

FOCUS AFRICA

MAGAZINE

Embracing
a Healthy
Lifestyle

The
Global
Clusters:

Revolutionizing Empowerment
through the S.P.A.R.K. HUB
Framework

Petroleum Industry:
Benefits, Global Impact and Business



Esteemed readers,

As we embark on a new journey, I want to share with you our vision for this publication and the impact we aim to make.

This year, our focus will be on amplifying the stories of African excellence, innovation, and resilience. We will showcase the achievements of Africans who are making a positive impact in their communities and the world at large. Through our platform, we aim to inspire a new generation of Africans to take pride in their heritage and strive for greatness.

In the next five years we envision expansion into 20 more African Countries with publications covering African affairs, with a global reach and influence. We will expand our coverage to include an in-depth analysis of African politics, business, culture, and lifestyle. Our goal is to provide a platform for Africans to engage in meaningful discussions, share their perspectives, and shape the narrative about the continent. It is our plan to make Focus Africa Magazine a catalyst for African development and growth. Inspiring Africans who will be committed to building a brighter future for the continent.

Through our publication, we aim to promote African unity, celebrate our diversity, and showcase our potential to the world.

Together we can turn the spotlight on Africa. Happy 6th Year Anniversary to Focus Africa Magazine.

Congratulations to all of us!!!

Thank you.

Amb Mrs Angonimi David-Imeh
MD, Focus Africa Magazine

Editor

Dr Okezie Victor Ikpeazu



Dr. Okezie Victor Ikpeazu, a distinguished biochemist, educator, and public servant, served as the fourth democratically elected Governor of Abia State, Nigeria, from May 29, 2015, to May 29, 2023, under the platform of the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

He was born on October 18, 1964, to the family of the late Pa Ishmael and Deaconess Bessie Ikpeazu of Umuebere in Umuobiakwa Village, Isialaukwu Mbato Autonomous Community, Obingwa Local Government Area of Abia State.

Dr. Ikpeazu began his formal education at Amaise Central Primary School, Umuobiakwa. In 1973, while in Primary Five, he gained admission to Eziamma High School, Aba, and later transferred to Ihie High School, Isiala Ngwa, where he obtained his West African School Certificate in 1979.

In 1980, at the age of 16, he secured admission to the University of Maiduguri to study Clinical Biochemistry and graduated in August 1984 with a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc. Hons.) degree, Second Class Upper Division. From August 1984 to August 1985, Dr. Ikpeazu fulfilled his National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) assignment as a Clinical Biochemist at the Medical Laboratory of the Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST), Port Harcourt.

He returned to the University of Maiduguri for postgraduate studies and earned a Master's degree in Biochemical Toxicology in 1990. In 1994, at the age of 30, he obtained a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Biochemical Pharmacology from the University of Calabar.

Dr. Ikpeazu began his academic career as a Graduate Assistant in the Department of Science Laboratory Technology at the University of Maiduguri from 1986 to 1987, while pursuing his Master's degree. Between 1990 and 1992, he lectured at Calabar Polytechnic during his doctoral studies. In 1998, he joined the Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT)

as Lecturer I in the Department of Applied Biochemistry, Faculty of Applied Natural Sciences, and rose to become Head of Department in 2001.

From 2000 to 2002, he also served as an Adjunct Senior Lecturer in the Department of Biochemistry at Ebonyi State University, College of Basic Medical Sciences. Additionally, from 2003 to 2004, he served as an external examiner for Master's degree programs in the Department of Biochemistry at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN).

Dr. Ikpeazu ventured into public service in 2002 when he was appointed Chairman of the Transition Committee for Obingwa Local Government Area, marking the beginning of his political journey. He subsequently served as Special Adviser on Environment to the Governor of Abia State before his appointment as General Manager of the Abia State Passengers Integrated Manifest and Safety Scheme (ASPIMSS), from 2007 to 2009. Under his leadership, ASPIMSS became a significant revenue-generating agency for the state government.

In 2010, he was appointed Chairman of the Governing Council of the Abia State College of Health Technology, Aba, where he facilitated the accreditation of three critical programs by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). He was reappointed as General Manager of ASPIMSS in 2011 and served until 2013.

In June 2013, Dr. Ikpeazu was appointed Deputy General Manager of the Abia State Environmental Protection Agency (ASEPA), overseeing Aba and its environs. In this role, he developed and implemented a practical roadmap for environmental and waste management, earning

widespread commendation from residents across the state. He resigned from this position in October 2014 to contest the 2015 gubernatorial election. He won and subsequently served two terms as Governor of Abia State from 2015 to 2023.

Dr. Okezie Ikpeazu is a member of several professional and civic organizations, including the Biochemical Society of Nigeria, the Nigerian Environmental Society, and the Rotary Club of Eziukwu, Aba. He is married to Mrs. Nkechi Okezie Ikpeazu, and their union is blessed with four children. He is also a proud grandfather.



HARRISON OSAUWAGBOE is a dedicated and experienced professional who has been working at the Bank of Industry for over 19 years. Throughout his tenure at the bank, Harrison has demonstrated exemplary leadership skills, extensive knowledge of the banking industry, and a strong commitment to serving clients.

As a long-time employee of the Bank of Industry, Harrison has developed a deep understanding of the financial products and services offered by the institution. He is well-versed in various banking operations, including loan processing, financial analysis, risk assessment, and customer service.

Harrison is known for his exceptional work ethic and attention to detail. He is highly organized and efficient in handling multiple tasks simultaneously, ensuring that all client requests are met in a timely and professional manner. Harrison's strong analytical skills and sound judgment have earned him the trust and respect of his colleagues and clients alike.

In addition to his technical skills, Harrison is also a natural leader who excels at building strong relationships with his team members. He is known for his ability to inspire and motivate others, fostering a positive and collaborative work environment. Harrison consistently goes above and beyond to support his colleagues and ensure the success of the bank as a whole.

Overall, Harrison Osauwagboe is a seasoned professional with a wealth of experience in the banking industry. His dedication, expertise, and leadership abilities make him an invaluable asset to the Bank of Industry, and a trusted partner for clients seeking financial services.



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Her Eminence

AMB MRS DR ALANYINGI UDUAK SYLVA

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The Role of Mentorship in Shaping the Future of Nigerian Youths



- Nachi Harrison

As the most populous country in Africa, Nigeria is home to over 60 million young people under the age of 30. This demographic dividend presents a unique opportunity for the country to harness the energy, creativity, and innovation of its youth to drive economic growth, social progress, and national development. However, the Nigerian youth face numerous challenges, including unemployment, poverty, and lack of access to quality education and healthcare. This is where mentorship comes in – a powerful tool that can help shape the future of Nigerian youths.

The Impact of Mentorship on Nigerian Youths

Mentorship is a structured relationship where an experienced and knowledgeable individual (the mentor) guides and supports a less experienced individual (the mentee) in achieving their personal and professional goals. In the context of Nigerian youths, mentorship can have a profound impact on their lives. Here are a few ways:

- 1. Career guidance:** Mentorship provides young people with valuable insights and guidance on career choices, helping them make informed decisions about their future.
- 2. Skill development:** Mentors can help youths develop essential skills such as communication, leadership, and problem-solving, making them more employable and competitive in the job market.
- 3. Networking opportunities:** Mentorship can provide young people with access to professional networks and connections, opening up new opportunities for personal and professional growth.
- 4. Confidence building:** A good mentor can help build a young person's confidence and self-esteem, empowering them to take risks and pursue their passions.
- 5. Role modeling:** Mentors can serve as positive role models, demonstrating values such as hard work, integrity, and resilience, which are essential for success in life.

Successful Mentorship Programs in Nigeria

There are several successful mentorship programs in Nigeria that are making a positive impact on the lives of young people. Here are a few examples:

- 1. The Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF) Mentorship Program:** This program provides mentorship and funding to young entrepreneurs across Africa, including Nigeria.
- 2. The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders:** This program, sponsored by the US Department of State, provides mentorship and leadership training to young Africans, including Nigerians.
- 3. The Nigerian Youth Parliament Mentorship Program:** This program provides mentorship and leadership training to young people in Nigeria,

focusing on areas such as governance, entrepreneurship, and community development.

4. The LEAP Africa Youth Leadership Program: This program provides mentorship and leadership training to young people in Nigeria, focusing on areas such as leadership, entrepreneurship, and community development.

CONCLUSION

Mentorship is a powerful tool that can help shape the future of Nigerian youths. By providing guidance, support, and valuable insights, mentors can help young people achieve their personal and professional goals, and make a positive impact on their communities. As Nigeria continues to navigate the challenges of youth development, mentorship programs such as those highlighted above will play a critical role in empowering young people to become leaders, entrepreneurs, and change-makers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To further leverage the power of mentorship in Nigeria, we recommend the following:

1. Increased funding: Governments, corporations, and foundations should increase funding for mentorship programs in Nigeria, focusing on areas such as entrepreneurship, leadership, and community development.

2. Capacity building: Mentorship programs should prioritize capacity building for mentors, providing them with training and resources to effectively support their mentees.

3. Scaling up: Successful mentorship programs should be scaled up to reach more young people across Nigeria, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

4. Collaboration: Mentorship programs should collaborate with schools, universities, and community organizations to provide a comprehensive support system for young people.

By prioritizing mentorship and providing young people with the guidance and support they need to succeed, we can unlock the full potential of Nigerian youths and build a brighter future for our country.

A Systematic Review of the Business Model of Big Pharmaceutical Companies:

Profit-Driven Healthcare and Its Global Implications

- Prince Anthony Ozigbo

ABSTRACT

The pharmaceutical industry plays a crucial role in healthcare by developing drugs and vaccines that improve health outcomes worldwide. However, increasing concerns have been raised regarding its prioritization of financial gain over scientific integrity and patient welfare. This systematic review explores the business model of big pharmaceutical companies, focusing on their emphasis on symptom management over curative treatments, the influence of financial incentives on healthcare providers, and the industry's role in shaping public health policies, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The review also examines the economic



strategies employed by pharmaceutical companies to expand markets, including the medicalization of normal human experiences and disease exaggeration. Additionally, the study draws parallels between pharmaceutical and geopolitical strategies, highlighting the economic motivations behind global health crises and regional destabilization. Findings indicate that without regulatory reforms, public trust in healthcare institutions may continue to erode.

1. INTRODUCTION

The global pharmaceutical industry is often regarded as a driver of medical innovation, producing life-saving treatments that have transformed healthcare. However, evidence suggests that major pharmaceutical corporations operate primarily as for-profit entities, often prioritizing shareholder value over public health (Angell, 2004). The industry's business model relies on long-term treatment rather than cures, ensuring a continuous revenue stream from chronic conditions (Goldacre, 2012).

Concerns regarding the ethical implications of this approach have been widely discussed. Scholars argue that pharmaceutical companies influence regulatory agencies, physicians, and global health institutions, raising questions about medical integrity (Sismondo, 2018). Furthermore, the role of organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and key figures such as Anthony Fauci in drug administration during the COVID-19 pandemic remains controversial (Kennedy, 2021). This systematic review evaluates existing literature on the pharmaceutical industry's business practices, with a focus on its economic strategies, influence over medical professionals, role in public health emergencies, and its parallels with geopolitical tactics.

2. METHODOLOGY

This systematic review follows the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to ensure transparency and rigor.

2.1 Search Strategy

A comprehensive search was conducted across multiple academic databases, including PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Keywords included:

- Pharmaceutical industry business model
- Big Pharma profit-driven healthcare
- Medicalization and disease creation
- COVID-19 vaccine policies

- Influence of pharmaceutical companies on healthcare

2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria:

- Peer-reviewed articles, books, and systematic reviews published in English between 2000 and 2023.
- Studies analyzing the pharmaceutical industry's business model, regulatory influence, or economic strategies.
- Research examining pharmaceutical industry involvement in public health emergencies, including COVID-19.

Exclusion criteria:

- Articles focused solely on drug efficacy without addressing economic or policy implications.
- Studies lacking empirical data or based on opinion pieces.

2.3 Data Extraction and Synthesis

Relevant data were extracted using a standardized template, categorizing findings into themes such as curative vs. symptom management, financial incentives, disease creation, and geopolitical parallels.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Shift from Curative Medicine to Symptom Management

Historically, medical research aimed to eradicate infectious diseases, leading to breakthroughs in antibiotics and vaccines. However, pharmaceutical companies have shifted their focus toward managing chronic conditions rather than curing them (Gotsche, 2013). This model ensures patient dependency on medication, creating long-term profitability.

For example, despite decades of cancer research, treatment remains focused on chemotherapy and radiation, which require repeated administration (Goldacre, 2012). Similarly, medications for diabetes, hypertension, and mental health conditions prioritize symptom control rather than addressing root causes (Healy, 2012).

3.2 Financial Incentives and Physician Influence

Studies have documented the financial relationships between pharmaceutical companies and healthcare providers. Physicians who receive payments from drug manufacturers are more likely to prescribe their medications, often at the expense of more effective or cost-efficient alternatives (Sismondo, 2018).

A well-known example is the opioid crisis in the United States, where Purdue Pharma aggressively

marketed OxyContin to doctors despite its known addictive potential. This contributed to widespread opioid dependence and fatalities while generating billions in revenue (*Van Zee, 2009*).

3.3 The COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study in Pharmaceutical Power

3.3.1 WHO and Fauci's Role in Vaccine Administration

During the COVID-19 pandemic, major pharmaceutical companies exercised significant influence over vaccine policy and distribution. Emergency use authorizations allowed for rapid vaccine rollout despite limited long-term safety data (*Doshi, 2020*). Governments worldwide mandated vaccinations, effectively securing massive profits for companies such as Pfizer and Moderna (*Kennedy, 2021*).

Alternative treatments such as ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine were systematically discredited, despite reports suggesting potential benefits in early-stage COVID-19 treatment (*Kory et al., 2021*). This raises concerns about whether economic interests overshadowed scientific debate.

3.3.2 The Economic Burden on Developing Nations

The COVID-19 response in Africa highlights how public health emergencies can be exploited for economic gain. South Africa, for instance, diverted significant healthcare funding toward vaccines and medical supplies, often at the expense of managing existing endemic diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis (*Chirume, 2021*). This mirrors historical cases such as Project Coast, where pharmaceuticals were weaponized for social control under apartheid (*Gould & Folb, 2002*).

3.4 The Medicalization of Everyday Life

Pharmaceutical companies have been accused of expanding their markets by redefining normal human experiences as medical conditions. This process, known as "medicalization," has led to the overdiagnosis and overprescription of medications for conditions such as ADHD, restless leg syndrome, and female sexual dysfunction (*Moynihan & Cassels, 2005*).

Antidepressants, particularly SSRIs, are widely prescribed despite evidence suggesting they often provide only marginal benefits over placebos and can lead to dependency (*Götzsche, 2015*). This strategy aligns with the industry's broader profit-driven approach.

3.5 Parallels Between Big Pharma and the Arms

Industry.

The pharmaceutical industry's model bears striking similarities to the global arms trade. Both industries rely on continuous demand—pharmaceutical companies benefit from chronic illness, while arms manufacturers profit from prolonged conflicts (*Chomsky, 2017*).

Western nations have historically destabilized regions to justify arms sales, just as pharmaceutical companies have been accused of exaggerating or fabricating diseases to expand their market (*Kennedy, 2021*). This suggests a broader economic pattern where crises are manufactured or sustained for financial gain.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Key Findings

- The pharmaceutical industry prioritizes symptom management over cures, ensuring long-term profits.
- Financial incentives compromise medical integrity, influencing physician prescribing patterns.
- Public health emergencies, such as COVID-19, have been leveraged to maximize corporate profits.
- The medicalization of everyday life expands pharmaceutical markets at the expense of patient well-being.
- The economic strategies of Big Pharma parallel those of the arms industry, raising ethical concerns.

4.2 Recommendations

- Stronger Regulatory Oversight: Governments and regulatory agencies must enforce stricter transparency laws to prevent conflicts of interest in healthcare.
- Independent Medical Research: Funding for drug research should be diversified to reduce dependence on pharmaceutical corporations.
- Public Awareness Campaigns: Educating the public about overprescription and the risks of medicalization can empower individuals to make informed health decisions.
- Global Policy Reforms: International organizations such as the WHO must be held accountable for unbiased decision-making in drug approvals and public health recommendations.

...to be continued on the next edition



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A portrait of Odenke-Odemonke Ibiang, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a red top and a heart-shaped pendant, resting her chin on her hand. The background is a solid red color.

Gender Dynamics in Nigerian Politics, Leadership and Governance

- Odenke-Odemonke Ibiang

Gender dynamics in politics often reflect broader societal norms and entrenched power structures. In Nigeria, the political landscape has traditionally been male-dominated, influencing perceptions of leadership and restricting women's contributions to nation-building.

The disparity is evident in the statistics: in the 10th National Assembly, only 4 out of 109 Senators are women—a drop from 7 in the previous Assembly. In the House of Representatives, only 16 out of 360 members are women, with 344 seats held by men. Altogether, women occupy less than 7% of elective positions at the federal level.

Why the Disparity?

Women in Nigerian politics face numerous

barriers, including:

- **Cultural and Societal Norms:** Traditional roles emphasize domestic responsibilities for women, limiting their engagement in public life.
- **Political Violence and Intimidation:** Female candidates face threats, harassment, and even physical violence, discouraging many from participating.
- **Economic Constraints:** Political campaigns demand significant financial resources, but women often lack access to funding due to systemic inequalities such as limited land ownership and inheritance rights.
- **Marginalised Party Support:** Male-dominated political parties frequently exclude women from leadership roles and nominations.
- **Weak Policy Implementation:** Despite global commitments to gender inclusion, enforcement of policies like the 35% affirmative action remains insufficient.

Why Gender Parity Matters

Addressing the gender gap in politics is not just a matter of equity—it is essential for sustainable development and democracy:

- **Representation and Inclusivity:** Women bring unique perspectives to governance, contributing to balanced and effective policies.
- **Stronger Democracy:** Inclusive governance ensures all voices are heard, strengthening democratic institutions.
- **Economic Progress:** Meeting the needs of diverse demographics promotes economic growth and social equity.
- **Justice and Fairness:** Ensuring equal political opportunities for all citizens, regardless of gender, upholds democratic principles.

Moving Forward

To empower women and bridge the gender gap in Nigerian politics, the following steps are crucial:

- **Actively promote women's participation** in politics and provide resources to support their campaigns.
- **Implement affirmative action policies**, such as the 35% representation quota, to guarantee equitable participation.
- **Create safer environments** for women by

addressing political violence and harassment.

- Improve women's access to financial resources, including loans and property rights.
- Advocate for cultural change through education and awareness campaigns to challenge gender

stereotypes.

Women's voices must resonate—not as mere symbols of equality, but as vital agents of progress and transformation.



The Mental Health Crisis and Drug Abuse Among Youth in Sierra Leone

– Abubakarr Benson

*Civil Rights Activist, Youth Advocate,
and Student at Fourah Bay College,
University of Sierra Leone*

The Silent Epidemic in Sierra Leone

A quiet storm is devastating the hopes of young people, tearing apart families and communities in Sierra Leone. This storm is not a natural disaster—it is the growing epidemic of drug abuse, with kush and tramadol at its center. Once vibrant streets are now shrouded in the shadows of addiction.

Kush is not just another drug; it is a synthetic substance far more dangerous than marijuana. When mixed with tramadol, a highly addictive opioid, the crisis reaches catastrophic levels. The effects are devastating: Neurological damage, respiratory complications, and fatal overdoses. Unlike a visible disease that prompts immediate action, drug abuse spreads in silence, leaving a generation at risk of being lost.

Kush and the Crisis Among Youth

The rise of kush is one of the most alarming trends in Sierra Leone's mental health and substance abuse crisis. Marketed as a marijuana substitute, it is far more toxic and unpredictable. Young people turn to kush as an escape from poverty and hopelessness, drawn by its accessibility and affordability. Its impact is immediate: dizziness, dry mouth, and nausea. Long-term use leads to respiratory problems, neurological disorders, and addiction. The psychological effects are equally devastating, leading to paranoia, hallucinations, and violent behavior. Many users become trapped in a vicious cycle, where their mental health deteriorates, and their future fades into addiction.

The full extent of kush use remains difficult to quantify due to limited data, but Freetown and other urban centers are hotspots for drug abuse.

In 2024, the government declared a public health emergency in response to the growing crisis. Reports from healthcare providers indicate an alarming rise in cases linked to kush abuse, with mental health disorders and physical complications overwhelming hospitals.

Although precise numbers are scarce, anecdotal evidence suggests thousands of young people are battling kush addiction, with rural communities also experiencing a surge in cases. The crisis is no longer an isolated issue—it is a national emergency.

Kush Addiction and Its Impact on Communities

The spread of kush addiction has torn families apart and fueled violence. According to the Ministry of Social Welfare's 2024 report, over 3,000 cases of kush addiction have been recorded, with most from Freetown and rural areas where rehabilitation services are limited.

Unlike visible diseases, addiction often goes unnoticed until it has already consumed lives. Parents, teachers, and community leaders struggle to intervene as young people spiral deeper into dependency. The emotional toll on families is immeasurable, leaving many feeling helpless as their loved ones slip away.

Tramadol Abuse: The Silent Threat

While kush dominates headlines, tramadol abuse is another growing crisis. Originally prescribed for pain relief, tramadol is now widely misused for its euphoric effects. Youth across Sierra Leone are turning to tramadol as a stimulant to cope with exhaustion, emotional pain, and economic hardship. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 60% of youth aged 15–24 in Sierra Leone have experimented with tramadol. A 2023 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) report states that 15% of Sierra Leone's youth are regular tramadol users—three times the global average.

The drug is dangerously accessible, sold openly on the black market at a fraction of the cost of other substances. What begins as casual use quickly becomes dependency, leading to nausea, confusion, and life-threatening overdoses. When mixed with kush, the combination becomes lethal, causing respiratory failure, seizures, and death.

Trapped by Despair: The Stories Behind the Addiction

For many young people, drugs are not about seeking destruction but escaping despair. A young woman confided, *"I take tramadol to keep working, but now I can't stop. It's killing me."* Another young man shared, *"Kush helped me forget my problems—until I lost everything."* These stories are not isolated—they are the reality of a failed system. Addiction is not just a personal struggle; it is a symptom of poverty, unemployment, and neglect.

Neglect and Indifference: A Systemic Failure

This crisis did not emerge in isolation. It has thrived in an environment of neglect, indifference, and lack of coordinated action. The absence of rehabilitation centers, awareness campaigns, and government intervention has allowed the epidemic to spread unchecked.

Society has labeled struggling youth as delinquents instead of recognizing their struggles as systemic failures. Media coverage is scarce, treatment options are limited, and rehabilitation centers are underfunded. The message is clear: young lives are not a priority.

The Ripple Effect: Families, Communities, and Society

The devastation extends beyond those directly affected. Families are left in anguish, watching helplessly as addiction consumes their children. Communities are drained of their potential as youth drop out of school, struggle to find work, and become trapped in a cycle of dependency. Mental health services in Sierra Leone are already overstretched, and the surge in drug-related cases is pushing them to the brink. Schools see fewer students, workplaces lose capable employees, and the economy suffers as the workforce is eroded by addiction.

Solutions: Turning the Tide on the Kush and Tramadol Crisis

But this is not a time for blame. Pointing fingers will not save our youth. What we need is immediate and coordinated action to address this crisis. Young people need to understand the dangers of kush and tramadol before they are tempted to try them. Schools, community leaders, and the media must play a central role in

spreading awareness.

Unemployment, poverty, and a lack of opportunities are driving young people to drugs. By creating jobs and investing in education, we can give them a sense of purpose and hope for the future. Sierra Leone must prioritize building more rehabilitation centers nationwide. These centers should not only treat addiction but also provide skills training and mental health support to help individuals reintegrate into society.

The government must also take firm action against the sale and distribution of kush and tramadol, particularly to minors. It is not enough to simply penalize; authorities must dismantle the networks that make these drugs easily available. By addressing these factors head-on, we can begin to turn the tide and protect our nation's youth. This is not an impossible battle—it is one we can and must win together.


Witnessing the Struggle and the Need for Action

As I write this, I think about the young people I

have met—their laughter, their struggles, their dreams. They are not just statistics; they are sons and daughters, brothers and sisters. They are the heart of Sierra Leone.

It is easy to feel overwhelmed by the scale of this problem, but we cannot afford to give up. The youth are not just the future, they are the now. Their energy, creativity, and resilience are what will drive this nation forward. But they cannot do it alone. They need us to stand with them, to fight for them, and to believe in them.

For every young person trapped in the grip of kush or tramadol, there is a family waiting for them to come home, a community that needs their strength, and a nation that cannot afford to lose them. Let us not wait for another tragedy, another life lost, to take this seriously. The time to act is now. Let us rise to this challenge—not as individuals, but as a united Sierra Leone. Because when we save our youth, we save the future of our nation.

A portrait of Adepeju Olowookerea, a woman with dark skin, wearing a black headwrap with a large bow, a blue denim jacket over a black top, and large green and blue earrings. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a warm, abstract orange and yellow pattern.

Adepeju Olowookerea

Thought Leader Transforming Healthcare through Innovation and Interdisciplinary Science

Adepeju Olowookere is an accomplished interdisciplinary scientist, clinical diagnostics expert, and global health innovator whose career epitomizes African excellence in biomedical and nanoscience research. With over a decade of transformative experience in translational medicine, antimicrobial resistance, and nanotechnology, Adepeju has profoundly impacted healthcare standards and drug development practices internationally. Her groundbreaking research and strategic improvements in healthcare delivery continue to shape global health outcomes.

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY INNOVATOR IN GLOBAL HEALTH

Adepeju Olowookere's distinguished career is characterized by her ability to seamlessly integrate cutting-edge bioinformatics, pharmaceutical and medical microbiology, and nanotechnology into effective solutions for complex public health challenges. With substantial experience as a Chief Medical Laboratory Scientist, she has consistently led high-impact initiatives that have elevated clinical practices and significantly improved patient outcomes. Her remarkable ability to translate rigorous scientific discoveries into actionable healthcare strategies has earned her widespread respect and recognition within the global scientific community.

Her expertise spans population pharmacokinetics-pharmacodynamics (PK/PD) modeling, antimicrobial stewardship, functional genomics, and advanced molecular diagnostics, making her a vital voice in addressing contemporary healthcare challenges at national and international levels.

A passionate educator and mentor, she has lectured extensively at Al-Hikmah University, imparting critical skills in pharmacology, antimicrobial stewardship, and molecular diagnostics. Her mentorship has empowered hundreds of students and young professionals to pursue impactful careers in healthcare and biomedical research.

EDUCATION: A FOUNDATION OF SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE

Adepeju's academic journey highlights her commitment to continuous learning and scholarly excellence. She obtained her Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science from Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH), Nigeria, and later pursued her Master's in Pharmaceutical Microbiology at the prestigious University of Ibadan. Currently, she is advancing her scholarly contributions as a Ph.D. candidate in Nanoscience at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where her innovative research focuses on combating antimicrobial resistance through nanoscale materials,

bioinformatics, and molecular biology.

Internationally recognized for her significant contributions to public health and science, Mrs Adepeju Olowookere holds prestigious fellowships with the National Institute of Professional Engineers and Scientists (FNIPES) and the Royal Society for Public Health (FRSPH). Both fellowships represent the highest distinctions granted by these professional bodies, affirming her exceptional status within global professional circles.

GLOBAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND PROFESSIONAL INFLUENCE

Adepeju's scholarly insights have been disseminated through impactful publications in esteemed international journals, including *Human Vaccines & Immunotherapeutics* and the *Journal of Infectious Diseases and Immunity*. Her expertise is regularly sought by prominent international journals such as the *Cureus Journal of Medical Science*, *Journal of Public Health in Africa*, and *Academia Biology*, where she critically evaluates pioneering scientific research. Furthermore, her selection by Nigerian universities as an external reviewer for significant research proposals submitted to Nigeria's Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) underscores the high regard her peers have for her scientific judgment and expertise.

A LEGACY OF MENTORSHIP AND ADVANCING GLOBAL HEALTH

As a dedicated mentor, Adepeju has significantly influenced the next generation of scientists and healthcare professionals. Through her leadership roles in academia, scientific competitions, and community initiatives, she continues to inspire and equip emerging leaders with the essential skills required to effectively address global healthcare challenges.

She remains committed to empowering future generations of scientists and healthcare leaders across Africa and beyond—serving as a true thought leader dedicated to advancing global health and improving lives worldwide.



Petroleum Industry:

Benefits, Global Impact and Business

- AMB.(DR) AISHA SALIHU LEMU

1.0 The Petroleum Industry: An In-Depth Overview

The petroleum industry, often referred to as the oil and gas industry, is one of the most significant sectors in the global economy. It encompasses the exploration, extraction, refining, transportation, and marketing of petroleum products. Petroleum, or crude oil, is a naturally occurring fossil fuel that is refined into various products, including fuel oil, gasoline (petrol), diesel, jet fuel, and other petrochemicals. These products are essential for powering transportation, generating electricity, and producing a wide range of consumer goods.

The industry is typically divided into three major components:

1. **Upstream:** This involves the exploration and extraction of crude oil and natural gas. It includes activities such as seismic surveys, drilling, and well construction.
2. **Midstream:** This segment focuses on the transportation and storage of crude oil and natural gas. It includes pipelines, tankers, and storage facilities.
3. **Downstream:** This involves refining crude oil into usable products and distributing them to consumers. It includes refineries, petrochemical plants, and retail outlets.

2.0 Global Oil Reserves and Consumption

As of the latest data (2023), the world's proven oil reserves are estimated at approximately 1.7 trillion barrels, with the largest reserves located in Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, and Canada. The global oil consumption rate is around 100 million barrels per day, which translates to roughly 36.5 billion barrels per year. This consumption is driven by the demand for transportation fuels, industrial

processes, and petrochemicals.

The distribution of oil consumption varies significantly by region:

- * Middle East: 53% of energy consumption comes from oil.
- * South and Central America: 44% of energy consumption comes from oil.
- * Africa: 41% of energy consumption comes from oil.
- * North America: 40% of energy consumption comes from oil.
- * Europe and Asia: 32% of energy consumption comes from oil.

The United States remains the largest consumer of oil, accounting for approximately 20% of global consumption in 2023. China and India are also significant consumers, with their demand growing rapidly due to industrialization and urbanization.

3.0 Advantages of Oil and Gas

1. **Energy Density:** Oil and gas have a high energy density, meaning they provide a large amount of energy per unit of volume. This makes them highly efficient fuels for transportation and industrial processes.
2. **Economic Growth:** The petroleum industry is a major driver of economic growth. It creates millions of jobs worldwide, from oil rig workers to engineers, and contributes significantly to national GDPs. For example, in countries like Saudi Arabia, Russia, and Nigeria, oil exports account for a substantial portion of government revenue.
3. **Infrastructure Development:** The industry has spurred the development of extensive infrastructure, including pipelines, refineries,

and ports. This infrastructure not only supports the oil and gas sector but also benefits other industries by improving transportation and logistics.

4. Versatility: Petroleum is not only a source of energy but also a raw material for a wide range of products. It is used to produce plastics, synthetic rubber, fertilizers, pharmaceuticals, and even cosmetics. This versatility makes it indispensable in modern life.

5. Energy Security: For many countries, having access to domestic oil and gas reserves is a matter of national security. It reduces dependence on foreign energy sources and enhances energy independence.

4.0 Impact of Oil and Gas on the World Positive Impacts

1. Industrialization and Modernization: The availability of cheap and abundant energy from oil and gas has been a key factor in the industrialization of many countries. It has enabled the development of modern infrastructure, transportation systems, and manufacturing industries.

2. Technological Advancements: The petroleum industry has driven technological innovation, from advanced drilling techniques to the development of petrochemicals. These technologies have applications beyond the oil and gas sector, contributing to advancements in medicine, materials science, and environmental engineering.

3. Global Trade: Oil and gas are among the most traded commodities in the world. The industry has facilitated global trade by providing the energy needed to transport goods across long distances. It has also created economic interdependence among nations, fostering international cooperation.

Negative Impacts

1. Environmental Degradation: The extraction, refining, and combustion of oil and gas have significant environmental impacts. These include air and water pollution, habitat destruction, and the release of greenhouse gases (GHGs) that contribute to climate change. Oil spills, such as the Deepwater Horizon disaster in 2010, have caused severe ecological damage.

2. Climate Change: The burning of fossil fuels is the largest source of anthropogenic GHG emissions, primarily carbon dioxide (CO₂). These emissions are the leading cause of global warming, which has resulted in rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and disruptions to

ecosystems.

3. Resource Depletion: Oil and gas are finite resources, and their extraction is becoming increasingly challenging and expensive as easily accessible reserves are depleted. This has led to the exploration of more remote and environmentally sensitive areas, such as the Arctic and deep-sea regions.

4. Geopolitical Tensions: Control over oil and gas resources has been a source of geopolitical conflict. Countries with large reserves often wield significant political influence, and competition for access to these resources has led to wars and political instability in regions like the Middle East.

5. Economic Dependence: Many countries that rely heavily on oil exports are vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil prices. A drop in prices can lead to economic crises, as seen in Venezuela and Nigeria during periods of low oil prices.

5.0 The Future of the Petroleum Industry

The petroleum industry is at a crossroads. On one hand, the world still relies heavily on oil and gas for energy and industrial processes. On the other hand, there is increasing pressure to transition to cleaner and more sustainable energy sources to combat climate change.

1. Energy Transition: Many countries and companies are investing in renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, and hydrogen. The goal is to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and achieve net-zero emissions by mid-century. However, this transition will take time, and oil and gas will likely remain important energy sources for decades to come.

2. Technological Innovation: The industry is investing in technologies to reduce its environmental footprint. These include carbon capture and storage (CCS), which captures CO₂ emissions from industrial processes and stores them underground, and enhanced oil recovery (EOR) techniques that increase the efficiency of oil extraction.

3. Diversification: Some oil-producing countries are diversifying their economies to reduce their dependence on oil revenues. For example, Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 plan aims to develop sectors such as tourism, entertainment, and technology.

4. Regulatory Changes: Governments around the world are implementing stricter regulations on emissions and environmental protection. This is pushing the industry to adopt cleaner practices and invest in sustainable technologies.

...to be continued on the next edition

CYBERBULLYING AND CYBERSTALKING:

A NEW CRAZE FOR
MUFFLING EXPRESSIONS ON
SOCIAL MEDIA IN NIGERIA



In the digital age, social media has emerged as a powerful platform for self-expression, communication, and community building. In Nigeria, where the youth constitute a significant portion of the population, platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have become vital spaces for sharing opinions, advocating for social change, and connecting with like-minded individuals. However, alongside these positive aspects, a darker phenomenon has surfaced: cyberbullying and cyberstalking. This troubling trend is not only stifling free expression but also posing serious psychological and emotional risks to individuals, particularly the youth.

Understanding Cyberbullying and Cyberstalking

Cyberbullying refers to the use of digital platforms to harass, threaten, or humiliate individuals. It can take various forms, including spreading rumors, sharing embarrassing photos, or sending threatening messages. Cyberstalking, on the other hand, involves the persistent and targeted harassment of an individual online, often leading to fear and anxiety. Both behaviors are increasingly prevalent in Nigeria, fueled by the anonymity and reach that social media provides.

The Nigerian Context

Nigeria's social media landscape is vibrant and diverse, with millions of users engaging in discussions about politics, culture, and social issues. However, this openness has also made it a breeding ground for cyberbullying and cyberstalking. The anonymity afforded by the

internet allows individuals to hide behind pseudonyms, emboldening them to engage in harmful behaviors without fear of repercussions. This has created an environment where people feel free to attack others, often with little regard for the consequences.

The Impact on Victims

The effects of cyberbullying and cyberstalking can be devastating. Victims often experience a range of emotional and psychological issues, including anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. In extreme cases, the harassment can lead to suicidal thoughts or actions. The stigma associated with being a victim can further isolate individuals, making it difficult for them to seek help or support. In Nigeria, where mental health issues are often stigmatized, many victims suffer in silence, fearing judgment or further victimization.

The Role of Social Media Platforms

Social media companies have a responsibility to create safe environments for their users. However, many platforms have been criticized for their inadequate responses to reports of cyberbullying and cyberstalking. In Nigeria, the lack of robust reporting mechanisms and the slow response to complaints can leave victims feeling helpless. While some platforms have introduced features to block or report abusive users, these measures are often insufficient to deter persistent offenders. Legal Framework and Challenges In Nigeria, the legal framework surrounding cyberbullying and cyberstalking is still evolving.

The Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act of 2015 addresses some aspects of online harassment, but enforcement remains a significant challenge. Many victims are unaware of their rights or the legal avenues available to them, and law enforcement agencies often lack the resources or training to effectively handle cybercrime cases. This gap in the legal system leaves many victims without recourse, further perpetuating a culture of silence and fear.

The Role of Education and Awareness

Addressing cyberbullying and cyberstalking in Nigeria requires a multifaceted approach that includes education and awareness. Schools,

parents, and community organizations must work together to educate young people about the dangers of online harassment and the importance of respectful communication. Digital literacy programs can empower individuals to navigate social media safely, recognize harmful behaviors, and understand their rights.

Moreover, public awareness campaigns can help destigmatize mental health issues and encourage victims to seek help. By fostering a culture of empathy and support, society can begin to dismantle the harmful narratives that often accompany cyberbullying and cyberstalking.

Empowering Victims Empowering victims is crucial in the fight against cyberbullying and cyberstalking. Support groups, both online and offline, can provide safe spaces for individuals to share their experiences and seek guidance. Mental health professionals can play a vital role in helping victims cope with the emotional fallout of harassment. Additionally, legal aid organizations can assist victims in navigating the legal system and pursuing justice.

The Path Forward

As Nigeria continues to embrace the digital age, it is essential to prioritize the safety and well-being of its citizens online. This requires a collective effort from individuals, communities, social media platforms, and the government. By fostering a culture of respect and accountability, Nigeria can create a safer online environment where individuals feel free to express themselves without fear of harassment.

In conclusion, cyberbullying and cyberstalking represent a significant threat to free expression on social media in Nigeria. The consequences of these behaviors extend far beyond the digital realm, impacting the mental health and well-being of individuals. By raising awareness, advocating for stronger legal protections, and fostering supportive communities, Nigeria can combat this troubling trend and ensure that social media remains a space for positive engagement and expression. The fight against cyberbullying and cyberstalking is not just about protecting individuals; it is about safeguarding the very essence of free speech and the right to express oneself in a digital world.

South Africa to erect a monument in honor of Fish Keitseng

The High Commissioner of South Africa to Botswana, Thaninga Shope-Soumah, says her country remains committed to erect a monument in remembrance of the Late Ntwaetsele Thatayone "Fish" Keitseng.

She said this during the inaugural Fish Keitseng Memorial lecture in Gaborone on Friday.

Keitseng, who was a Motswana Trade Union Activist and Politician, was born in 1919 and died on the 28th of March 2005. He was one of the defendants in the 1956 treason trial in South Africa.

Still on the celebration of the life of Keitseng, the Minister for State President, Moeti Mohwasa pleaded with liberation movements to handle history with care.

Giving a keynote address at the lecture, he said history should not be distorted but must be told as it is.



The Science of Emotional Economy: EI 4.0 AND PSYCHOMETRICS.

- Victor Prince Dickson f.hcd

The fact is that the workplace has evolved and transformed.

We now live in a very disruptive world of automation, artificial intelligence and high rapid market shifts, it is therefore no longer surprising that intelligence is no longer enough.

Hence, there is a search for an edge, that extra that guarantees results in a VUCA world. Based on the Future of Work (FoW) skills, we have come to learn that to find your way through the maze of modern times, businesses and leaders must master Emotional Intelligence (EI) to navigate complexity, inspire teams, and drive measurable performance.

Yet, for decades, EI has been treated as a “soft skill” that is intangible, immeasurable and undervalued.

But this era is over.... we are now in the world of Emotional Intelligence 4.0. In this world of EI 4.0, Emotional Intelligence is no longer a feel-good to have soft skill instead EI has become a data-driven, neuroscience-backed, performance-enhancing power skill.

Cutting-edge research in epigenetics and cognitive neuroscience reveals that Emotional Intelligence is not just a personality trait, it is an adaptable, trainable, and measurable cognitive function.

We now have experiences and studies showing that leaders with high EI demonstrate:

- Enhanced prefrontal cortex activity leading to better decision-making under pressure.
- Stronger neural connectivity between the amygdala and rational brain results in superior emotional regulation.
- Increased oxytocin and dopamine levels that fuel trust, motivation, and high-performance cultures.

The impact of this is that we have slowly moved from a Knowledge Economy to an Emotional Economy. After all, everyone is a bundle of emotions, whether they are aware of it or not.

That is why result-oriented leaders today are not just technically skilled they have mastered the neuroscience of influence, resilience, and cognitive agility. Especially, when it is rooted in the science of precision: Psychometrics.

If you can't measure it, you can't improve it.

With Psychometrics, which often contains benchmarks and validity backings, it is now easier to transform behavior and decision-making into quantifiable, data-driven insights that drive strategic decision-making, leadership excellence, and workforce optimization.

With valid and scientifically backed



Psychometrics and Assessments, we can now provide real-time EI metrics, revealing the behavioural patterns that shape workplace performance. We can now measure, how “nice” managers are destroying their organizations.

With Emotional Culture Index (ECI), we can measure the collective emotional climate of an organization, pinpointing gaps in engagement, morale, and leadership impact. To the level of identifying the size of fear and anxiety in a team, group or community.

With Cognitive & Behavioral AI-powered assessments, we can now predict how leaders, managers, and employees will respond under stress, change, and high-stakes decision-making.

Clearly, Emotional Intelligence 4.0 is not about self-awareness, it is about using hard data to drive high-performance cultures with precision.

- Research has it that 90% of top-performing leaders exhibit high EI (*HBR, 2024*).
- Teams led by emotionally intelligent managers outperform by 34% in productivity and engagement (*McKinsey, 2023*).
- Companies with EI-driven cultures report 40% lower turnover and higher profit margins than their competitors (*Forbes, 2024*).

The shift is clear for business and leaders.

As a certified EI practitioner, I can tell that the business and leadership climate in Africa is heavily dense with inconsistent personalities, rash behaviour and difficult work culture.

To create a real high value performance culture will require precision at both individual and group levels. Deploying Emotional Intelligence 4.0 may just be the best play for a competitive edge.

It is to this extent that I leave you with these critical reflections:

- Emotional Intelligence 4.0 is no longer optional, it's mission-critical.
- Psychometric-driven EI is the competitive edge for the modern workplace.
- The leaders who master EI 4.0 will dominate their industries.

My final thought is that for CEOs, industry leaders, and decision-makers, the question is no longer:

“Should we invest in Emotional Intelligence 4.0?”

Rather, the question is: “Can you afford not to?”

Victor Prince Dickson (f.hed)

*Inventor, Kommon Sense, Creator, National Cake Genos EI Certified Trainer
Country Director: Profiles International.
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Navigating Health and Wellbeing Through the Eyes of Dr. Elizabeth Yuwun

As Africa celebrates its progress and contemplates its future, individuals like Dr. Elizabeth Yuwun serve as shining examples of how health and wellbeing are the



cornerstones of a thriving continent. In the upcoming 6th edition of Focus Africa Magazine, it is only fitting to explore this topic through the remarkable journey of a woman who has dedicated her life to healing, nurturing, and empowering communities.

Dr. Yuwun's work as a naturopath stands as a testament to the potential of blending traditional wisdom with innovative practices. Her natural treatments for complex diseases not only provide effective solutions but also respect the heritage and resources of the African continent. Through her approach, she has created pathways for accessible healthcare—especially for those who face barriers in conventional medical systems.

The Yuwun Elizabeth Foundation adds yet another layer to her health-focused legacy. Beyond providing physical nourishment to orphans, displaced individuals, and women affected by conflict, the foundation nurtures mental and emotional resilience—a crucial component of overall wellbeing. By offering these communities hope and support, Dr. Yuwun demonstrates that true health extends beyond the body and into the spirit.

Dr. Yuwun's ability to lead by example, as a mother and guardian to 117 orphans, encapsulates the essence of nurturing care. Her dedication to providing a safe haven for these children highlights the importance of family and community in fostering healthy development.

Her success in the domains of agriculture and food processing through YEFOPROC also contributes to the broader discourse on health and wellbeing. Food security and sustainable practices are key to combating malnutrition—a challenge faced by many African nations.

The upcoming edition of Focus Africa Magazine promises to delve into how figures like Dr. Yuwun inspire us to rethink health and wellbeing as holistic and transformative forces. Her legacy underscores the necessity of innovation, empathy, and resilience as pillars for a healthier continent.

In a world striving for solutions to global health challenges, Dr. Elizabeth Yuwun exemplifies that it is possible to not only heal but also empower individuals and communities for generations to come. Readers across Africa will find her story not just informative, but profoundly inspiring.



Resistance to Heal: Another Challenge in the Pursuit of Health and Well-Being.

– Dr Iwowarri Berian James, *CEO, GoldenRays Energy Health Services Ltd, Abuja, Nigeria.*

You must have heard people complain of visiting hospitals for weeks and months. Sometimes even years for a health condition that have refused to go away.

You may have also read about people who are very comfortable in their ailments. They have developed bonds with their health condition because it has become part of their identity.

This may be a strange term for you because it is a topic that you may not find in medical journals because outside the fold of Energy Healing, such topics can not be accessed. So if you are reading this special Magazine, then you are lucky to come to this new awareness so that you can help yourself and others who maybe experiencing resistance to heal without knowing it.

The journey to health and well-being is often seen as a straightforward

path—identify the problem, apply the solution, and experience healing. However, many individuals, even those consciously seeking healing, encounter an unexpected barrier: resistance to heal. This resistance can manifest in various ways, preventing people from fully embracing their healing journey. Understanding this phenomenon is crucial for both individuals and health practitioners in the fields of energy therapy, holistic healing, and even conventional western medicine.

What is Resistance to Heal?

Resistance to heal refers to a subconscious or conscious reluctance to fully embrace recovery and well-being. This resistance can be emotional, psychological, energetic, or even physiological. Despite a strong desire for healing, an individual may unconsciously block progress due to deep-seated beliefs, fears, or unresolved traumas. Think of a woman whose husband shows her love and affection only when she is sick or ill. Won't she have the motivation to be sick or refuse to heal? A lady who gets huge sustenance allowance due to her multiple health challenges is reluctant to heal from her inside because that will put her on the job search list and loss of the allowance.

Signs of Resistance to Heal

People experiencing resistance to heal may exhibit the following:

1. **Self-Sabotage:** Engaging in behaviors that counteract healing efforts, such as neglecting treatment, skipping therapy, or continuing harmful habits.
2. **Fear of Change:** Even positive changes can be intimidating. Healing often requires lifestyle shifts, new mindsets, or stepping into an unfamiliar version of oneself.
3. **Emotional Attachments to Illness or Pain:** Sometimes, illness becomes part of a person's identity, providing a sense of purpose, sympathy, or validation.
4. **Unconscious Beliefs About Worthiness:** Some individuals may feel unworthy of healing, success, or happiness due to past traumas or conditioning.
5. **Reluctance to Release Trauma:** Healing often requires facing and processing painful emotions. The fear of revisiting trauma can create subconscious blocks.
6. **External Influences:** Negative influences from family, society, or even medical professionals can reinforce limiting beliefs about the possibility of healing.

Psychological and Energetic Roots of Resistance

From an energy therapy perspective, resistance to healing can be seen as blockages within the body's

energy system. If chakras remain blocked or stagnant, healing may be hindered, regardless of external interventions. METACS (Meridian Tapping and Chakra Stimulation), CCIT (Cosmic Colour Invocation Technique) can help release these blockages, allowing for deeper energetic and emotional healing.

In psychology, resistance often stems from the subconscious mind, which prioritizes safety over change. If healing is perceived as threatening (even if beneficial), the mind resists.

How to Overcome Resistance to Heal

1. **Acknowledge the Resistance:** Recognizing that resistance exists is the first step. Bringing awareness to unconscious fears or beliefs can help shift them.
2. **Inner Work & Self-Reflection:** Journaling, meditation, and self-inquiry can help uncover hidden emotional blocks.
3. **Energy Healing Practices:** Techniques such as METACS, CCIT, Reiki, Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT), and other energy therapies can dissolve resistance at the energetic level.
4. **Exploratory Diagnosis for Blockages:** Using energy testing (as done in METACS, EFT, CCIT) can help identify specific resistance points and guide healing interventions.
5. **Embrace Small, Safe Changes:** Gradual, non-threatening shifts in habits and mindsets can ease the transition into full healing.
6. **Work with a Practitioner:** Energy healers, therapists, and holistic health professionals can provide insights and strategies to navigate resistance.
7. **Reframe the Narrative:** Healing is not about "losing" an old identity but stepping into a more empowered version of oneself. It is an opportunity for a positive transformation.
8. **Embrace Energy Therapy as an important step in overturning resistance to heal.** This is important for healing in all departments of one's personal life (Finance, Business, Health, and Relationships)

In Conclusion, Resistance to heal is a hidden but powerful force in the pursuit of well-being. By understanding and addressing these internal blocks, individuals can unlock deeper healing, transformation, and lasting health. Whether through energy therapy, self-awareness, or guided interventions, overcoming resistance is a crucial step toward achieving true healing and well-being.

Dr Iwowarri Berian James, Africa's First Certified Energy Psychologist & Consultant Energy Therapist (Based in Abuja)

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A professional portrait of Mrs. Ngozi Enite-Okoro, a woman with dark, wavy hair and a warm smile, wearing a vibrant purple patterned top. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

Mrs Ngozi Enite-Okoro

**MCIPM, MCILG Accredited Management Trainer
CEO/ Founder Tuzminis Place & Tuzminis Global Services Limited**

With over 21 years of distinguished experience across diverse sectors—including Banking, Health Insurance, Information Technology, Governance, Consulting, FMCG, and Real Estate—Mrs. Ngozi Enite-Okoro is a highly accomplished and results-driven leader renowned for her transformative leadership skills and expertise in human resources. She is an established professional with an impeccable record of excellence in people management, organisational development, and business growth.

Mrs Enite-Okoro's career journey spans high-impact roles in both the public and private

sectors. Her portfolio includes senior leadership positions at prestigious organisations such as Brian Integrated Systems, Hygeia HMO Limited, Fortis Bank, the Progressive Governors Forum (APC), and HR-Cnergy. In these roles, she has demonstrated an exceptional ability to lead teams, develop talent, and drive organisational change, helping businesses navigate complex challenges and realize sustainable growth.

As a seasoned HR professional, she is particularly recognized for her turnaround expertise in leadership management—helping businesses adapt,

scale, and thrive in dynamic and competitive environments. Mrs. Enite-Okoro's deep understanding of organizational culture, talent optimization, and workforce engagement has earned her a reputation as a highly sought-after consultant and trainer in the field of Human Capital Development.

In addition to her consulting work, Mrs Enite-Okoro is the Founder and CEO of Tuzminis Global Services, a management consulting and training firm dedicated to empowering entrepreneurs, particularly women, to overcome business challenges and scale their operations globally. Through this platform, she provides strategic guidance and practical tools to help businesses, especially those in the food, beverage, cosmetics, and herbal remedies industries, access new markets and achieve long-term success. A key initiative under her leadership is the Women Entrepreneurship Workshop, a flagship event that she launched to help women entrepreneurs navigate industry-specific regulations, grow their businesses, and position their products in mainstream markets. The workshop, with its focus on fostering growth and sustainability, has supported numerous women-led enterprises in scaling their operations and expanding their reach. She also ventured into the manufacturing of healthy, organic beverages under the brand name Tuzminis Place. These beverages, which are produced in compliance with the highest standards of health and safety, have been approved by the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC).

As a committed advocate for women's empowerment, Mrs Enite-Okoro also serves on the board of the Space for Women Foundation, an NGO focused on amplifying women's voices and fostering socio-economic change. Her passion for talent development extends to the Precise Concept Investment and Engineering Company

Limited, where she plays a pivotal role in shaping HR strategies for the construction and real estate sectors, ensuring that the company maintains a competitive edge and a high standard of performance.

An accredited Management Consultant and licensed HR professional, Mrs. Enite-Okoro holds membership in esteemed institutions such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management (CIPM) and the Chartered Institute of Leadership and Governance (USA). Her expertise in policy development, learning and development, coaching, mentorship, organizational restructuring, and corporate governance has contributed to the success and resilience of organizations across various industries.

Mrs. Enite-Okoro's remarkable achievements in Human Capital Development, business, and entrepreneurship highlight her as a true leader and change-maker. Her recognition in 2021 by the Charter Institute of Leadership and Governance (USA), Nigerian Chapter, with an Award of Excellence, is a testament to her outstanding contributions to the development of human resources in Nigeria.

Additionally, her dedication to advancing food security earned her the Food Security Advocate Award at the 2024 Women and Youth Agro Trade Investment Summit (AFRI-WYATS). These honours reflect not only her professional achievements but also her unwavering commitment to mentorship and empowering individuals. Her leadership and advocacy continue to inspire those around her, making her a role model in various sectors, including business, leadership, and social responsibility. Beyond her professional achievements, Mrs Enite-Okoro is a proud mother of two sons and enjoys a fulfilling family life with her husband. She is a dynamic thought leader, passionate about leveraging her expertise to create opportunities for sustainable business development and empower future generations of entrepreneurs.

Growth:

THE BEAUTIFUL TORMENT

A portrait of Benedicta Anthony, a woman with long, wavy dark hair, smiling and wearing a green top. The background is dark and textured.

– Benedicta Anthony

***Growth:** What a torturous being. Rewarding in hindsight yet excruciating in the present. It demands everything and then demands more, stretching the soul to its limits and forcing transformation even when resistance feels like the safer and easier option either in career, business, education, marriage, or just any venture.*

It takes, and takes, and takes...until exhaustion sets in. And just when you think you have nothing left to give, it delivers one final push – a stretch that feels merciless, yet necessary. Growth is not a gentle guide; it is an unyielding force, an uncompromising strict African parent, a relentless teacher that cares little for comfort but everything for transformation.

The Crossroads of Growth

Growth presents itself as a paradox. On one hand, it wounds with its garment of thorns, piercing through the layers of comfort and certainty. Yet,

on the other, it holds an irresistible allure, a promise of becoming more than you were yesterday. Even when the process feels unbearable, something within longs to embrace it, to wear it with pride and gusto, knowing that the pain is the price of elevation.

At every stage, it dangles the figurative candy of progress – visible, yet just out of reach. To claim it, one must relinquish the ease of the familiar and step boldly into the unfamiliar. Growth lures us into the darkness of uncertainty, stripping away the safety nets of past habits and unquestioned routines. It whispers with both authority and seduction: “My dear, leave all you know and follow me.”

The Pains of Transformation

The greatest challenge of growth is not the effort it requires, but the sacrifices it demands. It forces us to let go of outdated mindsets, to part ways with comfort, and to embrace discomfort as the birthplace of evolution. The process often feels unfair and stifling, as if life is asking too much without offering immediate rewards.

But here’s the truth—growth does not rob; it refines. It does not punish; it prepares. Every loss experienced along the journey is, in fact, a pathway for something greater. The exhaustion, the doubt, and the fear are mere markers of transformation in motion.

The Rewards of Growth

The beauty of growth is that while it may feel merciless in the present, it is profoundly rewarding in hindsight. Looking back, we see how the struggle shaped resilience, how the challenges–built character, and how the sacrifices led to breakthroughs. The very things that once felt unbearable become the defining moments of strength and achievement. To grow is to endure discomfort with the faith that something greater lies ahead. It is to accept the pain of transformation as the necessary price for a future self that is wiser, stronger, superior, and more fulfilled. So yes, growth is a torturous being—unyielding, demanding, and ruthless. But it is also the most faithful companion of success. And despite the hardships, we find ourselves choosing it, time and time again. Because deep down, we know staying the same is the only thing more painful than growing.

The Africa Japa Syndrome:

Reckless Leadership and Mismanaged Resources Fuel Mass Migration

- MOTAYO JAIYESIMI, MD/CEO *Travelcentra*



In recent years, the term "Japa Syndrome" has emerged as a popular expression in Nigeria and across several African countries, describing the increasing trend of skilled professionals and young individuals emigrating in search of better opportunities abroad. The word "Japa," a Yoruba slang meaning "to run away," captures the urgency and desperation felt by many seeking to escape economic hardship, political instability, and limited career advancement prospects. While migration is a global phenomenon, the scale and impact of this trend have become particularly pronounced in Africa, raising concerns about brain drain and its long-term effects on national development.

A Global Phenomenon

It is crucial to recognize that the "Japa Syndrome" is not exclusive to Africa. Countries in Asia, South America, and even parts of Europe have experienced similar trends where skilled professionals leave their home countries in search of better opportunities. For instance, nations like India and the Philippines have long faced migration waves driven by economic instability and limited growth opportunities. In the United States, migration trends have shown significant shifts, with some citizens relocating to Canada or other regions to escape healthcare

costs, social tensions, or career stagnation.

What distinguishes Africa's "Japa Syndrome" is the compounded effect of reckless leadership and resource mismanagement. While countries in Asia have successfully leveraged their diaspora communities to foster economic growth through remittances and investments, many African nations have failed to implement sustainable strategies that can harness the potential of their migrating citizens. The absence of strong institutions and transparent governance exacerbates the brain drain, leaving African nations struggling to fill critical gaps in healthcare, education, and technology.

Why Are Africans Leaving?

The "Japa Syndrome" is driven by several factors, including:

Economic Instability: Many African nations face economic crises, inflation, and high unemployment rates, prompting citizens to seek better financial stability abroad.

Inadequate Healthcare and Education Systems: Poor access to quality healthcare, substandard educational facilities, and limited professional development opportunities push many to seek improved living conditions elsewhere.

Political Instability and Insecurity: Persistent

insecurity, corruption, and governance issues in some African countries have led citizens to migrate in search of safety and stability.

Global Talent Demand: The global demand for healthcare professionals, IT experts, and skilled workers has created attractive opportunities for African talents in developed countries.

Reckless Leadership and Resource Mismanagement: At the heart of the "Japa Syndrome" lies a critical yet often overlooked factor — poor governance and the inefficient management of Africa's abundant natural resources. Despite being home to vast mineral reserves, oil deposits, and arable land, many African nations remain economically stagnant. Corruption, misappropriation of funds, and policy failures have prevented these resources from translating into tangible benefits for citizens. This mismanagement has deepened social inequality, leaving citizens feeling hopeless and desperate to migrate.

The Positive Impact of Japarians

Despite its seemingly negative effects, the "Japa Syndrome" has also yielded some positive outcomes. Many of those who emigrated, often referred to as 'Japarians,' have contributed significantly to their home countries' economies. Through remittances, they have lifted their families out of poverty, improved education access for relatives, and funded entrepreneurial ventures back home. By establishing businesses or investing in local economies, Japarians have indirectly created employment opportunities and improved the standard of living in their communities.

The Consequences for Africa

While migration offers individuals opportunities for improved quality of life and career advancement, the "Japa Syndrome" has had significant repercussions on African nations:

Brain Drain: The mass exodus of skilled professionals, especially in healthcare and technology sectors, weakens Africa's workforce and limits development potential.

Economic Pressure: Countries invest heavily in education and training, yet see reduced returns when professionals relocate abroad.

Family and Social Impact: The departure of parents, caregivers, and breadwinners can strain family dynamics and disrupt social cohesion.

What Can Be Done?

Addressing the "Japa Syndrome" requires comprehensive strategies to create sustainable opportunities within African nations. Key solutions include:

Economic Reforms: Governments must focus on job creation, entrepreneurship support, and favorable economic policies to improve living conditions and reduce the incentive to migrate.

Improved Healthcare and Education Systems: Investing in infrastructure, training, and staff retention strategies can reduce the urge for professionals to seek better opportunities overseas.


Policy Advocacy: African governments should engage diaspora communities, fostering policies that encourage knowledge transfer and investment back home.

Partnerships with Developed Nations: Bilateral agreements can create exchange programs that allow skilled professionals to gain experience abroad while committing to contribute their expertise back home.

Accountability and Resource Management: African leaders must adopt transparent governance practices, ensure accountability, and harness their countries' natural resources to create sustainable development and economic opportunities for citizens.

Conclusion

The "Japa Syndrome" reflects a broader global migration challenge but poses unique threats to Africa's growth and stability. While individuals may benefit from relocation, governments, institutions, and civil society must collaborate to improve local opportunities and address the root causes driving this migration wave. Without urgent reforms to address reckless leadership and resource mismanagement, Africa risks losing even more of its brightest minds to foreign shores.



Energy therapy as Essential Component of Complimentary and Alternative Medicine Practice in Africa

INTRODUCTION:

Energy therapy is an essential component of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) practice in Africa, where traditional healing practices often incorporate energy-based modalities. Although now promoted as a Western Health Modality with many founders of various modalities and protocols being of American origin, essentially, it has its roots in Eastern Oriental Medicine where a large part of its essence was documented.

Our practice of Energy Medicine was not documented for reference, hence the appearance of its discussion and presentation as a new knowledge. Yes, in the way it is done now, it can pass as a new body of knowledge which needs to be studied for professional application in the areas of physiological, mental, emotional and spiritual health and wellbeing.

ROLE OF ENERGY THERAPY IN CAM PRACTICE IN AFRICA:

Exploring the role of energy therapy in CAM practice in Africa, we note the following areas that have long been recorded:

1. **Traditional roots:** Energy therapy is deeply rooted in traditional African healing practices, which often involve spiritual and energetic components. Mothers did energy therapy on their children when they patted them on the back to calm their crying nerves and get them to sleep. That was the transfer of energy to stimulate relaxation.
2. **Holistic approach:** Energy therapy aligns with the holistic approach of CAM, addressing physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.
3. **Diverse modalities:** Various energy therapy modalities are used in Africa, including Reiki, Qigong, Therapeutic Touch, and traditional practices like Yoruba Ifá and Zulu Sangoma Invocations and meditations etc. Though not documented as energy therapy, the medium of healing through these approaches was basically energy.
4. **Integration with conventional medicine:** Energy therapy is increasingly being integrated into conventional healthcare settings in Africa, offering a complementary approach to patient care. This approach is slow, but it is taking shape.

borrowing from what is already happening in the Western world where Energy Healing is prominent in stress management and trauma resolution in some known hospitals.

5. Addressing chronic diseases: Energy therapy is used to manage chronic diseases like Pains, Emotional Trauma induced challenges, behavioural issues, diabetes, and hypertension, which are prevalent in Africa.

6. Mental health: Energy therapy is also used to address mental health concerns, such as anxiety, depression, and trauma. Challenges such as fears, phobias, and negative feelings are also dealt with using the process.

7. Community based: Energy therapy is often practiced in community settings, making it accessible and affordable for marginalized populations. I run Community Energy Health Project as a medium for reaching communities with the knowledge and skill of energy therapy for deployment as Emotional Trauma First Aid support tool.

8. Cultural significance: Energy therapy is deeply rooted in African culture and spirituality, making it an essential component of CAM practice in Africa.

9. Research and regulation: This is the area where African Institutions and CAM Professionals need to rise to ensure action. Now, we are doing justice to this area of lack through our documentation of healing actions and outcomes through the development of psychometric instruments that measure pre - and post energy therapy administrations. There is a growing need for research and regulation to ensure the safe and effective practice of energy therapy in Africa.

10. Collaboration and education: Collaboration between energy therapists, conventional healthcare providers, and other arms of traditional healers is essential for promoting education, research, and integration of energy therapy into CAM practice in Africa.

Energy therapy is a vital component of CAM practice in Africa, offering a holistic and culturally relevant approach to healthcare. Its integration into conventional healthcare settings and community-based practices has the potential to address various health concerns and

promote overall well-being.

For example, Energy blocks along the spine could be responsible for back aches and pains that refuse to go. This can be helped with an Energy process called Cerebrospinal flush. Everyone who experiences this process will always tell the difference.

Adverse Childhood Experiences, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Normal Injury are key areas that Energy Therapy can be applied in securing individual and collective emotional freedom.

Behavioural transformation, human capacity enhancement, and confidence rebuilding which are the hallmarks of Human Capital developmental needs for Organizations, are areas that do benefit from Energy Therapy because the process eliminates or resolves the inherent limiters in human capacity expressions associated with trauma and stress.

Energy Therapy Awareness is important now. More on this can be sourced direct from Dr Iwosarri Berian James, the founding Director of Golden Rays Integrated Energy Therapy Institute, Nigeria.

Dr. Iwosarri Berian James is an esteemed USA-trained and Certified Energy Health Practitioner specialized in Energy Psychology and Energy Medicine. He has been at the forefront of addressing physical and emotional health challenges, emotional trauma, and negative Behavioural transformation and physiological health challenges with Energy Therapy, which he is also promoting in Nigeria and Africa.

Dr. James is passionate about promoting energy therapy and directs his speakership on this in the areas including the critical causes of trauma among Nigerian citizens such as mobility insecurity, spousal violence and homicide, kidnapping, and economic hardship. As an expert in Emotional Trauma Resolution, he is an internationally recognized Energy Healer and Certified Management Consultant, very active in therapeutic practices and energy health consultations both locally and internationally. He is also a Certified Trainer with GIET Institute, Abuja, and Lagos.

FRAGILITY OF EAC FEDERATION: INTEGRATION OF RICH AND DISINTEGRATION OF POOR



Hon. Paul Dhel Gum

The East African Community (EAC) Federation envisions economic and political integration among member states to foster sustainable development. However, disparities between the wealthy and poor regions have exacerbated inequalities, threatening its cohesion. This study explores the fragility of the EAC Federation, focusing on the integration of affluent regions and the marginalization of poorer areas. Using secondary data, the research employs a mixed-methods approach to analyze economic, social, and political variables. Results reveal significant disparities in economic growth, access to infrastructure, and political representation among member states. Wealthier nations dominate decision-making and reap disproportionate benefits from integration, while poorer states struggle with debt, underdevelopment, and inadequate participation. The findings emphasize the urgent

need for equitable policies and robust mechanisms to address disparities, ensuring a balanced and sustainable federation.

The East African Community (EAC) Federation, comprising Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), represents a bold attempt to foster regional unity through economic integration and political cooperation (EAC, 2022). Established to drive shared prosperity, the EAC has achieved notable milestones, including the creation of a customs union and the implementation of the Common Market Protocol (EAC, 2022). These initiatives aim to reduce trade barriers, promote cross-border investments, and enhance regional stability (Kasaija, 2021). However, the federation faces significant challenges, particularly deep-seated economic and infrastructural disparities, which jeopardize the vision of a cohesive and equitable bloc (Kasaija, 2021).

Economic inequalities among EAC member states are stark, with GDP per capita figures revealing pronounced disparities (World Bank, 2023). For example, Kenya's GDP per capita of \$2,200 in 2023 dwarfs Burundi's \$240, reflecting a significant income gap between wealthier and poorer states (World Bank, 2023). These disparities extend beyond income to encompass critical sectors such as education, healthcare, and industrial development (Ndung'u, 2020). Wealthier nations like Kenya and Rwanda attract more Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), further consolidating their economic advantages, while resource-poor countries like Burundi and South Sudan struggle to achieve comparable development levels (Ndung'u, 2020). This economic imbalance undermines regional integration by creating unequal opportunities and benefits, fostering resentment and diminishing trust among member states (Afesorghor & van Bergeijk, 2019).

Infrastructure development is another area of concern, with significant disparities in road density, rail connectivity, and access to electricity (Mwanika, 2020). Kenya and Rwanda have made considerable progress in infrastructure expansion, which enhances trade facilitation and productivity (IEA, 2022). Conversely, countries like South Sudan and Burundi lag behind, exacerbating regional inequities (UNECA, 2019). For instance, Rwanda's electrification rate stood at 72% in 2022, while Burundi's was a mere 11% (IEA, 2022). These discrepancies create logistical

bottlenecks that hinder the movement of goods and services, limiting the benefits of regional trade agreements and reducing the overall competitiveness of the EAC on the global stage (Mulongo, 2017).

Politically, wealthier member states wield disproportionate influence in the EAC's decision-making processes, often sidelining poorer nations (Oloo, 2021). The unequal representation arises from economic power dynamics, where wealthier states contribute more financially to the EAC's budget and, in turn, demand greater control over its governance (Mwanika, 2020). This imbalance exacerbates the marginalization of smaller economies, weakening their ability to advocate for equitable policies. As a result, poorer states often perceive the federation's initiatives as favoring the interests of more affluent nations, undermining trust and regional cohesion (Biswaro, 2018).

These challenges highlight the fragility of the EAC Federation and its sustainability as a unified bloc. To address these issues, the study proposes to assess the impact of economic inequalities, socio-political representation, and infrastructure disparities on regional integration. The study adopts a multidimensional approach to analyze the underlying factors and their implications for the EAC's future. By examining the socio-political

representation of poorer states, it will shed light on their role in decision-making and identify strategies to promote inclusive governance (Mugisa et al., 2016). Additionally, the analysis of infrastructure disparities will provide insights into the structural barriers impeding trade and development (Githinji, 2019).

To enhance equity and cohesion, the study proposes several strategies. First, the establishment of a regional development fund can help bridge the infrastructure gap by channeling resources to underserved areas (Oloo, 2021). Second, implementing affirmative action measures to amplify the voices of poorer states in decision-making processes can foster a sense of ownership and inclusivity. Third, promoting capacity-building initiatives to strengthen institutional frameworks in less-developed member states will empower them to participate more effectively in the integration process (Mwangi, 2018).

Hon. Paul Dhel Gum

Associate Lawyer/South Sudan.

Former National Deputy Chairperson of Relief and Rehabilitation Commission. Republic of South Sudan.

Paul serves at different ministerial capacities: state minister of Livestock and fisheries, state minister of Health and state minister of ICT South Sudan



Dr. Prince Canice Ugbe

Dr. Prince Canice Ugbe is a well-rounded scholar, a respected public administrator, and a devoted gospel minister with over 35 years of experience in ministry. He holds a Doctorate in Public Administration and has earned numerous qualifications throughout his career. His commitment to learning and leadership is evident through his active membership in various professional groups. One of his notable achievements is being accredited as a Management Trainer by the Nigerian Council of Management Development, a recognition that highlights his expertise in leadership and management.

Dr. Ugbe's path to ministry is a story of transformation. He initially dreamed of a career in law, but he felt a powerful calling to serve in ministry. This led him to leave behind his legal aspirations and fully commit to spreading the gospel. His dedication to ministry has been evident over the years, and he has worked tirelessly to empower people and communities through his faith in drilling water boreholes for the Bebi Community of Obanliku Local Government Area, Cross River State.

Outside of his ministry, Dr. Ugbe has a deep passion for agriculture and economic

empowerment. He believes that agriculture can play a key role in helping vulnerable communities become more self-sufficient and grow sustainably. His efforts go beyond spiritual support, as he actively seeks ways to improve the lives of others both practically and spiritually.

Dr. Ugbe is happily married to a successful Christian woman, and together, they are blessed with five children. He treasures his family, considering them his heritage and source of joy. His work and life are centered around faith, service, and making a meaningful impact on both the spiritual and practical aspects of life.

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Prof F. Uphie Chinje is Reinventing the Education- to-Employment Model for Africa's STEM Graduates via The Nayokan Centre

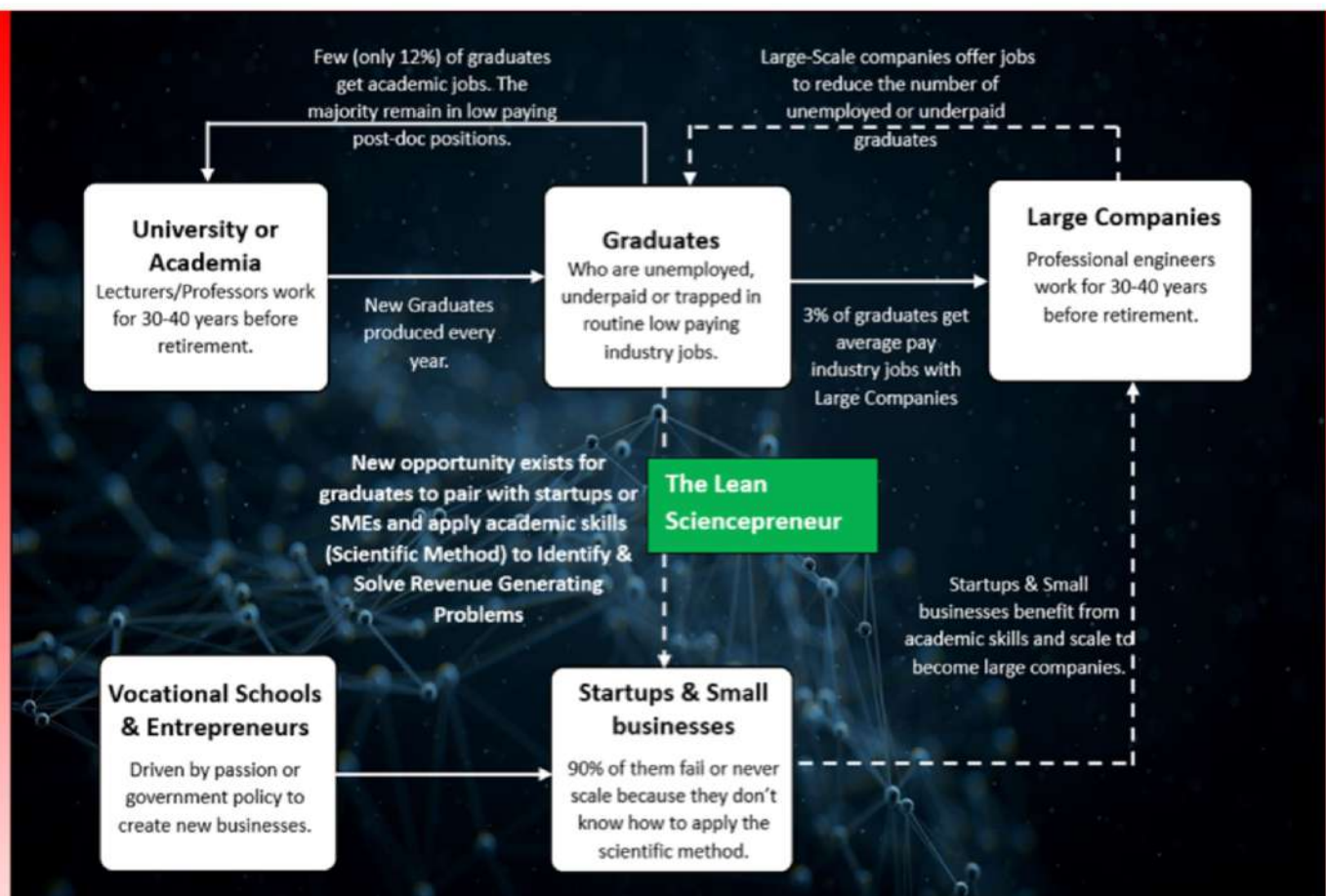
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In today's job market, the question is no longer what academic degrees you hold but what skills can you apply to solve a real business or industry problem. The traditional education system is simultaneously failing both graduates and employers:

1. On one hand, over 90% of university STEM graduates are either unemployed, underpaid, or unsatisfied with their career.
2. On the other hand, employers can't find enough qualified candidates to fill job openings.

Even though everyone agrees that education to employment is extremely critical, there's a significant lack of data in terms of the journey from education to employment.

The Solution?



Pr Uphie has partnered with education leaders and top industry experts to create the Nayokan Industry Traineeship Centre that trains and certifies African STEM Graduates as Enterprise Growth Engineers. In her unique and proven model for education-to-employment dubbed the Lean Sciencepreneur, candidates work in collaboration with companies and academic supervisors to design and implement innovative projects that help SMEs Scale.

Headquartered in Yaounde, Cameroon, The Growth Engineering Program is an industry-traineeship that offers STEM Graduates an application-focused certification after their academic degree to provide them with a solid basis for an accelerated start of an industrial career.

Traditional Academic degrees help you acquire knowledge while the Growth Engineering Certificate (PGEng) helps you convert academic knowledge into industrial applications.



CONSULTING STEM Graduate?

Earn a Professional
**Certification in
Growth Engineering
(PGEng)**

& Become a Chartered
Growth Engineer where you
get paid to innovate & help
Companies scale.

Joanna L. (PGEng)

The image features a woman, Joanna L. (PGEng), wearing a white hard hat with a green 'NA' logo and an orange safety vest over a white shirt. She is holding a tablet. In the background, there is a large smartphone graphic displaying a hexagonal diagram with the word 'CONSULTING' at the top and 'STEM Graduate?' to its right. The diagram includes hexagons labeled 'EXPERIENCE', 'EXPERT', 'PROFESSIONAL', 'SUCCESS', and 'INITIAL'. The text 'Earn a Professional Certification in Growth Engineering (PGEng)' is prominently displayed, followed by '& Become a Chartered Growth Engineer where you get paid to innovate & help Companies scale.' The woman's name 'Joanna L. (PGEng)' is at the bottom left.

Nayokan Centre's Growth Engineering Industry Traineeship Program, STEM Graduates are provided with cutting edge knowledge, tools, and workflows to help them achieve the following:

1. Build business models based on their university knowledge
2. Pair with a company where they turn their business model into scalable industry project or startup
3. Get access to investors who can scale their business model into a full company or consulting career
4. Go from a university degree holder into a business model innovator.

The expertise gained in this programme is in great demand and leads to excellent prospects for a professional career in Africa and international industry. Following huge demand from companies for Growth Engineers, the Pr. Uphie is open to partner with African Institutions to help solve the problem of STEM Graduate employability.

DR (MRS) Victoria Odubo Forcados (Nee Ogei)

Entrepreneur & Proprietress,
Ebivico Early Foundation Schools,
Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Dr. (Mrs.) Victoria Odubo Forcados (Nee Ogei) was born on March 25th, 1972 to the family of Mr. Osele Ogei and Mrs. Ebiere Ogei (Nee Akara), both of Toru-Ndoro in Ekeremor local government area, Bayelsa State.

Her academic trips began at Community Primary School Peretorugbene in Ekeremor L.G.A She however completed at Onyagede primary School, Otikpoi L.G.A. Benue State in 1978. In 1988, she proceeded to community Secondary School, Toru-Ndoro. She was head girl in her secondary school days. Knowing fully well that education is the source of power; she read on and obtained a Diploma (Public Administration) from the Enugu state School of Journalism. Currently she holds a B.Ed (Education/English & Literary Studies) from the prestigious Niger-Delta University, Wilberforce Island, and Bayelsa State.

Dr. (Mrs.) Victoria Odubo Forcados is self made and holds fast the ideology of hard work, As a proprietress she has over one hundred members of staff under her employ and about four thousand pupils/students. Amidst this, she runs a scholarship scheme for orphaned and financially challenged pupils or students with smart minds.

Little wonder she targets and promote the government agenda for providing access to quality education as well as reducing the biting trend of unemployment in the country through the Education for all (EFA) schemes she has adopted. This was further propelled by her humble family background.

Ex-students of Ebivico Early Foundations Schools are doing well both in and outside the shores of Nigeria. This is proven by the several awards/laurels won by the school for academic excellence. Some of such are:

- 2007,2013 & 2014 Olympia Mathematics Award winner, Bayelsa State.
- 2014 Best school in Junior Science Olympia.Y 2008



Bayelsa State representative in space programme, Calabar-Cross River State.

- 2013 Best School in Bayelsa State in the ESPEL inter-Schools debate

- 2014, 2015, 2016 & 2017 First position award in Inter-School match- pass during NAPPS Day in Bayelsa State.

- 2017 Best School award in Inter-School debate (Bayelsa State) both in Primary & Secondary category.

- Best ICT Compliant School, Bayelsa State.

- Best fast growing school

- Best Staffed School

- Best beautiful friendly school

- Best sports school.

All these and much more is incidented upon the hard work and eloquent strides of Dr. (Mrs.) Victoria O. Forcados Irrespective of her status as a wife, mother, proprietress, she equally finds time to mentor & serve society in other social capacities.

These include:

- President, NAPPS, Bayelsa State chapter (2010-2015)

- Treasurer, NAPPS, South-South chapter.

SOME OF THE AWARD SHE HAS RECEIVED ARE:

- Best proprietress award by NAPPS Bayelsa State chapter (2012).

- Fellow award by institute of Corporate Administration (2014)

- National development Gold award by Corporate

& Media Africa communications Ltd. (2014)

- Honorary doctorate degree award by the State University of New York-Albany, U.S.A. (2015).

- Shepherd Guide of Nigeria Bayelsa State Council Award of Recognition in outstanding contributions and humanitarian services towards the upliftment of the youths and the less privilege in the society.

- Professional Hunters Association of Nigeria Grand Patron (2024)

- Sterling award for excellent Leadership to Dr. (Mrs.) Victoria Odubo Forcados on the occasion of NAPPS Day 2024, held on Tuesday 15th October, 2024.

- Outstanding NAPPS leadership of the year 2024 Award to Dr. (Mrs.) Victoria Odubo Forcados in recognition of your selfless service toward the growth and sustainability of NAPPS. Under the leadership of Chief (Dr) Yomi Otubela FCMA.

Dr/Mrs. Odubo Victoria was the welfare 1 in NAPPS for four years in Nigeria.

Currently, she is the Board of Trustee (BOT) NAPPS Nigeria.

She is happily married to an amiable dedicated child of God, Mr. Odubo Forcados, a professional accountant. He has been a tremendous source of inspiration and courage for her. They are blessed with three children, two grand children, one hundred and fifty foster children and two hundred and fifty foster grand children.

Join us as we present this wonderful woman of God, mentor, an achiever, educationist of no mean repute, a lovely and a caring mother.



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Mediation:

The Priceless Future of Dispute Resolution in a Divided & Fractured World

INTRODUCTION

Disputes are an inevitable part of life. They occur in families, businesses, workplaces, and even between nations. What is rare today, however, is trust, harmony, and strong relationships. While conflicts have always existed, our ability to resolve them amicably has diminished. The world has become more transactional, and personal and professional relationships are being tested like never before.

Amidst this, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), particularly mediation, is emerging as the bridge between broken relationships and a just resolution. Mediation is often described as being "cheaper and faster" than litigation. But is that really the case? No—it's not just cheaper, it's priceless. Mediation doesn't just save money; it saves years of emotional and financial turmoil, protects relationships, and fosters long-term peace.

In this global landscape of increasing conflicts, mediation is not just an option—it is the future of dispute resolution.

The Global Shift Towards Mediation

Litigation has long been the standard approach for resolving disputes, but it comes at a heavy price—both financially and emotionally. Courts across the world are overflowing with cases, leading to delays that can span years, even decades. In contrast, mediation offers a collaborative, efficient, and relationship-focused way of resolving conflicts.

Governments, corporations, and even international organizations are recognizing mediation as a more sustainable approach. Countries like Singapore, the United States, the United Kingdom, and India have already incorporated mediation into their legal frameworks, making it a preferred mode of

conflict resolution in commercial and personal disputes.

Why Mediation is the Future of ADR

Mediation is not just about resolving disputes—it is about building a culture of Communication, Collaboration, and Co-creation. These three pillars define why mediation is essential for the future:

Communication: Restoring the Lost Art of Dialogue

In today's world, people talk at each other rather than to each other. Mediation brings structured dialogue back into conflict resolution.

It creates a safe space where parties can openly express their concerns, fears, and expectations without the aggression of litigation.

Skilled mediators help re-establish communication channels that may have been lost over time.

Collaboration: A Win-Win Mindset Over a Win-



Lose Battle

Courtroom battles are about winning and losing. Mediation is about mutual gain.

It allows disputing parties to work together to find solutions instead of having a verdict imposed upon them.

Collaboration fosters long-term cooperation—whether in business disputes, family conflicts, or workplace disagreements.

Co-creation: Designing the Future, Not Just Settling the Past

Litigation focuses on what went wrong. Mediation focuses on how to move forward.

Instead of a judge deciding the outcome, parties co-create a solution that works best for everyone.

This approach ensures that resolutions are tailored, flexible, and more sustainable.

Debunking the Myth: Is Mediation Cheap? No, It's Priceless

One of the most common misconceptions about mediation is that it is cheaper and faster than litigation. While this may be true in a technical sense, the real value of mediation goes beyond cost and time.

Mediation saves years of legal battles, emotional stress, and broken relationships.

It preserves reputations—essential in business and personal life.

It prevents the destructive cycle of prolonged disputes that drain individuals financially and psychologically.

So, is mediation cheap? No. It is super expensive, but not in the way people think—it is expensive because it saves what truly matters: time, peace, relationships, and mental well-being.

The Challenges & Opportunities in Mediation

Despite its growing global acceptance, mediation still faces several challenges:

Lack of Awareness: Many people still see mediation as a weak alternative to litigation rather than a powerful tool for resolution.

Cultural Resistance: In some regions, people are accustomed to adversarial legal battles and view mediation as an unnecessary compromise.

Enforceability Issues: Unlike court judgments, mediated agreements may not always be

enforceable in all jurisdictions, though international treaties like the Singapore Convention on Mediation are changing this.

However, the opportunities are immense:

Online Dispute Resolution (ODR): Virtual mediation platforms are making ADR more accessible worldwide.

AI in Mediation: Artificial Intelligence is being explored to analyze disputes, suggest solutions, and even assist in negotiations.

Cross-Border Mediation: With globalization, mediation is playing a crucial role in resolving international business and trade disputes.

The Way Forward: Making Mediation the Norm

To truly make mediation the future of dispute resolution, a global cultural shift is needed. Some key steps include:

Education & Training: ADR awareness should be introduced in schools, universities, and workplaces.

Legal & Policy Reforms: Governments should incentivize mediation before litigation.

Integration in Business Practices: Companies should embed mediation clauses in contracts to resolve disputes without going to court.

Conclusion: A New Era of Conflict Resolution

We live in a world where disputes are common, but meaningful relationships are rare. Litigation may settle a case, but it rarely restores trust. Mediation, on the other hand, is built on communication, collaboration, and co-creation, ensuring that disputes don't just end—but transform into opportunities for growth.

Mediation is not just the future of dispute resolution—it is the only way forward for a world seeking peace, harmony, and lasting relationships.

The question is no longer "Should we choose mediation?" but rather "Why haven't we embraced it fully yet?"

- Dr. Adv. DDeepika Saini

Founder Institute For Alternative Dispute Resolution

New Delhi, India.

PRINCE NNAMDI DUKE TEW

Prince Nnamdi Duke Tew is known predominantly by his stage name Prince Vibes. He's a Nigerian born, An accomplished music producer, Pianist, Synthesizer, Programmer, Multi-instrumentalist, Artist, Songwriter, Singer Arranger, Sound engineer and a Music director, Song evaluator, In addition he's a music minister.

He is the founder and current CEO of Immortal Vibes Record LTD. And Prince Vibes has worked for artists all over the world, Countries including Canada, United Kingdom, The United States of America, Kenya and South Africa for several years writing and producing music for artist's album projects. His unquenchable passion for music made him choose music as a profession eventually. He started playing percussion instruments at the

age of 8 in the late 80's. Back then in C.C.C Where he joined the adult choir as a young kid due to his incredible talent and then he developed his music skills and talent.

His first hit was producing 'Oshimiri Atata by Minister Preye Odede, Followed by You reign in majesty which earned the artist Pshantel an award for Gospel songstress.

So far, he has produced for over 900 artists including Mercy Chinwo, Chioma Jesus, Preye Odede, Empraiz, Sensational Bamidele, Pshantel Etc. also jingles for big brands just to mention a few.

Prince Vibes says
"My inspiration has always been the Holy Spirit, God's mercy and grace has been my strength.





THE LEADERSHIP JOURNAL:

Why Putting Pen to Paper Makes Better Leaders

Imaobong Essien, Leadership Strategist/Journaling Guide

John Maxwell is doing it. Brian Tracy is still doing it. Personally, Journaling has changed my life. Do you want to be an outstanding leader? Keep a leadership journal. As a Leadership Strategist and Journaling Coach, one of the most effective tools I recommend to my clients is a leadership journal. Leadership guru Peter Drucker said, "Follow effective action with quiet reflection. From the quiet reflection will come even more effective action".

One outstanding characteristic of effective leaders is that they appear to maintain clarity of thought even in the midst of chaos. Journaling might seem like an effortless thing to do, but it's a powerful practice. Journaling has become a cornerstone habit for today's most influential leaders.

Most of my friends and colleagues have testified to me that, because of the way I discuss the benefits of consistent journaling, they have adopted the practice, and it has transformed their lives and the way they lead others. Their experiences confirm to me that every leader needs to add keeping journals to their leadership toolkit.

THE POWER OF REFLECTION THAT IS ALWAYS OVERLOOKED

Are you one of those people who move at a hundred miles an hour? That means on a typical day, you are always reactive and rarely proactive. Engaging in Journaling will force you to slow down and think.

That's the first gift of journaling. It creates space for reflection. When you're constantly responding to different things daily, your brain never gets the

chance to process information deeply. Journaling provides that mental breathing room.

Leaders who journal regularly report greater strategic clarity and fewer rash decisions. By writing down your thoughts, you're essentially having a conversation with yourself, one where you can't hide behind vague ideas or unexamined assumptions.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMPLIFIER

Leadership isn't just about strategy; it's deeply human work that requires understanding both yourself and others. Journaling serves as a private space to process emotions and interactions that might otherwise cloud your judgment.

I used to experience mood swings before I started journaling consistently. That used to be very frustrating for me and everyone around me. Over time, writing helped me change that aspect of my life.

Regular journaling creates emotional awareness that translates to better leadership behaviours:

- You'll spot patterns in what triggers your stress responses
- You'll recognise when you're making decisions from fear rather than conviction
- You'll develop more empathy as you reflect on team dynamics.

DECISION CLARITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Perhaps one of the most practical benefits of journaling is its improvement in decision-making quality. When you document your reasoning process, you create a record you can revisit and

learn from.

I review my goal-setting journal quarterly to track which decisions panned out and which didn't. It's a very productive practice. I can see where to focus and also re-strategise.

Journaling is a practice that makes you accountable to yourself. When you write down certain things, you are committed to those things you have written down. Much later, when you go back to what you wrote, you can honestly evaluate whether your thinking was sound or not.

HOW JOURNALING CAN WORK FOR YOU

If you're convinced but uncertain how to begin, here are some practical approaches you can start with.

The Five-Minute Morning Ritual

Start small with just five minutes each morning. Answer three questions:

- What's my most important focus today? • What potential obstacles might I face?
- What's one thing I can do to improve as a leader today?

This quick exercise primes your brain for intentional leadership before the day's demands take over.

The End-of-Day Download

Prefer evenings? Take ten minutes before leaving work or before going to bed to document:

- What went well today? • What didn't go as planned?
- What did I learn that might help tomorrow?
- This practice helps you mentally close your day in a good mood.

The Weekly Leadership Review

If daily journaling feels overwhelming, consider a weekly approach instead. Block 30 minutes each Friday to reflect on your leadership:

- What decisions did I make this week that I'm pleased with?
- Where did I fall short of my leadership values?
- What patterns am I noticing in my team or organisation?
- What's one leadership skill I want to focus on next week?

Digital vs. Analog

My best way is handwritten journaling. I have engaged in it over the years. It works best for me, and research shows it engages different neural pathways than typing. So, I recommend it

anytime, any day. However, the best method is ultimately the one you'll use. Digital journals offer searchability and are always accessible, while paper journals eliminate screen distractions.

OVERCOMING RESISTANCE

"I don't have time" is the most common reason people give for not keeping a journal. Sister, Brother, if it's important to you, you will create time for it.

Do you know what? The leaders who benefit most are often those with the most demanding schedules. Let me burst your bubbles. Journaling doesn't take time. It creates time. The clarity you'll gain saves you the hours of second-guessing and redoing work.

Are you struggling with consistency? Let go practical

- Attach journaling to an existing habit. For instance, you are a tea or coffee person. Journal alongside it
- Set a timer and write without editing for just 5-10 minutes • Use prompts when you're not sure what to write about. I am always available to provide prompt to achieve any purpose.
- Remember there's no "wrong way" to journal it's for your eyes only

THE COMPOUNDING RETURNS

Like investing, the benefits of journaling compound over time. In the short term, you'll notice increased clarity and reduced stress. In the long run, you'll develop deeper self-awareness and a valuable record of your leadership journey.

My journals from five years ago are treasures. Each time I revisit them, it brings me joy and also allows me to see how far I've come. I appreciate God more. Especially when I see challenges I was able to overcome.

START TODAY

Leadership can be a lonely journey, with few opportunities for honest feedback or reflection. A journal becomes your trusted companion. A place to process challenges, celebrate wins, and continuously refine your leadership approach.

The most effective leaders aren't necessarily the most naturally talented; they're the ones who commit to continuous learning and self-awareness. Journaling may be the most accessible tool for that journey. Your future self, family members and your team will thank you for starting now.



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Future Ready Skills

— FUTURE
READY
WORKFORCE

1. The world of work is undergoing rapid and complex transformations. It is increasingly driven by technology and globalization. From automation to robotics and artificial intelligence (AI), these sweeping changes demand that the modern workforce adapts swiftly and strategically.

2. Across every industry—from health to finance, education to retail—technology is creating innovative ways to engage customers, increase brand visibility, and transform service delivery. The future-ready workforce must be prepared not only to navigate these changes but to lead them.

3. The future of work demands more than just competence; it demands agility, collaboration, and innovation. Employees must learn how to use emerging technologies to solve problems and drive sustainable innovation in their sectors.

4. The work environment is evolving into a more flexible model that includes remote work, flexi-hours, and cross-functional teams. Collaboration platforms like Zoom, Slack, and Microsoft Teams have become essential tools for productivity and communication.

5. As the workplace transforms, certain skills are becoming indispensable. These include high levels of trust, effective communication, and a deep understanding of diverse working styles. The half-life of professional skills is shrinking, making continuous learning and upskilling essential for relevance and career growth.

CORE FUTURE-READY SKILLS

#1: Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is now a non-negotiable skill. Workers must deliberately and continuously engage with digital tools to stay competitive. This includes navigating work-relevant platforms, using collaborative software, and integrating virtual communication into daily operations. According to the World Economic Forum, digital

literacy is the bedrock of all other future-ready skills.

#2: Data Literacy In today's economy, data is currency. Future-ready employees must be able to collect, interpret, analyze, and derive insights from data. This skill empowers individuals and organizations to make informed decisions, improve productivity, and enhance customer experience.

#3: Cultural Agility As businesses expand across borders, the ability to function across cultural divides is critical. Cultural agility enables workers to understand and respect diverse communication styles, work efficiently in multinational teams, and respond effectively to the expectations of a global clientele.

— **Sinari**
Bolade Daranijo
(Chairman, Sinbol Group)



#4: Communication Skills Effective communication—whether verbal, written, digital, or non-verbal—is vital. In an increasingly digital workspace, communication spans emails, video calls, instant messaging, and presentations. Clear communication prevents misunderstandings, fosters collaboration, and ensures tasks are well organized.

#5: Emotional Intelligence (EQ) EQ is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's emotions and those of others. High EQ helps individuals resolve conflicts, make better decisions, and build stronger relationships. For leaders, emotional intelligence is essential for managing diverse teams and navigating the complex human dynamics of modern workplaces.

MINDSETS FOR A FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE

1. Growth Mindset

A future-ready employee or leader must cultivate a growth mindset—embracing challenges, learning from feedback, and continuously evolving. This mindset encourages innovation, adaptability, and lifelong learning.

2. Resilience and Self-Management

Resilience is the ability to recover from setbacks and maintain performance under pressure. Self-management involves time management, goal setting, and emotional regulation—all of which are crucial for sustaining well-being and productivity, especially in high-stress environments.

3. Innovation Mindset

Innovation isn't limited to new ideas. It also involves rethinking systems, improving processes, and solving problems in creative ways. An innovation mindset drives progress in

products, services, and operational efficiency.

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING FUTURE-READY SKILLS

1. Continuous Learning Culture

Organizations must foster a culture of self-directed learning and provide access to professional development opportunities. Regular upskilling ensures that employees remain aligned with industry trends and best practices.

2. On-the-Job Training and Upskilling

Practical, real-time training is vital. Embedding skill development into daily workflows helps employees learn faster and retain knowledge more effectively.

3. Membership and Networking Professional networks are valuable sources of knowledge, mentorship, and opportunity. They expose members to industry insights, best practices, and emerging technologies, helping them stay ahead of the curve.

CONCLUSION

The time to act is now. As artificial intelligence reshapes the global economy, Nigeria must seize the opportunity to harness its demographic advantage and transform it into technological leadership. Nigeria has the potential to become a global AI powerhouse—but only with deliberate investment in skills development and innovation.

ACTION PLAN:

- Launch an AI Skills Development Initiative.
- Promote Social and Emotional Skills Training.
- Build and sustain a future-ready workforce.

Let's commit to shaping a workforce that is resilient, innovative, and equipped to lead in the 21st century and beyond.





- Joan Faluyi

Founder CEO, Offshore Dimensions Ltd and Blossomflow Empowerment Foundation

SCALE SMALL: HOW AFRICAN ENTREPRENEURS CAN GROW BUSINESSES WITH LIMITED CAPITAL

For many African entrepreneurs, the biggest barrier to starting a business isn't a lack of ideas — it's the fear of not having enough capital. But what if starting with less isn't a limitation — but an advantage?

With almost three decades of experience — 17.5 years in a family-run business and 11 years building my own oil and gas company — I've learned this fundamental truth: growth doesn't come from size, it comes from strategy. This article is a practical playbook for any entrepreneur ready to grow from the ground up — using grit, focus, and small wins to build something extraordinary.

Don't Wait for Perfect Capital — Start with Practical Steps

Across Africa, countless brilliant ideas never leave the notebook — not because they lack merit, but because their founders are waiting for the “perfect” investor or capital injection.

Let me be clear: that rarely happens.

When I launched Offshore Dimensions, I didn't have state-of-the-art equipment or a fleet of trucks. But I had industry knowledge, a reputation for delivering, and the courage to start small. My first contracts weren't worth millions — they were modest, often subcontracted tasks. But I executed them with excellence, and clients kept coming back — often bringing others with them.

Here's how you can begin:

- Start with what's in your hand. Whether it's a laptop, smartphone, borrowed tool, or shared space — that's enough to launch.
- Look for quick wins. What can you offer this week? Who can pay you for a skill you already possess?
- Value humble beginnings. Even in capital-intensive industries like oil and gas, I've seen people build sustainable companies by consistently delivering on small, profitable

jobs.

Perfection is a myth. Take practical steps now — because business starts the moment you do.

Operate Lean — Every Kobo Must Work

A common early mistake is spending like you've already made it — hiring branding agencies, renting plush offices, launching flashy websites. But all of that means little without a steady income stream.

Running lean isn't just about frugality — it's about ensuring every naira works for your growth.

In my company, even after landing bigger contracts, we kept a tight budget. We subcontracted rather than over-hiring, rented equipment instead of buying it, and made permanent investments only after clear return-on-investment (ROI) assessments.

Here's how to run lean and smart:

1. Cut non-essentials. If it doesn't drive revenue or operations, it's a luxury.
2. Hire slowly. Begin with freelancers or contractors before adding full-time roles.
3. Negotiate wisely. Flexible payment terms can make or break your cash flow.

Your goal in the early stage isn't to look successful — it's to be sustainable. Build your core strength before adding weight.

Reinvest Before You Reward Yourself

Every sale brings a decision point: treat yourself or fuel your business?

Early on, I set a rule — a large chunk of every project's profit went straight back into the company. That meant upgrading tools, improving systems, and paying for training. Of course, I wanted rewards. But I understood they would come in time — if I stayed focused.

Reinvestment is what transforms a hustle into a sustainable business.

Here's where to start:

- Upgrade your tools. Better equipment boosts speed and quality.
- Invest in learning. Staying competitive means continuous growth.
- Strengthen your systems. From customer

management to accounting, strong processes matter.

Your profits can be spent or compounded. Choose wisely.

Build Trust Before Branding

There's a myth that branding begins with logos, websites, and catchy slogans. But your real brand starts with your behavior.

Before I ever printed a business card, I built trust — with clients, contractors, and suppliers. That trust became my most effective marketing tool. When people know they can count on you, they become your unpaid promoters.

Here's how to build trust that scales:

- Be punctual. In Africa, simply being on time can set you apart.
- Keep your word. Always deliver — or exceed — what you promise.
- Communicate openly. Silence breeds doubt. Transparency builds confidence.

Your logo may come later — but let your integrity speak first.

Leverage Social Capital — Use Your Network

Your first investors probably won't write a cheque — but they might buy your product, refer your services, or introduce you to key connections. That's the power of social capital.

When I started, one of my earliest contracts came from a family friend's referral. That single conversation led to real business, credibility, and a chain reaction of new clients.

Here's how to activate your network:

- Speak up. Tell people what you do — not just online, but in everyday conversations.
- Be visible. Attend events, join industry groups, and show up where opportunities live.
- Offer value first. Often, helping others without expecting anything opens the biggest doors.

In Africa, relationships are often the most valuable currency you have. Spend them wisely — and nurture them well.



WITHHOLDING TAX IN NIGERIA:

IMPLICATIONS FOR MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMEs)

Withholding Tax also known as Retention Tax is a tax regime that requires taxpayers to withhold a certain percentage of tax when making payments under specific heads (such as rent, commission, payment for professional services, salaries, contracts, etc.) at the rates that have been specified in the current tax regime.

Obligation is placed on the taxpayer to deduct the tax and remit to the relevant tax authorities, either the Federal Inland Revenue Service or State Inland Revenue Service.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises refers to businesses or enterprises that are characterized by their relatively small size, typically in terms of the number of employees, assets or annual turnover.

The MSME sector is often considered the backbone of many economies as it provides employment opportunities, contributes to GDP growth and promotes innovation and entrepreneurship and as such should be protected at all costs.

This article focuses on the adverse effects of WHT on MSMEs and recommendations for reform.

The introduction of the WHT regime in Nigeria came about in order to address the problem of tax evasion and increase compliance. It is a payment on account of the ultimate income tax liability of the taxpayer or company. Withholding tax (WHT) is not a separate tax on its own and does not confer an exemption from the filing of annual tax returns by any company which had suffered WHT deductions. The WHT is normally deducted at source when payment is to be made to a beneficiary.

The law governing or regulating the payment of WHT is the Company Income Tax Act (CITA) and the Personal Income Tax Act (PITA). The Information published in 2006 by the Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS) provides insights on withholding tax practice in Nigeria.

WHT COVERAGE

The withholding tax (WHT) deduction covers the following transactions or areas and remains at 10% for corporates and 5% for individuals.

- All aspect of the building, construction and related services.
- All types of contract and agency arrangement, other than outright sale and purchase of goods and property in the ordinary course of business.
- Consultancy, Technical and Professional

services

- Management services
- Commissions
- Interest and Royalty

ADVERSE IMPLICATIONS FORMSMEs.

- CASH FLOW CONSTRAINTS

WHT is deducted at source, that is, the payer deducts the tax amount before making payment to the small business. This reduces the immediate cash available, impacts on the working capital making it challenging to manage their finances, paybills and invest in growth opportunities.

- REDUCED PROFIT MARGIN

WHT reduces amount of revenue received by the small business, as the tax is deducted at source. Oftentimes WHT is an additional cost to the small business and if prices are increased to compensate for the tax, they may lose competitiveness and reduce sales.

All these affect the profit margin of the business.

- INCREASED ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN

Complying with WHT regulations can be time consuming and costly for small businesses. Also, small businesses may not be able to employ qualified staff that would ensure that the business is compliant. It therefore becomes administratively burdensome for the business.

- DIFFICULTY IN ACCESSING CREDIT AND INCREASED COST OF BORROWING

WHT can limit small businesses access to credit facilities as banks may not be willing to lend to businesses with reduced cashflow.

Where credit is available, they may need to borrow more to cover the tax deduction thereby increasing their effective cost of borrowing.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REFORMS

Given the crucial role of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) as the back bone of our economy, I would like to propose the following reforms to enhance the protection and support of such companies.

- REDUCE WHT RATES

WHT rates should be reduced to 5% for

corporates and 2% for individuals to alleviate the cash flow burden on small businesses.

-IMPROVE TAX ADMINISTRATION

Tax administration should be improved in Nigeria to reduce corruption and increase transparency.

Taxpayers should be educated on their rights and obligations under the law, the importance of record keeping and accounting practices, the benefits and consequences of tax compliance. By empowering taxpayers with knowledge, voluntary compliance will be increased, errors will be reduced and a more transparent and equitable tax system will be fostered.

- INTRODUCE WHT EXEMPTIONS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

To alleviate the burden of WHT on small businesses and promote their growth, MSMEs should be exempted from WHT.

This exemption would reduce their tax compliance costs, increase their cashflow and working capital, enable them to invest in expansion and job creation.

In conclusion, while taxation is essential for the government to fund public goods and services, it is equally important to recognize the vulnerability of MSMEs in Nigeria. These businesses are the backbone of the economy, driving growth, innovation and job creation.

Therefore, it is crucial that we strike a balance between taxation and protection of MSMEs.

By implementing policies that mitigate the burden of Withholding tax and other tax related challenges, MSMEs will thrive, more jobs will be created and this will contribute to the overall development of the economy. Ultimately, protecting MSMEs is not only a moral imperative, but also a sound economic strategy.

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The Digital Dawn:

– Deacon
George
Towobola
IT Systems Engineer

How Technology Is Transforming Africa

Africa is undergoing a quiet but powerful revolution—one driven not by politics or power, but by technology. From bustling cities to remote villages, the continent is leaping into the digital age, reshaping lives, industries, and futures along the way.

One of the most striking examples of this transformation is the rise of mobile technology. With limited access to traditional infrastructure, Africa skipped the landline era and went straight to mobile. Today, over 600 million people across the continent use mobile phones—not just for calls, but for banking, education, and healthcare. Services like M-Pesa in Kenya have turned mobile phones into digital wallets, empowering millions to transfer money, pay bills, and build financial security.

Startups are also making waves, solving local problems with global potential. In Nigeria, healthtech apps are connecting patients with doctors in real-time. In Rwanda, drones deliver blood to remote hospitals within minutes. And in South Africa, agritech platforms help farmers monitor weather patterns and market prices using simple smartphone tools. These innovations are not just impressive—they're life-changing. Internet

access is another area of rapid growth. While challenges remain, especially in rural areas, initiatives like Google's Equiano cable and SpaceX's Starlink are expanding connectivity. As more Africans come online, digital literacy is growing, and with it, new opportunities in education, e-commerce, and digital work.

Perhaps most exciting is the youth-driven energy behind this movement. Africa's population is the youngest in the world, and its tech-savvy youth are driving innovation. With the rise of coding bootcamps, digital hubs, and tech incubators in cities like Lagos, Nairobi, and Accra, a new generation of African tech leaders is emerging.

However, challenges persist—limited infrastructure, high data costs, and gaps in access still hold some communities back. But the momentum is clear: Africa is not just consuming technology; it's shaping it.

The future of technology in Africa isn't just about catching up—it's about leading in new ways. From digital finance to drone delivery, the continent is proving that innovation thrives not in the absence of challenges, but because of them.

As the world watches, Africa builds.



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