

ACCOMPLISH

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SPECIAL EDITION



Nigeria's Giants of **Africa**

THE GREAT WALL OF BENIN:
*A Monument Of Ingenuity
And Endurance*



ACCOMPLISH Contents

October 2024

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OUR VISION:

To be the go-to publication for information and inspiration in pursuing life's attainments.

OUR MISSION:

To profile and celebrate the achievements and lifestyle choices of outstanding leaders and influencers in business, manufacturing, agriculture, academia, administration, entertainment and innovation in Nigeria, Africa and, indeed, globally.



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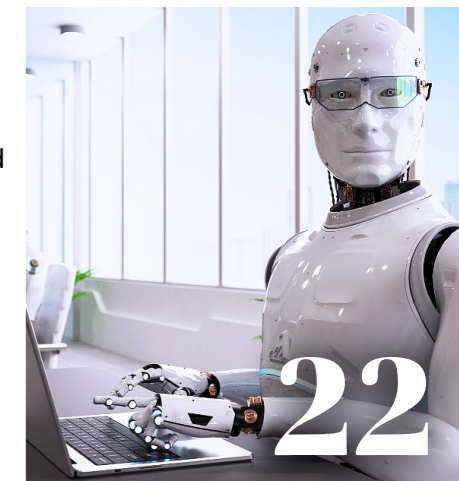
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From The Editor

So, Nigeria has been independent for 64 years? And, that in the dispensation of "business at the speed of thought" as one icon put it? To the discerning and sincere, Nigeria's size, human resources, natural resources and the era it is marking 60 plus years of independence compared to where it stands on all positive standards of nationhood do not align. Perhaps, we could celebrate 'countryhood' because of the sheer quality of positive individual exploits but nothing more!

It's quite convenient to blame past and present leaders, most of whom we describe as 'heroes past' for our national and sub-national woes. But, the stark truth is that non-leaders and non-elites of Nigeria are contributing to this "Nigeria in ICU" status. Just observe how many of us sell their votes for less than a mess of porridge during elections!

So, while we celebrate six randomly selected "Giants of Africa": Dr. Aliko Dangote GCON, Dr. Michael Adeniyi Adenuga Jr. GCON, Barr. Allen Ifechukwu Onyema CON; Adebayo O. Ogunlesi CON, Ibukun Awosika CON and Chimamanda Adichie and many others who have shone in the Nigerian business and intellectual firmament, we

have sober thoughts for the hundreds of millions of Nigerians who may go without food on Independence Day! The question is: Why should a country which produced these icons be in the backwater of infrastructural and institutional development?

Please, go through the pages to see the incisive, soul searching articles in this edition reflect these concerns under "Features and Analysis".

On the flip side, we celebrate the accomplishments of some people whose contributions are making life better. They are: Nigerian-American scientist, Robert Okojie, honoured by NASA; Sharfuddeen Sadiq Maisikeli, who pioneered the production of USB cables in Nigeria; Hemen Bekele, 15-year old Ethiopian scientist who created soap for skin cancer treatment; Tobi Amusan, world record holder in hurdles and Rena Wakama, best basketball coach at the 2024 Olympics Games.

As usual, our regulars on angel investment, artificial intelligence, real estate, travel/leisure and foods/drinks have been packaged with you in mind. We had to make this Independence edition a Special Edition!

Diyi William West

DIYI WILLIAM-WEST
Editor

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NIGERIA: BITS & BOBS

By Ikenna Ngere

BUSINESS AND FINANCE



Nigeria and UK Clash Over Air Peace Landing Rights at Heathrow Airport

The ongoing diplomatic dispute between Nigeria and the United Kingdom revolves around the refusal of Heathrow Airport to grant Air Peace landing slots, despite ongoing efforts from the Nigerian government. Festus Keyamo, Nigeria's Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, sent a formal letter to his UK counterpart, demanding landing rights for Air Peace at Heathrow.

Currently, the airline operates at Gatwick, a secondary UK airport, but aims to access Heathrow for better connectivity. Keyamo's letter threatened reciprocal action, potentially restricting British Airways and Virgin Atlantic's access to Nigeria's primary airports, Lagos and Abuja.

The conflict stems from a Bilateral Aviation Safety Agreement (BASA) between both countries, which is supposed to ensure mutual landing rights. However, UK authorities,

particularly Airport Coordination Limited, claim Air Peace missed key deadlines for slot applications, adding complexity to the situation.

While some industry experts advocate for more diplomatic measures, others back Keyamo's firm stance, urging that UK airlines should not enjoy preferential treatment in Nigeria if Air Peace continues to face such challenges in the UK

Nigeria's Inflation Rate Drops to 32.15% in August 2024

Nigeria's inflation rate eased to 32.15% in August 2024, marking a slight drop from the 33.4% recorded in July, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). This is the second consecutive month of declining inflation, though it remains 6.35 percentage points higher than the 25.80% rate in August 2023.

On a month-to-month basis, inflation slowed to 2.22%, down from 2.28% in July. Food inflation reached 37.52%. Despite concerns over rising fuel prices, the expected inflation spike did not materialise.

Nigerian Government Hails Commencement of Local Petrol Refining at Dangote facility

The Nigerian government has praised the commencement of petrol transportation from the Dangote Petroleum Refinery, marking it as a crucial step toward the country's industrialisation and self-reliance in fuel refining. Trucks from the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Ltd (NNPCL) began lifting petrol from the refinery in

Lagos on Sunday, 15th September, 2024.

Finance Minister Wale Edun, leading the government delegation, called it a significant moment for Nigeria's energy security, reducing fuel scarcity, and ending import dependency. The initiative aligns with President Tinubu's vision of enhancing local production and adding value to raw materials before export.



POLITICS



Peter Obi Dismisses Trump Comparison, Criticises Presidency's Deflection from National Issues

Peter Obi, Labour Party's 2023 presidential candidate, has condemned efforts by the

Nigerian presidency to smear his reputation by comparing him to former U.S. President Donald Trump. Through his spokesperson, Ibrahim Umar, Obi called the comparison a misguided attempt to divert attention from the government's own shortcomings.

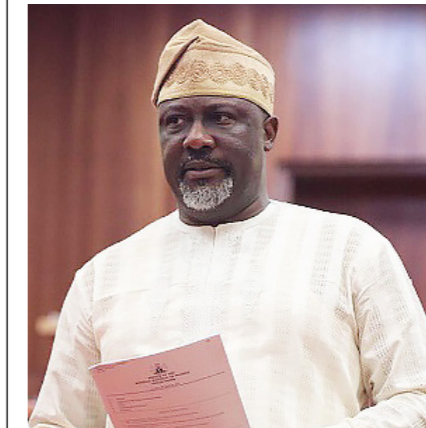
Obi, known for his focus on transparency and people-oriented policies, stressed that these tactics are meant to distract Nigerians from the real issues facing the country. He said that despite the attacks, he remains committed to his vision for a better Nigeria and urged his supporters to stay focused. Obi reiterated that his political mission is driven by a desire for national progress, not personal ambition.

Wike Vows to Withdraw Political Support for Rivers Governor Fubara

Nyesom Wike, Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, has vowed never to support Rivers State Governor Siminalayi Fubara

in his political career again. During a television appearance, Wike expressed his frustration, stating that he had played a key role in Fubara's rise to power by uniting different political factions and communities.

However, Wike claimed that Fubara has since turned against him, accusing Wike of making unreasonable demands. Despite their falling out, Wike denied that the rift has affected the governance or development of Rivers State,



emphasising that he has no desire to interfere in its leadership.

PDP Suspends Dino Melaye Over Alleged Anti-Party Activities

The Kogi State chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has suspended former senator and governorship candidate, Dino Melaye, for alleged anti-party activities. The suspension, initiated by the party's executive committee in Ayetoro Gbede, Ward 1, followed Melaye's refusal to attend a disciplinary meeting in August 2024, where he was summoned to address accusations of misconduct.

The party described Melaye's failure to honour the invitation as disrespectful and in violation of the PDP Constitution. As a result, the party concluded that his actions had brought embarrassment to the PDP, leading to his immediate suspension under Article 59(1) of the party's rules.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP



President Tinubu Strengthens Ties with China, Signs Five MoUs in Beijing

President Bola Tinubu visited China on Tuesday, September 2, to hold key bilateral meetings with President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang. During the visit, Nigeria and China signed five memoranda of understanding.

Tinubu also attended the China-Africa Cooperation Forum (FOCAC) and, as ECOWAS chairman, delivered a paper on global peace, emphasising the importance of multilateralism and co-operation.

Additionally, he addressed the Nigerian diaspora in China, discussing ongoing reforms in Nigeria aimed at improving infrastructure. After his visit to China, Tinubu travelled to London to meet King Charles III, focusing on climate change issues.

Tinubu's Diplomatic Mission to China: All Agreements Signed Between Nigeria and China

During President Bola Tinubu's visit to China, several key agreements were signed between both countries. These agreements aim to foster significant bilateral cooperation across various sectors:

- 1. Currency Swap Expansion:** The renewal of the bilateral currency swap deal between Nigeria's Central Bank and the People's Bank of China aims to facilitate trade and investment by reducing reliance on the United States' dollar.
- 2. Infrastructure Development:** China will provide funding and technical support for critical infrastructure projects in Nigeria, including railways, highways, and energy facilities, such as the Lagos-Calabar coastal railway.
- 3. Power Generation:** A new agreement focuses on enhancing Nigeria's power sector by developing new power plants and expanding renewable energy sources to tackle the country's power shortages.
- 4. Mining and Minerals:** The agreement targets the development of Nigeria's mining sector by leveraging China's

expertise and technology to explore and process mineral resources.

5. Technology and Telecommunications: China will assist in upgrading Nigeria's digital infrastructure, deploying 5G networks, and enhancing cybersecurity.

6. Cultural and Educational Exchange: This agreement includes student exchange programmes, scholarships, and increased cultural co-operation between Nigerian and Chinese educational institutions.

These agreements reflect President Tinubu's strategy to strengthen Nigeria's economic and infrastructural ties with China.



DAMIAN
IKENNA NGERE

AUTHOR'S BIO

Ikenna is a graduate of Physics and Education, who works as a freelance writer. He has an interest in technology, humanity and sports.

WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY 2024: THE ALARMING RATE OF SUICIDES IN NIGERIA

By Ify Davies

As World Mental Health Day approaches on October 10, 2024, the focus on mental health issues has never been more critical, particularly in Nigeria, where the suicide rate and mental health challenges are alarming. This year's theme, "Mental Health is a Universal Human Right," underscores the urgent need for comprehensive mental health support and awareness across all sectors of society.

The Alarming Rate of Suicides

Nigeria faces a significant mental health crisis, with estimates suggesting that 20-30% of the population suffers from various mental disorders. Despite this staggering number, mental health issues remain largely stigmatised and underreported. The suicide rate in Nigeria is estimated at 9.5 per 100,000 people, which is higher than the global average of 10.5 per 100,000.

Recent reports indicate that economic hardship, unemployment, and social instability are contributing factors to rising suicide rates. For instance, the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital in Lagos reported a 100% increase in admissions related to mental health crises in 2023. These statistics highlight a growing concern that economic pressures are leading to increased incidences of suicide.

Factors Contributing to Mental Health Issues

Several factors exacerbate mental health challenges in Nigeria:

- **Economic Crisis:** The ongoing economic downturn has led to widespread unemployment and poverty. As of mid-2023, Nigeria's unemployment rate was reported at 4.2%, with many individuals underemployed or unable to meet their basic needs.

- **Social Isolation and Stigma:** Cultural beliefs often frame mental illness as a taboo subject, leading to isolation for those affected. Many individuals suffering from mental health challenges avoid seeking help due to fear of stigma.

- **Violence and Insecurity:** The rise in violence, including kidnapping and armed robbery, has created an environment of fear that contributes to anxiety and depression among the populace.

- **Substance Abuse:** Drug abuse is on the rise among Nigerian youth, further complicating mental health issues. Reports indicate that one in seven individuals aged

15-64 used drugs in the past year, with many suffering from drug-related disorders.

Looking Beyond Government MDAs

While government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) have initiated some reforms - such as the Mental Health Act of 2021 - the implementation remains inadequate. The following strategies can enhance mental health support beyond governmental efforts:

- **Community-Based Initiatives:** Local organisations like the Nigeria Suicide Prevention (NSP) and Mentally Aware Nigeria Initiative (MANI) are crucial for raising awareness and providing support services directly within communities. These organisations focus on education, advocacy, and direct intervention for those at risk.

- **Training Lay Counsellors:** There is a pressing need for grassroots training programmes that equip community members with basic counselling skills. Initiatives like those from Idimma aim to create a network of lay counsellors who can provide early intervention and support within their communities.

- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Increasing awareness about mental health symptoms can help reduce stigma. Campaigns should focus on educating the public about common mental health issues and encouraging individuals to seek help without fear of judgement.

- **Integration into Health Care Systems:** Mental

health services should be integrated into primary health care settings to ensure accessibility for all Nigerians. Training primary health care providers in mental health diagnosis and treatment can significantly improve care delivery.

Conclusion

As we observe World Mental Health Day 2024, it is imperative for all stakeholders - government agencies, non-profits, community leaders, and individuals - to come together to address the alarming rates of suicide and mental illness in Nigeria. By fostering a culture of openness around mental health issues and implementing community-driven solutions, we can work towards reducing stigma and improving access to care for those in need.

The time has come for Nigeria to prioritise mental health as a fundamental human right - ensuring that every individual has the support they need to thrive mentally and emotionally.



IFY DAVIES

AUTHOR'S BIO

Ify Davies is a seasoned writer, editor, and strategist with a keen eye for technology. With a career spanning over six years, Davies excels in crafting compelling narratives and strategies that drive innovation and growth.



NIGERIA'S GIANTS OF AFRICA



Aliko Dangote: The Business Titan

Aliko Dangote is an illustrious figure in Nigeria and a major business leader in Africa. He was, until recently, known as Africa's richest person. He leads the Dangote Group, a big name in agriculture, oil and gas, fertilizer, and cement.

His efforts have contributed greatly to grow Nigeria's economy; more so with Dangote Petroleum Refinery, Africa's largest refinery. The project cost \$20 billion and will produce 650,000 barrels of oil daily. It will reduce Nigeria's need for imported oil and save a lot of foreign exchange. Also, Dangote Cement holds a big share of the cement market.

Looking into his life and achievements, it's clear that Dangote's story is more than just his own successes. It's about inspiring growth and sustainability in Nigeria and beyond.

Early Life and Education

Aliko Dangote was born into a prominent Muslim family in Kano, Nigeria. His family has a history of trading, which sparked his entrepreneurial spirit. This background led to a strong work ethic and a dedication to business from a young age.

Background and Family

His maternal grandfather was a successful trader, creating a lively environment that fuelled his dreams. His family's dedication to commerce inspired him to follow in their footsteps.

Academic Pursuits

His education started at Alaziziyah Primary School, Kano before he moved to Sheikh Ali Kumasi Madrasa. These schools laid a strong foundation for his future. In 1978, he finished at Government College, Birnin Kudu, before heading to Egypt to study more.

He got a degree in Business Studies at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. This degree gave him the knowledge he needed for his business ventures. His education was crucial in preparing him for success in the business world.

Aliko Dangote: The Business Titan

Aliko Dangote is a top African business leader known for his amazing entrepreneurial skills. His story shows how to build a successful business from scratch. It's a tale of hard work and smart decisions.

Formation of Dangote Group

The Dangote Group was founded in 1978 as a small but ambitious company. It began with trading and soon grew into other fields. Over time, it entered many sectors, becoming a leading conglomerate. Dangote saw

opportunities others missed, making his company a success in Africa's tough market.

Diversified Business Ventures

Dangote Industries is key to the company's success. It covers cement, sugar, flour, and salt production. These businesses boost Dangote's wealth and help local economies.

Dangote Cement is a big name in sub-Saharan Africa. The company aims to improve food security and economic growth on the continent.

Major Accomplishments and Success Stories

A big part of his success comes from Dangote Cement, a leader in the cement market that helps build Nigeria's infrastructure. Its big wins help it to lead the cement industry in Africa, which shows Dangote's vision for the industry across Africa.

Leading the Cement Industry

Dangote Cement is now Nigeria's biggest cement maker, producing 48.6 million metric tons annually. This big output allows the company to work in ten African countries.

With earnings of about N2.21 trillion (around \$1.39 billion) in 2023, Dangote Cement shows what business success in Africa looks like. It's all about growth and making things locally.

Innovations in Agriculture and Energy

Dangote has also changed the game in agriculture and energy. He's working to boost local food production and reduce imports, especially of sugar. This fits his goal of growing the economy and making food more secure in Nigeria. Dangote is leading the way in energy and sustainable energy. He's using green energy from agricultural waste. This shows Dangote's big impact on making things more efficient and caring for the environment.

Philanthropic Efforts and Contributions

The Dangote Foundation is the biggest private foundation in sub-Saharan Africa, and its work shows Aliko Dangote's deep commitment to giving back. The foundation works on health care, education, and helping people get better jobs, and it wants to make a big difference in the lives of many people across the continent.

One main goal of the foundation is to fight malnutrition. By 2025, it plans to help one million

households. In education, it has given a lot, including N1 billion to Nigerian universities. This included N500 million for a business school at Bayero University.

- The foundation helped build dormitory rooms for 2,160 students at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, costing N1.2 billion.
- It gave N230 million to women in Kogi State through a micro-grant programme, which aimed to empower 106,000 women in four northern Nigerian states with N1.1 billion.
- Internationally, the foundation gave \$2 million to the World Food Programme to help flood victims in Pakistan.

Commitment to Sustainability

The Dangote Foundation focuses on sustainability in its projects. It works with communities, governments, NGOs, and international agencies. This helps improve health, education, and economic well-being. Programmes like Mu Shuka Iri train local women as community educators, using Montessori methods to improve education. These efforts are vital, with over 10 million children in Nigeria not in school. The foundation aims to improve individual lives and support community growth for a sustainable future.

Looking Ahead: Future Aspirations

Aliko Dangote looks to the future with a bold vision for the Dangote Group. He aims to change the African business scene with his plans. With a net worth of over \$20 billion, the group is pushing limits in sectors like manufacturing and farming.

He wants to make Africa more self-sufficient and boost production in key areas. Dangote's goals are all about helping the continent's economy grow. The group is expanding in the cement, sugar, and salt production sectors. Dangote is also focusing on technology and innovation, like at the Dangote Refinery. This will create more jobs and boost the economy.

He's committed to meeting market needs and turning challenges into opportunities. This shows his strong leadership in a tough market.

Aliko Dangote is also working on building a sustainable and responsible industrial ecosystem. He's linking his business with community development projects to ensure everyone benefits from the growth. By focusing on these areas, Dangote is not only building his legacy but also creating a strong and inclusive economic future for Africa.

By Harry Choms



Ibukun Awosika

Ibukun Awosika stands aloft as a beacon of inspiration in Nigeria's business landscape, embodying resilience, integrity and innovation. As the first female Chairman of First Bank of Nigeria Plc., she broke significant barriers in the once male-dominated banking industry. Her journey from humble beginnings to becoming a prominent business leader showcases her unwavering commitment to excellence and empowerment.

Early Life and Education

Born on December 24, 1962, in Ibadan, Nigeria, she was the third of seven children. She completed her primary education at St. Paul's African Church Primary School, Lagos and secondary education at Methodist Girls' High School, Yaba, Lagos. She pursued a degree in Chemistry at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), where she also took elective courses in Accounting, reflecting her diverse interests and capabilities.

Her educational journey continued with several prestigious business programmes, including the Global Executive MBA from IESE Business School in Barcelona, Spain and the Chief Executive Programme at Lagos Business School. This robust academic foundation equipped her with the knowledge and skills to navigate and excel in business.

Entrepreneurial Ventures

Awosika's entrepreneurial spirit was ignited during her National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) year when she worked as an audit trainee at Akintola Williams & Co. Afterward, she joined Alibert Nigeria Ltd. as a showroom manager but soon ventured out on her own. In 1989, she founded Quebees Limited, a furniture manufacturing company that

later evolved into Sokoa Chair Centre Ltd., after merging with Sokoa S.A. and Guaranty Trust Bank in 2004.

Under her leadership, Sokoa Chair Centre has become a leading player in the furniture manufacturing sub-sector, showcasing her ability to innovate and adapt to market demands. Her vision extends beyond profit; she actively promotes entrepreneurship through youth employability and enterprise development initiatives.

Corporate Governance and Board Memberships

Awosika's influence extends into corporate governance as she serves on the board of several companies. Notably, she is a board director at Cadbury Nigeria Plc and has held leadership roles in various organisations, including FBN Life Assurance Limited and FBN Capital Limited. Her commitment to corporate governance is evident through her involvement with the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority and other significant boards.

In addition to her corporate roles, Awosika is passionate about social issues, particularly women's empowerment. She co-founded Women in Business Management and Public Service (WIMBIZ), an organisation that promotes female leadership and entrepreneurship.

Recognition and Awards

Awosika's contributions have not gone unnoticed; she has received numerous accolades throughout her career:

- In 2008, she became the first Nigerian recipient of the International Women Entrepreneurial Challenge (IWECA) Award.

- She was recognised as a finalist for several awards including the Entrepreneur of the Year by ThisDay newspaper and the Best Female Entrepreneur by Financial Standard.

- In 2020, she received the Forbes Woman Africa Chairperson Award, cementing her status as a leader who inspires others.

Personal Life and Philanthropy

Beyond her professional achievements, she is also an ordained pastor and founder of the Christian Missionary Fund. Through this organisation, she supports hundreds of missionaries across Nigeria by providing essential supplies for medical and educational needs.

She is married to Abiodun Awosika, with whom she has three children. Like everything else, her family life reflects her values of integrity, hard work, and community service.

Conclusion

Ibukun Awosika's story is one of determination, innovation, and leadership. As she continues to break barriers in business and inspire future generations, her legacy will undoubtedly influence many aspiring entrepreneurs across Africa. Her journey reminds us that with vision and perseverance, it is possible to achieve greatness while uplifting others.

By Ify Davies



Dr. Michael Adeniyi Adenuga Jr:

The Consummate Tactician

Dr. Michael Adeniyi Adenuga Jr. was born on April 29, 1953. He is a key figure in African business circles. As Chairman of Globacom, he has changed the Nigerian telecommunications sector. His company is the second-largest telecoms operator in Nigeria.

According to Forbes, in May 2024, his net worth was about \$6.7 billion. Dr. Adenuga has invested in oil, banking, aviation, and real estate, which shows his wide range of interests as a modern African entrepreneur. His early business ventures showed his sharp business skills, which led to his successes and made him one of Africa's richest people.

His Early Life

Dr. Michael Adeniyi Adenuga Jr. was born in April 1953, in Ibadan, Nigeria. His early life set the stage for his success as an entrepreneur, and his family background deeply influenced his goals and achievements.

Dr. Adenuga grew up in a supportive family. His dad, Oloye Michael Agbolade Adenuga Sr., was a teacher, and his mum, Omoba Juliana Oyindamola Adenuga, ran a business. This mix of education, business and cultural values shaped his early life as he learnt the importance of diligence.

Education Journey

He attended Ibadan Grammar School in Ibadan, Nigeria, before heading to Comprehensive High School in Aiyetoro for his Higher School Certificate. He moved to the United States to gain more knowledge and received a degree in Business Administration from Northwestern Oklahoma State University and a master's degree from Pace University in New York. To fund his studies, Adenuga did various jobs, including driving taxis.

Initial Business Ventures

At 26, Dr. Michael Adenuga started his first business in 1979 and made his first million naira by selling lace fabrics and distributing soft drinks. His early business moves showed his sharp mind and drive. Those early experiences helped shape his future business strategies. He was good at spotting good business opportunities, which helped his entrepreneurial journey.

Oil Exploration Success with Conoil

Ready for bigger challenges, Dr. Michael Adenuga moved into oil exploration. In 1990, he got a drilling licence. A year later, his company, Consolidated Oil, found oil in south western Ondo State, Nigeria. This was a big deal, as it was the first time an indigenous company found oil in large amounts. This success made Conoil grow fast, becoming a key player in the oil industry.

Transformation of Telecommunications in Africa

He has changed how Africa uses telecommunications with Globacom which,

in 2003 became Nigeria's second biggest telecoms operator, with over 61 million users. This success came by making mobile internet affordable for everyone.

Founding and Growth of Globacom

Adenuga started his telecoms journey after getting a GSM licence. He faced many challenges before Globacom could get a foothold in the sector, particularly with the privatisation of Nigeria Telecommunications (NITEL) which he acquired. After that acquisition, the company grew quickly, gaining 25% of the market in its first year when it introduced Per Second Billing which earlier telecoms operators in the country hadn't bothered to consider. Globacom has over 3,000 employees across Nigeria now.

Innovative Strategies in Telecommunications

Globacom has led in bringing new ideas to telecom. It introduced Per Second Billing, thus changing how people use mobile phones. The launch of the Glo-1 fibre-optic cable was another big step, connecting Nigeria to the United Kingdom and improving internet access. The company was also early to offer 4G LTE, making fast internet available to more people. Globacom keeps investing in its network and technology, setting a new standard for telecoms companies in Africa and making the market more competitive and vibrant. His work in advancing telecommunications in Nigeria is a key example of his dedication to innovation and excellence. Of course, his success extends beyond telecoms to include oil and gas, banking, and real estate.

Contribution to Economic Growth in Nigeria

Dr. Adenuga's businesses have made a big economic impact. They've created thousands of jobs directly and helped millions more indirectly. For example, Globacom, under his leadership, is a leading telecom company in Nigeria, serving over 60 million customers.

Conoil, his oil marketing company, is also very successful with operations across Nigeria. This has made him a key figure in Nigeria's economic growth. His businesses have changed industries and boosted Nigeria's economic standing worldwide.

Philanthropic Efforts and Social Responsibility

Dr. Adenuga is deeply committed to helping others and making a difference in various community. He gives generously to various causes, tackling big social issues. His efforts aim to make a lasting, positive change.

Dr. Adenuga's work has greatly improved lives, especially in areas that need it most. He focuses on empowering communities, spreading health awareness, and bettering living conditions. His goal is to give back and help people grow and develop.

Support for Education and Sports

Education is key to Dr. Adenuga's efforts to help communities.

He has supported many educational projects, scholarships, and building improvements, which help young people have better learning opportunities. He also sees the value in sports, especially football. Through his company, Globacom, he has become Africa's biggest football sponsor, greatly boosting football in Nigeria. Dr. Adenuga believes in the power of sports and education for social progress.

Honours and Awards

Dr. Michael Adenuga has earned many awards. Dr. Adenuga's journey is filled with amazing achievements and many recognitions.

In 2007, he was named African Entrepreneur of the Year at the African Telecoms Awards.

One top award he received is the Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger (GCON). He also got the Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur from France. These honours show his big impact globally.

His work has made him a celebrated figure. He has featured in many media outlets and forums. He's among the Top 100 most influential Africans, named by New African magazine. Indeed, he inspires many entrepreneurs. His successes show how innovative thinking and hard work can overcome business challenges.

Mentorship and Influence on Young Entrepreneurs

Dr. Michael Adenuga's legacy is being shaped by his focus on mentorship and his vision for African business. He has greatly influenced the entrepreneurial scene in Africa. He has made it easier for young entrepreneurs to succeed in a world full of innovation and resilience.

Through his work, Adenuga shows what a mentor should be. He teaches young Africans about hard work and giving back to society. He encourages them to think about making wealth that helps everyone. Through various programmes, he has shared success tips with many young business leaders, helping to build a strong business community.

Personal Life and Values

He extols family values. He is married and has seven children, including Bella Disu, who helps run Globacom as executive vice chairman. Despite having a lot of wealth and being one of Africa's richest, he keeps a low profile in line with the values he was taught while growing up. He believes in making a difference in society, not just earning money. He believes true wealth is about positively changing the world.

By Harry Choms



Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, born September 15, 1977, in Enugu, Nigeria, is a prominent author and speaker whose works resonated globally. As a leading voice in contemporary literature, particularly in post-colonial feminist discourse, Adichie has made significant contributions through her novels, essays, and public speeches. Her literary prowess is matched by her advocacy for gender equality and social justice, making her a formidable figure in both the literary and feminist arenas.

Early Life and Education

Adichie was raised in a well-educated Igbo family; her father was a professor at the University of Nigeria, while her mother was the first female registrar at the same institution. Growing up amidst the backdrop of the Nigerian Civil War profoundly influenced her writing. The loss of family members during this tumultuous period instilled in her a deep understanding of conflict's human cost, themes that would later permeate her work.

Adichie's educational journey began at the University of Nigeria, where she initially pursued Medicine before shifting to Communications and Political Science after moving to the United States at age 19. She graduated summa cum laude from Eastern Connecticut State University and later earned two Master's degrees - one in Creative Writing from Johns Hopkins University and another in African Studies from Yale University. Her academic background laid a strong foundation for her literary career.

Literary Accomplishments

Adichie's debut novel, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), received critical acclaim and won several awards, including the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book. Her second novel, *Half of a Yellow*

Sun (2006), which explored the Nigerian Civil War through personal narratives, won the Orange Prize for Fiction and has been adapted into a film. Her third novel, *Americanah* (2013), further solidified her reputation as a leading author, winning the U.S. National Book Critics Circle Award.

In addition to her novels, Adichie has published notable essays such as *We Should All Be Feminists* (2014), which originated from her TEDx talk of the same title. This talk sparked a global conversation about feminism and was later adapted into a book that has reached audiences worldwide. Other significant works include *Dear Ijeawele: A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* (2017) and *Notes on Grief* (2021), reflecting on personal loss. Adichie's writing is characterised by its rich narratives that intertwine personal experiences with broader social issues. Her style is accessible yet profound, allowing readers to engage deeply with complex themes of identity, race, gender, and cultural heritage.

Awards and Recognition

Throughout her career, Adichie has received numerous accolades that

underscore her impact on literature and society. Some of these are:

- MacArthur Fellowship (2008): Often referred to as the "genius grant," this fellowship recognised her exceptional creativity.
- W.E.B. Du Bois Medal (2022): Awarded by Harvard University for outstanding contributions to African and African-American culture.
- PEN Pinter Prize (2018): Honouring writers who demonstrate an unwavering commitment to freedom of expression.

Adichie's work has been translated into over thirty languages, making her stories accessible to diverse audiences worldwide. She has also been honoured with honorary doctorate from prestigious institutions such as Yale University and Johns Hopkins University.

Public Speaking and Advocacy

As an influential speaker, Adichie has delivered multiple TED talks that address critical issues surrounding feminism and story telling. Her talk, *The Danger of a Single Story*, emphasises the importance of diverse narratives in combating stereotypes about Africa and its people. This message resonates

with many who advocate for representation in literature and media.

Adichie's advocacy extends beyond literature; she actively participates in discussions about women's rights and social justice. Her feminist approach challenges traditional gender roles and encourages women to assert their rights and identities.

Conclusion

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie stands as a beacon of hope and inspiration for many around the globe. Through her literary works and public engagements, she continues to challenge societal norms while advocating for equality and justice. Her accomplishments reflect her talent as a writer and her unwavering commitment to using literature as a platform for change. As she divides her time between Nigeria and the United States, Adichie's influence remains profound - her voice echoing across continents as she inspires future generations to embrace their stories.

By Ify Davies



Adebayo Ogunlesi: Nigerian Investment Banker With Global Strides

Adebayo Ogunlesi, a name that resonates across the financial world, has solidified his reputation with yet another landmark deal. The Nigerian-born investment banker, and chairman of Global Infrastructure Partners (GIP), recently made headlines with the sale of his firm to BlackRock Inc., the world's largest asset management company, for an impressive \$12.5 billion. This monumental transaction, which saw BlackRock paying \$3 billion in cash and issuing 12 million shares worth approximately \$9.5 billion, is a testament to Ogunlesi's enduring impact on the financial industry.

His expertise earned him a seat on BlackRock's board and its global executive committee, cementing his influence in the highest echelons of global finance.

Early Life and Education

Born on December 20, 1953 in Sagamu, Ogun State, Nigeria, Adebayo Ogunlesi comes from an academically distinguished family. His father, Prof. Theophilus Ogunlesi, was Nigeria's first professor of Medicine. Adebayo's educational journey began at King's College, Lagos, before he travelled to the United Kingdom, where he earned a first-class degree in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics from Oxford University.

Following this, he moved to the United States, where he simultaneously pursued a Juris Doctor (JD) at Harvard Law School and an MBA at Harvard Business School, graduating magna cum laude in 1979.

Transition to Finance

Ogunlesi's career initially started in Law. He worked as a summer associate at Cravath, Swaine & Moore, a renowned New York law firm, and later served as a law clerk to Associate Justice Thurgood Marshall of the U.S. Supreme Court from 1980 to 1981. His foray into investment banking began when he joined First Boston as an advisor on a Nigerian gas project in 1983. This role ignited his passion for finance and marked the beginning of a remarkable career.

A Force in Global Investment

Ogunlesi's rise in the world of finance was swift. He joined Credit Suisse First Boston (CSFB), where he advised clients on global strategic transactions. His talent and leadership saw him rise to the position of global head of investment banking at CSFB, where he also served as executive vice chairman and chief client officer.

In 2006, Ogunlesi founded Global Infrastructure Partners (GIP), a private equity firm focused on infrastructure investment. GIP quickly became a

major player, making high-profile investments in airports, energy, transport, and other infrastructure assets. Some of its most notable acquisitions include London City Airport, Gatwick Airport, and Edinburgh Airport.

GIP's Global Impact

Under Ogunlesi's leadership, GIP became synonymous with successful infrastructure investments. The firm's acquisition of Gatwick Airport in 2009 for £1.455 billion was a watershed moment, marking GIP's entry into major global airport management. In 2012, GIP expanded further with the purchase of Edinburgh Airport, Scotland's busiest airport.

GIP also invested in the transport and energy sectors, with stakes in Terminal Investment Limited, Pacific National, Port of Melbourne, and Freeport LNG, to name a few. The firm manages over \$51 billion in assets and its portfolio generates annual revenues exceeding \$46 billion.

Making Waves on Wall Street

In January, Adebayo Ogunlesi made headlines when GIP was sold to BlackRock for a staggering \$12.5 billion. With over \$106 billion in assets under management, GIP has grown into a global leader in infrastructure investment. This deal, marked by its scale, further solidified Ogunlesi's standing in the finance world at the age of 70.

GIP was co-founded by Ogunlesi and five other financial heavyweights – Jonathan Bram, Matt Harris, Michael McGhee, Bill Woodburn, and Raj Rao. The firm quickly made a name for itself by focusing on infrastructure assets in transport, energy, water, and waste management. One of GIP's most notable early deals was the acquisition of London City Airport, followed by the purchase of Gatwick Airport in 2009 for £1.5 billion. The firm also acquired Edinburgh Airport in Scotland and Sydney Airport in Australia, among other assets.

Modest African Footprint

Despite his global success, Ogunlesi's direct investments in Africa remain limited. GIP's African presence is primarily linked to the port of Douala, Cameroon, through its stake in Terminal Investment Limited. Ogunlesi also sits on the board of Kosmos Energy, which is involved in significant gas projects off the coast of West Africa, including the Grand

Tortue Ahmeyim project between Senegal and Mauritania.

However, the potential for growth in African infrastructure remains vast. With the continent's annual infrastructure funding gap estimated at \$100 billion, Ogunlesi's partnership with BlackRock may pave the way for further investment in Africa's burgeoning infrastructure sector.

Notable Roles and Achievements

Adebayo Ogunlesi has held numerous prestigious positions throughout his career. He was appointed to the board of directors at Goldman Sachs in 2012, becoming lead director in 2014. His roles also include serving as a member of the board of trustees for NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital and the national board of directors of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. He is a member of the Harvard Business School dean's advisory board and the global advisory council at Harvard University.

In 2016, Ogunlesi was named as part of then U.S. President Donald Trump's Strategic and Policy Forum, a group of business leaders offering insights on economic policy. Though the forum was dissolved eight months later, his inclusion underscored his standing as a global economic influencer.

Legacy and Philanthropy

Adebayo Ogunlesi's influence extends beyond finance. He remains active in philanthropy, particularly through educational initiatives in Africa. His recognition as one of the top 100 most influential Africans by New African magazine, in 2019, highlights his ongoing contributions to the global community.

By Ikenna Ngere



Allen Onyema: A Man of Vision Reshaping Nigeria's Aviation

When we think of Nigerian entrepreneurs with inspiring journeys, Allen Onyema, the founder of Air Peace, stands out. Unlike many, his story is not rooted in political connections but in sheer perseverance, hard work, and a deep sense of purpose. Onyema's rise from a struggling, young lawyer to head Nigeria's largest airline offers a unique narrative of how passion for peace and nation-building can fuel entrepreneurial success.

Humble Beginnings

Born in Benin City, in present-day Edo State, Nigeria, in 1964, to parents from Anambra State, his childhood was a blend of modesty and ambition. As the first of nine children, he attended schools across Mid-Western Nigeria, eventually studying Law at the University of Ibadan. Here, alongside his academic pursuits, he developed a deep interest in social activism, particularly centred around national unity. These values of peace and cohesion would later guide his business philosophy.

From Law to Entrepreneurship

With a Law degree in hand but no financial resources, Onyema moved to Lagos in 1990, in search of opportunities. Living in the crowded, bustling city, he faced the daily rigour of long commutes and difficult living conditions, squatting with friends. His break came when he secured a position at Nwizugbo & Co. Chambers. Soon, his legal career took a back seat as he discovered a new calling – entrepreneurship.

Allen Onyema's first steps into business were unplanned but proved pivotal. Through a chance connection, he began selling plots of land for a family in Lagos, earning significant profits. Sensing the potential in real estate, he launched his own company, Allen Onyema & Co., to focus on property development. This encouraged him to transition from a struggling lawyer to a thriving businessman.

Expanding into Real Estate, Trade, and Imports

As Onyema's real estate business grew, he diversified into other sectors. His company, Continental Business

Links Limited, acted as a bridge between Nigerian traders and foreign manufacturers, particularly from Korea. This intermediary role provided Onyema with a steady stream of business, allowing him to connect global manufacturers with Nigerian markets.

He didn't stop there. Onyema launched Every Tide Limited, an import company specialising in electronics. Many Nigerian traders, wary of the complexities of importing goods directly, flocked to Onyema's services. His businesses flourished, each venture building upon the last, laying the foundations of a growing empire.

The Birth of Air Peace

For Onyema, launching Air Peace was not about personal profit but about creating jobs. He realised that the aviation sector held vast potential for employment. A single Boeing 737, he discovered, could provide jobs for over a thousand people. Inspired by the opportunity to contribute to Nigeria's economy, Onyema shifted his focus to aviation.

Initially, he purchased three Domier jets for charter services, but it soon became clear that commercial aviation was where the real opportunity lay. Air Peace was officially launched, in 2013, with seven Boeing 737 planes – making it the first Nigerian airline to begin with more than two aircraft. Despite early challenges, including a two-year delay in obtaining an operating licence, Air Peace has grown rapidly, becoming the largest indigenous airline in West and Central Africa, renowned for its competitive fares and commitment to safety.

Selfless Gesture Earns Public Recognition

While Allen Onyema was already building a business empire, it wasn't until 2019 that his name captured international attention. In an act of selfless patriotism, he used his Boeing 777 aircraft to evacuate Nigerians caught in the xenophobic attacks in South Africa, free of charge. This humanitarian gesture, costing over N280 million, became a defining moment in his aviation operations. For Onyema, that gesture wasn't about business; it was about valuing human life and national pride. Public awareness of his airline simply hit the skies!

Peace and Philanthropy

Onyema's interests extend far beyond the world of business. His commitment to peace and national unity is deeply ingrained in his personal values. In 2005, he launched the Nigeria Forever Project, which promoted national unity over ethnic divisions. His dedication to peace advocacy was recognised internationally when, in 2007, he became the second African to be appointed to the Executive Board of The Global Nonviolence Conference Series Inc., USA.

Recognition and Awards

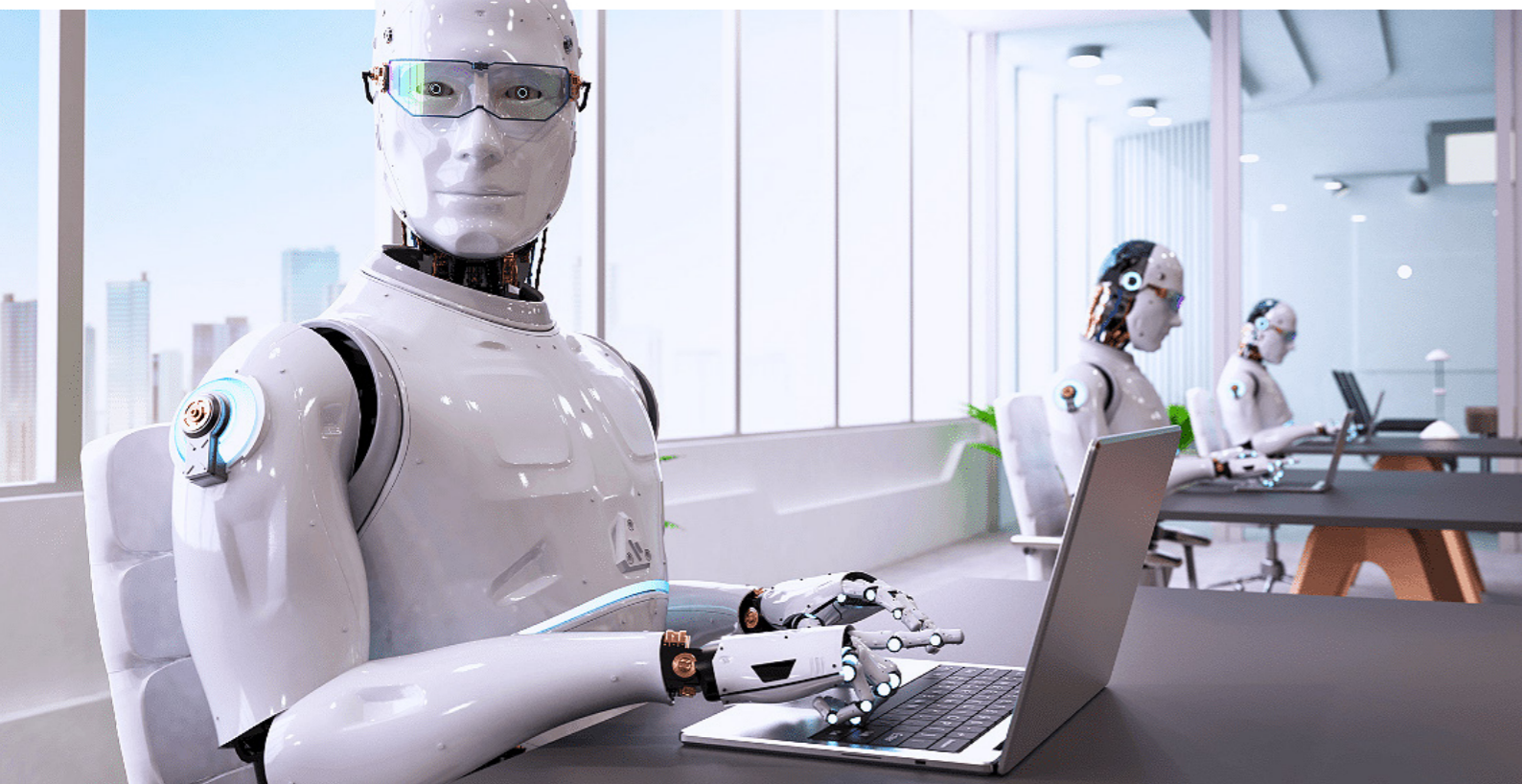
- Africa Leadership Merit Award (2006) by Africa International News Magazine.
- Hope for Humanity Award (2007) by Rotary Club for his contributions to humanity.
- Martin Luther King Global Award (2007) for Pioneering Nonviolence Education in West Africa.
- Ambassador of Change (2019) by Centre of Change for his work in promoting peace and unity in Nigeria.
- L&M Leader of the Month Award (2019) for his humanitarian efforts, particularly during the xenophobic attacks.

Traditional Honour

- Conferred the title of Ide (Pillar) of Ihiala by his native local government, recognising his contributions to his community and Nigeria as a whole.

Onyema's life and career embody a powerful message: success is not just about accumulating wealth, but about making meaningful impact on the society. From his humble beginnings to leading Nigeria's largest airline, Allen Onyema remains an inspiring figure, exemplifying resilience, entrepreneurship, and a steadfast commitment to peace.

By Ikenna Ngere



AI AND MACHINE LEARNING BY AFRICAN START-UPS: UNLOCKING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INNOVATION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) have emerged as transformative technologies reshaping industries worldwide. On the African continent, these tools are playing a critical role in driving innovation, addressing specific regional challenges, and fostering economic growth, with the support of angel investors who see the potential for AI-

driven solutions to catalyse growth and development in key sectors.

Key Applications of AI and ML in African Start-ups

Agriculture: Agriculture remains the backbone of many African economies, and AI is revolutionising this sector. AI-powered solutions are being employed to optimise crop yields, improve disease detection, and enhance supply chain management. For instance, start-ups like Hello Tractor use AI to connect smallholder farmers with machinery, thereby improving efficiency and productivity and empowering farmers to make data-driven decisions, ensuring food security and sustainability in an unpredictable climate.

Health Care: AI is stepping in to fill the gaps of limited access to medical professionals, diagnostic tools etc. by enabling remote diagnosis, disease prediction, and the development of life-saving innovations. Vezeeta, a digital health platform, utilises AI to manage telehealth services, reducing the need for extensive administrative support and improving access to health care for remote communities. AI-driven diagnostic tools are also helping start-ups to detect diseases like malaria and tuberculosis with greater accuracy, drastically improving outcomes for patients.

Financial Services: AI is transforming Africa's fintech landscape by enabling personalised financial services, automating fraud detection, and providing credit risk assessments. For instance, M-KOPA, a fintech company, uses AI to assess the creditworthiness of individuals without traditional banking history, providing them with financing options for solar energy products.

Education: Education start-ups are increasingly leveraging AI to provide personalised learning experiences and improve student outcomes. AI-powered platforms such as ULesson offer adaptive learning technologies that tailor educational content to each student's needs, making quality education more accessible across Africa. These innovations are bridging gaps in educational

access and providing solutions to Africa's growing youth population.

Challenges and Opportunities

While AI and ML hold tremendous promise, there are significant challenges including:

Data Scarcity: High-quality, localised data is essential for developing and training AI models, yet in many African countries, access to reliable data remains limited. Start-ups must find innovative ways to collect and utilise data that reflects the diverse realities of African markets.

Infrastructure Limitations: Insufficient access to computing power and reliable internet connectivity can restrict the adoption of AI technologies. To overcome this, start-ups are increasingly relying on cloud services like those offered by Google for Start-ups Accelerator: AI First, which provides start-ups with cloud credits and technical expertise to scale their AI solutions.

Talent Shortage: The shortage of skilled AI professionals is critical. However, initiatives such as the African Start-ups AI Fest and programmes by organisations like Zindi and ALX are helping to bridge this gap by offering training, hackathons, and job placement programmes tailored to AI and data science.

Despite these challenges, the opportunities for AI and ML in Africa are vast. By addressing these barriers and investing in AI research and development, African start-ups are positioning themselves at the forefront

of a global AI revolution.

The Role of Business Angels in AI-Driven Growth

The rise of AI-powered start-ups is being met with growing interest from business angels across Africa. These investors provide not only the early-stage capital that start-ups need to scale but also offer mentorship and access to networks that are critical for navigating Africa's complex regulatory and operational environments. Angel investors recognise the long-term potential of AI in solving Africa's unique challenges, and by backing AI-driven ventures, they are helping to create businesses that can deliver both financial returns and positive societal impact.

Start-ups such as ThriveAgric and Fawry are prime examples of how AI can be leveraged to solve real-world problems while delivering significant economic value. Angel investors are not just providing financial backing - they are contributing to the development of an AI ecosystem that can drive lasting economic growth.

AI and ML are proving to be game-changers for African start-ups, offering innovative solutions to pressing challenges across agriculture, health care, financial services, and education. As the continent continues to embrace AI and ML, Africa has the potential to become a global leader in technology and innovation, with start-ups and business angels leading the way.



Tomi Davies (TD) BIO: TD is a leading figure in Africa's tech ecosystem, known as "Africa's top Angel" and the inspiring voice behind TVC Labs, a start-up support organisation in Lagos, Nigeria. His expertise extends to angel investing, mentoring, and advising tech companies, all while equipping future generations of entrepreneurs through his book "Investment Worthy Startup" published in 2023.

Lonnie Johnson:

Pioneering Engineer and Innovator

By Ikenna Ngere

Lonnie George Johnson, a renowned American engineer, made his mark with the invention of the super soaker water gun in 1989. His inventions, however, extend far beyond the world of toys. Johnson has focused his efforts on advancing sustainable energy technology, working on cutting-edge solutions such as a thermoelectric device that aims to convert solar power into highly efficient, renewable energy.

Born in 1949 in Mobile, Alabama, Johnson's ingenuity has earned him global recognition, particularly for the iconic super soaker, a favourite among children for decades. Yet, his aspirations go much further. Johnson is now leading the charge in green energy innovation with his Johnson thermoelectric energy converter (JTEC), a groundbreaking invention designed to significantly enhance solar energy conversion. His achievements have secured him places in both the National Toy Hall of Fame and the National Inventors Hall of Fame.

Early Life and Inspiration

Lonnie Johnson was born on October 6, 1949 in the segregated southern city of Mobile, Alabama. His father, a World War II veteran, worked at local Air Force bases,



while his mother balanced jobs in a laundry and as a nurse's aide. Johnson's father, a resourceful handyman, taught his children how to create their own toys out of necessity. One of Johnson's first inventions at the age of 13 was a go-kart, powered by a lawn mower engine, which he took for a high-speed joyride on the highway until he was stopped by

the police.

From a young age, Johnson displayed insatiable curiosity about how things worked, once dismantling his sister's doll and nearly burning down his family's home while attempting to concoct rocket fuel in the kitchen. His creativity and fascination with mechanics set the stage for his future success.

Overcoming Adversity in Education

Despite facing segregation and low expectations at Williamson High School, Mobile, Alabama, Johnson's natural talent for invention could not be ignored. He was determined to become an inventor, taking inspiration from renowned African-American scientist, George Washington Carver. In 1968, Johnson represented his school at a science fair held at the University of Alabama. His project, a compressed-air-powered robot, won first prize, despite being the only Black student at the competition.

He later earned a scholarship to Tuskegee University, where he graduated with a degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1973. He continued his education at the same institution, completing a

master's degree in nuclear engineering in 1975.

A Career in Innovation

Johnson's early career saw him work for the U.S. Air Force, contributing to the development of the stealth bomber. He later worked for NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, participating in high-profile space exploration missions, including the Galileo mission to Jupiter and the Cassini mission to Saturn.

However, Johnson never stopped inventing in his spare time. In 1982, while working on an eco-friendly heat pump that used water instead of harmful Freon, he stumbled upon an idea that would change his life. During a test, he discovered that the water pressure he had generated could be harnessed in a toy. This discovery led to the development of the super soaker, a water gun that would become one of the best-selling toys of all time.

The Super Soaker Phenomenon

In 1989, after seven years of development and numerous sales pitches, Johnson sold his invention to the Larami Corporation. Originally named the "Power Drencher," the water gun was rebranded as the "Super Soaker" and became a huge commercial success. By 1991, it had generated \$200 million in sales. Today, more than 200 million super soakers have been sold worldwide, bringing in an estimated \$1 billion in revenue.

Johnson's impact on the toy industry was cemented in 2015 when the super soaker was inducted into the National Toy Hall of Fame. Additionally, he won a \$73 million settlement from Hasbro, which had acquired the Larami Corporation, for unpaid royalties.



A Vision for Renewable Energy: The JTEC

With the financial success of the super soaker, Johnson shifted his focus to addressing a global issue: renewable energy. He founded Johnson Research & Development and began working on the Johnson thermoelectric energy converter (JTEC), a device designed to convert solar heat into electricity with twice the efficiency of current systems. If perfected, the JTEC could revolutionise solar energy, making it a viable competitor to fossil fuels like coal.

Initially, Johnson struggled to secure funding for the project. However, he eventually received support from the U.S. Air Force. In 2008, Johnson was awarded the Popular Mechanics Breakthrough Award for his work on the JTEC. By 2021, his team had developed two working models focused on harnessing waste heat, marking a major milestone for the project.

Johnson Battery Technologies: The Future of Energy Storage

In addition to his work on solar energy conversion, Johnson founded Johnson Battery Technologies Inc. The company is dedicated to developing next-generation rechargeable batteries that offer higher energy capacity in smaller forms, catering to both government and commercial clients.

Recognitions

Throughout his career, Johnson has received numerous honours for his work. In 2011, he was inducted into the Alabama Engineering Hall of Fame, and in 2022, he was honoured by the National Inventors Hall of Fame.

Beyond his work in science and technology, Johnson is also actively involved in community service. He serves as chairman of the Georgia Alliance for Children and mentors young people through the 100 Black Men of Atlanta organisation.

A Legacy of Innovation

Lonnie Johnson's inventions have had a far-reaching impact, from creating one of the most popular toys in history to leading groundbreaking research in renewable energy. His commitment to innovation, combined with his perseverance in the face of adversity, makes him a towering figure in both the fields of engineering and social change. As he continues his quest to revolutionise green technology, Johnson's legacy as an inventor and visionary grows ever stronger.



DAMIAN
IKENNA NGERE

AUTHOR'S BIO

Ikenna is a graduate of Physics and Education, who works as a freelance writer. He has interest in technology, humanity and sports.

CELEBRATING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Robert Okojie Nigerian-American scientist honoured by NASA



Robert Sylvester Okojie, a leading Nigerian-American scientist, was praised by NASA for his big contributions to silicon carbide technology. He has over 20 patents for high-temperature devices. He has spent his career improving NASA's research.

Okojie was inducted into the NASA Inventors Hall of Fame on November 22, 2020. This made him the 35th person and only the fourth African-Black person to receive this honour. His work on micro-electromechanical systems (MEMS) for tough environments won him awards in 2009 and 2012. Also, his work on high-temperature devices shows his innovative spirit. This spirit is what NASA and Robert Okojie are all about.

Early Life and Education of Robert Okojie

Robert Okojie was born in Barkin-Ladi, Plateau State, Nigeria. He grew up in a family with deep cultural roots. His parents, Juliana Omakhamen Okojie and Prince Francis A. Okojie, encouraged his love for learning from a young age. This support shaped his future greatly. The values they taught him are key to his successes.

Robert Okojie is from the Esan town in Edo State where he learned the importance of community and hard work. While in Nigeria, he was surrounded by different cultures and educational opportunities. These experiences helped him decide to study in the United States later on.

Educational Journey in Nigeria and the United States

He started his education at Ibadan Boys' High School, graduating in 1980. Then, he moved to the United States in 1986 to continue his studies. He excelled at the New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark, earning his Electrical Engineering degree in 1991.

He didn't stop there. He got a master's degree in 1993 and a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering from New Jersey Institute of Technology in 1996. These achievements set the stage for his career and showed how good education can open doors.

Rena Wakama Nigeria's Wave-Making Basketball Coach

One can say that Rena Wakama, Head Coach of the country's national female basketball team, D'Tigress, has given pride of place to female basketball with her accomplishments with D'Tigress. Rena Wakama started her coaching career in the late 1990s and became well-known for her effectiveness in player development and on-court strategy. She has motivated innumerable athletes to realise their full potential via her uncompromising dedication to the game and her players.

Given that D'Tigress' performance was the "most impactful" of any African squad in Olympic basketball history, Wakama, as coach of the Nigerian women's basketball team, was selected as the greatest coach of the 2024 Summer Olympics hosted in Paris. At 32, her leadership style was acknowledged by organisers of Paris 2024 as a major contributor to Nigeria's extraordinary achievement during the mondial, emphasising her involvement in the team's tactical wins and tenacious defence.

The Nigerian women's basketball team has recorded many accomplishments under Wakama's direction, including qualifying D'Tigress for the Olympics. The successes of the team in African and other international tournaments haven't gone unnoticed. Wakama

has gained immense respect from her players for her leadership qualities, which has been crucial in enhancing the team's vision, synergy, and overall performance.

In addition to her skills as a coach, Wakama is a fervent supporter of gender parity in sports. She has devoted her life to breaking down barriers and misconceptions that prevent women from playing basketball and to creating opportunities for them to do so. Basketball in Nigeria and other countries has benefited greatly from Wakama's commitment to fostering diversity and inclusivity within the game. Given her significant influence on the development of the next generation of Nigerian female basketball players, Accomplish Magazine appreciates her as a mentor and role model for upcoming female athletes. Her love of the game and dedication to inspiring young women have motivated countless others to follow their goals and conquer challenges in their athletic endeavours.



Career Milestones of Robert Okojie

Robert Okojie has made a big impact in aerospace engineering.

- Joining NASA's Glenn Research Centre

Robert Okojie joined the silicon carbide research group at NASA Glenn Research Centre. His skills in semi-conductor technology led him to work on high-temperature devices, which improved the performance of space systems.

- Contributions to Silicon Carbide Micro-Electromechanical Systems (MEMS)

He has greatly advanced silicon carbide MEMS. His work has led to over 20 patents for extreme environments. These patents improve spacecraft efficiency and reduce weight. His work is key to reliable space missions.

Groundbreaking Research and Innovations

Dr. Robert Okojie is a leader in Microelectronics, thanks to his work on high-temperature devices. His research shows silicon carbide can handle extreme

heat well.

- High-Temperature Devices and Their Applications

Robert Okojie made a big leap with silicon carbide pressure sensors that work over 600°C. These sensors are perfect for checking things like hydrocarbon combustion and geothermal energy. They're key for industries needing top performance in tough conditions.

- Pioneering Work in High-Temperature Sensors and Electronics

He also created silicon carbide accelerometers that can measure huge impacts up to 200 kilogees. This work is opening new doors for high-temperature sensors. For example, NASA's HyFly programme uses them to check hypersonic engines in harsh conditions. Okojie's work is making technology safer and more efficient in extreme environments.

Awards and Recognitions

Robert Okojie has made a big mark in

science and technology. In 2009, he won the NASA Abe Silverstein Medal for his groundbreaking work. In 2012, he received the Glenn Research Centre Distinguished Publication Award for his work on high-temperature devices.

NASA Abe Silverstein Medal and Other Accolades

Okojie has won more than just the NASA Abe Silverstein Medal. In 2002, the National Technical Association named him Scientist of the Year for his work on MEMS technology. In 2020, he was inducted into the NASA Inventors Hall of Fame, becoming the fourth African-Black person to receive this honour.

Robert Okojie is not just about winning awards; he's also a mentor. At the Glenn Research Centre, he guides students towards successful careers in science and engineering. His work goes beyond his patents and research, helping build a strong scientific community for the future.



Sharfuddeen Sadiq Maisikelito

Nigeria's Avant-garde USB Cable Producer

When information reached us, at Accomplish Magazine, that universal serial bus (USB) cables for mobile phones and computers are now being produced in Kano, the initial reaction was: Kano? This is because, 'by the calculation of many', Lagos should have been the location for such production because of its standing as the apex centre of economic activities in the country. So, we decided to find out more. That's how we got in touch with Sharfuddeen Sadiq Maisikelito, CEO of Mucstar Cables and Accessories, a duly registered limited liability company in Kano. This is not only to report about this production but to also encourage him and other youth seeking to make a difference in



entrepreneurship at a time like this. Sharfuddeen Maisikelito was born in Nasarawa Local Government Council of Kano State, Nigeria. He attended Dakata Special Primary School, Kano and Government Secondary School, Kawaji (Boys). He proceeded to Bayero University, Kano where he earned his first degree in Agricultural Engineering in 2015. He is married and a father of one.

He hails from the prominent Maisikelito heritage, renowned for over a century for its vast entrepreneurial endeavours and investments. According to him, his grandfather was the first to begin poultry farming on a commercial level in northern Nigeria, long before the country became independent. As one would expect, with that kind of background, the young Maisikelito wasn't interested in staying employed for long so after working briefly with Niger State Salary Management Committee as Assistant Director and Staff Validator after graduation, he followed the footsteps of his father and grandfather to find an area of need he can fill up. His father encouraged him all the way, especially with the search for a unique field of commercial venture to go into.

From the conception of the idea to produce USB cables to actual commencement of production took about a year-and-a-half. Part of that period was used to reaseach how he could

get requisite machines for production. He has to draw from his wide knowledge of computer operations, television programming and other skills to assemble and operate the equipment when they arrived from China. Going through all that took some time, including making mistakes, as there was no one else doing the same business in Nigeria to turn to. To solve the problem, he had to sit down with respective user's manuals to learn all aspects of the production process.

Again, due to financial constraints, the machines were brought into the country in bits. Production, finally, began about 4 months ago. In Maisikelito's words, "... We started very small. We started with small capital." Though he hopes to get the needed support to acquire industrial-size machinery, he's glad that the business has taken off. His factory produces between 5,000 and 6,000 USB cables over a 24-hour run. He has 12 employees for different stages of production and

Heman Bekele

The Teenage Inventor Fighting Skin Cancer with Soap

Heman Bekele, a 14-year-old science enthusiast, has captured attention by developing an innovative soap that could transform skin cancer treatment. His invention earned him the £20,000 top prize in the 3M Young Scientist Challenge and the prestigious title of TIME Magazine's 2024 Kid of the Year.

A Love for Chemistry and Innovation

Bekele's fascination with Chemistry began at an early age. When he was seven, his parents gifted him a Chemistry set, which he used to conduct experiments, mixing common household chemicals to explore chemical reactions. His curiosity continued to grow, and as he entered secondary school, he channelled his passion into creating a product that could address a global health challenge.

Inspired by His Roots

Born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Heman moved to the United States with his family when he was four. His early memories of seeing workers in Ethiopia labouring in the sun without any form of protection

sparked his interest in skin cancer. After relocating to the U.S., he learned more about the damaging effects of ultraviolet rays and the widespread issue of skin cancer. This concern motivated Bekele to devise an affordable and accessible solution.

Tackling Skin Cancer with the Power of Soap

Skin cancer is one of the most common yet treatable forms of the disease, particularly when detected early. Heman's invention is a soap-based compound containing imiquimod, a drug approved to treat certain types of skin cancer. His idea was simple but effective: since nearly everyone uses soap, why not make it a vehicle for treatment? This forward-thinking approach won him recognition at the 3M Young Scientist Challenge.

A Promising Future

Heman is currently refining his soap at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, where he spent the

summer of 2024 working part-time in a laboratory. Looking into the future, he hopes to establish a non-profit organisation to distribute the soap to communities in need. His mentor, Deborah Isabelle, praised Heman for his intellect and compassion, highlighting that his invention has the potential to improve the lives of many. With his groundbreaking creation, Heman Bekele is proving that age is no barrier to making a meaningful impact on the world.

supplies to most northern states, particularly Kano and Kaduna states, and even exports to Niger and Chad. When asked why he chose to produce USB cables and doing so in Kano, he said: "The reason is that, as you know, Kano is a city that has a large market with numerous businesses. It is a centre of commerce. So, I just start thinking of how I can produce something that is unique and will provide jobs for our youth in Kano State. Now, so many people outside Kano come here to purchase USB cables in bulk and send to many other states. Even Niger and Chad Republics." Maisikelito aspires to expand the business. He wants to acquire so many machines so the factory can produce enough USB cables to stop their importation.

He's so confident about the quality of Mucstar Cables and Accessories' USB cables due to the sheer increasing demand across northern Nigeria. His words: "If you get our USB cable and test it, you will be satisfied that our USB cable is more durable than imported ones. They're also fast-charging and strong." He noted that, soon, Lagos, Ibadan and other southern markets would be served. Sharafuddeen Sadiq Maisikelito said he raised the capital for Mucstar Cables and Accessories take-off from personal savings and contributions by members of his family, especially his father.

On the nature of support his company needs, Maisikelito said, "We need to acquire many large machines since most of the raw materials are in Kano. If we could get support from government, I assure you that many of the youth here will be employed by my company." Asked if the company had approached government agencies like the Bank of Industry, he said they had but nothing



has come out of the move yet. And, they'll keep trying.

For advice to young, aspiring entrepreneurs, he said Nigeria has so many talented youth. He encouraged them to look for ways to start small, like he did, and gradually acquire the assets they need for mega operations. He added they shouldn't wait for government aid to get started. "You can see that we have so many youth in Nigeria. We are more than half of the population of this country and most of us are jobless. If they can start something, honestly, I believe that they can make it," he noted.

THE GREAT WALL OF BENIN: A Monument Of Ingenuity And Endurance

By Damian Ikenna Ngere

The Great Wall of Benin, also known as the Walls of Benin City, stands as a remarkable testament to human ingenuity, ambition, and resilience. Built by the Edo people of present-day Nigeria, the walls were constructed to protect the flourishing Benin Empire, which spanned from the 13th to the 19th centuries.

Recognised by the Guinness World Records as the longest man-made structure by length, this awe-inspiring feat is a significant yet often overlooked marvel of African architecture.

Historical Context and Timeline

The construction of the Walls of Benin began around 800 A.D. and continued over several centuries. The precise timing and stages of construction are difficult to pinpoint, given that the project spanned multiple reigns of the obas, the kings of Benin, and evolved with the empire's growth and development. The most intensive phase of construction likely took place between the 13th and 15th centuries, coinciding with the height of the Benin Empire's power.

Oral history suggests that it took approximately 600 years to complete the entire wall system. This long duration highlights the immense dedication of the Edo people to the fortification of their capital. It also reflects the challenges involved in constructing such a monumental structure with limited technology. The walls continued to be expanded and reinforced well into the 16th century, during the reign of Oba Ewuare the

Great, one of Benin's most renowned rulers. Under his leadership, the city of Benin reached its zenith, and the walls became a symbol of the empire's power and prosperity.

Scale and Structure

Stretching over 16,000 kilometres, the Walls of Benin once enclosed an area of around 6,500 square kilometres, making them one of the largest man-made structures ever built. At their highest points, the walls reached up to 20 metres. Constructed using a combination of deep moats and earthen ramparts, the walls were primarily built from local materials, including earth and clay. The ditches or moats, which were dug to create the walls, played a dual role: the excavated earth was used to build the towering fortifications, while the moats served as additional barriers against invaders.

Unlike many other ancient defensive structures, the Walls of Benin were not built from stone but from earthworks, an engineering choice that speaks to the Edo people's intimate understanding of their local environment. The walls were not only functional but also symbolic, representing the strength and unity of the Benin Empire.

Purpose and Significance

The primary function of the Walls of Benin was to protect the city from external threats, including rival kingdoms and European colonisers. The walls were particularly vital during periods of political unrest or military conflict. However, their significance extended beyond defence; they also played a role in the social and economic organisation of the city.



The walls helped delineate districts and facilitated the control of trade routes, which were crucial to the empire's wealth.

Benin City was a hub of cultural and artistic innovation, known for its bronzes, ivory carvings, and other artworks that are still celebrated today. The walls, therefore, were not only a protective barrier but also a symbol of the empire's cultural sophistication and economic power.

Construction Techniques

The construction of the walls required enormous human labour, particularly given the lack of advanced machinery. According to historians, millions of hours of human effort went into the construction of the walls, as large sections were built by hand. The Edo people employed highly organised labour systems, often involving entire communities in the building process. These construction projects were overseen by the oba, whose authority was instrumental in mobilising the necessary workforce.

The walls were built using a method called "rammed earth," which involves compacting layers of earth to form solid, durable structures. This technique, combined with the natural moisture content of the soil in the region, made the walls particularly sturdy and long-lasting.

The British Expedition and the Walls' Decline

Tragically, the walls were severely damaged during the British Punitive Expedition of 1897. British forces looted and razed much of Benin City, including large portions of the walls. This marked the end of the Benin Empire, as the British annexed the territory and incorporated it into their colonial holdings. Despite the destruction, remnants of the walls can still be found today, particularly in the rural areas surrounding modern-day Benin City. Efforts have been made to preserve these remnants, but much of the structure has been lost to time and neglect.

Legacy and Recognition

The recognition of the Walls of Benin by the Guinness World Records as the largest man-made structure

by length underscores their significance in global history. Yet, despite this recognition, the walls remain relatively unknown outside of Africa. There is growing interest in preserving what remains of the walls and in bringing greater awareness to their historical importance.

The Great Wall of Benin represents an extraordinary achievement in both engineering and human effort. While much of the structure has been lost, its legacy endures as a symbol of the cultural and political might of the Benin Empire. It is a heritage that deserves not only to be remembered but celebrated as one of the great wonders of the ancient world.

An Enduring Marvel

The Walls of Benin stand as a testament to the creativity, endurance, and determination of the Edo people. Spanning centuries in their construction and holding a place in history as the world's longest man-made structure, these walls reflect the might and sophistication of an empire that once dominated West Africa. As interest in

African history continues to grow, the Great Wall of Benin is slowly receiving the global recognition it deserves. Its story, one of triumph and tragedy, is a reminder of the richness of Africa's historical legacy.



DAMIAN
IKENNA NGERE

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Ikenna is a graduate of Physics and Education, who works as a freelance writer. He has interest in technology, humanity and sports.

CONFLICTS, CREATIVE CRISIS AND FOOD SECURITY IN AFRICA

By Osita Aniemeka

The 2024 Cadre Harmonisé Food Security Analysis released by the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), says that about 60 million people in West and Central Africa are struggling to feed themselves in the 2024 lean season. This figure represents a four-million increase in the number of people who are food-insecure compared to the November 2023 forecast and highlights a four-fold increase over the last five years. The situation is particularly worrying in conflict-affected northern Mali, where an estimated 2,600 people are likely to experience catastrophic hunger. The latest data also reveals a significant shift in the factors driving food insecurity in the region, beyond recurring conflicts.

While a conflict is a serious disagreement, argument, and sometimes protracted dissonance, some are opposing opinions and principles, while some are just discords in beliefs or actions of one or more members of the group that are either resisted and are unacceptable. Conflict is a clash, characterised by opposing interests, goals, or viewpoints. Any path we follow, it's clear that a conflict occurs.

Conflicts may be thought of as having three dimensions: perception, feeling and action. Conflict involves the perception that one person's interests, needs or values are incompatible with those of another person. Conflict



also involves feelings, such as anger, fear or sadness. Conflicts are manifest through the parties' actions, from speech to violence. Each of these dimensions can vary independently of the other, although they usually do affect each other.

The dynamics of conflict shows that people have different attitudes toward conflict in general. These attitudes shape their behaviour in particular conflicts. People may think conflict is bad or healthy, solvable or intractable. They may have different norms for conflict behaviour. Some people tend to



avoid conflict while others are willing to engage. Strategies for avoiding conflict include denial, hopelessness and passivity, capitulation, passive-aggressive approaches.

Individuals may try to intimidate the other party into avoiding the issue, may deflect the conflict onto some other party, or may announce a premature solution. Strategies for engaging in conflict include power, rights or interest-based approaches, appeals to fairness, or indirection and manipulation.

Conflict disrupting events occur at particular moments during a conflict, but the event has a pre-and after-life. Its pre-life, or formative processes and events, refers to the factors that led to actors engaging in conflict disrupting behaviours and stances. A disruptive conflict does not follow any set of rules, and parties involved engage in activities to beat their opponent which causes anger, fear, and stress.

Conflict Classifications

Relational Conflict: When a diverse group gathers, it's almost inevitable that conflicts arise. One of the most common conflicts is relational conflict, where two or more people clash over different styles, culture change, or just stress.

Individual/Group: In situations where one person disagrees with the collective, the conflict has the capacity to spread quickly through word of mouth and may have big impacts on group morale, so it's important to stay ahead of it and act quickly.

Group Disputes: This type of conflict takes into account the larger picture of a situation and what it comprises. In other words, within an environment, there are smaller networks of groups that oftentimes rely on each other or utilise each other's skills and responsibilities.

Intergroup Conflict: When the larger group depends on other groups, there's always room for disputes. Here, there may be an issue of conflicting cultures and group

behavioural styles, which can impact expectations, ethic, quantity, and quality.

Mission Conflict: Mission conflict is a common occurrence in the society. It arises when individuals have differing views on how to handle specific missions. This can be due to variances in understanding instructions, procedures, and policies.

Relationship Conflict: Relationship conflicts emerge from interpersonal disagreements among persons. These conflicts often stem from personality clashes, differing communication styles, or variations in personal values and beliefs.

Value Conflict: Value conflicts occur when there are deep-rooted differences in personal principles that guide decisions and behaviour. Value conflicts are particularly challenging because they go beyond simple preferences, touching the core of what individuals consider morally or ethically right.

Creative Crisis

Apart from conflicts, there's the creative crisis regime in Africa, as the continent's citizens are atrophied by weaponised poverty and human rights abuses that everyone has lost the gravitas to get up and go. In other words, the people have become fed up by increasing corruption, the impunity and abuse of power and the lack of intention by the elites to address burgeoning abjectness and dearth. Creative crisis is the decrease in human creativity, over time, due to the increased focus on accuracy rather than innovation, the stratification of success and creativity, and the inability to find the way out; production is tortured and the larger population is in turmoil.

The discomfort and agony of creative crisis is the emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion that can occur when the people are overwhelmed, stressed, or bored by any invitation to contribute to work such as plowing, planting, nurturing and harvesting. Creative crisis affects and dampens the urge to be productive, to achieve results. The creative crisis phenomenon is best described as an overwhelming feeling of being stuck in the creative process without the ability to move forward and make anything new. In some other places, the most obvious, and most effective, way of overcoming creative crisis is to take some time off work but the feeling of entrapment in Nigeria calls for something more drastic and more resolute.

Conflicts and Food Security in Africa

For three decades plus, about a third of African countries have been involved in conflicts. While African conflicts, whether local, national or regional, may have various roots, the remnants of colonialism and persistent levels of poverty and unemployment in the continent serve as key sources. For many Africans, the need for security and identity are pull factors for joining conflict movements. These modern conflicts undermine African economic development and deter long-term foreign investments, decreasing respective national per capita gross domestic products (GDPs) by an average of 2.5%. However, agriculture offers a local solution to meet those needs, thus, helping to deter from conflict-driven pull factors.

While Africa undergoes a period of vigorous development through urbanisation and industrialisation, leveraging accessible resources for job security and poverty reduction are key for sustainable continental growth. Currently, 70% of Africans work in the field of agriculture and 23% of sub-Saharan Africa GDP is rooted in agriculture. As Africa continues to develop, agriculture begins to expand from basic subsistence herding and crop cultivation to commercial agriculture, requiring more intensive irrigation, energy and technology. Not only is this essential to sustainable development on the continent, but it also offers local opportunities in the scientific and knowledge economy,

detering many from joining conflict movements.

Economic challenges such as currency devaluations, soaring inflation, stagnating production, and trade barriers have worsened the food crisis, affecting ordinary people across the region with Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Mali being among the worst affected. Prices of major staple grains continue to rise across the region from 10 per cent to more than 100 per cent compared to the five-year average, driven by currency inflation, fuel and transport costs, ECOWAS sanctions, and restrictions on agropastoral product flows. Currency inflation is a major driver of price volatility in Ghana (23%), Nigeria (30%), Sierra Leone (54%), Liberia (10%), and The Gambia (16%).

Conflict dynamics and disruption to agriculture in Africa show that West and Central Africa remain heavily dependent on imports to meet the population's food needs. Still, import bills continue to rise due to currency depreciation and high inflation, even as countries struggle with major fiscal constraints and macroeconomic challenges. In Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, and Niger, millions of people now benefit from national social protection programmes supported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Program (WFP). Both agencies are expanding their support to the Chad and Burkina Faso governments.

Similarly, the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and WFP have joined forces across the Sahel to increase productivity, availability, and access to nutritious food through resilience-building programmes.

Good news is that the Alliance for Food Security Action in Africa (AFSAA), is doing something about it by turning conflicts into the creative compass to combat food insecurity in Africa. With the recent food security investment summit side event at the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York, AFSAA is focusing on urgent strategies to combat food insecurity across the African continent despite the conflicts.



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WILL LABOUR PARTY LABOUR IN VAIN?

By Dave Baro-Thomas



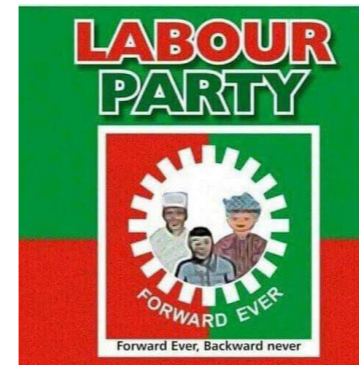
The Labour Party in Nigeria is about the proverbial 8th wonder of the world. Practically, from crass insignificance, it shook the foundation of the Nigerian political landscape prior to the 2023 general elections. Established by the Nigerian Labour Congress as "Party for Social Democracy" in 2002 to pursue social democratic philosophies before transmuting into its present nomenclature, the Labour Party was irredeemably inconsequential and potentially worthless in the scheme of party

politics in Nigeria with its first presidential candidate in the person of Alhaji Muhammed Usman Zaki scoring a mere 5,074 votes in the 2019 presidential election.

The only relevance enjoyed by the party, hitherto, was its link to the Nigerian Labour Congress, NLC. Sadly, such models don't work here because it is merely an umbrella body of workers whose members are staunch advocates of other political parties. So, transiting the cohesion of unionism into party politics was herculean until the Obi

tsunami happened.

The tsunami was so potentially threatening that top contenders mobilised to extirpate the burning fire of the Labour Party (LP) whose torch glowed in the hearts of millions of youths across the country as we approached the 2023 elections. Indeed, with the Labour Party, a third force was born, transcending primordial sentiments and filthy lucre that rules our political space. Despite the mockery of 'no structure', members of the two leading parties suffered insomnia such that one of



the then presidential contenders, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, declared that the Labour Party would labour in vain.

While some dismissed Asiwaju Tinubu, the eventual winner of the 2023 presidential polls as a troubled man - bellyaching over an eminent defeat, it appears recent development affirms that he was indeed inspired and saw tomorrow as the party, more than one year after the elections, is still in hot waters and labouring to put its house in order.

Since all parties concerned are in various courts with accusations and counter-accusations for the soul of the party, it will be prejudicial to go into the nitty-gritty of the matter. But, is the Labour Party heading for the rocks? For some keen political strategists, it will be a wonder for the Labour Party to remain on the political horizon - exerting the same influence it had in 2023 while the political gladiators in the opposition fold their hands and watch.

The emerging drama in the party may linger and balloon out of proportion before 2027. That's because hired deadly guns have been unleashed within the ranks of the party to make Hiroshima a child's play after its destruction prior to 2027. The bad blood in the party during the build-up to 2023 foretold what was to come. The dramatic personae that disrupted the peace are still lurking, and some presumed saints are monsters today.

The confusion is palpable, but the learning curves stare the party's leadership in the face. Interestingly, we are not even sure where the party's authority lies until after the court brouhaha. Given the emerging mudslinging in the party, it was strategic for the Peter Obi brand to consolidate a structure outside the Labour Party, as alluded to by Obi's spokesperson - Dr Yunusa Tanko. Some delusional members seek to extricate the influence of the Labour Party outside the Obidient Movement. They forget that Obi's structure is the catalyst for the Labour Party because it resides with the people; albeit docile it seems today, the ideological framings and

faith remain incorruptible.

Unless something drastic happens, the Labour Party may not remain in existence as a formidable force if it doesn't survive this brewing volcano. Like Buhari, Peter Obi will retain his over 6 million voters and take them wherever he goes, but reenacting the feat in 2027 starts now with a decisive, dispassionate and bold move. If by the end of the year, the problem plaguing the party persists, Peter Obi and his team should walk out and leave the carcass of the power-drunk and irrelevant few who will celebrate their follies and eminent obliteration soon.

The handwriting on the wall is clear, and the party risks labouring in vain except a miracle happens. If Peter Obi becomes a running mate to any candidate on the horizon currently, his career will not rest in peace but in pieces. Let that non-desperation stance of not becoming the president, by all means, make him return to his country home and enjoy his retirement instead of destroying the legacy he has so worked hard for.



DAVE BARO-THOMAS

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Nigerian Officials and the 'Thieving Culture'

By Victor Olewunne

Introduction

That Nigerian public officials steal public funds is no longer news; at least, not in Nigeria. What continuously perplexes rational minds is the brazenness with which the thieving is done, the dramatic and cosmetic attention of law enforcement agents, the criminal complicity of the executive and the judiciary in muddling up cases of such stealing, the systemic ease with which the state lets the culprits off the hook without any sense of loss, and, finally, the self denigrating acceptance of the Nigerian populace of the decrepit stench of corruption that goes on right under their noses.

That is to say, over time, a culture

has been established. No one seems ruffled anymore by thievery and corruption! The looters celebrate the opportunity to steal. The citizens are kept busy with parochial sentiments of ethnicity, religion and numerous other petty distractions which colour their perception of unethical things happening around them. Well, in the end, everyone suffers, including the thieves, from the decay of the country and the price of the opportunity lost to the stealing of public funds.

Femi Falana's recent article, 'Catalogue of Looting in Nigeria'

The said article is an exposé of the magnitude of looting that has become the reality of the Nigerian

space for decades. In some other climes, the shock of the figures revealed may seem great, but in a place with an enduring systemic culture of corruption, they are nothing more than just figures. Nigeria and Nigerians have lost the imaginative construct of how these figures could impact their lives and are not bothered. At best, the media noise and euphoria of a new corruption case will trend for a few days or weeks and get swept under the rug and forgotten.

'The bleeding of a Nation' would have served as a more apt title for Falana's article! While the country's treasury bleeds to death, the blood is feeding the corrupt privileged government officials whose executive, legislative and institutional responsibilities are to manage and account for the common wealth of the country.

Forms of corruption among Nigerian officials

Corruption in Nigeria takes many forms and shades. The well-known ones are embezzlement of public funds, bribery and kickbacks, nepotism and favouritism in public appointments and contracts, election rigging and its connection to political corruption. Overshadowing all these is the seeming negligence or indifference to the constitution and enabling laws of public institutions. Public officials act outside the Law without consequences. The culture of 'settling enforcement officials', thereby making them incapable of taking necessary actions, has become normal in Nigeria! So, reported corruption cases serve only as an opportunity for the enforcement institutions to perpetrate their own and secure a portion of the loot for themselves.

Historical perspectives and institutionalisation of corruption

The period covered by the catalogue gives a historical perspective and unbroken continuity of the 'thieving'

“
The backwardness that Nigeria represents today can be attributed to official corruption. Most public infrastructures are in a state of disrepair and decay

tradition. But note that each successive regime loudly mouths the fighting of corruption as one of its cardinal policies. But what we see instead, is the institutionalisation of systemic corruption with total buy-in of every cadre of the work force. Therefore, the accountability mechanism is weakened and the political will to address it is non-existent. New laws are created by every new government, and special institutions like the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offence Commission (ICPC) are put in place. But, instead of corruption abating, it has become emboldened with well established escape routes for offenders.

Impact of the 'thieving culture' on the society

The backwardness that Nigeria represents today can be attributed to official corruption. Most public infrastructures are in a state of disrepair and decay. Modern facilities, in line with technological advancement, are ignored because the resources that could be used to procure them have gone into private pockets! The unethical

behaviour of these officials influences societal norms, morals and values. That explains why lawlessness is rife here. Most young people in Nigeria are not interested in the more enduring and sustainable route to wealth and fame. Earning without work and taking without conscience is the new preferred path to success. Since ethical values hold societies together, everything is falling apart - starting from the family.

The path forward

African societies of old had institutions that upheld morals, values and behavioural norms. The institutions of governance were different. The social/political process were community-based or communitarian. Everyone was an active stakeholder, with the understanding that what affects one affects all: I am because we are. The post-colonial period in Africa bathed Western democracy anchored on individualism and alien institutions we cannot manage. With active connivance of the West, where most of the loots are stored, the new administrative governance structure had the seeds of corruption inborn. In other words, to address corruption in Nigeria, we must re-institute our traditional leadership ethics, we must Africanise our governance philosophy that builds community and is accountable to community instead of individuals.

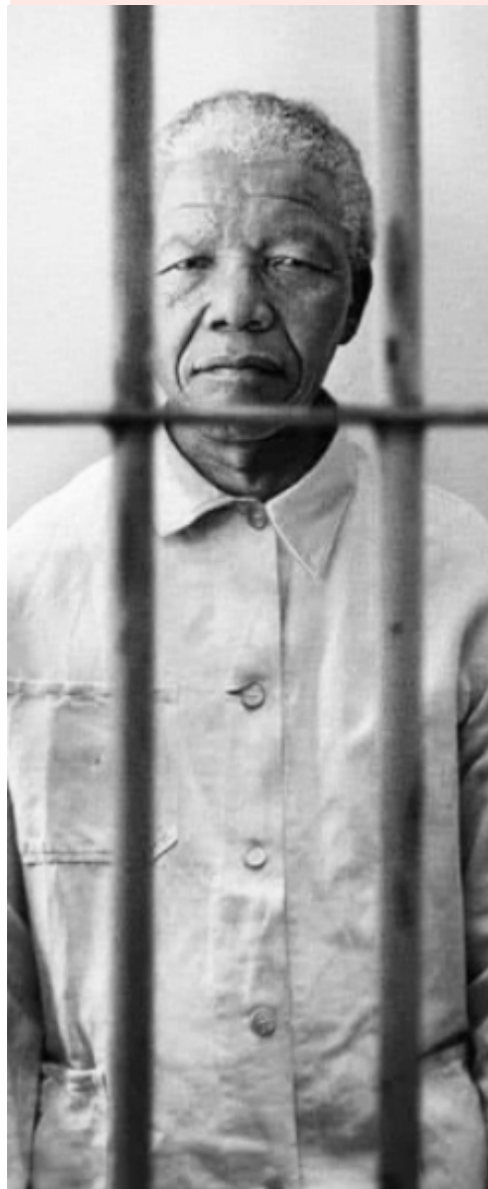


VICTOR OLEWUNNE

AUTHOR'S BIO

Victor Olewunne, the Ethicist, is a public affairs analyst and Founder, African Foundation for Ethics and Social Responsibility.

Nelson Mandela Talks About the Prison of the Mind



When he was served, I said to one of my soldiers: "Go and ask that gentleman to join us. The soldier went and conveyed my invitation to him. The man got up, took his plate and sat down right next to me.

While he ate his hands trembled constantly and he did not lift his head from his food. When we finished, he said goodbye without looking at me. I shook his hand and he left.

The escort told me: "Madiba, that man must have been very ill, seeing as his hands didn't stop shaking while he ate." Absolutely no! The reason for his trembling was another.

Then I told him: "That man was the warden of the prison where I stayed. After he tortured me, I screamed and cried asking for some water and he came humiliated me, laughed at me and instead of giving me water, he urinated in my head.

"He is not sick. He was afraid that I, now president of South Africa, would send him to prison and do to him what he did to me. But I'm not like that. This conduct is not part of my character, nor of my ethics.

"Minds that seek revenge destroy states, while those that seek reconciliation build nations. Walking out the door to my freedom, I knew that if I didn't leave all the anger, hatred and resentment behind me, I would still be a prisoner."

After I became president, I asked my escort to join me for lunch at a restaurant. We sat down and each of us asked what we wanted.

On the front table, there was a man waiting to be served.

Thomas Fuller, the African Mathematics genius, also known as "Negro Tom" and "Virginia Calculator", was an enslaved African born in today's Benin Republic in 1710 (circa) and died in 1790 in the USA. He was renowned for his mathematical abilities and was also known as a mental calculator.

Shipped to America as a

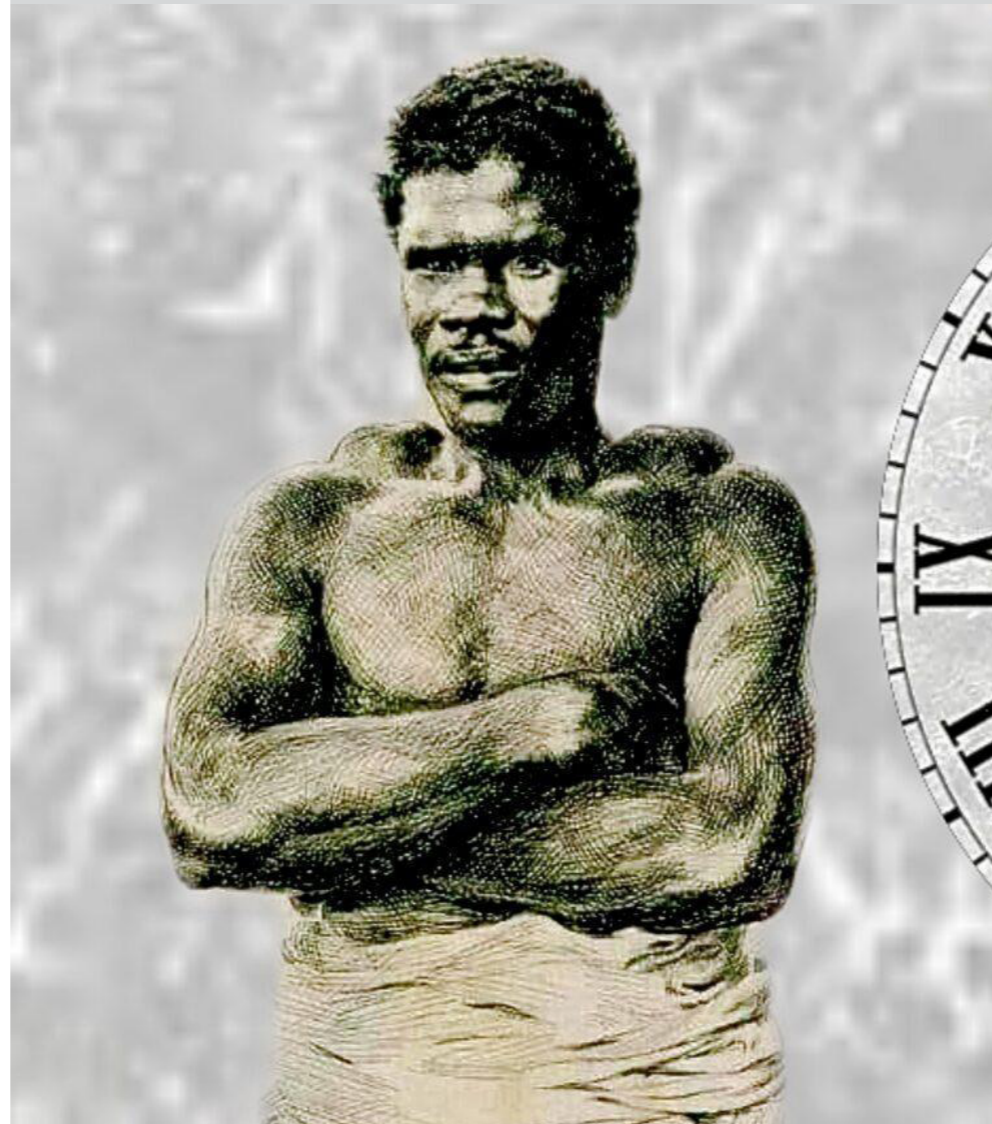
slave in 1724, he had remarkable powers of calculation. Late in his life, he was discovered by anti-slavery campaigners who used him as a demonstration

that Blacks were superior, not inferior to whites in academics.

When he was about

seventy years old, two natives of Pennsylvania, viz., William Hartshorne and Samuel Coates, having heard, while travelling through the neighbourhood where Fuller lived, of his extraordinary powers in arithmetic, sent for him and had their curiosity sufficiently gratified by the answers which he

Thomas Fuller, the Black Superhuman Mental Calculator!



gave to the following questions:

- First. Upon being asked, how many seconds there are in a year and a half, he answered within about two minutes: 47,304,000 seconds.

- Second. On being asked how many seconds a man has lived, who is seventy years, seventeen days and twelve hours old, he answered, within a minute and a half: 2,210,500,800 seconds. At this point, one of the men there, who had made calculations with pen and paper, told him he was wrong with that figure. Then, Fuller replied: "Stop, massa, you forget de leap year."

On adding the seconds of the leap years to the man's calculation, the total matched Fuller's initial calculation.

- Third. Theb, he was asked: Suppose a farmer has six sows, and each sow has six female pigs, the first year, and they all increase in the same proportion, to the end of eight years, how many sows will the farmer then have? Within ten minutes, he answered: 34,588,806 sows. Despite Fuller's perfect answers, it appeared to Hartshorne and Coates

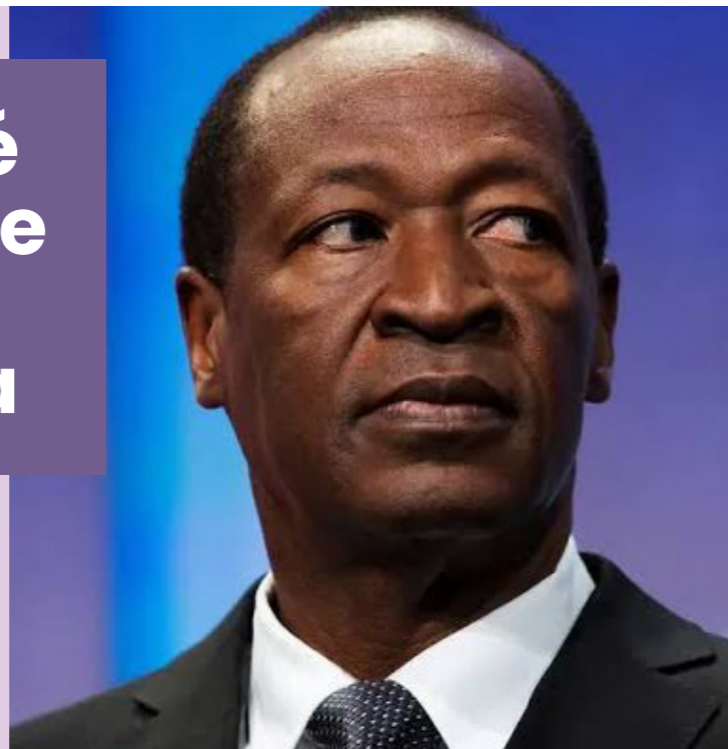
that his mental abilities must have once been greater, considering his age. One writer known as Rush wrote: "He was grey-headed, and exhibited several other marks of the weakness of old age. He had worked hard upon a farm during the whole of life but had never been intemperate in the use of spirituous liquors. He spoke with great respect of his mistress, and mentioned in a particular manner his obligations to her for refusing to sell him, which she had been tempted to by offers of large sums of money from several persons. One of the gentlemen, Mr. Coates, having remarked in his presence that it was a pity he had not an education equal to his genius, he said, "No, Massa, it is best I had no learning, for many learned men be great fools."

No one could challenge his abilities in mathematics.

Editor's Note: This piece was posted on Facebook by 'The Story of Our Times'. Photo: herexg.wordpress.com

Blaise Compaoré Apologises for the Assassination of Thomas Sankara

Blaise Compaoré, former president of Burkina Faso, rendered an apology, on July 26, 2024, for the assassination of Thomas Isidore Noël Sankara, first president of Burkina



Faso, in 1987. He also apologised to the entire country over the inhumane treatments suffered by the populace during his 27-year rule.

"I ask the Burkinabe people for forgiveness for all the acts I may have committed during my tenure, and especially the family of my brother and friend Thomas Sankara.

"I take responsibility for, and regret from the bottom of my heart, all the suffering and tragedies experienced by all victims during my terms as leader of the country and ask their families to grant me their forgiveness."

Prosecutors earlier sentenced Compaoré to life imprisonment in absentia for the assassination of the revered Pan-African leader, Sankara. However, he was invited into



the country by the current military regime of President Ibrahim Traore without facing arrest as directed by the court.

The decision has sparked outrage among the citizens who keep demanding justice for Sankara.

Source: Choice of the People on Facebook



A Glimpse of the Horrors of Auschwitz

On January 27, 1945, Soviet scouts in southern Poland stumbled upon what appeared to be an abandoned Nazi camp near the town of Oświęcim. They had no idea that the camp even existed and were stunned to see thousands of emaciated and brutalised prisoners, some barely clinging to life, staring at them through the barbed-wire fence. As one Soviet soldier later recalled, "I remember their faces, especially their eyes which betrayed their ordeal." This was Auschwitz, the largest and deadliest of all the Nazis' concentration camps, and its liberators were about to discover just how horrifying the ordeal of these prisoners truly was.

When the soldiers entered the camp, there were no guards anywhere to be found. The Nazis had recently abandoned the facility, taking 60,000 prisoners with them and trying to destroy the evidence of all the horrors they'd perpetrated there. However, there was far too much evidence to ever conceal and the Soviet troops soon uncovered warehouses filled with enormous piles of the shoes, glasses, and other personal belongings of the 1.1 million victims who had perished inside the gates of Auschwitz. In the end, Soviet soldiers were able to save the lives of 7,500 victims, including many children and ill prisoners who the Nazis had simply left behind to die.

Editor's Note: This piece of history was posted on Quora.com by Enigmatic and Unusual Things.



AMB. DR. FLORENCE EDWARDS

Trailblazing First Female President of Ginger Growers, Processors and Marketers

By Henry Ndiulo

At a time when majority of Nigerians are wondering why a country that was once held in awe, across Africa and beyond, on account of its imposing stature in food and cash crops production, can hardly feed its population, some people have taken responsibility to lift the country back to its place of prominence by starting or supporting mega-agric projects. One of the people who have taken far-reaching, innovative steps is Amb. Dr. Florence Edwards, Nigeria's premier president of ginger growers and producers.

With Nigeria's Independence Day celebration round the corner, Accomplish Magazine reached out to her to contribute to discourse on how Nigeria can reassert its once renowned agric-based GDP earnings. It is also our way of getting various tiers of government in the country to place needed emphasis on every agric produce, including ginger, which many may not see as a major farm produce. Please, read on.

Accomplish Magazine: Who actually is Dr. Florence Chukwudum Edwards?

Amb. Dr. Florence Edwards: Amb. Dr. Florence Edwards is a native of Umuleri, Anambra East Local Government of Anambra State. I grew up in Kano where I had my early education and attended Women Teachers' College before my advanced leadership training programmes. I am current the National President of Ginger Growers, Processors and Marketers Association of Nigeria (GGPMAN); President, Turmeric Growers Association of Nigeria (TGAN); President, Spice Dealers Association; Chairperson, Strategic Alliance Leaders of Agriculture Commodities Associations of Nigeria (SALACAN); MD/CEO of Proland Nigeria Limited; Founder/CEO of Women Farming Without Borders Initiative (WFWBI) and Founder/CEO of Georgina Ugoyibo Foundation.

Accomplish Magazine: In your profile, you stated that you were raised by a single mom. How was it like growing up, in those days, with five of your siblings?

Amb. Dr. Florence Edwards: Life in that kind of environment often involved sharing everything – like space, food, responsibilities, and time with others. Our home was filled with sibling rivalries but also had a sense of camaraderie, as everyone had to pitch in to keep things running. My mother was a tailor and later became a contractor with the Nigerian Railway Corporation and Nigeria Telecom – NITEL. My mother sacrificed a lot for us. She put in immense strength and resourcefulness to make sure of our



daily bread, clothing and shelter, including going an extra mile to see us through school despite financial constraints.

For us, the children, growing up in that environment led us to early independence, as older siblings often took on care giving roles or helping around the house. At the same time, there was a powerful sense of community, as we supported each other to navigate the ups and downs of life.

Accomplish Magazine: At various times, you have been a theologian, a farmer, school teacher, agriculturist, woman leader, humanitarian as well as spiritual leader. How do you combine all these roles? How did they prepare you to become a CEO?

Amb. Dr. Florence Edwards: Being described so suggests a deeply multifaceted life. Each of these roles reflects different aspects of service and leadership, with the underlying thread being a desire to improve the lives of others and contribute to societal development. My fluency in the three major languages of Nigeria and my wide exposure across the country's regions makes me a powerful advocate for unity, which is something Nigeria desperately needs today.

How the roles prepared me to become a CEO was by making me align with the principles of time management; continuous learning; servant leadership; vision and strategic thinking; adaptability and resilience; and, empathy and people-centred leadership. Many of my roles such as being a humanitarian, woman leader, and theologian centres on serving others.

The principle of servant leadership wholistically shaped my approach to the CEO role, where empowering and supporting my team is essential. I have developed the ability to think long-term in a strategic manner. This skill translates well into managing organisations, where setting a clear vision and guiding others toward it is critical.

Farming and leadership face various challenges. Overcoming these have prepared me to handle the complexities of being a CEO, where flexibility and resilience are vital in decision-making.

Also, I have been able to cultivate strong empathy and communication skills which are important for understanding and motivating those I am leading, ensuring a balanced yet dynamic approach to leadership.

Accomplish Magazine: Please, share your how you rose to become a CEO. How has the experience been?

Amb. Dr. Florence Edwards: Rising to the position of CEO is a journey that often combines hard work, vision, and ability to adapt to various challenges. I am the first woman to be a national president of the National Ginger Association of Nigeria – NGAN before it became GGPMAN, which was not easy at all. That



was on January 4, 2014.

My wide range of roles as a theologian, farmer, teacher, agriculturist, and humanitarian have also equipped me with broader skills. Each role contributes to my understanding of the place of leadership, organisation, and community engagement. This diversity has made me a well-rounded leader capable of handling the complexities of running organisations.

As a woman leader and spiritual guide, I have led people through difficult decisions and guided them toward growth. I have also conducted grassroots activities, understanding both the micro and macro aspects of projects. This hands-on experience is invaluable as it helps me make informed decisions that resonate with the realities on ground, demonstrating that leadership is not just about profit but also about serving people and communities.

The role of CEO demands continuous learning. Leading an organisation requires adapting to new trends, navigating business landscapes, and managing people's expectations. Like any other CEO, I have faced numerous challenges – financial, organisational, and personal. Navigating tough decisions, managing teams, and dealing with uncertainty have all tested my resilience. However, the rewards, such as seeing projects succeed or people grow under my leadership, have made my experience fulfilling.

Over time, my leadership style has evolved. In the early stages, I had been more involved in day-to-day operations, but as the organisation grew, I have shifted towards a more strategic, visionary role; focusing on long-term goals and fostering innovation within my team.

The key part of my role as a CEO is building and maintaining strong relationships with stakeholders,

employees, and partners. In summary, my rise to the position of CEO was driven by hard work, diverse experiences, and a strong commitment to leading with purpose. The experience, though challenging, is filled with opportunities to learn, grow, and make a lasting impact.

Accomplish Magazine: You are the national president, GGPMAN. How has the association helped in empowering members and ginger farmers?

Amb. Dr. Florence Edwards: As the national president of GGPMAN, my responsibility in empowering members has been pivotal. GGPMAN has offered various training programmes to enhance members' skills and knowledge. These includes workshops on advanced farming techniques on good agricultural practices, business management, and leadership development; helping members improve both their agricultural practices and their ability to manage their businesses effectively.

The association has not been able to access adequate funds from governments and donors; we source for resources such as high quality seeds, fertilizers, and farming equipment. By negotiating with suppliers or trying to secure grants, GGPMAN has helped members obtain inputs they need to boost productivity and sustainability.

GGPMAN provides a platform for members to connect with other farmers, industry experts, and stakeholders. These networking opportunities have led to collaborations, partnerships, and access to new markets, which are vital for growth and expansion.

GGPMAN advocates for policies and support systems that benefit its members. This includes negotiating with government bodies, influencing agricultural policies, and ensuring that the interests of ginger farmers are well represented.

The association engages in and supports research on ginger cultivation techniques, risk management, and disease control. By staying in the forefront of agricultural research, GGPMAN helps farmers implement innovative practices that can improve yield and reduce losses.

GGPMAN fosters a sense of community among ginger farmers, creating a supportive network where members can share experiences, advice, and solutions to common problems. This solidarity is a powerful motivator and resource for individual farmers.

Generally, GGPMAN's efforts in training, resource allocation, advocacy, and community-building have played a significant role in empowering her members and supporting ginger farming in Nigeria.

Accomplish Magazine: What does your portfolio as the association's national president entail? And, what are the highlights of your tenure?

Amb. Dr. Florence Edwards: As the national president of GGPMAN, my portfolio involves a range of strategic,

operational, and leadership responsibilities. I lead the association with a focus on strategic vision and long-term goals, including policy development to support ginger farmers. I oversee programme management, ensuring effective training, resource distribution, and research initiatives, while also managing the association's finances to maintain stability. In representation and advocacy, I engage with stakeholders through industry events, meeting with governments, and promoting the association's achievements through various media channels. Additionally, I support and develop members by enhancing their skills through workshops and networking opportunities, and continuously improving services based on their feedback.

For highlights of my tenure, I'll say that since I assumed office, there's been successful implementation of impactful programmes that improve the livelihoods of ginger farmers through training and capacity building, new technologies, and market access. Advocacy efforts have secured favourable policies and funding, enhancing support for farmers and expanding trade opportunities. Financially, the association has reached key milestones with major grants and improved financial practices, boosting its capacity to support members. Member engagement has increased through better communication and community-building activities. The association has also gained recognition for its work, demonstrated measurable impact, and advanced innovative research in ginger farming practices, improving cultivation techniques and pest management.

Accomplish Magazine: *You were born in Umuleri, Anambra State, grew up in Kano where you had your early education before moving to Ibadan for your advanced leadership programmes. How do you see Nigeria of yesterday and today?*

The political landscape is tensed with challenges like corruption, election irregularities, and distrust of institutions. This has contributed to slow economic and social development compared to the country's potentials.

Amb. Dr. Florence Edwards: Born in Umuleri, growing up in Lagos and Kano, and later schooling in Ibadan has undoubtedly given me a rich and diverse perspective on Nigeria, especially with my fluency in the three major languages of Nigeria (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba). This blend of experiences across different cultural, regional, and linguistic backgrounds speaks to the beauty and complexity of Nigeria's unity in diversity.

In the years following independence, there was a more pronounced sense of collective identity as Nigerians. I remember seeing the groundnut pyramids in Kano. The civil service, education, and infrastructure held significant promise during this period.

Nigeria has had significant challenges, such as the brutal Biafran War and several military coups. Yet, despite these difficulties, there remained a strong sense of hope that the country would ultimately attain stability and progress.

Again, before oil became the dominant driver of Nigeria's economy, agriculture was the primary focus in Nigeria. Farming played a central role in people's lives, and the economy was largely agrarian. At that time, the gap between rural and urban areas was not as wide as it is today, as both rural communities and urban centres shared a strong connection to agricultural activities. The shift toward oil dependency later created significant changes in the economic landscape and widened the rural-urban divide.

Back then, communities often thrived on communal living and mutual assistance. People felt more connected to one another, possibly due to the smaller gap between the rich and the poor and the lesser influence of modern individualism. People relied on one another for support, creating a culture of shared responsibility and collective well-being. The sense of community was an integral part of daily life, with stronger relationships formed through co-operation, inter-dependence, and a common focus on mutual growth and survival.

Today, tension has become more pronounced, with ethnic and religious divisions affecting political discourse and governance. The political landscape is tensed with challenges like corruption, election irregularities, and distrust of institutions. This has contributed to slow economic and social development compared to the country's potentials.

The shift from an agricultural economy to one heavily dependent on oil revenue has brought wealth but also significant negative issues, such as corruption, environmental degradation, and economic instability when oil prices fall.

On the positive side, the youth today are incredibly innovative. Nigeria's young population is driving technological advancements, arts, music, and entrepreneurship; they are globally recognised in fields like tech start-ups and entertainment (especially Nollywood and Afrobeats).



In agriculture, we find Nigeria having almost the best in every crop – both for food security and exportable commodities. For example, Nigeria has the best ginger in the world today.

While there have been improvements in infrastructure, they have not kept pace with the country's growth and needs. Many cities struggle with inadequate power supply, poor road networks, and lack of basic amenities.

Accomplish Magazine: *Are there unique challenges in ginger growing and processing? If yes, what is your association doing about them?*

Amb. Dr. Florence Edwards: Yes, we have been faced with several challenges. Over the years, ginger production activities have been on a decline, due to several factors such as lack of adequate financial support from government, lack of quality and improved ginger seed to increase yield and lack of processing plants and storage facilities.

The outbreak of ginger fungi pandemic that erupted in almost 90% of ginger farmlands in Kaduna State, Niger State and FCT has made ginger to be scarce. It also led to our members' inability to meet both local and international demand in 2023.

To curtail these challenges, GGPMAN is embarking on ginger improved seed production and seed multiplication to enable our farmers get seeds to cultivate ginger and we are calling on investors both from Nigeria and abroad to invest in our ginger. GGPMAN is actively working to ensure that Nigerian ginger farmers receive fair value for their produce. GGPMAN also aims to improve the overall market position of Nigerian ginger farmers, ensuring they receive fair compensation for their high-quality produce.

Accomplish Magazine: *You are passionate about women and youth empowerment. How has your position as United Nations Goodwill Ambassador helped these causes?*

Amb. Dr. Florence Edwards: As a United Nations Goodwill Ambassador, I have advanced the cause of women and youth empowerment in several impactful ways. I have raised awareness about the issues facing women and youth. By leveraging my visibility and influence, I have been able to spotlight critical challenges and mobilise support for solutions.

I have also had the opportunity to advocate for policies and initiatives that support women and youth. This includes working with governments, international organisations, and other stakeholders to promote gender equality, educational opportunities, and economic empowerment.

My work inspired me to establish an NGO called Women Farming Without Borders Initiative (WFWBI) with over 350 co-operative societies across the country. The NGO is affording members the opportunity to produce and market their products. This platform enables me to support and promote

Despite Nigeria's substantial arable land and agricultural resources, several key issues contribute to the country's struggle to achieve food self-sufficiency. These include inadequate infrastructure such as poor road networks and insufficient storage facilities which hamper efficient transportation and preservation of agricultural produce.

programmes designed to empower women and youth which includes endorsing and participating in initiatives that provide training/capacity building, resources, and opportunities for these groups to thrive.

Also, through public appearances, speeches, and media engagements, I have inspired others to join the cause as we build partnerships. My leadership and commitment serve as a powerful example, encouraging individuals and organisations to contribute to the empowerment of women and youth.

Accomplish Magazine: Nigeria has about 36.9 million hectares of arable land. This is in addition to 6.6 million hectares that are under permanent crops, while 25.2 million hectares are under permanent meadows and pastures, yet we cannot feed ourselves sufficiently. What do you think is the problem?

Amb. Dr. Florence Edwards: Despite Nigeria's substantial arable land and agricultural resources, several key issues contribute to the country's struggle to achieve food self-sufficiency. These include inadequate infrastructure such as poor road networks and insufficient storage facilities which hamper efficient transportation and preservation of agricultural produce. This leads to significant post-harvest losses and difficulty in getting food to markets.

Some of Nigeria's arable land faces issues of



degradation and erosion due to unsustainable farming practices, which reduce soil fertility and productivity. Also, many farmers still rely on traditional methods of farming that are less efficient compared to modern farming techniques. Limited access to technology, quality seeds, and advanced farming equipment impact overall productivity.

Farmers often face difficulties accessing affordable financing and credit facilities, which are crucial for investing in inputs, technology, and scaling operations. Then, we have the issue of climate change which has led to unpredictable weather patterns, affecting crop yields and increasing vulnerability to pests and diseases

Of course, weak linkages in the agricultural value chain, including market access issues and inefficient value chain processes, contribute to the challenges in meeting domestic food needs.

Addressing these problems requires a comprehensive approach involving infrastructure development, adoption of modern farming practices, improved access to finance, effective climate adaptation strategies, and better policy implementation to enhance Nigeria's food security and self-sufficiency.

There's need to enhance transparency and accountability in the agricultural sector to ensure that resources are used effectively and that policies are responsive to the needs of farmers. We also need to employ a multifaceted approach to enhance our country's security infrastructure, improve intelligence

gathering, foster community engagement, address socio-economic disparities, and promote effective law enforcement to create a safer and more stable environment for farmers.

Accomplish Magazine: The six federal universities of agriculture in Nigeria were established, in the main, to identify the agricultural problems and needs, find solutions to them within the context of overall national development and contribute to the scientific transformation of agriculture in Nigeria. Sadly, agricultural practices in Nigeria are still largely at subsistence level. How can we feed over 200 million people using traditional agricultural implements? Do you think government has properly engaged these universities of agriculture?

Amb. Dr. Florence Edwards: To feed over 200 million people, Nigeria must modernise agriculture through advanced technologies and practices, beyond traditional implements. While federal universities of agriculture aim to address these challenges, improved government engagement is needed to fully leverage their research and solutions for broader impact.

Accomplish Magazine: You are the first woman to become national president of agricultural commodities in Nigeria. How has it been in this male-dominated space?

Amb. Dr. Florence Edwards: As a woman from the eastern part of Nigeria, I was faced with series of challenges in leading commodity associations that are male-dominated in the North. The reasons for this include religious issues, rejection and discrimination against me as a woman. Breaking barriers as the first woman to lead in Nigeria's agricultural sector has been both challenging and rewarding. Navigating this space required overcoming gender biases and proving my capacity through determination and excellence. I have leveraged this unique position to advocate for more women and youths' involvement in agriculture, driving impactful change and fostering a more inclusive environment. Despite obstacles, my leadership has demonstrated that women can lead effectively in any field, inspiring others and contributing to meaningful advancements to the agricultural sector.

Accomplish Magazine: How do you relax?

Amb. Dr. Florence Edwards: To relax, I enjoy engaging in activities around my residence: like playing with my 8 dogs, feeding my fishes, chicken and turkeys which helps me unwind whenever I am tensed. I spend time with my family, pursuing hobbies like reading, watching television or gardening and practicing mindfulness or meditation. Occasionally, I also find solace in nature, whether through a leisurely walk or simply enjoying a quiet moment indoors. These activities help me maintain balance and manage stress, allowing me to return to my responsibilities refreshed and focused.

Accomplish Magazine: How would you want to be remembered by your family, friends and mentees?

Amb. Dr. Florence Edwards: I am a single mother who would like to be remembered by my children as a loving, supportive and inspiring figure who balanced personal and professional life with grace and dedication. For my friends, I hope to be seen as a loyal, empathetic companion who made positive impact on their lives. My mentees should remember me as a guiding force who provided valuable insights, encouragement, and opportunities for growth. Lastly, within the industry, I aim to be remembered as a trailblazer who drove significant progress, championed innovation, and fostered inclusivity, leaving a lasting legacy of positive change and empowerment.

Accomplish Magazine: What is your advice for aspiring CEOs in Nigeria, given that many young people are leaving in droves because they do not have faith in the country?

Amb. Dr. Florence Edwards: For people who want to become CEOs in Nigeria, my advice is that they should embrace resilience, understanding that challenges are a natural part of the journey and can be turned into growth opportunities. Focusing on innovative solutions to local problems and addressing gaps can lead to impactful ventures. Building a strong network with mentors, peers, and industry leaders is crucial for support and guidance. Continuous personal development, staying informed about industry trends, and enhancing leadership skills are essential. Leading with integrity and transparency builds trust and ensures long-term success. Leveraging technology to improve efficiency and reach wider markets provides a competitive edge. Finally, aiming to make a positive impact on society and contributing to national development can be a powerful motivator for meaningful success. By focusing on these principles, aspiring CEOs can build successful careers and contribute to the country's growth, even amidst challenging circumstances.



HENRY NDIULO

AUTHOR'S BIO

Henry Ejike Ndiulo is a writer, broadcaster and strategic management expert. He holds a Ph.D. in Strategic Marketing Management and was the Head of Corporate Communications of Fidelity Bank Plc. before moving on to lead its Export and Agriculture Division. He left banking to fulfill his desire of running his integrated marketing company.

By Damian Ikenna Ngere



• Moke Architekten's Wooden House in Muiden Features Greenhouse and Natural Design

Moke Architekten, in collaboration with LA4Sale, designed the Wooden House in Muiden, the Netherlands, featuring two offset wooden volumes connected by pergolas and crowned with a greenhouse. The structure balances open views of the nearby IJmeer Lake with privacy, offering a private work space and bedroom in one section, while a kitchen, dining area, and living space with a greenhouse-topped terrace are in the other.

The home incorporates wooden slats, full-height glass doors, and a concrete

core, emphasizing natural materials throughout its design. Photovoltaic panels on the greenhouse add sustainability.



• Vert Installation at London Design Festival Showcases Sustainable Urban Greening

Diez Office and OMCC collaborated with the American Hardwood Export Council to create "Vert," a timber installation showcased at the London Design Festival. Located at Chelsea College of Arts, the 10-metre tall structure is designed as an urban greening solution to combat rising city temperatures and declining biodiversity.

"The project is intended to inspire urban planners, architects and designers to tackle climate change and, above all, to develop interdisciplinary solutions together.

"We want to show that large-scale greening systems can also be realised in densely built-up city centres.

"A garden for insects and people in the centre of the city, a place to relax," co-founder of OMCC Nicola Stattman told Dezeen.

Made of modular red oak and filled with climbing



plants, Vert serves as a cooling space for both people and insects. Its biodegradable fabric nets and seating areas offer a refuge in the city while promoting sustainable, large-scale urban greening efforts. The installation can be dismantled and relocated.



DAMIAN IKENNA NGERE

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Ikenna is a graduate of Physics and Education, who works as a freelance writer. He has interest in technology, humanity and sports.

Breaking into Real Estate Whilst Being Cashless

In this period of stiff economic realities, discernment people are seriously thinking about how to remain relevant and financially buoyant. For operators in the real estate sector, there are two ways this can be done. But, to even get started, you must have a model in order to succeed.

The two ways are:
1. Attach yourself to an establishment or
2. Go solo.

Knowing that you don't have disposable cash, it's advisable to start at the bottom of the real estate chain, which is "realtorship or agency". Real estate practice has several branches.

There's the agency - where you find a property owner who wants to sell and a prospective buyer meeting with a broker. The broker takes a commission for services rendered. Then, there are real

estate owners (who run their own estates), valuers and developers.

The beauty of real estate, especially in Nigeria, is that you can swim with the sharks even without certification to be in the water. Agency operation gives you this power, and you can run an agency with very little cash. At this level,



I'll refer to agency or realtorship alone. If you can do well here, you can get proper education and branch into other fields.

Let's begin.

1. Getting attached to a duly registered firm. This entails looking for a real estate firm you can work with. They may not readily accept your services as you're not a school-trained estate manager, but working with them will cut your prep time a lot. The advantage of this approach is having a ready model to work with, and learn from. Also, firms may not want to take you on because of paying you a salary so in your proposal (may be in the form of a cover letter) try and negotiate with the firm's management to allow you work without pay. If they accept, you can use their tools, receive stipends from them to take care of things like transportation and communication in the field, and then earn a certain percentage of the commission. It'll might difficult, especially at the start but it gets easier with time and dedication.

2. Going solo will ensure you have 100% of the commission to yourself. But you'll have to build a model all by yourself and take care of financing your tools. You'll also have to be accountable to yourself alone which makes getting things done a bit difficult, except you're a fire starter. If you plan to go solo, you'll have to hang around agents (mostly those on the streets who are "unregistered"). Also, you'll need to package your brand properly and advertise efficiently.

The beauty of real estate, especially in Nigeria, is that you can swim with the sharks even without certification to be in the water

When building a real estate brand, there are 2 major aspects. From these, you can modify as you go on.

*** Sourcing:** This entails looking for available properties in a particular municipality which you can market to your prospects (tenants

and buyers). You can do this by moving around neighborhoods and taking stock of signs on buildings and calling the agents whose numbers are on the signs, asking them questions and making accessibility requests. You can also do sourcing through the monthly property bulletins and magazines. You can get this through mobile newspaper vendors. If they don't have any, they'll direct you appropriately.

*** Marketing:** online and offline: Marketing is basically where you hunt for people in need of property, for rent and/or purchase, let them know you have something to sell, and link them up with your sources. This is where you'll spend the most and where your income comes from too. In marketing, you'll have to advertise, serve clients by showing them properties, linking them up with your sources or other agents servicing various sources, following up the transactions, closing the deals, and collecting commissions.

Real estate brokerage like any business or work has rules. Some are set by nature, and others are set by man. Learn them, apply them diligently and patiently, and watch your efforts materialise into profits.

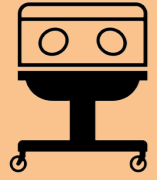
Wishing you the very best in your real estate endeavours.



JOHN ABIODUN OLAITAN

AUTHOR'S BIO

John Abiodun Olaitan is a real estate consultant, realtor and emerging developer and CEO of Arklanded Properties Ltd. He diversified into real estate after decades of experience in the oil and gas sector. He's happily married with children.



Make Your Jotter Your Business Companion



Have you noticed the unusual look and smirk people give to that one person that always pulls out a jotter to write during meetings? You know that look of "Why is this one always acting as if she's better than all of us?"

Truth is, deep in those people's mind, they know that the note-taker is kilometres ahead of them! Why? Among other things, the note-taker is the one who is sure about decisions taken and 'next steps' because the evidence of such is in black and white. The note-taker is the one that can, on a personal level, quickly make references and or comparisons in order to make decisions. Also, the note-taker has a better understanding of current trend of events in the organisation she works for and is able to suggest solutions based on educated information while her colleagues may just look on in hope. However you think about it, leaving things to memory, especially information from important meetings and conferences, does no one any good!

Now, consider this. Have you seen pictures of some Nigerian government officials holding bi-lateral talks with officials of another country with Nigerian officials folding their arms or crossing their legs during the meetings while almost all their foreign counterparts there are holding jotters and pens, taking down important points of the talks? So, while each of their foreign counterparts leave the meeting to properly evaluate the content and outcomes of such meetings - especially in areas that touch their respective portfolios, our officials leave things to memory and the notes of a "secretary"; i.e. if there is even one! Are we surprised, then, that the outcomes of many bi-lateral meetings are nearly nothing to write home about here?

Does this illustration help to give readers reason to see the good in note-taking? The benefits are not few but a few would be

Remember that your meeting notes doesn't have to be lengthy or detailed, if you are not the secretary. The shorter and more functional, the better.

given here:

- Your own meeting notes would enable you remember the meeting in a manner that supports "next steps" by you and members of your team.
- Taking "bullet reminders" helps your mind to highlight and focus on key aspects of a meeting for future reference purposes.
- While the general minutes of a meeting, taken by a secretary, may provide general or specific ideas and policies for future actions, your own notes would provide information about what and how those ideas and policies apply to you, personally, or your portfolio.
- Taking your own short meeting notes enables you to focus on expected outcomes of actions, deadlines inclusive.
- Your meeting notes could be useful in ascertaining what was decided if a dispute arises among team mates. In fact, disputes would be minimal if every member of the team is a note-taker!
- There is also that intangible confidence you have when you know that your meeting notes

would ensure that you are rarely taken unawares about issues, policy direction and implementation of decisions.

Remember that your meeting notes doesn't have to be lengthy or detailed, if you are not the secretary. The shorter and more functional, the better. However, the notes shouldn't be so sketchy that they become useless when the need for them arises. Also, meeting notes doesn't always have to happen in corporate/office meetings. Note-taking could be useful for family meetings, religious unit meetings and, business meetings - even for one-man owned firms.

As you can see, when given thorough consideration, making your jotter your business companion will bring added steeze to your goal-getting efforts.



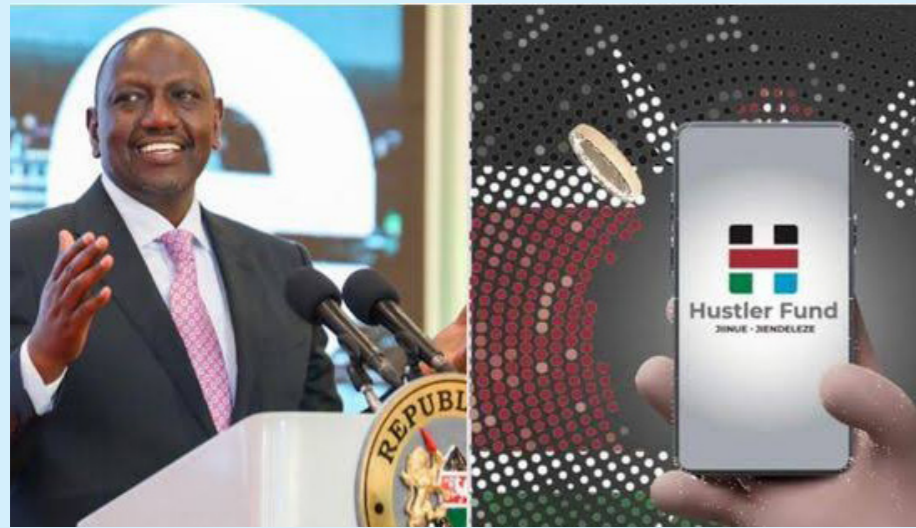
**DIIYI
WILLIAM-WEST**

AUTHOR'S BIO

More fondly known as DDWEST, he has several years of media practice experience spanning magazines, newspapers, television and radio; laying emphasis on maintaining standards in media practice. He practised and lectured Public Relations for nearly a decade before going into leadership consulting and real estate consultancy.

By *Damian Ikenna Ngere*

BUSINESS AND FINANCE



Kenya's Hustler Fund Faces Crisis as Loan Default Rate Soars Above 50%

Kenya's "Hustler Fund", designed to offer affordable loans to low-income citizens, now faces a major challenge, with default rates exceeding 50%. Launched by President William Ruto to provide microloans at an 8% annual interest rate, the fund aimed to reduce dependence on costly commercial loans.

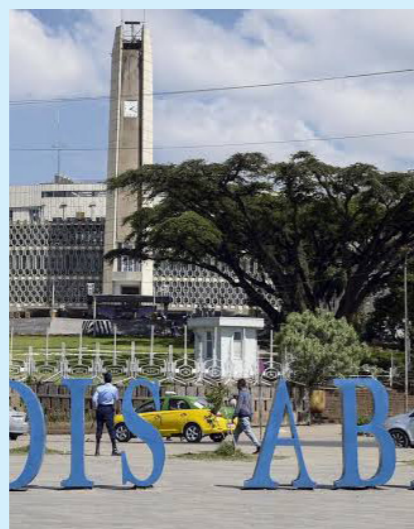
However, the rising defaults have raised concerns about the programme's sustainability. Critics argue

that lenient enforcement and lack of serious consequences for defaulters undermine the fund's viability, especially given Kenya's strained financial position and high national debt.

The government's need to curb spending has also intensified after public backlash against proposed tax increases.

Ethiopia to List 10 State-Owned Enterprises as Part of Privatisation Push

Ethiopia's sovereign wealth fund, Ethiopian Investment Holdings (EIH), has announced plans to list ten state-owned enterprises on the Ethiopian Securities Exchange (ESX), which is set to launch in late 2024 or early 2025. The companies slated for listing include key players such as



Ethio Telecom, the Ethiopian Insurance Corporation, and the Ethiopian Shipping and Logistics Services Enterprise (ESLSE).

This move is part of a broader government initiative to privatise sectors that have long been dominated by state-run entities, including telecommunications, insurance, and logistics.

The reform aims to attract investment and modernise the Ethiopian economy by opening up these industries to private ownership.

POLITICS



Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger to Issue New Biometric Passports Following Exit from ECOWAS

In the wake of recent military coups, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger are set to introduce a new biometric passport system, signaling their formal exit from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). This decision follows their establishment of the Alliance of Sahel States, aimed at reinforcing regional unity and security independent of ECOWAS.

The new passports are

intended to streamline travel within this alliance but may complicate movement to other ECOWAS countries. The alliance, which also plans to enhance information sharing among member states, reflects these countries' shift towards greater self-reliance and their pivot from traditional Western alliances to partnerships with Russia for military support.



Senegal President Faye Dissolves Parliament

Senegal's President Bassirou Diomaye Faye has disbanded the country's parliament and announced snap elections for November. Faye, who came into office on a reformist agenda, cited significant obstacles in collaborating with the opposition-controlled assembly.

He criticised the parliament for obstructing discussions on the budget and rejecting proposals to streamline government institutions. The upcoming elections are scheduled for November 17.



TECHNOLOGY

Nigeria Partners with Google to Launch 100 Million AI Fund for Start-ups

The Nigerian government, in collaboration with Google, unveiled a 100 million fund to support AI-driven start-ups in Nigeria. The initiative, spearheaded by the National Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (NCAIR), was announced by Dr. Bosun Tijani, Minister of Communications, Innovation, and Digital Economy, on September 10, 2024. The fund aims to empower 10 start-ups using artificial intelligence to foster innovation and technological growth within the country's expanding tech sector.

This move is in line with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's vision of positioning Nigeria as a hub for AI development, further enhancing the country's reputation as a growing leader in tech on the continent.

Namibia's 8th National ICT Summit

Namibia's 8th National ICT Summit was held from September 9 to 11, 2024. The summit emphasised Africa's digital transformation and resilience. The summit was held under the theme "Building Resilience to Adapt or Die" in the era of digital



transformation and artificial intelligence (AI).

It brought together global ICT experts to discuss the future of digital innovation and the growing role of artificial intelligence in the continent's economic growth and development. The event focused on strategies for building digital resilience to adapt to rapid technological advancements.



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GLOBAL NEWS ROUND UP

ENTREPRENEUR

TECHNOLOGY



Winklevoss Twins Drive \$190 Million Surge in Crypto Spending for 2024 US Election

Spending on crypto-related contributions for the 2024 United States election has surged to £190 million, a dramatic increase from £15 million in 2020. This sharp rise is predominantly attributed to the Winklevoss twins, founders of the Gemini crypto exchange, who have contributed approximately £10.1 million in total.

Their contributions include £1.7 million in bitcoin to support former President Donald Trump and £4.9 million to the Fairshake PAC, which advocates for pro-crypto policies. The crypto industry's increased spending

underscores its strategy to back candidates who align with its interests and to counteract regulatory pressures from figures such as SEC Chairman Gary Gensler.

Apple Unveils iPhone 16 Series and New AI Features at California Event



At Apple's recent California launch event, on September 9, 2024, the tech giant introduced its latest lineup of products, including the iPhone 16 series, new AirPods, and an updated Apple Watch. The iPhone 16 models feature advanced A18 processors and AI capabilities, branded as Apple Intelligence, which will

By Damian Ikenna Ngere

debut in the United States in October and the United Kingdom in December.

The iPhone 16 starts at £799, with the Pro Max priced at £1,199. New AirPods and a revamped Apple Watch 10 were also announced, showcasing enhancements in design and functionality.

Meanwhile, Huawei has announced a new tri-fold phone with over 3 million pre-orders, intensifying competition in the AI space.

splashed down near Florida, United States, after reaching a peak altitude of 875 miles, the highest any human has travelled since NASA's moon missions.

The mission, led by tech entrepreneur, Jared Isaacman, also tested new spacesuit technology, crucial for future Mars missions. Isaacman and SpaceX's Sarah Gillis both performed the brief space walk.

This was Isaacman's second flight with SpaceX under his Polaris programme, aimed at advancing space exploration.



U.S. National Debt Interest Payments Exceed \$1 Trillion for First Time

The United States' government has, for the first time, spent over \$1 trillion on interest payments for its \$35.3 trillion national debt, largely due to the Federal Reserve maintaining high interest rates. Debt service costs have surged by 30% compared to last year, reaching \$1.049 trillion. This increase coincides with a growing budget deficit, which neared \$2 trillion by August 2024.

Net interest payments, after subtracting government earnings, reached \$843 billion - making it one of the largest federal expenditures, surpassed only by Social Security and Medicare.

POLITICS

Trump Escapes Second Assassination Attempt at Florida Golf Course

Former United States' President, Donald Trump, narrowly escaped a second assassination attempt at his Florida golf course, Trump International Golf Club, on September 15, 2024. The incident occurred when Secret Service agents spotted an AK-47-style rifle near the course and confronted the suspect, who fled but was later apprehended after a brief chase.

The suspect, Ryan Wesley Routh, had a history of criminal activity and controversial social media posts. Trump was unharmed and reassured supporters of his safety. The FBI and other agencies are investigating the attack, and political leaders have expressed concern over increasing violence.



Elon Musk Calls Australian Government 'Fascists' Over Misinformation Law



Elon Musk, on Thursday, September 12, 2024, took a firm stand against the Australian government, branding them as "fascists" in response to new regulations designed to curb online misinformation. Under the proposed law, social media platforms could face fines of up to 5% of their global revenue if they fail to prevent the spread of harmful false information.

The legislation, introduced by Australia's Labour government, would require tech companies to create and enforce guidelines to combat misinformation, which would need approval from a regulatory body. If platforms fail to comply, they could be forced to follow a standard imposed by the regulator.

Musk, a self-proclaimed defender of free speech, made his brief comment on X (formerly Twitter), where he reposted an article detailing the proposed law. Australian officials, in turn, accused Musk of being hypocritical in his stance.



Gates Foundation Boosts Agricultural and Health Cclare Initiatives in Ethiopia and Nigeria

Bill Gates recently concluded a five-day visit to Ethiopia and Nigeria, aimed at supporting development initiatives in health, agriculture, and nutrition. In Ethiopia, Gates met with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, discussing the country's significant agricultural progress, particularly in wheat production, which has made Ethiopia self-sufficient. He visited farms in Oromia, observing innovative techniques in wheat cultivation and poultry farming that boost food security and create jobs.

In Nigeria, Gates met with government leaders, including Health Minister Muhammad Ali Pate, to address health system improvements and malnutrition. A highlight of his trip was participating in the "Nutrivision" event, where he engaged with young innovators tackling malnutrition.

Gates also collaborated with Nigerian influencer, Chef T, to promote nutrition awareness. His visit underscored the Gates Foundation's ongoing commitment to fostering innovation and progress across Africa.



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BUSINESS AND FINANCE



Tech Entrepreneur Leads Historic Private Spacewalk and High-Altitude Mission

A billionaire and his crew returned to Earth after completing a five-day space mission, which included the first private space walk. The SpaceX capsule

By *Damian Ikenna Ngere*

ARTS & THE MASTERS



• MBS and the \$450 Million Masterpiece: The Story Behind Saudi Arabia's Record-Breaking Art Purchase

In 2017, the art world witnessed an extraordinary moment when Leonardo da Vinci's painting, *Salvator Mundi*, was sold for a record-breaking \$450 million at Christie's in New York, USA. This historic sale took on even more significance when it emerged that the buyer was Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), a man

renowned for his ambitious Vision 2030 reforms and now, his unexpected role as a major player in the world of Fine Art.

The purchase sparked a global debate. Some hailed it as a bold symbol of Saudi Arabia's growing cultural influence, while others questioned the

motivations behind such a significant acquisition by a leader from a nation with traditionally conservative views on artistic representations, particularly those of religious figures.

Salvator Mundi, which translates as "Saviour of the World," depicts

known for modernising Saudi Arabia, has been working to reshape the country's identity on the world stage. His acquisition of *Salvator Mundi* is seen by some as a reflection of his broader efforts to place Saudi Arabia at the forefront of international cultural and economic discussions. In a region historically associated with oil exports, MBS's purchase sends a clear message - Saudi Arabia is staking its claim in the art world and aiming to become a future centre for global culture.

However, the art world remains deeply divided. Some critics argue that the acquisition symbolises the overpowering influence of wealth over artistic integrity, with masterpieces becoming mere status symbols. The secrecy surrounding the painting's location - initially believed to be destined for the Louvre Abu Dhabi - only added to the intrigue. Speculation arose that *Salvator Mundi* might be displayed on a luxury yacht owned by MBS, sparking outrage among purists who felt the painting should be housed in a public institution, accessible for all to appreciate.

Beyond the painting itself, MBS's purchase reflects the wider cultural transformations taking place in Saudi Arabia. Under his leadership, the kingdom has begun to relax its traditionally strict approach to art, entertainment, and tourism. The country is embracing music festivals, cinema screenings, and international sporting events - initiatives that were unimaginable just a few years ago.

With Vision 2030, MBS aims to reduce Saudi Arabia's reliance on oil, opening new cultural and economic avenues. Owning one

of the world's most valuable works of art is seen as part of this overarching strategy.

This event also raises important questions about the relationship between art and power. Throughout history, rulers and monarchs have used art to project authority and prestige. The Medici family, patrons of the Renaissance, famously transformed Florence into a cultural epicentre. In a similar vein, MBS's acquisition of *Salvator Mundi* signals Saudi Arabia's ambition to become a key player on the global cultural stage. But at what cost? Will this painting, once hidden from view and now shrouded in mystery, ever fulfil its purpose as a work meant to inspire the public?

For now, the whereabouts of *Salvator Mundi* remain unknown, its future uncertain. However, what is clear is that MBS's purchase has secured his place in the annals of art history, whether as a patron of a new cultural renaissance or as a controversial figure in the ongoing debate over the ownership and stewardship of art in the modern world.

Christ holding a crystal orb, symbolising his role as the saviour of humanity. Although the painting's authorship was contested for many years, it was eventually attributed to Leonardo da Vinci, further cementing its status as a masterpiece. Yet, the painting's journey from obscurity to becoming part of MBS's private collection brought with it a mix of fascination and controversy.

MBS, a transformative figure



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The Secrets of a Simple Cucumber Salad for Healthy Weight Loss

By Tolulope Akinruli



Welcome to a new approach to eating that will help you achieve your weight loss objectives! Let's look at a delicious, simple-to-make cucumber salad recipe that has many health benefits that might surprise you. This is no ordinary salad – rather, it's a tried-and-true favourite for anyone trying to lose weight without feeling deprived.

The Strength of Uncomplicated Things

Our recipe for cucumber salad celebrates the elegance of minimalism. This recipe, which only requires a few ingredients, is a great complement to your regular meals because it is high in nutrients and low in calories. It all comes down to making wise decisions that support a healthy way of living.

Ingredients:

Cucumbers: Fresh and hydrating, cucumbers are a great source of vitamins, including Vitamin K, and they add a crisp texture.

Red onions: For a touch of sharpness and depth, which also brings antioxidants.

Fresh dill: Adds a vibrant pop of flavour and freshness.

Greek yoghurt: A healthy substitute for mayonnaise or heavy dressing, providing a creamy texture with added protein.

Lemon juice: Gives a zesty twist and boosts

digestion.

Salt and pepper: Just a pinch in each case to enhance all the flavours.

Getting It Ready

Cut the cucumbers Thinly: Eating a salad with thin slices enhances its flavour and helps the cucumbers absorb more of the dressing.

Combine your dressing: Spoon Greek yoghurt into a bowl and add lemon juice, salt, and pepper. You can taste and adjust the seasoning.

Stir together and chill: Stir the dressing together

and toss in the cucumbers, red onions, and fresh dill. For optimal flavour fusion, allow the salad to sit for approximately one hour before serving.

Health Benefits

This cucumber salad is a nutritional powerhouse as well as a delight to the taste buds. Cucumbers are calorie-efficient and hydrating, which makes them perfect for controlling weight. Greek yoghurt gives you an extra protein boost that keeps your muscle mass intact, which is important for a healthy metabolism.

Source: Filmflicks.net

How to make Cucumber Pineapple Juice



Simple Cucumber Pineapple Juice Recipe

Ingredients:

- One large cucumber
- Half of a ripe pineapple
- Fresh mint leaves (optional, for added flavour)
- Ice cubes (optional, for serving).

How to Prepare It

Prepare the Ingredients: Cut the cucumber into bits after peeling it. Make sure to remove the core and skin before chopping the pineapple into cubes.

Juicing:

Put the pineapple and cucumber chunks in a juicer, if you have one. If you are using a blender, combine the ingredients until they are smooth. If you would want to eliminate the fibre, strain the mixture with a fine-mesh screen.

Boost the Taste:

In order to give the juice a cool taste, add a few mint leaves while mixing.

Serve Cold:

For a cool summer beverage, pour the juice into a tumbler with ice

cubes in it.

Health Benefits of Pineapple Cucumber Juice

Digestion and Hydration:

Since cucumbers are 95% water, they are ideal for hydration. They have fibre as well, which facilitates digestion.

Anti-inflammatory Properties:

Bromelain, an enzyme with anti-inflammatory properties, is abundant in pineapples and can help lessen bodily oedema and pain.

Immune System Boost:

Packed full of vitamin C, pineapple improves skin health and immune system performance, warding off sickness and promoting wound healing.

Detoxification:

The detoxifying qualities of cucumbers aid the removal of toxins from the body and promote liver function.

Source: Filmflicks.net

Obudu Mountain Resort:

One of Africa's Finest, Most Visited Tourist Sites

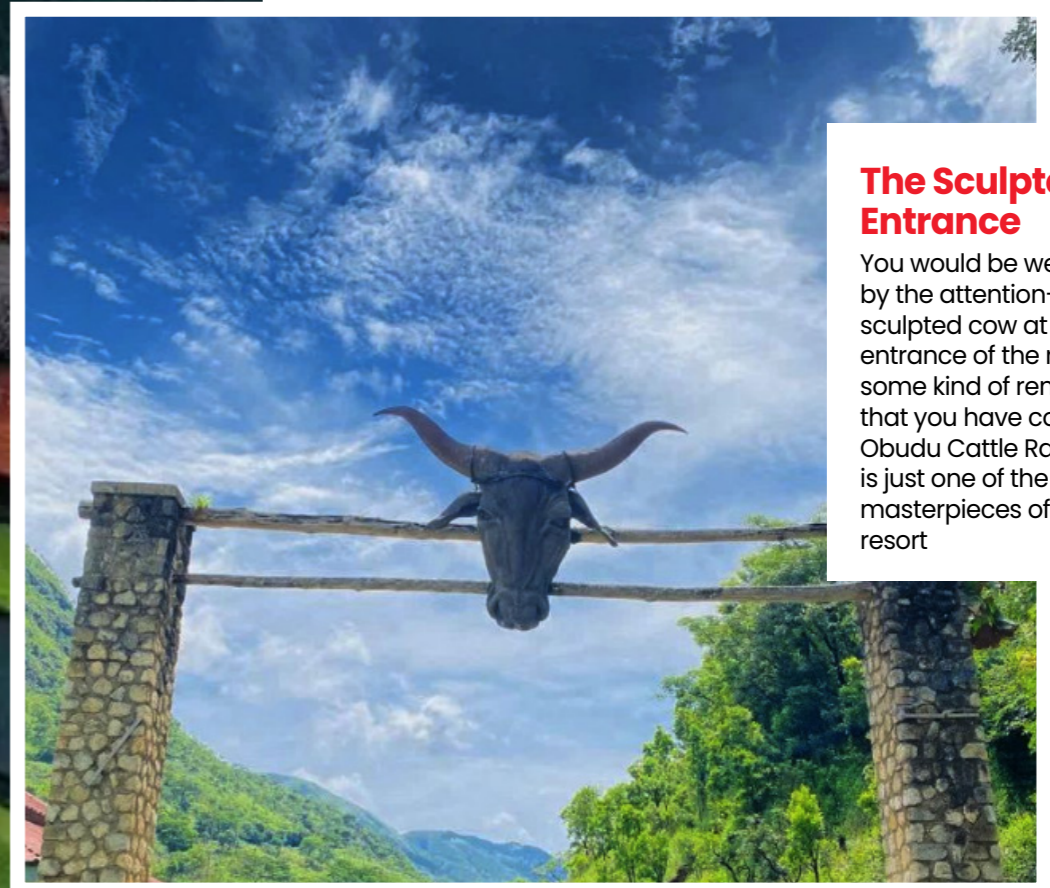
By Diiyi William-West

It could surprise many Nigerians that a tourist destination in Nigeria would be described as "one of Africa's finest, most visited tourist destinations". But, that is exactly how Travel Tank blog described the Obudu Mountain Resort which was developed in 1951 by M. McCaughey. Its scenic paradise has put Nigeria on the world tourism map. The name of the resort was derived from the Obudu Mountain. The resort is located in Cross River State and is just 45 miles off Cameroonian border!

If you need to relax and reset your psyche after hectic schedules, Obudu Mountain Resort should be seriously considered. You're certain to enjoy fun, adventure, and the soothing calm of nature.

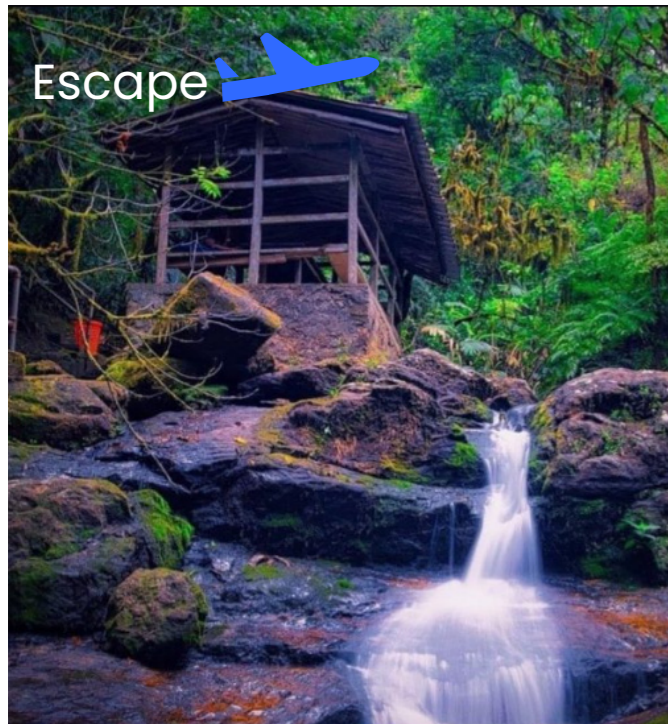
Obudu Mountain Resort, which many refer to as Obudu Cattle Ranch, offers round hut-like accommodation chalets on stilts, so visitors can enjoy breathtaking views of the surroundings. There are also self-contained suites of different sizes ranging from the 2-bedroomed Governor's Lodge with private lounge/dining room and kitchenette to the 20 Mountain Villas, each with three bedrooms, lounge, dining room, kitchenette, and balcony.

Here are some of the unique features of the resort:



The Sculpted Cow Entrance

You would be welcomed by the attention-catching sculpted cow at the entrance of the resort; some kind of reminder that you have come to Obudu Cattle Ranch. This is just one of the numerous masterpieces of art at the resort



Grotto Mini Waterfall

The resort has beautiful waterfalls, one of which is the Grotto Mini Waterfall. This waterfall stands out because it has a pool. The waterfall was modified to allow the water to accumulate at its bed, forming a deep pool.

Cable Car

For a scenic, bird's eye view, you need to get into the resort's cable car. It is an exciting alternative to driving the 25 minutes distance to the resort which sits 1,576 metres above sea level!

The cable car reaches the resort in about 6 minutes. There are claims that this is the longest cable car ride in Africa - from the base of the mountain to the climax (often in the clouds).



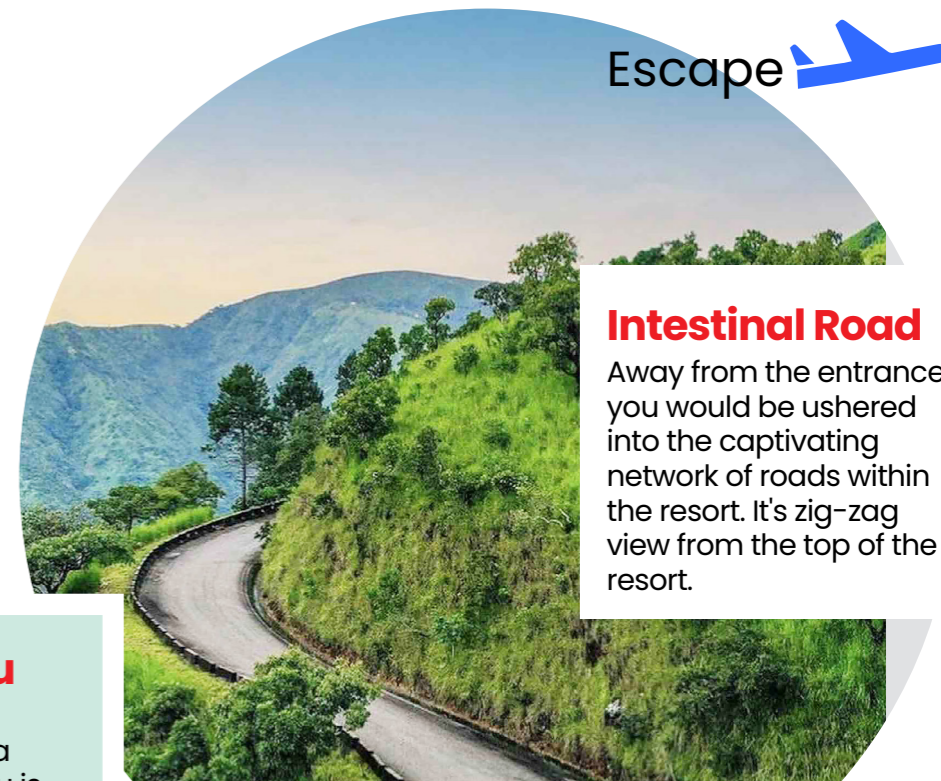
The Becheeve Nature Reserve

Do include going to the Beecheeve Nature Reserve in your itinerary. With numerous species of plants and wildlife in their natural state, the Becheeve Nature Reserve is a conservation forest with vegetation that boasts to have existed before civilisation.

Obudu Plateau

This is on the Oshie Ridge of the Sankwala Mountain. The plateau is a picturesque, gigantic spread of landmass of about 40 square miles. It rises above 5,200 feet above sea level, with its peak hitting a mindblowing height of about 1,716 above sea level.

Here, you would find rare species of birds. The plateau is situated in the Obanliku Local Government Area of Cross River State.



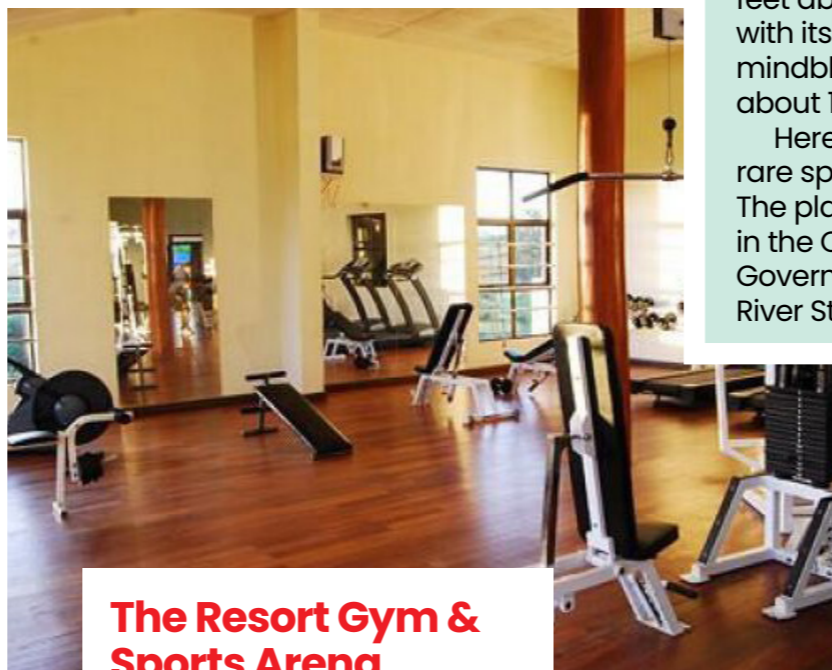
Intestinal Road

Away from the entrance, you would be ushered into the captivating network of roads within the resort. It's zig-zag view from the top of the resort.



Obudu Mountain Resort Hotel and Cuisines

A major unique feature of the resort is its round, hut-like accommodation chalets on stilts which gives guests breathtaking views of the surroundings.



The Resort Gym & Sports Arena

There's a cosy gym for fitness enthusiasts at Obudu Mountain Resort. The resort runs a fully equipped gym. There's also two flood-lit tennis courts, a squash court, a natural swimming pool a 9-hole golf course.

Canopy Walkway

You would find the canopy walkway quite interesting. The about 100 metres walkway is suspended at great heights above the ground. Just imagine yourself walking through this!



Obudu Ranch International Mountain Race

Sports enthusiasts would easily remember the Obudu Mountain Race; a mountain competition held in Obudu, every November with a huge prize money. It has been referred to as the world's richest mountain race. It is associated with the World Mountain Running Association (WMRA) and endorsed by the International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF).

Key Trends Shaping the Future of Work in 2024 and Beyond

As we navigate the complexities of the modern workplace, 2024 has brought with it a host of challenges and opportunities that organisations must address. From economic pressures to shifts in employee expectations, understanding these trends is essential for leaders aiming to thrive in an evolving landscape.

Here are nine critical trends that will shape the future of work.

1. Creative Benefits to Offset Work Costs

With many employees now accustomed to remote or hybrid work, the hidden costs of commuting and office presence have become apparent. Research indicates that a significant portion of the work force views returning to the office as more burdensome than beneficial. To attract and retain talent, organisations must confront these costs head-on. Innovative benefits such as housing subsidies, caregiver support, and financial wellness programmes will become

increasingly vital.

2. AI as a Catalyst for Job Redesign

Despite fears of job displacement due to generative AI (GenAI), its true impact will likely be transformative rather than reductive. GenAI is

expected to enhance roles by automating data-heavy tasks, enabling employees to focus on more strategic aspects of their jobs. Organisations should adapt their talent strategies to incorporate new responsibilities tied to AI tools, ensuring that employees are equipped to leverage these

technologies effectively.

3. The Rise of the Four-Day Workweek

Once viewed as radical, the four-day workweek is gaining traction as a desirable employee benefit. As organisations strive to attract talent

amid a competitive labour market, this model promises improved productivity and employee well-being. Companies will need to rethink their work structures, prioritising effective scheduling and collaboration to make this transition successful.

4. Conflict Resolution as an Essential Managerial Skill

In a world filled with geopolitical tensions and social issues, employee conflict is likely to rise. Effective conflict resolution will become a crucial skill for managers, impacting overall team dynamics and performance. Organisations should invest in training programmes that equip leaders to navigate interpersonal conflicts and create a more harmonious workplace.

5. Caution in GenAI Implementation

While excitement surrounds the potential of GenAI, it is important for organisations to temper expectations. As GenAI tools become more integrated into workflows, companies must establish robust governance and training to ensure responsible use. Understanding the limitations of these technologies and the necessity for quality control will be essential for reaping their benefits.

6. Skills Over Degrees

The traditional reliance on degrees as a hiring criterion is diminishing. Organisations are increasingly focusing on skills-based hiring, opening doors for talented individuals who may not have formal qualification. This shift not only diversifies talent pools but also enables organisations to harness skills from various backgrounds, leading to innovative solutions and perspectives.

7. Climate Change as a Workplace Priority

The growing impacts of climate change are prompting organisations to incorporate environmental considerations into their employee value

propositions. As climate-related events become more frequent, companies are likely to develop comprehensive response strategies that include direct support for affected employees, mental health resources, and clear communication about safety measures.

8. DEI as an Integrated Strategy

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts are evolving from stand-alone initiatives to integral components of organisational culture. In the future, businesses will begin embedding DEI principles into their core operations, ensuring that these values inform decision-making processes and daily practices. This shift will foster a more inclusive environment and enhance overall performance.

9. Non-traditional Career Paths

The concept of a linear career trajectory is fading, with more individuals embracing varied career paths and employment models. Organisations must adapt by offering flexible work arrangements, returnship programmes, and opportunities for cross-training. By recognising the diverse experiences and expertise of employees, companies can enhance retention and attract a broader talent pool.

Conclusion

As we look to the future, these nine trends will profoundly influence how organisations operate and engage with their employees. Leaders should prioritise these trends based on their potential impact on organisational goals and talent strategies. Proactive adaptation to these changes will not only enhance talent retention and attraction but also ensure that businesses remain competitive in an ever-evolving landscape. Embracing these trends is not merely a choice but a necessity for organisations aiming to succeed in the coming years.

Editor's Note: The original piece was taken from Harvard Business Review.

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