketing metrics: Measure the success of your campaigns using marketing metrics such as click-through rates, conversion rates, ROI, and customer acquisition costs.

Adjust as needed: If brand awareness is increasing but conversions need to catch up, revisit your marketing strategy to ensure clear messaging and offers. Conversely, if marketing campaigns are driving sales but brand loyalty is low, focus on enhancing your brand's emotional connection with customers. Regularly review both sets of metrics to ensure your brand and marketing strategies remain aligned and effective.

5. Stay agile and refresh your strategy as needed

Both branding and marketing are iterative processes that evolve over time.

As your business grows, customer preferences shift, or industry trends change, you may need to pivot.

Brand refresh: Consider updating your brand's identity every few years to stay relevant. This could mean adjusting your brand's visual elements, messaging, or values to reflect market changes.

Marketing strategy updates: Regularly review your marketing channels and tactics to ensure they align with your brand's current goals and customer behaviours.

Staying agile will allow you to respond to changes and keep both strategies aligned for long-term success.

LAST LINE

Don't settle for one without the other. A compelling brand gives your marketing efforts direction and resonance, while an effective marketing strategy ensures that your brand reaches the right audience at the right time. By aligning both, your business will not only stand out in a crowded marketplace but also remain relevant in the hearts and minds of your customers.



FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA

Feyisitan Ijimakinwa is a Reputation and Perception Management expert. He is a prolific writer and researcher who, at different times, served as Head of Corporate Communications of top brands quoted on the Nigerian Stock Exchange. A versatile communications specialist, he practiced extensively as a print journalist and was variously engaged in the broadcast media, working on radio and television. Feyisitan continues to write on corporate communications, brand reputation and perception management, and brand intelligence, among others. He organises the 'Brand Intelligence and the Marketplace' masterclass. Feyisitan advocates a pollution free and sustainable environment

THE CITY OF THE DEAD

UDY OSARO-EDOBOR

Ayo, a Nigerian man, relocated to Cairo, Egypt, in search of a better life. He found work as a taxi driver. Every day he met different people but one passenger stood out. Her name was Habeebat Hassan.

Habeebat worked in an office in Cairo. Her job required her to travel around the city several times every week. After using Ayo's taxi once, she enjoyed both his company and the smooth ride. Before she got out of the car that day, they exchanged phone numbers.

From then on, whenever she had errands to run for her boss, she called Ayo.

Over time they became friends. Whenever she had enough time, they would stop for lunch before continuing with the day's work. She became Ayo's favourite customer. Soon, he found himself looking forward to seeing her even on days she had no errands to run.

Weeks passed. Months passed.

Habeebat visited Ayo a few times but she never allowed him to return the visit.

They had become close friends. Ayo liked her very much and wanted their friendship to become something more.

But first, he wanted to know her better.

He wanted to meet her family.

He wanted to know where she lived.

He wanted to meet her son.

Whenever they spent an evening together, Habeebat would never allow Ayo to drop her off at home. She always asked him to stop somewhere else, insisting that she would find her own way home. This continued for a long time until it became an issue between them.

One night after dinner, she finally agreed that he could take her home. Ayo asked for her address so he could enter it into his GPS. She refused. Instead, she told him to follow her directions. As she guided him through the roads, Ayo became uneasy. He knew where they were heading. The road led farther and farther away from the city. It was one of the longest drives he had ever made. Finally, she asked him to stop.

Ayo looked around. His eyes widened in shock. Habeebat lived in the City of the Dead. One of the world's oldest and largest Islamic cemeteries.

Although it was a cemetery, many people had lived there for generations. Some families even lived inside or beside old mausoleums. Because of housing shortages in Egypt, parts of the cemetery had slowly become real neighbourhoods. People cooked meals, raised children, went to work and returned home every evening... all while surrounded by graves.

At that moment, Ayo understood why she had hidden her home from him. He gently assured her that she had nothing to be ashamed of.

He reminded her that she was hardworking and he believed that with enough savings she would eventually move somewhere better. He even promised to support her if she needed help. She smiled and thanked him.

Then she apologised that it was already late and it was not a good time for him to come inside to meet her family, especially her son. But she promised that the next time he visited, she would introduce everyone to him.

As Ayo drove home that night, he could not stop thinking. The people living there had become so used to their surroundings that the cemetery no longer frightened them. They had built a thriving community among the tombs.

Meanwhile, he was a foreigner, yet life had treated him better than many of them. He warned himself never to complain again whenever he felt life was unfair.

When he got home, he sent Habeebat a text message. She replied immediately.

She thanked him for being understanding because she believed most men would have reacted differently after discovering where she lived. Ayo assured her that he was not like most men. She mentioned that her phone had started acting up and that she had to go and he wished her good night.

The next day he did not hear from her.

He waited. Still nothing. He became worried. He drove to her office building and waited outside, hoping to see her come out. She never did. He approached the security desk and asked if they had seen Habeebat.

The security guards told him the building had sixteen floors, many companies and several women named Habeebat. He needed to be more specific. That was when something struck him. He did not know the name of the company where she worked. It had never occurred to him to ask.

His mind filled with questions.

Was she embarrassed after showing him where she lived?

Had she fallen sick?

Had something happened to her parents?

Had something happened to her son?

The questions refused to leave him.

A week later, Ayo drove to the City of the Dead to look for her. The cemetery stretched for miles. Finding one person there was like looking for a pin in a haystack. Still, he was willing to try. As expected, asking for Habeebat Hassan led nowhere. There were many women with that name. Then Ayo remembered her son's name. Khalid.

That narrowed the search.

A young man nearby became interested in Ayo's story and offered to help for a fee. He then asked Ayo if he had a photograph of the woman.

Thankfully, Habeebat loved taking pictures. Ayo opened his phone and showed him several photographs.

The young man stared at them for a long moment. Then he quietly told Ayo to follow him. They walked for a long time through

narrow paths lined with old tombs and weathered mausoleums. Eventually they arrived at a small tent where a young boy was playing alone.

The guide gently called the boy and asked him, through Arabic, to go and bring his grandparents because someone had come looking for their daughter. The little boy ran inside.

Moments later, an elderly man and woman stepped out. The guide introduced Ayo and explained that he had travelled there looking for their daughter, Habeebat.

The old couple looked at each other in silence. Then the guide slowly turned to Ayo. He explained that Habeebat had died four years earlier while giving birth to her son, Khalid.

For a few seconds Ayo could neither breathe nor speak. His ears rang. His knees became weak. The world around him spun violently. Then everything went black. He collapsed onto the ground.

When Ayo finally regained consciousness, he found himself lying inside the tent while the elderly couple watched him with concern. His whole body trembled. He struggled to sit up.

Then, with a shaking voice, he told them everything.

He told them how he had met Habeebat.

How she became his favourite passenger. How they ate lunch together.

How they became close friends. And only a week earlier, he had driven her home.

No one interrupted him. No one spoke.

When he finished, the silence inside the tent became unbearable. Desperate to prove he was not losing his mind, Ayo grabbed his phone. His hands shook as he opened the gallery. He searched for her photographs. One after another. There was nothing. Every single picture of Habeebat had disappeared.

His breathing became heavy.

“No...”

He searched again.

Nothing.

The volunteer guide snatched the phone from him. His own face turned pale.

Only minutes earlier, he had personally looked through several photographs of Habeebat before bringing Ayo there.

Now they were all gone. Not one remained.

Before Ayo left, the elderly couple quietly asked him to follow them. They led him through rows of old tombs until they stopped before a simple grave. The guide told him that this was where Habeebat had been buried four years earlier.

Ayo stood frozen.

His eyes remained fixed on her grave.

He wanted to say something, but no words came.

For a brief moment, he caught the faint scent of the perfume Habeebat always wore.

His heart skipped.

He slowly turned around.

No one was there.

When he looked back at the grave, an overwhelming feeling came over him.

He could almost swear that Habeebat was there... watching.

Ayo forced himself to walk away, but every step felt heavier than the last. He never looked back.

Fear followed Ayo everywhere after that day. He could no longer drive at night without checking the rear-view mirror again and again.

Every time his phone vibrated after midnight, his heart pounded before he looked at the screen.

Sometimes he thought he saw Habeebat standing among crowds before she disappeared.

Sometimes he heard a familiar laugh behind him. Whenever he turned around, no one was there.

One question never left his mind.

How many people do we meet every day without knowing who... or what... they really are?

Perhaps the woman serving you at the grocery store.

Perhaps the stylist doing your hair.

Perhaps the waiter smiling as he brings your food.

Perhaps the stranger sitting quietly beside you.

Who knows?

There could just be a Habeebat sitting... or walking... beside you. Life and death exist side by side, not only in the City of the Dead but in the city where you live.

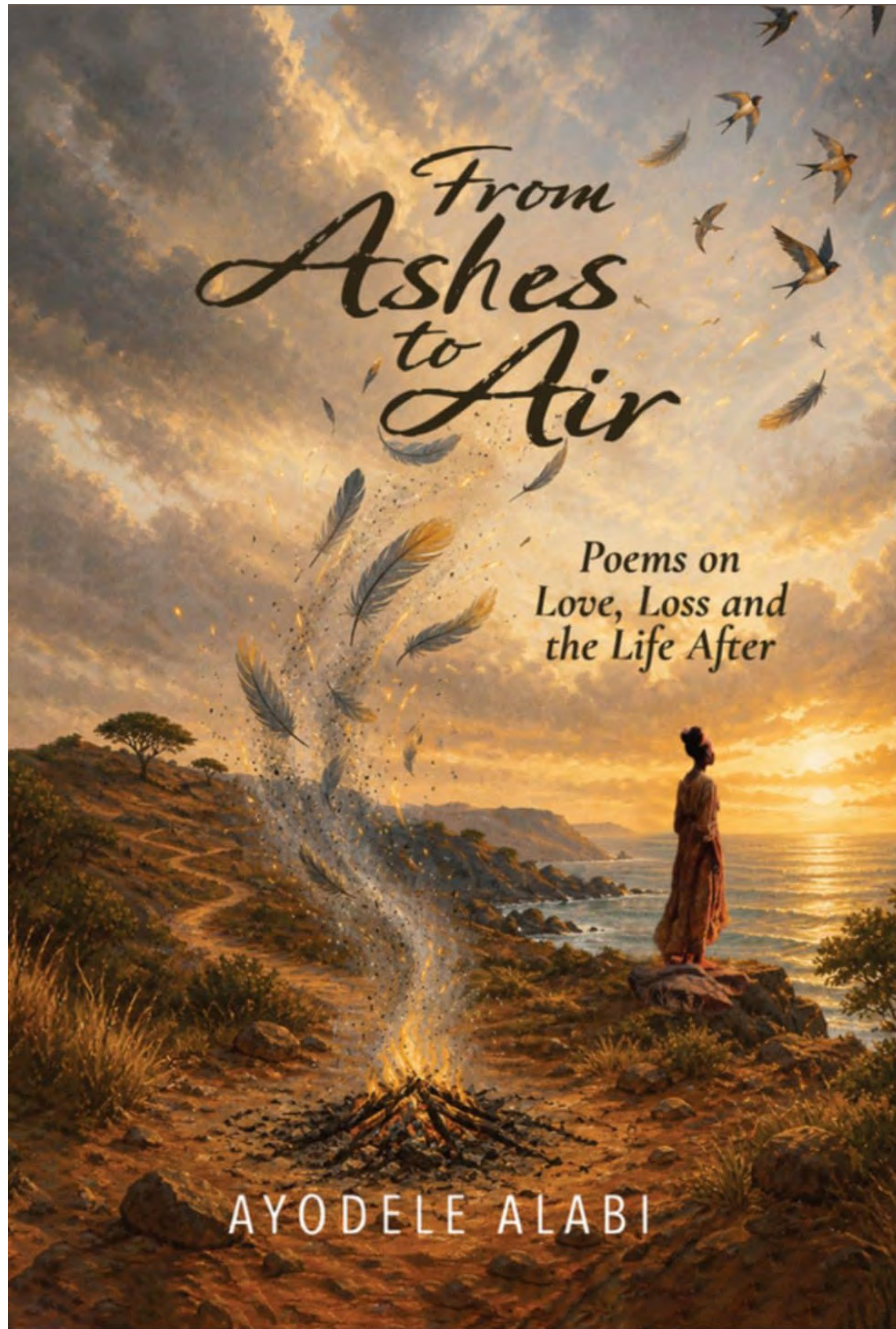


Udy Osaro-Edobor

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

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

udy1717@gmail.com



Every Tear Has a Story-A Review of Ayodele Alabi's From Ashes to Air

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Author: Ayodele Alabi
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FROM ASHES TO AIR: POEMS ON LOVE, LOSS AND THE LIFE AFTER

TITILADE OYEMADE

Death changes everything. It interrupts dreams, changes lives and leaves behind questions that may never be answered. No one hopes to lose a loved one, yet grief eventually visits many of us. In *From Ashes to Air: Poems on Love, Loss and the Life After*, Ayodele Alabi opens the door to her private world and invites readers to walk with her through the loss of her father and later her husband.

If you know Ayodele, you know she loves to talk and express herself. But in this collection, you discover that poetry is where she speaks most freely. Through these poems, she says the things that are difficult to express in everyday conversations. The collection is divided into five parts, each reflecting a different stage of her journey. By the final pages, you are no longer reading the same woman you met at the beginning. Pain slowly gives way to healing, confusion makes room for clarity, and sadness begins to turn into hope.

Although this is a poetry collection, it often feels like a memoir. Every poem is deeply personal. The emotions are so real that you feel as though you were there with the author. You feel her heartbreak, anger and longing. She holds nothing back.

One of the book's greatest strengths is the author's honesty. She does not pretend her marriage was perfect. She writes openly about betrayal, insecurity, shame, disappointment and the questions she was left to carry. At times, you may even think, "This is too personal." Yet that honesty is what gives the collection its power. Grief is not neat or predictable, and Ayodele captures its many emotions without trying to tidy them up.

At different moments, you may experience mixed feelings. You sympathise with her pain, yet you may also feel uncomfortable with some of the blame she directs towards others and even towards God. But grief rarely makes perfect sense. Ayodele allows readers to witness her pain exactly as she lived it.

The poems touch on love, betrayal, loneliness, shame, insecurity, forgiveness, anger, regret, hope and healing. Although these themes appear throughout the book, each poem feels different because every experience carries its own emotion. Readers who have been in difficult relationships will especially connect with this collection.

Those who have loved deeply, been betrayed or struggled to let go may see parts of themselves in these pages. The poems also reveal the deep emotional wounds infidelity leaves behind, especially for the betrayed spouse. Without judging anyone, the author invites readers to reflect on the lasting effects of broken trust.

Some poems may bring tears. Others may begin the process of healing. If you have lost a spouse, a parent or someone you deeply loved, these poems will feel painfully familiar. If you have never experienced such loss, you may wonder why the emotions seem so intense. But that is one of the book's greatest lessons: grief can only be fully understood by those who have lived through it.

As the collection progresses, the tone becomes lighter. The early poems are filled with heartbreak, but hope slowly begins to appear. The author's voice grows stronger, her confidence returns and she slowly rediscovers herself. She is no longer defined only by what she has lost but also by the strength she has gained.

Beneath the sorrow, Ayodele remains someone who still believes in love. She has not given up on it; she simply wants a wiser and healthier kind of love. Careful readers may even find clues about the kind of partner she hopes for in the future. That is what makes *From Ashes to Air* more than a poetry collection. It begins like a memoir, becomes deeply reflective and eventually offers hope to anyone carrying pain. These poems were not written to impress readers. They were written because the author needed a place to pour out her heart. By the end of the book, one thing is certain: every word comes from lived experience.

From Ashes to Air is not a book you simply read; it is a book you feel. It may bring tears, stir old memories and help readers begin difficult conversations they have avoided for years. More importantly, it reminds us that although grief changes us, it does not have to define us forever.

Ayodele Alabi has turned her ashes into words, offering comfort to others walking through their own seasons of loss. She reminds us that healing may be slow, but it is possible.



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

WEEKENDER

MOVIE REVIEW

VOICEMAILS FOR ISABELLE (2026)

Welcome to this week's review, in this romantic movie we discover that love truly conquers all. This was a very sweet, emotional movie. Jill had a sister called Isabelle, who she loved so much, but her sister was very ill, after some years She died. After her death Jill couldn't just move on, every day She will Send her voicenotes telling her about her day and her plans. little did she know that the phone number had been reallocated and the new guy Austin who is into real Estate, he had been receiving all the messages and listening in. For some weird reasons Austin was enjoying the messages and was secretly falling for Jill. You will need to go check out this movie to discover if Jill and Austin ended up together. The 118m romantic comedy films, comedy romance movie was directed by Leah Mckendrick, they featured actors like Zoey Deutch Nick Robinson, Nick Offerman, Lukas Gage, Harry Shum Jr., Clara Brano, Megan Danso, Toby Sandeman, Leah Mckendrick, Spencer Lord, & Gill Bellow.



ROB PEACE (2004)

Honestly this movie got to me and left my heart in Serious Pain. I sincerely thought that Shawn will rewrite his story and change his life. I kept asking myself, why? Why did things have to end up this way, but I guess that life can sometimes go South. In this emotional movie Shawn was the only Son of his Separated parents, along the line his father was accused wrongly for killing 2 ladies and was Sentenced to jail. Shawn desperately wanted to prove his father's innocence, to the extent that he was ready to jeopardize his future for that. Shawn almost lost everything and even his university degree certificate, all to raise money, to help his father. You will need to go check out this movie to find out how Shawn solved things, if he was able to raise the money, save his father, do the PHD and save the world. The 120m drama, film based on book, based on real life, social issues was directed by Chiwetel Ejiofor, they had actors like Jay Will, Mary J. Blige, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Gbenga Akinnagbe, Michael Kelly, Mare Winningham, Camila Cabello, Caleb Eberhardt, Curt Morlaye etc.



LITTLE BROTHER (2022)

If you are searching for a witty, funny comedy movie to catch up with this week, then you might want to jump on this brand-new movie. In this movie, Rudd was a successful real estate agent, but always felt like he was in the shadow of his elder brother, who was way more successful. Rudd always wanted to prove that he was better and really could do without his brother. Rudd was supposed to go on a popular TV show, when suddenly his younger brother from high school returned with no prior notice. Apparently, Marcus was his school adopted brother who decided to reunite after a series of events 30 years later. You will need to go check out this movie to find out if Rudd and Marcus could ignite the lost flame again or if the flame was long gone. The 100-minute comedy, raunchy, irreverent, novelty, language, substance movie was directed by Matt Spicer, they featured actors like John Cena, Eric André, Michelle Monaghan, Christopher Meloni, Sherry Cola, Ego Nwodim, Ben Ahlers, Caleb Hearon, Rhet Bunch etc.



WEEKEND QUOTES



1

You are not the first to experience 'the more they afflict you the more you grow.' Ask the Israelites.
.....WhispersbyTEN

2

I am connected to a server that has unlimited capacity and produces clear signals. Code Jn 1.4.5 Which server are you connected to?
.....WhispersbyTEN

3

Your efficiency rate disclosure is leadership vulnerability. Don't over promise
.....WhispersbyTEN

4

Asking for help is important however, staying helpless is not growth
.....WhispersbyTEN