

A portrait of Mrs. Folashade Arike Ayoade, Ph.D. She is wearing a blue headwrap, large blue-rimmed glasses, and a blue patterned top with a pearl necklace. The background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape.

FOCUS AFRICA

MAGAZINE

*A Public Servant
Per Excellence*

*MRS FOLASHADE
ARIKE AYOADE, Ph.D*

Secretary to the Government of Kogi State, Nigeria

Amb Mrs Angonimi David-Imeh

MD, Focus Africa Magazine

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!!!!





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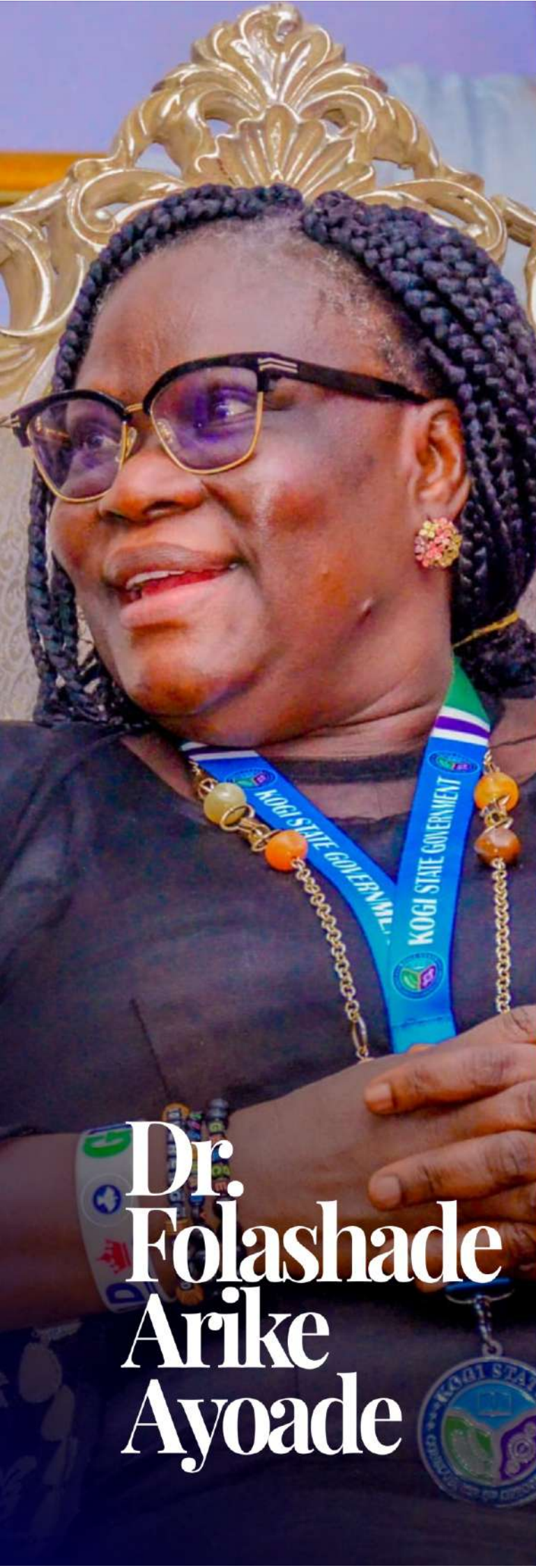
COORDINATOR FOR AFRICA, UNITED NATIONS
GENDER PRIORITY STRATEGY



Her Eminence

AMB MRS DR ALANYINGI UDUAK SYLVA

Chairperson Focus Africa Series

A portrait of Dr. Folashade Arike Ayoade, a woman with dark skin and braided hair, wearing glasses and a blue lanyard with 'KOGI STATE GOVERNMENT' text. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the left. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting.

Dr. Folashade Arike Ayoade

Dr. Folashade Arike Ayoade is the Secretary to the Government of Kogi State, with over 30 years of experience in public administration, academia, and regulatory science. She holds a Ph.D. in Biochemistry from the University of Ilorin and is a Fellow of the Institute of Public Analysts of Nigeria (FIPAN). A seasoned leader and scholar, she has contributed significantly to governance, food safety, and public health, with several publications to her credit. Dr. Ayoade is dedicated to driving impactful initiatives and fostering sustainable development in Kogi State and beyond.

Born in 1965, Dr. Ayoade is a highly accomplished scholar, holding multiple academic qualifications that demonstrate her expertise across various fields. She holds a Ph.D. in Biochemistry from the University of Ilorin (2017), an M.Sc. in Biochemistry from the University of Lagos (1993), and a B.Sc. in Biochemistry from the University of Ilorin (1988). She is currently pursuing an LL.B. in Law at Salem University. Additionally, she holds a Diploma in Theology from The Redeemed Christian Bible College (2001), a Diploma in Quality Assurance of Food from Germany Fachhochschule (1997), and a Diploma in Elementary Level German from Carl Duisberg Centre, Germany (1996). Her early academic foundation includes an IJMBA' LEVEL from Kwara State College of Technology, Ilorin (1984), a West African Senior School Certificate from Saint Mary's Grammar School, Iwo (1982), and a First School Leaving Certificate from CAC School, Odo Ona, Ibadan (1977).

Her expertise spans public administration, regulatory science, and academia, with numerous publications in mycotoxicology, food safety, and public health. She has also contributed significantly to research on fungal metabolites and their health implications.

Dr. Ayoade serves as a Part-time Lecturer at Confluence University of Science and Technology, Osara, sharing her vast knowledge with the next generation of scientists and administrators. She has also worked with key institutions such as the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) and the Federal Ministry of Health, demonstrating her commitment to regulatory excellence.

Her professional affiliations include Fellowships and memberships in esteemed organizations

such as the Mycotoxicology Society of Nigeria (FMSN), Nigerian Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (MNSBMB), and the Academy for Entrepreneurial Studies (FAES). She has attended numerous international training programs and leadership workshops, further solidifying her expertise in governance and food safety management.

Dr. Ayoade is a results-driven leader with exceptional competencies in policy development, program management, leadership, people management, and public relations. She is also proficient in ICT, data management, and social media tools, ensuring effective communication and administration in her various roles.

Her passion for service, leadership, and sustainable development continues to impact Kogi State and Nigeria as a whole. She remains committed to driving transformative initiatives and fostering growth in governance, public health, and regulatory sciences. In 2022, she was honored with the Decade of Significance Award by Focus Africa International in recognition of her numerous contributions to leadership development in Africa and her community impact projects over the past decade.

Mrs Ayoade is the founder of (Folashade Ayoade Initiative for Widows and Orphans-FAIWO) and an Ordained Pastor with the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG).



The Role of Rural Women as Governance Actors in Food Productions and Security – MS. EVERLYNE KOIYAN

Director Kenya Institute of Mass Communication

INTRODUCTION

In Africa, Women are the backbone of the development of rural and national economies. They comprise 43% of the world's agricultural labor force. In Kenya (My Country), 80% of the food production comes from small scale farmers, who are mostly rural women.

According to an Article by Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2023: Reference to FAO, AUC, ECA and WFP. 2023. Africa is facing a food crisis of unprecedented proportions and the Progress towards

achieving the global nutrition targets by 2030 remains slow.

It further states that, The deterioration of the food security situation and the lack of progress towards the WHO global nutrition targets make it imperative for countries to step up their efforts if they are to achieve a world without hunger and malnutrition by 2030. Hence, The call for greater action remains true.

Women comprise the largest percentage of the workforce in the agricultural sector, but do not have access and control over all land and productive resources. To this effect, the lack of appreciation of the role of rural women in food productions and security gives rise to specific policies, which are misdirected, contribute to high levels of poverty, illiteracy and non-involvement in the design and planning of programs and policies, which involves a process of mutual learning that reflects the real and specific needs of rural women.

Today at Shehu Musa Yar'Dua Center, Women from various parts of Africa have converged to Celebrate Africa, to Celebrate our different diversities but more so use This Platform, To speak one African Language of Women Driving Africa Forward by Empowering Our men, Our women and Our Children.

I take a moment to say: You Great Women are powerful, Transformative, change driver's beautiful hence we will provide opportunities for examining emerging issues and sharpening the approach to gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of rural women.

Main objectives

Spearheading The continued Creation of National policies that will Increase rural women's and girls' access to food and nutrition of adequate quality and quantity.

Spearheading The continued creation of policies that allow women and girl's own land Land rights highlight's ways various government's will strengthen the security of women's land tenure and food security within the context of Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.

National policies have increased rural women and girls' access to food and nutrition of adequate quality and quantity

Through modernization and globalization, the marginalization of female rural agricultural workers has been amplified. Multi-national corporations (MNCs) have utilized arable land in Africa to erect cash crop farms that have negatively affected rural workers, especially women. Men have migrated to work in urban areas or commercialized crop factories, leaving women to tend to the agricultural duties on land, plots technically owned

by their husbands or Fathers (for a Majority) with no legal protection.

Globalization has also initiated many changes within rural Agriculture. The global agro-food industry intertwines agriculture and industry with rural and urban regions together.

Hence, African Government's acknowledging that rural women in the agriculture industry are marginalized and need support is vital. The creation of groups that provide technical and financial support, such as the Women's Bureau and Ministry of Culture, Social Services and Gender, to provide self-help aid to close the gap between gender inequality.

The government should instill a basic needs approach to development and creation of "A Strategy," which advocates for income-earning opportunities for women through gaining social welfare functions and the placing of females into commercial projects. These opportunities are specialized to make rural women visible as a disadvantaged group and eliminate income inequality while redefining gender roles.

Policies of the past have attempted to educate women and provide jobs outside of the agricultural realm. Conversely, women need education regarding legal rights and protection within the agriculture industry rather than attempting to move them out of it. (Africa has to be Food Secure).

Education as a policy and tool for women empowerment

Improving rural women's education is the single most important policy instrument to increase agricultural productivity and reduce poverty. Women's education also leads to lower birth rates and lower child mortality, as well as better health, nutrition, and educational outcomes for our children.

Since women in Africa are the custodians of food security and nutrition at the household level, improving their education is the most important policy instrument Africa can use to increase agricultural productivity, reduce poverty, and promote better health.

It is a known fact that education contributes significantly to sustained rural income growth since education increases the ability of farmers to allocate their resources more efficiently and know the nutritional value of the foods they consume. Furthermore, education will help the rural women to develop the skills needed to participate in knowledge intensive agriculture, adopt new technology and participate in marketing (locally and Globally).

Building on Present Potentials

It is an error to believe that rural women in Africa do

not possess skills and techniques which are an asset to the development process. Where groups already exist, capacity building of existing groups can be more successful than forming a new group to which members are less likely to be committed. Similarly, rural people are less likely to resist adoption of an innovation when the new technique is based upon a concept or procedure they are already familiar with or are currently using.

It is important for change agents to acquaint themselves with the organizations and knowledge systems available at the local level to determine how they can be improved, rather than assuming that nothing of significance is currently available.

For example, instead of forming entirely new groups for women, local informal work exchange or savings groups could be strengthened through short training exercises on farm book-keeping and record-keeping, leadership, and democratic procedures.

While groups have proven to be a highly successful mechanism, they are not a universal panacea or appropriate for meeting all women's needs in agriculture. The poorest women in particular can find the costs of participation (of time, for example) too high at times of seasonal stress or greatest need. Care is also needed to sort out situations where collective effort by groups is effective and where individual activity structured or accessed through group membership is more effective and efficient.

Supply related policies

- i. Subsidy on farm inputs, especially fertilizers, through involvement of the Government National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) in importing and distributing the inputs.
- ii. Improvement of research and extension services and improving their linkages.
- iii. Provision of rural credit for farming (e.g. the Kilimo Biashara Initiative)
- iv. Improvement in rural infrastructure, especially road network
- v. Development rural agricultural markets and agri-business skills
- vi. Improvement of the management and use of natural resources, especially water for irrigation
- vii. Allowing for imports of tax free maize and ban on exports
- viii. Providing farmers with planting materials and seeds, especially of the so-called 'orphan crops-drought tolerant' which can be grown in the arid and semi-arid areas.
- ix. Encouraging diversification of crops planted
- x. Encouraging the citizens to diversify their eating habits to other foods and avoid over-reliance on some foods.

xi. Improving the conditions under which food relief organizations operate so as food relief can reach many needy people.

Price related policies

- i. Involvement of the NCPB or farmer group's in the National purchase of crops creating standardized prices higher than market prices to provide incentive to producers.
- ii. Providing subsidy to millers so has to bring down the consumer retail price (price subsidy to the consumers)
- iii. Raising the levels of the strategic food reserves in order to stabilize the food prices
- iv. Providing a fund to purchase livestock from the drought stricken areas
- v. Allowing private sector to import maize at tax free.

Income related policies

- i. Government's enhanced efforts to contribute the costs of social amenities e.g. through the free education programme and reduced costs of health at public health facilities.
- ii. This enables the population especially the poor to have a little more disposal income to spend on food.
- iii. The Government transfer funds for development to the grassroots, especially the Constituency Development Fund –CDF and Local Authorities Transfer Fund – LATF, helps the local communities meet their development need while creating employment at the local develop for those people who can provide specialized skills and labor.
- iv. Assisting in establishing producer and marketing associations (common interest groups) for farmers to enable them exploit the economies skill through collective action.

In Kenya, Under the Vision 2030, The Government Led by His Excellency The President of The Republic of Kenya, Dr. William Samoe Ruto has identified the following seven flagship projects for implementation:

- Agricultural policy reforms
- Three-tiered fertilizer cost reduction
- Branding Kenya farm produce
- Establishment of livestock disease free zones and processing facilities
- Creation of publicly accessible land registries
- Development of agricultural land use master plan
- Development of irrigation schemes.

Of which I believe is a guide towards ways the government of Kenya is seeking to strengthen the security of women's land tenure and food security.

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As with other countries, the Government's have to responded to the food productions and security

crises through the following major policy intervention.

Policies can no longer be described as gender-neutral, as that will not provide any meaningful change and shadows the true issue at hand. Genderized discourse within policy creation for agricultural protection for women needs to be emphasized. Once African Government accepts policies that rectify women's disadvantaged position in the economic and social realm by facilitating women's legal access to land, transformation can begin.

Once legislation is installed that legally and explicitly protects women's rights, food production will increase and women will be able to compete against MNCs.

Success of women's legal rights will be evaluated by the ability of women to compete in the agriculture industry. Percentages of farm plots under women's names will be analyzed and the Land Tenure Reform Act must be revised. Protection against forced migration due to MNCs will help women maintain their land through the enforcement of the new land tenure legislation.

Rural women sensitization

Rural women should be sensitized to the stipulation that in Africa Food production and Security is for all genders. It is, therefore, imperative That Africa's Governments hold civic education sessions for women and educate them on the same.

Involvement of Rural Women in planning and implementation of various projects.

Rural women should also be involved in the planning and implementation of various projects that have an impact on their lives. They should be actively involved in the identification, planning and implementation of water, silos for food storage, energy and road infrastructure projects.

Adapt programmes to women's needs and skills.

Allow sufficient time to enable rural women to acquire new skills and adjust schedules to fit rural women's existing workloads.

Provide training in agricultural and other productive activities, not just home and family welfare topics.

Emphasize activities for which there is an actual income-generation potential.

Ensure the involvement and full participation of rural women from poorer and less educated backgrounds.

Use trainers who are not only technically competent and up-to-date, but who empathize with the needs and aspirations of rural women.

Provide practical field experience in the use of

innovations.

Shift more resources to village-based training rather than residential training.

In Conclusion

Regardless of the rhetoric surrounding gender issues in agriculture and the countless research projects and women's studies, the important question to be considered is: Have rural women benefitted from these efforts?

Rural women in developing countries are only interested in concrete actions - whether more and better projects for women are actually implemented and whether more women are supported in their efforts to solve their problems on the road to self-determination.

I believe we are the key actors to Good Governance: I believe in The Empowerment of all genders. I believe in a Much Better Africa, Where the Generations and Generations to come will pride in being Food Secure. I believe we are a working in Progress. I take this opportunity to applaud our Various Countries/Nations, for mile stones achieved since colonization. (giving reference to one of our young leaders back in Kenya, We are Africa and Africa is our Business).

Lastly, With Acknowledgment from The Presidency, His Excellency Dr. William Samoe Ruto, The Executive, The Legislators, The Judiciary and The Great People of The Republic of Kenya. I wish to take this Humble opportunity to inform you That one of our own, The Right Hon. Raila Amollo Ondiga, Our Former Prime Minister, A Great and humble Leader, has been nominated for The position of The African Union, Chairperson. Kenya request humbly for The support and vote of Every African Nation Represented Here today at Shehu Musa Yar'Dua Center. We humbly request for an opportunity, to serve Africa. Thankyou.

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Embracing a Healthy Lifestyle

- Prince Anthony Ozigbo

INTRODUCTION

A. Embracing a healthy lifestyle is crucial for everyone, but for women, it has unique and profound implications. A healthy lifestyle encompasses a balanced diet, regular physical activity, adequate sleep, stress management, and preventative health care. For women, adopting these practices is essential not only for personal well-being but also for fulfilling various roles in the society, from caregiver to professional. This improved quality of life, enhanced productivity, and reduced risk of chronic diseases. This essay delves into myriad reasons why women should embrace healthy living and a healthy lifestyle.

B. PHYSICAL HEALTH

1. A healthy lifestyle significantly reduces the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes

and cancer. For example, regular physical activity helps maintain a healthy weight, improves cardiovascular health, and boosts the immune system.

A balanced diet rich in fruit, vegetables, proteins and whole grains provides essential nutrients that support bodily function and ease prevention.

2. Reproductive Health

Women's reproductive health is influenced by overall health. A healthy lifestyle can improve menstrual regularity, reduce symptoms of PMS and increase fertility. During pregnancy, maintaining a healthy lifestyle is crucial for the health of both the mother and developing baby. Adequate nutrition and regular exercise can prevent complications such as gestational diabetes and pre-eclampsia.

3. Bone Health

Women are at higher risk of osteoporosis compared to men, especially post menopause due to decreased estrogen levels. Engaging in weight bearing exercise and ensuring adequate intake of calcium and vitamin D are essential for maintaining bone density and preventing fractures.

C. MENTAL HEALTH

1. Stress Reduction

Women often juggle multiple roles and responsibilities leading to high level of stress. Healthy living practices such as regular exercise, Mindfulness, and adequate sleep can significantly reduce stress level. Exercise releases endorphins, which are natural mood lifters and Mindfulness practices such as meditation can help manage anxiety and depression.

D. EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

1. Self Esteem and Body Image

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle can improve body Image and self Esteem. Regular exercise and a balanced diet helps to achieve and maintain a healthy weight which can enhance self confidence. Additionally, the sense of accomplishment from meeting fitness goals can emotional well-being.

2. Social Connection Engaging in group activities such as fitness classes or sports can foster social interactions and support networks. These Social interactions are important for emotional health, providing a sense of community and belonging.



THE RISE OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN NIGERIA:

A Tapestry of Resilience, Innovation, and Transformation

Across Nigeria's dynamic landscapes, from the bustling markets of Lagos to the agrarian communities of the Niger Delta and the entrepreneurial hubs of Abuja, a powerful revolution is unfolding. Nigerian women are stepping into roles of influence, creativity, and authority, rewriting narratives and reshaping the nation's destiny. These leaders are not merely breaking barriers; they are weaving new possibilities into the fabric of society, merging ancestral wisdom with modern innovation to drive progress. Nigerian women are known for the irrefragance, intelligence, and determination in the face of numerous challenges. Despite cultural, economic, and social obstacles, they continue to break barriers, excel in various fields, and contribute significantly to national development. Their strength is evident in multiple areas, including family life, education, business, politics, and activism.

Nigerian women have a remarkable ability to endure and overcome difficulties. Whether in rural or urban areas, they play critical roles in sustaining families, often juggling multiple responsibilities. Many Nigerian women run businesses, care for their households, and pursue education simultaneously, proving their ability to handle multiple challenges with grace and determination. Even in difficult economic

conditions, they find ways to support their families, often engaging in small-scale trade, agriculture, and entrepreneurship. Long before colonialism, Nigerian women held sacred roles as leaders, warriors, and cultural custodians. Figures like Queen Amina of Zazzau, who expanded her kingdom's reach through military strategy in 16th-century northern Nigeria, and Moremi Ajasoro, the Yoruba heroine who sacrificed to protect her people in ancient Ile-Ife, exemplify a legacy of courage and wisdom. Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti, the fiery feminist and anti-colonial activist, mobilized Abeokuta market women in the 1940s against oppressive colonial taxes, earning the title "Lioness of Lisabi." These foremothers laid the groundwork for a leadership ethos rooted in community, resilience, and collective upliftment—principles that continue to inspire today.



DR.
FOLASHADE
ARIKE AYOADE

In 21st-century Nigeria, women are scaling unprecedented heights across sectors: In the political sector, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of the WTO, has redefined global trade with a focus on equity. Oby Ezekwesili, co-founder of the #BringBackOurGirls movement and former Education Minister, remains a vocal advocate for transparency and girls' education. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, champions sustainable

development, leveraging her roots as Nigeria's former Environment Minister to link grassroots realities to global policy. The presence of strong female political figures, such as Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia and Aisha Yesufu of Nigeria, serves as an inspiration for other women to engage in leadership and activism. Even in the Public Health sector, we have warriors like Prof. Dora Akunyili, who as Director-General of NAFDAC, waged a fearless war against counterfeit drugs, saving countless lives despite assassination attempts and Dr. Stella Ameyo Adadevoh, the physician who identified and contained Nigeria's first Ebola case in 2014, sacrificed her life to prevent a national epidemic. Funke Opeke, founder of MainOne, revolutionized Nigeria's digital infrastructure, while Mosunmola Abudu, CEO of EbonyLife TV, reshaped Africa's media landscape and Tara Fela-Durotoye, the pioneer of Nigeria's beauty industry, empowered thousands through entrepreneurship; these women all excelled in their capacity as Economic Architects. These women embody Omoluabi—the Yoruba philosophy of integrity and service—transforming leadership into a tool for societal advancement.

There is an exciting rise in a new generation of fearless women. Nigeria's youth (70% under 30) are its greatest asset. Young women are leading digital revolutions, activism, and creative industries: In Tech, Damilola Olokesusi (Co-founder of Shuttlers) reimagines urban mobility, while Jessica Anuna's Klasha bridges e-commerce across Africa. In Activism, The Feminist Coalition, led by Damilola Odufuwa and Odunayo Eweniyi, galvanized youth during the 2020 EndSARS protests. Rinu Oduala continues advocating for police reform. Aisha Yessuf is one woman who keeps fighting the fight of the people for the people #Revolution Now protest. Concerning Adventurers & Creatives, Pelumi Nubi, the British-Nigerian traveller who drove solo from the UK to Lagos in 2024, shattered stereotypes about women in exploration. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's global literary influence, the strides Funke Akindele takes in the entertainment industry and business sector are also worthy of note, and Tiwa Savage's Afrobeat dominance redefines cultural narratives. Initiatives like SheLeads Africa and the Lagos-based Girls in Tech Nigeria nurture this generation, providing mentorship and platforms to thrive.

Beyond formal sectors, Nigerian women are the backbone of homes and communities. In rural villages, they manage farms, sustain local economies through informal trade, and lead

communal welfare groups. In urban centers, market women like the legendary "Mama Put" food vendors and textile traders of Lagos' Balogun Market fuel the informal economy, often reinvesting earnings into their children's education. Women's collectives, such as the Omu titleholders in Igbo culture or the Egbe Omo Obinrin Yoruba women's associations, resolve disputes, fund raise for schools, and preserve cultural traditions.

In conflict zones like the Northeast, women like Hauwa Abdu Bura, a midwife in Borno, deliver babies under Boko Haram's shadow, embodying resilience. Meanwhile, mothers displaced by violence often become de facto community leaders, organizing shelters and advocating for aid.

Despite progress, systemic hurdles persist. Gender disparities in education, particularly in northern Nigeria where 60% of out-of-school children are girls, cultural norms like early marriages, and political underrepresentation (women hold just 7% of National Assembly seats) remain stark. The World Bank notes that Nigerian women contribute 41% to agricultural labour yet face limited land ownership. In conflict zones like the Northeast, women bear the brunt of Boko Haram's violence but are sidelined in peace talks.

Yet, Nigerian women turn adversity into agency. Organizations like the Nigerian Women Trust Fund and Women in Management, Business, and Public Service (WIMBIZ) amplify advocacy. Tech innovators like Odunayo Eweniyi (PiggyVest) democratize financial access, while NGOs like the Dorothy Njemanze Foundation combat gender-based violence.

Nigeria's Daughters, the World's Teachers, from Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti's defiant protests to Pelumi Nubi's boundary-breaking journey, Nigerian women teach us that leadership is not confined to titles; it thrives in homes, markets, and communities. They blend compassion with grit, tradition with innovation, and local action with global vision. As the Igbo proverb says, "Onye aghana nwanne ya" (Be your brother's keeper). Nigerian women live this ethos daily, proving that sustainable progress is impossible without their wisdom at the helm. In their hands, leadership becomes a symphony—of voices once silenced, now singing a future into being. The world would do well to listen.

"If you educate a man, you educate an individual. If you educate a woman, you educate a nation."—
African Proverb



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The Global Clusters:



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

- Adekunle Azeez Badmus, *The Global President Global Clusters*

In an era marked by rapid change and global competition, The Global Clusters stands out as a bold force for redefining empowerment and sustainable prosperity. This thriving community of professionals, entrepreneurs, technocrats, and innovators, led by Global President Ambassador Dr. Adekunle Badmus, has unveiled a transformative model designed to uplift lives worldwide.

At the core of the organization's strategy is the S.P.A.R.K. HUB Framework, a unique, seven-dimensional blueprint for holistic empowerment. It equips members with practical tools, strategic networks, and mindset reorientation essential for global relevance and personal success. The S.P.A.R.K. HUB acronym represents:

- **Sabificate Revolution:** Prioritizing practical skills over certificates, derived from "Sabi" (to know), emphasizing real-world abilities for lasting success.
- **People-to-People Revolution:** Fostering authentic human connections, mentoring, and replicating success to spark widespread empowerment.
- **Accurate Knowledge Revolution:** Promoting precise, transformational information while combating misinformation.
- **Rewiring the Mind (Mind Surgery):** Cultivating a progressive, success-driven mindset by challenging limiting beliefs.
- **Kindness & Love Revolution:** Championing compassion, empathy, collaboration, and genuine love as pillars of societal growth.
- **Humanity Revolution:** Advancing people-centered, inclusive progress that prioritizes human welfare and potential.
- **Universal Connections Revolution:** Building strategic, authentic global networks to drive collective prosperity.
- **Building Impactful Lives:** Ensuring measurable empowerment, personal growth, and sustainable success for all members.

Complementing the S.P.A.R.K. HUB framework are powerful flagship initiatives providing exclusive advantages to "Clusterians". Some of these, as shared by Ambassador Dr. Badmus, are

1. The A.R.E Concept (Agriculture, Real Estate and Export): an innovative investment initiative that strategically integrates the growth potential of agriculture, the stability of real estate, and the global reach of export.
2. Cow to Currency Project: Exclusively designed to bridge the gap between agriculture, investment, and commerce.
3. GQL Concept (Grants, Quality Education, and Lifetime Empowerment) a revolutionary, integrated program designed to empower individuals through a holistic approach encompassing financial support, quality education, and sustained personal and professional development.

With this multifaceted approach, The Global Clusters is not merely building a network—it is reshaping how empowerment and prosperity are achieved in today's world.

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Building Momentum as a Transformative & Visionary Leader

- Amb. HK. Bello from Ehinogbe, Owo, Ondo -

To Unlock the secrets to becoming a transformative leader who fuels success in the lives of their followers, Leadership must shape the atmosphere of any political as well as government setting and serves as the cornerstone of success in the life of every government. Too often, we place blame on followers or tools for results, forgetting that as leaders, we hold the key to shaping results.

Every action you take as a leader matters—how you treat your followers, how you speak, how you shake hands, how you greet others, even how you eat. Great leaders don't just react, they anticipate, innovate, and inspire. Being a visionary isn't about having all the answers; it's about seeing possibilities where others see limitations.

These actions set the tone and create the norms within your political circle. Leaders must be mindful not only of others but also of themselves, as they

lead by example in all things.

Relationship are the foundation of leadership so what you do to get along with people and attract people to you goes along way.

Great leaders really care about the people on their team. They see their role as being a supportive guide and mentor, helping everyone shine and reach their full potential. When leaders invest in their people, it creates a warm, collaborative atmosphere where everyone can thrive together, leading to amazing results for the whole team. That's what great leaders do. Remember, leadership is all about lifting up people, nurturing skills, and opening doors for political growth while building a tight-knit community with a shared sense of purpose. Ultimately, when leaders prioritize the development and well-being of their followers, they set the stage for remarkable achievements that benefit not just the individuals but the Government as a whole.



BECOMING A TEACHER- PRENEUR

Teacherpreneurs are educators who embrace entrepreneurial thinking and actions, often creating online courses, resources or businesses related to teaching and learning.

They explore the intersection of teaching and entrepreneurship, highlighting educators who leverage their skills and passion to create innovative educational ventures and impact the field of education.

Mindful of the challenging economic situation in most countries, many teachers have recently been inclined to navigating their noble profession with entrepreneurial skills in a bid to benefit from multiple streams of income, thus increasing the quality of life and sustainable financial growth for themselves and family.

Their desire to enhance their impact, innovate in education and significantly supplement their income via an array of investment opportunities outside the classroom is considered the propeller for this shift.

Worthy of note is that, teacherpreneurship can potentially contribute to educational innovation, professional development and the introduction/development of new teaching methods tailored to solving problems and creating wealth at the same time by learners. A myriad of activities carried out by a teacherpreneur includes but not limited to:

- Creating and selling educational resources or articles. For example, writing resourceful textbooks, lesson plans, online courses amongst others.
- Developing and running educational workshops or summer camps.
- Starting educational technology companies
- Consulting with schools or districts on educational practices. Teacherpreneurship is beneficial to teachers in a plethora of ways.

Firstly, there is an increased professional recognition and leadership opportunities within the community and beyond the geographic location of the teacher.

Secondly, it creates opportunities to collaborate with other educators and experts outside of traditional school settings.

Moreso, teacherpreneurship leads to enhanced skills in areas like marketing, branding, public

**MRS.
IMMACULATE
NCHANGON**

*Teacher of Law & Government,
GBTHS - Yaounde, Cameroon.
TeacherpreneurCEO - Loam's Beauty*

speaking and business management.

However, inspite of the juicy advantages teacherpreneurship can bring, it is important to note that it does not go without challenges such as navigation the complexities of starting and running a business, maintaining a strong connection to their passion for teaching while pursuing entrepreneurial ventures, balancing teaching responsibilities with entrepreneurial activities amongst others.

Inspite of the aforementioned challenges, it is safe

to say that teacherpreneurship is the way forward and the illuminated future for teachers in this ever changing global economy as their role in shaping the future of education is increasingly important taking into consideration the rise of online learning and educational technology which is creating new opportunities for the 21st century teacher with a drive to becoming a teacherpreneur.



Mastering Lifestyle Choices for Life long Health:

▶ A Global Health Perspective by Dr. Jaïyesimi

As a medical professional with over two decades of experience in public health and clinical practice, I have seen how lifestyle choices directly influence global health outcomes. While medical advancements have improved healthcare standards, the rising prevalence of chronic and incurable diseases emphasizes the need for strong preventive strategies. Drawing from my expertise in healthcare advocacy and community engagement, this article outlines how strategic lifestyle decisions can reduce disease risks and improve long-term well-being.

Global Burden of Chronic Diseases

Chronic diseases are a major public health concern worldwide, accounting for millions of deaths annually. Conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and respiratory disorders are increasingly prevalent across both high-income and low-income countries. While genetics may predispose individuals to these diseases, lifestyle behaviors are often the decisive factor in their onset and progression.

In regions like Africa, where healthcare infrastructure faces challenges, the impact of lifestyle choices on disease prevalence is even more pronounced. Poor access to preventive healthcare, combined with rising urbanization and changing dietary patterns, has resulted in an increase in non-communicable diseases. Efforts to promote healthier habits are essential to improving public health outcomes across the continent.

My years of experience in healthcare leadership

have shown that several lifestyle elements play critical roles in determining health outcomes. Diet and nutrition are pivotal, as diets loaded with processed foods, trans fats, and excessive sugars are linked to heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes. Conversely, diets rich in fresh vegetables, fruits, lean proteins, and healthy fats enhance immunity and reduce the risk of chronic conditions. Physical inactivity is another major risk factor. Sedentary behavior significantly increases the likelihood of developing conditions such as hypertension, obesity, and metabolic syndrome. Incorporating regular physical activity, like walking, swimming, or resistance training, can mitigate these risks.

Tobacco use and excessive alcohol consumption are also significant contributors to health complications. Smoking is a major factor in respiratory diseases, cancer, and cardiovascular issues. Similarly, excessive alcohol consumption strains the liver, weakens the immune system, and contributes to long-term organ damage. Mental health and stress management are equally crucial. Uncontrolled stress elevates cortisol levels, increasing the risk of hypertension, diabetes, and depression. Techniques like mindfulness, meditation, and cognitive behavioral therapy help reduce stress and improve resilience.

Sleep quality plays a vital role in maintaining overall well-being. Insufficient sleep disrupts hormonal balance, impairs cognitive function, and weakens the immune system. Prioritizing 7-9 hours of restful sleep enhances mental clarity, mood stability, and physical recovery. Routine medical checkups are another essential component of preventive care. Regular health screenings allow for early detection and intervention for conditions like hypertension, diabetes, and cancer. Consistent checkups also provide opportunities for healthcare providers to recommend lifestyle modifications tailored to individual needs.

Drug and substance abuse remains a significant contributor to preventable health issues worldwide. Drugs such as opioids, methamphetamines, and recreational substances severely impact mental, cardiovascular, and respiratory health. Educating individuals on the dangers of substance abuse, combined with rehabilitation programs, is crucial to breaking the cycle of addiction. In regions like Africa,

substance abuse has become a growing concern among youth, exacerbated by socioeconomic challenges and limited access to mental health support. Targeted awareness campaigns, coupled with stronger rehabilitation programs, are essential to addressing this rising trend.

Practical steps to minimize disease risks and promote healthier lifestyles include embracing a diverse, nutrient-rich diet with antioxidant-rich foods that protect against inflammation and cellular damage. Engaging in a mix of cardio, strength training, and flexibility exercises improves cardiovascular function and metabolic health. Enrolling in support programs that provide counseling, resources, and peer support can assist in eliminating harmful habits. Incorporating mindfulness practices, yoga, and relaxation strategies helps regulate mental well-being. Establishing a consistent sleep schedule, reducing screen exposure before bedtime, and creating a calming nighttime routine are effective ways to enhance sleep hygiene.

Preventive health screenings remain critical in detecting conditions like hypertension, diabetes, and cancer early, facilitating timely intervention. Equally important are educational campaigns that highlight the risks associated with drug and substance abuse. Expanding rehabilitation services offers vital support for those battling addiction.

While some diseases remain incurable, lifestyle changes can significantly reduce symptoms and improve quality of life. For example, cognitive exercises, memory care routines, and social engagement improve mental clarity and delay the progression of Alzheimer's disease. Modern antiretroviral therapies help patients manage HIV/AIDS while maintaining productive lives. Parkinson's disease management can benefit from physical therapy, occupational adjustments, and personalized exercise routines that improve mobility and day-to-day functionality.

From my extensive involvement in healthcare advocacy, I have learned that preventive care is key to reducing the burden of chronic diseases. National initiatives that promote healthier diets, physical fitness, and improved access to preventive care have successfully reduced mortality rates in countries like Finland, Japan, and Canada. African countries are increasingly adopting similar strategies, investing in public

health campaigns and promoting community-based interventions to raise awareness about preventive healthcare. As a public health advocate, I actively support partnerships between healthcare providers, policymakers, and community leaders to improve access to healthcare services and increase public awareness.

The rise of chronic and incurable diseases poses a global challenge, yet strategic lifestyle

modifications offer powerful preventive solutions. By adopting healthier habits, prioritizing mental well-being, and engaging in preventive healthcare, individuals can significantly improve their quality of life. As a dedicated advocate for public health, I encourage healthcare institutions, governments, and communities to prioritize preventive care campaigns and expand access to healthcare services, ensuring a healthier, more sustainable future for generations to come.



AFRICAN REAL ESTATE FINANCING DEMANDS

- Ohiaogu Nnaedozie E

The African real estate market faces a significant challenge in meeting the growing demand for housing, driven by population growth and urbanization, requiring innovative financing solutions to bridge the gap between supply and demand. For the purpose of this article, we shall streamline this topic to the challenges it faces and the opportunities it offers using Africa as a case study.

Challenges:-The following are the challenges African real estate financing demands.

- Demand Outstripping Supply: Population growth, urbanization, and rising incomes are fuelling a surge in housing demand across Africa, particularly in urban areas.
- Affordable Housing Shortage: The supply of affordable housing often lags behind demand, creating a significant challenge for low-to-middle income earners.
- Financing Constraints: Access to long-term,

affordable housing finance is a major constraint for both developers and investors, leading to a focus on the higher end of the market.

- Institutional Weaknesses: Weak institutional frameworks, macroeconomic instability, and adverse legal and regulatory environments further hinder the efficient collateralization of housing assets and access to long-term finance.

Opportunities:- The increasing demand for housing, coupled with the growth of the middleclass, presents significant opportunities for real estate financing and investment.

- Focus on ESG: Green and ESG-linked property financing is gaining traction, with record-breaking activity in 2024, indicating a shift towards sustainable development.

- Specialization: Real estate developers and agents are advised to specialize in specific market segments to differentiate themselves.

- Short-term rentals: The rise in short-term

rentals presents an opportunity for property owners.

- Coastal Properties: Properties along the coast are expected to see a high increase in sales.
- Online Platforms: Online real estate platforms are becoming increasingly popular, providing a convenient and efficient way for buyers and investors to access properties.
- REITs: Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) offer a simple way to invest in real estate and diversify portfolios.
- Government and NGO Grants: Government and NGO grants can provide funding for property development projects.
- Mortgages: Banks offer flexible mortgage solutions to finance property

Key Factors Driving Demand:

- Population Growth: Africa's population is rapidly growing, leading to a greater need for housing.
- Urbanization: People are migrating to urban areas in search of economic opportunities, further straining the housing market.
- Rising Incomes: As incomes rise, people have more disposable income to spend on housing and other amenities.
- Youthful Demographics: Many African countries

have a large youth population, which will contribute to future demand for housing.

Examples of Real Estate Financing Opportunities:

- Mortgages: Banks offer mortgage solutions to finance property purchases.
- Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs): REITs allow investors to pool their funds and invest in a portfolio of income-generating properties.
- Green and ESG-Linked Financing: Investors are increasingly interested in financing sustainable real estate projects.
- Off-Plan Sales: Developers can secure funding by offering properties for sale before construction is completed.
- Partnerships: Developers can leverage partnerships with other companies to secure funding and expertise.
- Government and NGO Grants: Government and NGO grants can provide funding for specific projects.

In summary, having seen the challenges and opportunities facing the African real estate financing demands, it is worthy to note that the key factors driving demand includes, population growth, urbanization, rising incomes and youthful demographics in African.

THE LAW of RECIPROCITY

**DR AMAKA
OFORBUKE**

FOUNDER INTELLIGENT BELIEVERS
NETWORK INTERNATIONAL AND
BROKEN EDGES FOUNDATION

The law of life is the law of reciprocity. Life is good when you are happy, but better when others are happy with you and best when others are happy because of you. When you acquire some wealth you make a living but when others live from your wealth you make a life. The life you make is what gives you life in the world beyond. A candle light loses nothing by lightening the other instead it increases the degree of illumination thereby eliminating every whiff of darkness. The great idea you share today is what another can use to transform the world tomorrow for the betterment of all human race.

The ladder of success can never be crowded at the top. The children you rear today shall sustain you tomorrow. The soul you save today may be the cause for your glimmer of hope in the valley of despondency tomorrow. No matter how powerful you are, you cannot bury yourself when you die. The usefulness of your life is dependent upon the number of lives you positively impart.

Nothing in nature lives for itself. Every life has a role to play in the midst of lives. The seed you sow in the lives of others is what you reap in your own life. A wet land releases some water to the atmosphere in the form of vapour and the sky in reciprocity sends a downpour to the earth. Rivers do not withhold their own water but flows into the sea and thus keep receiving from the tributaries. The same is applicable to the sea which flows into the ocean and receives from the rivers.

The ground provides nourishment to plants which grow and bear fruits. The plants do not eat their own fruits but serve as food for animals which later die and decay to enrich the soil for the growth of plants. In this way, there is mutual cycle of reciprocal synergism. The sun does not shine for itself. Flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves. The bees do not lick their own honey.

Mothers don't suck their own breast. Men cannot impregnate themselves and women cannot reproduce on their own. All depends on the reciprocal effect of one another.

Living for others is a law of nature as well as the law of life. The moment you stop living for others is the moment you start dying. When the sea stops flowing into an ocean, it becomes a dead Sea which is full of dirt, stinky and useless. When a nursing mother stops breastfeeding her child postpartum, the breast gets engorged, becomes painful and often gets ulcerated with a greater potential to malignant transformation.

When you fail to express love to your neighbor through various acts of charity, you tend to suppress your spiritual vitality and grieve your soul. Love is a natural tendency that should be allowed to flow ad infinitum. We were all born to help each other at any point in time. No matter the predicament you find yourself in, still do good to others. True joy consists not on what you do to yourself but what you do to others in the spirit of love. The law of nature is the law of selflessness. The law of selflessness is the law of love. The law of love is the law of reciprocity and the law of reciprocity is the law of life. Shalom shabat



**OGOCHUKU
OKEKPOLO**

THE FOUNDATIONS OF COLLABORATION

Unlocking Opportunities for Growth and Impact

Let's be real collaboration has become such a buzzword that people throw it around without really thinking about what it means. We hear it in boardrooms, at networking events, and even on social media. But what does it really mean to collaborate? More importantly, how do you make it work for you?

Over the years, I have come to realize that collaboration is not just about working with

others – it is about creating something bigger and better than you ever could alone. Think of it as a potluck: you bring your special dish, others bring theirs, and together, you create a feast. But if you just show up empty-handed expecting to eat, well – let's just say people will notice!

So, let's break it down. What is collaboration, how do you position yourself for it, and why should you care?

What Is Collaboration?

At its heart, collaboration is about teamwork – but on a whole new level. It is not just about working alongside others; it's about aligning visions, pooling resources, and amplifying impact.

Great collaborations are like a well-choreographed dance – each person or organization plays a unique role, and when done right, the result is magical. But if you've ever danced with someone who keeps stepping on your toes, you know that alignment is key!

How to Position Yourself (or Your Organization) for Collaboration

So, how do you make yourself collaboration-ready? Here's the secret sauce:

1. Shift Your Mindset

Drop the scarcity mindset! Collaboration isn't about competition; it's about synergy. You don't lose by sharing your expertise or connections – in fact, you gain. Think win-win, not me versus them.

2. Build Real Relationships

Nobody likes that person who only shows up when they need something. The best collaborations come from authentic relationships. Connect with people, attend industry events, and be genuinely interested in what others are doing. When the time comes to collaborate, the trust is already there.

3. Be a Valuable Partner

Here is a hard truth: nobody wants to collaborate with someone who does not bring anything to the table. Identify your strengths – what do you do exceptionally well? What value can you offer? Whether you're an individual or a business, being reliable and resourceful makes you the kind of partner people want to work with.

Why Should You Care? (AKA, The Benefits of Collaboration)

Still not convinced. Here is why you should be:

- **Faster Growth:** Why struggle alone when you can scale faster with the right partners?
- **Access to New Opportunities:** Collaborations open doors – new markets, new networks, and new ideas.
- **Innovation on Steroids:** Different perspectives spark creativity and lead to ground-breaking ideas.
- **Shared Risks and Costs:** Big projects become less scary when the weight is shared.
- **Enhanced Credibility:** Being associated with the right people or organizations boosts your reputation.

Final Thoughts: Collaboration Is the Future

The truth is, no one succeeds alone. The most influential people and organizations have mastered the art of collaboration. Africa, with its rich culture of community and togetherness, is primed for this.

So, my challenge to you is this: Take a look at your network. Who can you team up with to create something amazing? Who complements your strengths? Who shares your vision?

The future belongs to those who build bridges instead of walls. Will you be one of them?

I would love to hear your thoughts! Let's connect and explore.

Together We Create Magic!

A portrait of Dr. DDeepika Saini, a woman with dark hair, wearing a dark blue sari with gold stripes. She is smiling and has a nose ring. The background is a solid yellow circle.

DR DDEEPIKA SAINI

Dr. DDeepika Saini, Founder of Institute for Alternative Dispute Resolution is an Entrepreneur, Lawyer, Social-activist, Management Expert, Business Coach/consultant and an Author of the Amazon's bestseller book "Power Beam". She has significantly focused on issues related to women to enkindle self-reliance, child education, financial training, gender inequality and social justice/legal reforms.

She is heading India's country chair for Digital Literacy in Mission G-100. Academically is a BBA, MBA, holds a PGDBM – Finance & Banking, and has also done LLB, LLM and Doctorate from

reputed Institutions.

She has won several entrepreneurship, corporate and social service excellence awards. She has a rich experience of 14 years in Credit, Legal and Risk Management. Recently she has been awarded with Best women entrepreneur for the year 2022. During her career, she worked for several portfolios – System Automation, Logistics giants, IT and Medical international clients/partners representing in 97 countries worldwide, and has delivered her knowledge/expertise with a client-centric mindset.

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.

The Power of REGULATORY COMPLIANCE:

A Key Driver of Success for Women-Led Businesses Globally

As the world celebrates the growing number of women-led businesses, it's essential to highlight the importance of regulatory compliance in driving their success. Women-led businesses are making significant contributions to the global economy in the food, beverage, cosmetics, and herbal products industries. However, to ensure their long-term success and sustainability, they must prioritize regulatory compliance.

Regulatory compliance guarantees that products meet the required standards, reducing the risk of harm to consumers. This, in turn, builds trust and loyalty among customers. Compliance with regulatory requirements also opens up new markets and opportunities for women-led businesses. By meeting international standards, companies can export their products, increasing their revenue and contributing to the country's GDP.

Moreover, regulatory compliance demonstrates a company's commitment to quality, safety, and customer satisfaction. This enhances the brand's reputation, attracting more customers and investors. Women-led businesses that prioritize regulatory compliance also contribute significantly to the economy. By creating jobs, generating revenue, and paying taxes, these businesses help stimulate economic growth.

In Nigeria, for example, women-led businesses must comply with regulations from agencies such as:

- 1. Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC):** Responsible for registering and regulating businesses in Nigeria.
- 2. National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC):** Ensures

the quality and safety of food, drugs, and other regulated products.

3. Intellectual Property Rights: Protects businesses' intellectual property, such as trademarks, patents, and copyrights.

4. Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC): Promotes and regulates Nigeria's non-oil exports.

5. Consumer Protection Council (CPC): Protects consumers' rights and interests.

A shining example of the benefits of regulatory compliance is Tu2minis Place Limited, a Nigerian company founded by Mrs. Ngozi Enite-Okoro. Tu2minis Place Limited produces NAFDAC-approved drinks, demonstrating the company's commitment to regulatory compliance. By prioritizing compliance, Tu2minis Place Limited has ensured the quality and safety of its products, gained a competitive edge in the market, and contributed to Nigeria's economic growth.


In conclusion, regulatory compliance is essential for women-led businesses in the food, beverage, cosmetics, and herbal products industries. By prioritizing compliance, these businesses can ensure product quality and safety, increase market access, enhance their brand reputation, and contribute to economic growth. As we celebrate the achievements of women-led businesses, let us also emphasize the importance of regulatory compliance in driving their success.

Mrs. Ngozi Enite-OKORO

MCILG, MCIPM

Accredited Management Trainer





— DR. UCHE
IFUKOR

The Blessings of Conflict

Let's cut through the politeness: conflict is messy, painful, and often destructive. It tears through communities, leaves bodies on streets, breaks families apart, and turns dreams into dust. But here's a truth most people won't admit—conflict is also necessary. Not desirable, but necessary. And if we're honest, it's often the only thing that wakes a sleeping system.

You won't hear that in boardrooms or government press releases. But anyone who's worked deep in the heart of communities—where real people live, bleed, and rise again—knows this truth: conflict brings clarity. It drags injustice into the light. It exposes hypocrisy. It breaks fake peace and forces us to confront the rot beneath the surface.

Conflict Is a Loud Alarm

In Africa, we've been trained to fear conflict. To silence dissent. To sweep grievances under the rug until they explode. But conflict doesn't just show up for fun. It is a symptom—a sign that something fundamental is broken: trust, fairness, inclusion, opportunity.

That youth protests? It's not about a palliative handout. It's about being shut out for too long. That farmer-herder clash? It's not just land—it's decades of neglect, marginalization, and government failure. That political upheaval? It's power trying to preserve itself while people cry

out for change.

Conflict says: *"Wake up. Things aren't working."*

The Blessing? It Forces a Reckoning

Here's the raw blessing of conflict: it doesn't allow us to pretend. It demands answers. It forces stakeholders to the table. It pulls down the walls of fake unity and exposes what's real.

And once we're here—once everything is out in the open—we have two options: destruction, or transformation. Conflict is fire. Yes, it burns. But fire also refines, it purifies, it clears the old to make space for something better.

Real Change Has Never Come Without Tension

Let's not romanticize peace. Peace without justice is just silence. Real, lasting peace always comes after tough conversations, accountability, painful truths, and yes—conflict. That's the story of every liberation struggle, every civil rights movement, every revolution that's ever meant anything.

Conflict is not the problem. Our refusal to face what causes it—that's the real issue.

Innovation Grows in the Cracks

I've seen conflict-affected communities create their own justice systems when the courts failed them. I've seen young people turn trauma into movements. I've watched villages with no running

water organize stronger leadership structures than some city councils.

When systems collapse under the weight of conflict, the survivors innovate. They build what the state ignored. They find each other. That's the untold beauty of it—people become more honest, more resilient, more powerful.

If You Want to Lead in Africa, Learn to Handle Conflict

Too many African leaders think avoiding conflict is leadership. It's not. Real leadership walks into the fire—listens, engages, and charts a new path. Not by force, but by truth.

As a conflict specialist, I'm not in the business of peacekeeping for comfort's sake. I'm in the business of transformation. My role is to help communities, governments, companies—people—see what conflict is showing them. To help them harness it, not run from it.

No Progress Without Pressure

If you're uncomfortable reading this, good. Conflict should make you uncomfortable. That's the point. Pressure creates movement. Friction generates energy. And if Africa is going to become what it must be, we need to stop running from conflict and start learning from it.

We must stop managing symptoms and start addressing root causes. That means listening—not to reply, but to understand. That means investing

in peace building like we invest in infrastructure. That means honoring the brave voices who speak truth in dangerous times.

Final Word: Conflict Is a Doorway

Conflict is not the end of the world. It's the doorway to a new one. And if we're bold enough to walk through it—with humility, with courage, and with truth—what waits on the other side is not just peace, but justice. Not just stability, but transformation.

Africa doesn't need less conflict. It needs better conflict—honest, truth-telling, power-shifting conflict. The kind that births something real.

And that, my friends, is the blessing.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DR. UCHE IFUKOR is a veteran conflict management expert with over two decades of hands-on experience navigating the complex terrains of Nigeria's Niger Delta. His work has spanned critical interventions in militancy uprisings, inter-cult clashes, and grassroots peace building, where he has designed and implemented impactful programmes aimed at de-escalating violent conflicts and restoring community harmony. He currently serves as the Corporate Community Relations Manager at Seplat Energy Plc, where he continues to lead strategic engagement efforts across diverse stakeholder groups.



*- Pastor
Mrs Dorothy
Eseonye*

The Paradigm Shift:

Africa, Let's tell our History

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The Paradigm Shift: *Africa, Let's tell our History*

A paradigm is how we see the world, how we understand people, places, or ideas. But here's the truth: perception isn't always reality. You can look at someone for the first time and assume all the wrong things. A managing director can be mistaken for a driver, and a messenger for a CEO — just because of how they look.

And this — this is exactly what's been happening to Africa.

AFRICA, MAMA AFRICA!

People have seen you, misunderstood you, mislabeled you, and unfortunately, made you start believing their version of who you are. They boxed you in, called you third world, poor, underdeveloped. They told the world your story — from their own angle. And what did we do? We let them.

We've been degraded, downsized, and dismissed. The real tragedy? We bought into it.

OUR CULTURE IS GOLD

Africa is not just one thing — we are many nations, many languages, many traditions. Our food, our dress, our greetings, our music, our values — they are rich, beautiful, and full of life. From the east to the west, north to the south, our cultures shine with authenticity. But somehow, somewhere along the line, we started thinking they weren't good enough. Why?

NATURE GAVE US EVERYTHING

Look at our land. We've got the Sahara — the largest desert in the world. The Nile — the longest river on Earth. We sit on diamonds, gold, crude oil, and so many other natural resources. The world runs on what Africa holds.

But do we act like owners? No. We downplay it. We apologize for our blessings. We act like we need validation from outsiders. When in truth, they need us.

THE PROBLEM: A CULTURAL PARADIGM SHIFT

Somewhere, a shift happened. And it wasn't in our favor. We started believing that black is bad and white is good. We lightened our skin. Straightened our hair. Changed our accents. Started wearing heavy coats in 35°C heat just to feel "classy." Speaking through our noses, faking an identity that's not ours — just to feel accepted.

That's not change. That's erasure.

YES, CHANGE IS GOOD – BUT NOT AT THE COST OF WHO WE ARE

Let's be real — the world is evolving. Technology, healthcare, power, petrochemicals, AI — these are

amazing advancements. And we must embrace them. But let's not become so desperate for progress that we lose our soul in the process.

You can be African and innovative. You can be African and modern. We don't have to choose. We just have to be — fully, boldly, and proudly African.

RECLAIMING EDUCATION: TEACH OUR TRUTH

Education should open eyes — not close them. We need to:

- Teach African history as it is — not how colonizers wrote it.

- Use local languages, stories, and heroes to teach values and identity.

- Train students to question what they're told — to think, to challenge, and to see through lies.

Education shouldn't just produce workers. It should produce thinkers, builders, and changemakers — people who know who they are.

OWNING OUR STORIES THROUGH MEDIA

The media has painted Africa as poor, hungry, broken, and chaotic. But we know that's not all we are.

Let's teach our kids to:

- See through media bias.

- Use digital tools to tell real African stories.

- Create films, music, blogs, and art that reflect our truth, the way we live it.

If we don't own the narrative, someone else will keep distorting it.

RAISING TRUE LEADERS

Leadership is not just about sitting in high places. It's about responsibility. Vision. Sacrifice.

Our schools must:

- Start leadership training early at the community level.

- Show young people the weight of leadership, not just the perks.

- Set up mentorship platforms so older, wiser Africans can groom the next generation.

Enough of accidental leadership. We need intentional leaders.

IN CONCLUSION: THIS IS OUR SHIFT

This is the real paradigm shift, not just changing how the world sees us, but how we see ourselves.

It's a shift from shame to pride. From mimicry to originality. From being spoken for, to speaking for ourselves.

We are not just "black." We are brilliant, bold, blessed, and beautiful. We have skill, knowledge, resilience, strength, and wealth and we must stop hiding it.

It starts with us.

Let's stop waiting for the world to write our history.

Let's write it ourselves.

You and I — yes, we can.

\$ECURE YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE:

WHAT IF YOU
FALL SICK AND
CANNOT GO BACK
TO WORK?

Dr. Ntiasagwe, Innocent (CEO)
Dr. Ntiasagwe, Charity (COO)
Independent Licensed Financial Professionals

WHAT ACCOUNT DO YOU HAVE THAT WILL:

- Replace your income with Living Benefits
- Grow Tax Free
- Grow by Indexed and Compound Interest
- By-pass Probate Court
- Pay for your Children's College without Loans
- Create Generational Wealth
- Provide Terminal Illness Benefits (100%)
- Provide Critical and Chronic Illness benefits (90%)
- Allots for Liquidity & Flexibility

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The Silent Struggles:

*Contemporary Challenges
Women Face on Their
Leadership Journey*

"I lead because I must. I lead because the world needs what I carry as a mother, a woman, and a visionary." – **Anonymous African Leader**

Leadership today demands strength, vision, empathy, and, for many women, an extra layer of resilience. Whether in politics, business, civil service, or social advocacy, women across Nigeria and Africa are breaking barriers and setting new standards. But behind every celebrated milestone lies a story of silent battles: societal bias, personal sacrifices, and systemic challenges that continue to shape the female leadership experience.

For women, the journey to the top is rarely a straight path, it is often a balancing act between ambition, motherhood, societal expectations, and the burden of being "first" or "only" and often, this balancing is done amidst silent or hidden tears of pain, the hurt of having few or no support system at all and indeed the agonizing moments of self-doubt.

"They Called Me Ambitious Like It Was an Insult" That reflected many female executives I am privileged to have discussed with, listened to, or read their autobiography. These words mirror the experiences of many women who dare to lead in spaces historically dominated by men. Assertiveness in women is still often mistaken for arrogance, while leadership qualities like confidence or boldness are scrutinized more harshly. These societal double standards create emotional and psychological

*Halima
M. Usman*

barriers that can quietly stall progress.

Balancing Leadership and Motherhood

Many women begin their leadership ascent just as they are raising young families. The pressure to be everything to everyone can be overwhelming. Unfortunately, most African societies and workplaces are yet to offer the flexibility and structures needed to support this dual role. Without childcare support, many talented women are forced to choose between their careers and their children, but thank goodness for digitization, which encourages remote work options, this not without its challenges.

Yet, we see mothers like Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, who raised a family while climbing the ranks of global finance, proving that with the right support and personal drive, both dreams can coexist.

Access Denied: Networks, Mentors, and the “Old Boys’ Club”

Leadership thrives on access—access to information, networks, and mentors. But many women are excluded from informal spaces where decisions are made and deals are struck. They are not present at the golf meetings or the late-night strategy sessions. Even when included, they may find themselves talked over or underestimated.

In Nigeria, women like Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, Gambo Sawaba, Amina J. Mohammed, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Oby Ezekwesili, Binta Masi Garba, have carved out their seats at the table. Others are Wangari Maathai of Kenya, Joyce Banda – Former President of Malawi, Graça Machel, former first lady of Mozambique and South Africa, and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Liberia) – Africa’s First Female President, have similarly shattered the leadership ceiling, making it appear easy; however, their stories reveal that this journey is not without facing systemic resistance.

Glass Ceilings in Suits and Uniforms

Despite qualifications and years of experience, women are still paid less in some societies, promoted slower, and judged more harshly. The gender pay gap persists even in top-tier positions. In entrepreneurship, women-led startups receive significantly less funding than male-led ones, despite often outperforming them. Promotion at workplaces, including the uniform jobs, often requires navigating a culture of favoritism, male patronage, and limited female representation at the decision-making table. Societal expectations, where many cultures still expect women to prioritize family over career, create barriers to leadership.

Politics: The Final Frontier

In politics, the challenges multiply. Female

politicians face online abuse, media scrutiny focused on appearance rather than competence, and cultural resistance to women holding power. Nigeria remains one of the lowest-ranked countries in Africa in terms of women’s political representation, with women occupying less than 10% of elected positions.

Still, women like Senator Remi Tinubu and Hon. Nnenna Ukeje have defied these odds, pushing for more inclusive governance and laws that protect women and children.

Intergenerational Financial Disadvantages

Women face a range of financial challenges on their leadership journey, from access to capital and funding to unequal pay and economic exclusion. These financial hurdles often slow or even block the advancement of women into influential roles in business, politics, and public service.

Due to historic exclusion from financial systems and business networks, many women have limited access to financial education and training. This affects their confidence in managing funds, negotiating deals, or making strategic investments as leaders. Women disproportionately handle unpaid domestic work and caregiving responsibilities, limiting the time and energy they can devote to building wealth or pursuing income-generating leadership roles. This economic contribution, though vital, is often invisible and unrecognized in formal financial systems.

Because women often start with fewer financial resources than men—due to inheritance practices, education gaps, or societal restrictions—they’re more likely to take fewer financial risks or delay leadership pursuits until they feel “financially ready.”

Sexual Harassment: The Hidden Obstacle

From offices to campaign grounds, many women face unwanted advances, intimidation, or subtle forms of harassment that undermine their authority. Often, speaking out can cost a woman her job, reputation, or safety. Without strong institutional safeguards, these experiences remain unreported and unresolved.

The Weight of Representation

Sometimes, being a woman in leadership means being the only one in the room – the only female CEO, minister, or director. This comes with the burden of representing an entire gender. Mistakes are magnified, and pressure to “perform perfectly” can lead to burnout. Tokenism also means that some women are placed in leadership roles without the actual authority to make decisions – to tick a diversity box. In their book “Women and Leadership:

Real Live, Real Lessons,” Julia Gillard (one-time Prime Minister of Australia) and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala talked about how being the first and sometimes the only woman on the table felt. Carrying this weight often comes with opposition, sometimes from the very gender they were to represent.

Overcoming Internal Doubts: The Battle Within

Society often teaches women to doubt themselves, to stay in the background, and to wait to be chosen. I remember that while growing up, we were taught not to speak where men and elders are gathered unless permitted. The norm was that a woman should only be seen and not heard. This has led many high-performing women to struggle with impostor syndrome, feeling like they’re not qualified enough or worthy of their achievements. Haven’t many of us felt that way? But the tide is slowly changing as more women share their stories and build supportive communities.

Conclusion: A Call to Action

Leadership is not about gender it is about impact, vision, and responsibility. But until we build systems that allow women to thrive without sacrificing their identity, families, or peace of mind, true gender equity in leadership will remain a goal, not a reality.

The future of leadership in Africa depends on how well we empower our women – not just to rise but to

thrive. It is time for policies that support working mothers, inclusive leadership cultures, access to capital, and zero tolerance for harassment. When women lead, families grow, communities develop, and nations flourish. I believe strongly that as society continues to evolve, one thing remains clear: when women lead, everyone benefits.

About the author

Halima M. Usman works with the Federal Government. She is an award-winning poet, an author of 12 books and a passionate advocate for youth, women and children, and a familiar face at many Television Programmes. Her slogan “Turning Poetry to Action” has led her to organize and host several literary activities including the North-East Festival of Literature, Culture, Creativity and the Sciences (NEFLICCS), giving many children and youth a platform to discover and amplify their talents. Voices from the Camps, Almajiri Feed and Read Project, HalimaFactor Ambassadors Scheme as well as several skill acquisition and empowerment programmes where youth are equipped with Photography and Videography, Graphic Design, Public Speaking skills, leadership and mentoring opportunities, etc. All these she does under her NGO: The HalimaFactor Community Initiative.

Halima M. Usman is married and a mother of three children.

Legal Deposit in Nigeria:

The Lifeline for Access,
Preservation, and Posterity



In the heart of every nation lies its intellectual soul—preserved not only through education and memory but also through systems that archive its knowledge for generations to come. Legal deposit is that system for Nigeria. It is the lifeline that ensures the accessibility, usability, preservability, posterity, and bibliographic control of the nation's intellectual output.

In Nigeria, the responsibility to preserve the nation's documented heritage is not a choice—it is the law. This obligation is firmly rooted in the National Library of Nigeria Decree No. 6 of 1964 and the National Library Act No. 29 of 1970, which empower the National Library of Nigeria (NLN) to receive, preserve, and make available all published works in Nigeria.

The Legal Mandate

The laws clearly state that all individuals and institutions that publish materials within Nigeria must submit a

specified number of copies to the NLN. This system, known as legal deposit, is crucial for:

- Preserving Nigeria's intellectual and cultural heritage
- Facilitating research and access to knowledge
- Maintaining a comprehensive national bibliography
- Supporting educational and policy development

Failure to comply with these requirements not only undermines national documentation efforts but also violates statutory obligations.

Who Must Deposit and What to Submit

The National Library of Nigeria's legal deposit requirements are outlined as follows:

- Federal Government Ministries and Agencies are required to deposit 25 copies of each publication.
- State Government Institutions must submit 10 copies of each publication.
- Individual Authors and Private Publishers need to deposit 3 copies of each publication.

These submissions cover a wide array of materials, including:

- Print Publications: Books, policy papers, gazettes, journals, reports, research publications, etc.
- Electronic Publications: E-books, digital journals, podcasts, videos, CDs, DVDs, audiobooks, and other multimedia files.

Digital Inclusion: Modernising Legal Deposit

Recognising the shift towards digital publishing, the National Library of Nigeria encourages the submission of materials in accessible digital formats, such as:

- Text: PDF, DOC, EPUB
- Audio: Mp3
- Video: Mp4
- Multimedia: CD/DVD in standard formats

These formats make it easier to preserve and share Nigeria's intellectual contributions across platforms and generations.

Why Legal Deposit Matters

Legal deposit is a cornerstone of national documentation, with far-reaching benefits:

- Preserving National Memory: Ensures Nigeria's creative and intellectual legacy is not lost over time.
- Providing Public Access: Researchers, students, policymakers, and citizens benefit from a rich archive of publications.
- Enabling Bibliographic Control: Feeds into the Nigerian National Bibliography, ensuring organised

knowledge retrieval.

- Strengthening National Identity: Chronicles Nigeria's literary, policy, scientific, and cultural evolution.

How to Comply

All submissions—whether print or digital—must be properly packaged and delivered to:

The National Librarian

National Library of Nigeria Plot 274, Sanusi Dantata House Central Business District, Abuja

Email for digital copies and acknowledgements:

legallacknowledgementcopy@gmail.com

Each submission should include:

- A brief cover note stating the title, author, date, and number of copies
- Contact information for the sender
- A list of formats submitted (e.g., print, PDF, Mp4)

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CONCLUSION

Legal deposit is more than a legal obligation—it is a patriotic act of preservation. By depositing their works, authors, publishers, and institutions contribute to building Nigeria's permanent national memory. This system guarantees that the nation's knowledge, culture, and intellectual wealth are preserved, accessible, and never forgotten.

Complying with legal deposit laws is not just about fulfilling a mandate; it's about securing Nigeria's place in history—one publication at a time.

Entrepreneurship as a Catalyst for Africa's Economic Transformation

- TOLULOPE

National President Women in Energy Oil and Gas
Manager, Commercial Contracts Management, NLNG



Africa holds vast potential. With abundant natural resources, a young and growing population, and increasing connectivity, the continent has the ingredients for economic transformation. Yet many African countries still face deep-rooted challenges – high unemployment, poverty, and fragile infrastructure. One of the most effective levers to concretely address these issues is entrepreneurship.

Driving Economic Growth Through Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a proven engine for growth. Across Africa, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) form the backbone of most local economies, contributing to 80% of jobs in some countries. Entrepreneurs create markets where none existed, build value chains, and generate income across sectors—from agriculture to tech.

In recent years, African innovation has been on the rise. Tech hubs in Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa have produced globally competitive fintech startups, mobile solutions, and e-commerce platforms. Agribusiness entrepreneurs are applying smart technologies to boost yields and sustainability. Renewable energy ventures are bringing power to off-grid communities. These examples show how local entrepreneurs are not just solving African problems—they're building globally relevant solutions.

Challenges That Hinder Growth

Despite this momentum, several barriers still hold many entrepreneurs back:

1. **Access to Finance:** High interest rates, lack of collateral, and limited investor networks make it difficult for startups to raise capital.
2. **Weak Infrastructure:** Unreliable power, poor roads, and limited internet access disrupt operations and restrict growth.

3. **Bureaucracy and Regulation:** Complex registration processes and shifting policy environments discourage formalization and long-term investment.

4. **Skills Gaps:** Many entrepreneurs lack access to training, mentorship, and business development support.

To unlock entrepreneurship at scale, these systemic obstacles must be addressed. Governments, investors, and development partners must collaborate to build an ecosystem that supports risk-taking, innovation, and long-term growth.

The Path Forward

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a game-changer. By reducing trade barriers across the continent, it opens new markets for entrepreneurs and encourages regional value chains. Meanwhile, digital adoption is expanding rapidly, giving young innovators tools to build and scale businesses with global reach.

Youth and women represent untapped potential. They are often excluded from formal economic structures, yet they drive informal economies and grassroots innovation. Targeted support – through funding, training, and policy reforms – can bring their ideas into the mainstream and accelerate inclusive growth.

Introduction of entrepreneurial training from a young age in schools should also be mandatory, as most African youths are interested in securing white collar jobs after their education, whilst practical education and entrepreneurship, with its attendant value add are the key to Africa's economic growth.

Conclusion

Africa needs the entrepreneurial mindset – bold, innovative, and impact driven, that will unlock sustainable growth, job creation and economic independence.

Entrepreneurship is more than economic activity—it's a vehicle for empowerment and structural change. Africa doesn't need to follow traditional development models. It can leapfrog them by investing in entrepreneurs who are solving real problems and creating lasting value.

With the right support, the next generation of

African entrepreneurs won't just transform their communities—they'll reshape the continent's economic future.

Are you a serial entrepreneur, let's connect and collaborate to raise the next generation of effective and efficient African entrepreneurs.

A portrait of a woman with dark skin and short dark hair, wearing a red dress with a large ruffled collar. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is dark and out of focus.

Rebuilding from Within:

Faith, Purpose, and the
Power of Africa's
Developmental Capacity.

As Focus Africa celebrates six years of impactful storytelling, thought leadership, and advocacy for a thriving continent, this year's anniversary theme—"Showcasing Africa's Developmental Capacities in the Current Multipolar Realities", presents an opportunity for deep reflection and renewed commitment to Africa's future.

In today's world, global influence is no longer the monopoly of a single superpower. From the rise of new economic blocs to cross-continental collaborations, the 21st century is truly multipolar—and Africa has a unique opportunity to thrive, not just survive. But while international partnerships, foreign investment, and global diplomacy have their place, Africa's most potent force lies not in the external, but in the internal. If we are to take our rightful place on the world stage, we must first rebuild from within.

Faith and Family: The Unseen Infrastructure of Development

Too often, development is measured solely by visible metrics—GDP, infrastructure, and foreign reserves. But no nation can thrive on economics alone. Africa's true developmental capacity is deeply rooted in values, vision, and virtue—foundations nurtured primarily through faith and family.

Throughout history, the family has been the first institution of learning, leadership, and legacy. Strong families raise responsible citizens;

– *BIMBO
ILORI*

responsible citizens build resilient nations. Likewise, faith has shaped identity, provided hope, and instilled moral compass across African societies. These are not outdated ideals. They are strategic pillars for enduring transformation.

A faith-informed, family-oriented society fosters unity, discipline, and ethical leadership. It offers internal coherence—what some may call the soul of the nation. If Africa is to rise sustainably in this multipolar age, we must recognize and reinvest in these critical cultural assets.

Purpose-Driven Leadership: Unlocking Africa's Strategic Advantage

Africa's potential is undeniable, but potential alone doesn't deliver results. What converts possibility into progress is leadership, specifically, purpose-driven leadership.

A leader driven by purpose does not wait for position or power. Instead, they lead by example, take responsibility, and commit to the common good. This is the kind of leadership Africa needs: men and women who are not just professionally competent, but personally accountable and ethically grounded.

In a world where influence is shared across multiple power centers, Africa must move beyond reactive diplomacy to proactive positioning—and this starts with visionary, value-based leaders who understand their “why.” Whether in government, business, civil society, or education, leaders must be cultivated with a mindset that sees service above status and integrity above income.

The strength of our leadership will determine the strength of our voice in global conversations.

Africa in Multipolar Realities: From Passive Participant to Strategic Player

The global order is shifting. Emerging powers from Asia, South America, and the Middle East are redrawing geopolitical lines. Africa is no longer on the fringe—it is becoming a sought-after partner in trade, diplomacy, and innovation.

Yet, the real question is: Are we showing up as contributors or consumers?

Are we being defined by others, or are we defining ourselves?

To navigate multipolar realities effectively, Africa must harness and showcase its internal capacities—its young, vibrant population; its entrepreneurial energy; its cultural intelligence; and its value systems. We must emphasize governance that works, systems that serve, and education that transforms.

This is the time to invest in local solutions to local problems, to amplify African voices in global forums, and to strengthen intra-African trade, technology, and trust. Multipolarity is not a threat—it is a stage.

But only prepared actors will perform meaningfully on it.

From the Inside Out: Reclaiming the Narrative

Africa has often been portrayed as a continent in need of rescue. But this narrative is changing—and rightly so. Africa is not waiting to be saved; it is ready to lead. But leadership begins with self-awareness, and development starts with self-discipline.

Faith teaches vision.

Family instills responsibility.

Purpose fuels transformation.

Together, they form the nucleus of sustainable progress. Rather than being distracted by what we lack, we must double down on what we have—and what we are becoming.

Focus Africa has spent the last six years spotlighting innovation, resilience, and possibility across the continent. Now, as we celebrate this milestone, it is clear: Africa is not behind; Africa is building—from the inside out.

Celebrating Six Years, Igniting a Future

As we honor six years of Focus Africa's commitment to reshaping narratives and influencing change, we also stand at a defining moment. The global environment is shifting, but so is Africa. The difference will lie in how well we leverage our internal strengths.

Let the next six years be marked by:

Faith-informed policies that uphold dignity and justice. Family-centered strategies that build cohesive, resilient communities. Purpose-driven leadership that inspires trust and drives change. Homegrown solutions that prove Africa is not the “next” frontier—it is the now frontier.

The world is watching. Let us lead—not only with resources—but with resolve, responsibility, and relentless vision.

Africa's rise is not a matter of hope. It is a matter of alignment.

And that alignment starts within.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bimbo Ilori is a Life Purpose and Personal Development Coach, a prolific author of over 35 books, and the creator of the 5-V Anchors of Purpose Framework. She is the founder of ThriveForge and KBloc Consults, organizations dedicated to human capacity development and transformative leadership. With a passion for nation-building through personal growth, she leads masterclasses, runs multiple ventures, and empowers individuals to live purposefully. Her work blends faith, leadership, and strategy to help people and nations thrive from the inside out.



– **Adesua
J. Oni**

*CEO, Steppedup
Global Consults
Founder, Pregnancy
Support Foundation*

Postpartum Depression:

A Comprehensive Guide for Mothers, Families, and Health Professionals

Childbirth is often portrayed as a time of joy and fulfillment, but for many new mothers, the reality can be emotionally overwhelming. The physical recovery, hormonal shifts, and the immense responsibility of caring for a newborn can trigger a range of mood disturbances. Among these, postpartum depression (PPD) stands out as a serious mental health condition that requires attention and support.

Understanding Postpartum Mood Disorders

Not all emotional disturbances after childbirth are the same. It's important to distinguish between postpartum blues, postpartum depression, and postpartum psychosis—three different conditions with unique clinical presentations, severities, and treatments.

Postpartum Blues (Baby Blues) Postpartum blues are the mildest and most common form of mood disturbance after childbirth, affecting up to 70–80% of new mothers. They typically begin within the first few days after delivery and last for up to two weeks.

Symptoms of postpartum blues include:

- Mood swings
- Tearfulness
- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Difficulty sleeping
- Fatigue
- Mild concentration issues

These symptoms are usually self-limiting and resolve without medical intervention. Emotional support, reassurance, adequate rest, and understanding from loved ones are usually sufficient.

Postpartum Depression (PPD) Postpartum depression is a more severe and persistent form of mood disorder. It affects approximately 10–15% of new mothers and can begin any time within the first year after childbirth, though it most commonly starts within the first 4–6 weeks postpartum.

Clinical manifestations of PPD include:

- Persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or emptiness–Severe mood swings
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Excessive crying or irritability
- Difficulty bonding with the baby
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Appetite or sleep disturbances (too much or too little)

- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt.
- Thoughts of harming oneself or the baby (in severe cases)
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions

PPD can interfere significantly with daily functioning and requires timely intervention to protect both mother and child.

Postpartum Psychosis

Postpartum psychosis is the rarest and most severe form of postpartum mental illness, occurring in about 1 to 2 per 1,000 births. It is considered a psychiatric emergency and often requires immediate hospitalization.

Clinical features of PPD include:

- Delusions (false beliefs)
- Hallucinations (hearing or seeing things that aren't there)
- Disorganized thinking or speech
- Extreme confusion and agitation
- Severe insomnia
- Rapid mood swings
- Paranoia
- Thoughts of harming self or baby

Women with a personal or family history of bipolar disorder or previous psychotic episodes are at increased risk. Unlike postpartum blues or PPD, postpartum psychosis can quickly escalate and must be addressed urgently with professional medical care.

Treatment Modalities for Postpartum Depression

Treatment for PPD is tailored to the severity of the symptoms and the needs of the individual. It typically includes one or a combination of the following:

- 1. Psychotherapy (Talk Therapy):** Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) helps mothers identify and change negative thought patterns. Interpersonal Therapy (IPT) focuses on improving relationships and social functioning.
- 2. Pharmacotherapy:** Antidepressants, especially selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), are commonly prescribed.

Some medications are safe during breastfeeding, but risks and benefits must be assessed with a healthcare provider.

- 3. Support Groups and Peer Counseling:** Joining a group of mothers facing similar challenges can reduce feelings of isolation. Peer support offers empathy and practical coping strategies.
- 4. Hospitalization:** In cases of severe PPD or postpartum psychosis, hospitalization may be necessary for stabilization and safety.
- 5. Lifestyle Modifications:** Encouraging adequate rest, balanced nutrition, gentle physical activity, and time for self-care. Involving the partner and family in sharing responsibilities.

Prevention of Postpartum Depression

While PPD may not always be preventable, certain strategies can significantly reduce the risk or severity:

- 1. Prenatal Education and Awareness:** Educating expectant mothers and families about the emotional challenges of childbirth. Discussing the signs and symptoms of PPD during prenatal visits.
- 2. Screening and Early Detection:** Regular mental health screenings during and after pregnancy using tools like the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS).
- 3. Strengthening Support Systems:** Ensuring emotional and practical support from family, friends, and healthcare providers. Encouraging open communication about mental health concerns.
- 4. Counseling for At-Risk Mothers:** Offering therapy or psychiatric support to mothers with a history of depression, anxiety, or trauma.
- 5. Encouraging Self-Care and Realistic Expectations:** Helping new mothers prioritize their well-being and avoid perfectionism in parenting.

In conclusion, postpartum depression is a serious but treatable condition. Unlike postpartum blues, which resolve naturally, or postpartum psychosis, which requires urgent intervention, PPD sits in the middle—a significant mental health issue that must be addressed to protect the health and safety of both mother and baby. Through awareness, early detection, professional treatment, and social support, affected women can recover fully and embrace the joys of motherhood.

No mother should suffer in silence. With the right care and compassion, healing is not only possible—it is expected.



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AFRICAN CULTURE AND SPIRITUALITY

ANCESTRAL REVELATION ON THE MEANING OF EZUMEZU AND ANCESTRAL SIGNIFICANCE IN AFRICAN CULTURE AND SPIRITUALITY

In The Context Of African Spirituality "EZUMEZU" signifies THE COMPLETION, Representing The Totality Of Spiritual Forces And Entities That Guide And Protect Individuals, Connecting Them To Their Creator CHUKWU OKIKE ABIAMA Through Their Chi And Onye-Uwa.

EZUMEZU Is The Collective, The Aggregate And The Totality Of All That Is Most Viable, Most Potent And Most Powerful...

EZUMEZU Is The Sum Up Of All The Spirits That Knows And Are Able To Align And Work With An Individual And Agwu...

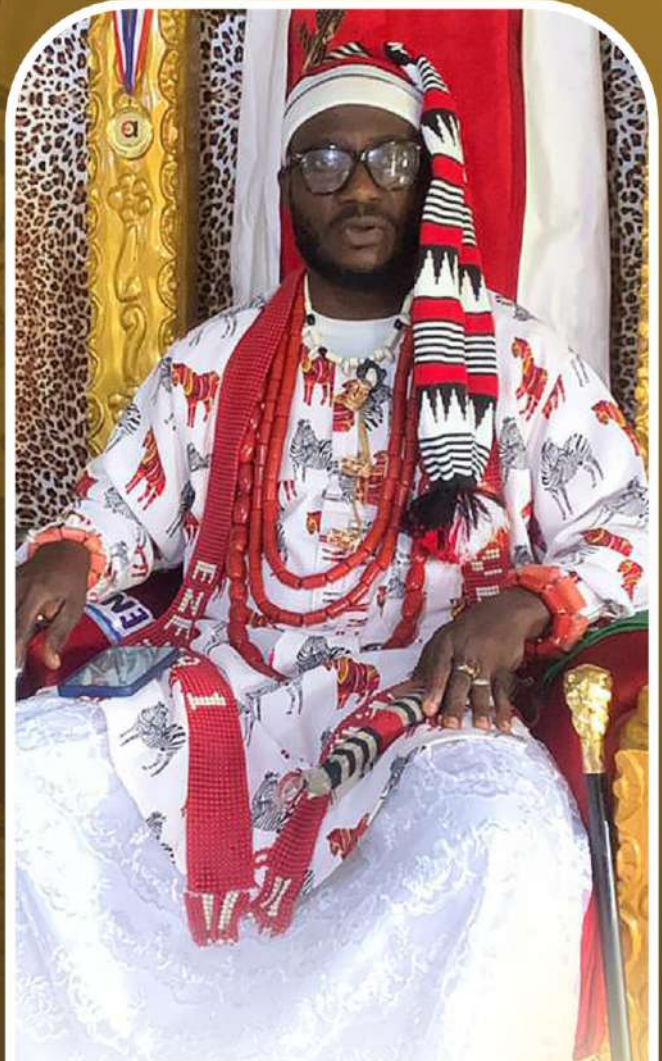
EZUMEZU FOURTEEN (14) MAJOR SPIRIT GUIDES AND THEIR SACRED ROLES IN AFRICAN SPIRITUALITY...

In African Spirituality, The Concept Of EZUMEZU encompasses a vast array of spirit guides that play integral roles in an individual's life journey. From the moment of birth, these spiritual guardians, collectively known as Ezumezu Mmuo or Ora Mmuo or Oha Mmuo, guide, protect, and influence every aspect of one's existence. The role they play in the life of an individual is important, especially because in African culture, prayers or Ancestral Consultations are normally addressed to these forces.

However, for the purpose of knowledge, let's uncover the diverse spirits that make up each person's spiritual entourage in African Culture And Spirituality.

1. CHI: Chi in African spirituality is the personal life force or guardian spirit that guides an individual throughout their life journey. At the core of each person's ezumezu mmuo is their Chi, which can also be represented through both the market day a person is born on (e.g Eke, Orie, Afo, Nkwo) and their Onye Uwa (Reincarnator). In Odinani, Chi serves as each person's primary guardian and guide.

2.2 AGWU: Another essential spirit guide is Agwu, which is the cosmic force that embodies ancestral wisdom and healing energies. Agwu is also the



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force responsible for imparting spiritual gifts or geniuses on each person. It provides spiritual protection and guidance, ensuring the well-being and vitality of each person is in good standing when it is in proper alignment with their Chi.

3.3 AJA ANI: Each person's connection to their motherland, Aja ani, roots them to their ancestral

lineage and cultural heritage. In Odinani, Aja ani serves as an independent force, acting as a representative of Ani—the great earth goddess in a person's life, offering spiritual guidance and support as the individual navigates life's challenges.

4. MMIRI: The water of origin, Mmiri, serves as a spirit guide, representing each person's connection to the water body in their homeland or nearby. As part of one's ezumezu mmuo, it is believed to be a point of origin where each person's spirit or soul emerges from when travelling into this world. It also acts as a representative of Nne Mmiri—the great mother of all water bodies, in an individual's life. It symbolizes purity, renewal, and spiritual cleansing.

5. ANYANWU: Representing the sun, Anyanwu radiates light, warmth, and vitality. As a spirit guide, Anyanwu instils courage, confidence, and clarity, illuminating one's path with divine wisdom and cosmic enlightenment. It also serves as a spiritual portal and message carrier, believed to help believers carry their messages through its light waves from this world into other realms.

6. IKUKU: The wind spirit, Ikuku, embodies freedom, movement, and change. It carries and brings messages of guidance and inspiration, guiding each person towards their true purpose and destiny. Ikuku ama na onya. Wind that does not blow in vain.

7. IZU ANO; MBOCHIANO: The four market days governing African Ancestry, Eke-Orie-Afo-Nkwo, represent the cyclical nature of time and seasons. They also serve as spirit guides, offering insights into the rhythm of life and the importance of embracing change and adaptation among other things. **8. ALUSI:** The deities in one's family and hometown, known as Alusi, by ancestral covenant serve as intermediaries between the earthly realm and the divine for that person. They bestow blessings, protection, and abundance upon their devotees, ensuring harmony and prosperity in the individual's life when they are acknowledged.

9. NDI ICHIE: Ascended ancestors, Ndi Ichie, guide and bless their descendants, offering wisdom, guidance, and ancestral blessings from the spirit world. They are key members of an individual's spiritual guardians, and they play their roles as mediators when revered.

10. UMUADA: The collective spirits of the daughters of the community, Umuada, embody feminine energy, nurturing, and community support. They protect and empower children of the land (especially women), ensuring their well-being and prosperity when called upon.

11. NDI MMIRI: Including Di Mmiri (spirit spouse), the spirits of the water, offer healing, purification, and spiritual rejuvenation. They cleanse and purify the spirit, making room for spiritual growth and transformation. They also offer protection and make it their business to grant certain desires according to their capabilities when they are revered.

12. ANUMANU MMUO: Spirit animals, known as Animanu Mmuo, symbolize intuition, instinct, and primal wisdom. In African culture, each community (and sometimes family) has animals that they revere or totemize. Those animals guide and protect their human counterparts, offering insights and guidance from the (super)natural world in their roles as spirit guides.

13. OSISI MMUO: Nature trees and plants, known as Osisi Mmuo, embody the essence of the earth and the divine. They also serve as spirit guides for communities, families, and individuals. They provide grounding, stability, and connection to the natural world, guiding each person towards harmony and balance.

14. NDI OTU / NDI OGBANJE: Ndi Otu, and More: A myriad of other spirit guides, including Ndi Ogbanje and Ndi Otu, which are kin spirits that are believed to have accompanied a spirit or soul into this world, serve as members of one's Ezumezu Mmuo. Each spirit plays a unique role in shaping and influencing an individual's life journey.

When one is aligned with their higher self, their Ezumezu Mmuo acts swiftly and effectively on their behalf, guiding them towards their highest potential and purpose. By surrendering to the wisdom and guidance of spirit guides, each person can navigate life's challenges with grace and resilience, knowing that they are supported and protected by their spiritual guardians.

It is important to note that in African Spirituality, as much as the concept of 'Ezumezu' represents the essence of their collectivity as a whole, there are still distinctions that exist. Each cohort of spirit that serves as spirit guides can still be categorized into those that emerge from the maternal (Ikwu Nne) or paternal side (Ikwu Nna) of a person's family.

It's on this note that ODUMEZUMEZU conducted the Ancestral Induction of New Members of EZUMEZU ANCESTRAL BROTHERHOOD judging from their Ancestral Connectivity and Performed Their Spiritual Indoctrination As Men Who Have Grown Into Level Of Ancestral Priesthood....Redefining the African Culture and Spirituality Remains Our Focus and Mandate....

A portrait of Donald Lorchir, a man with short grey hair, wearing a purple patterned shirt, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression.

10 Top Reasons Why First - Time Entrepreneurs Fail

- By Donald Lorchir, *Abuja*

For entrepreneurs, especially those just starting out businesses succeed as much they fail. But statistics also suggest that the failure rate for new startups within the first five (5) years is as high as 50 percent. Of course, real entrepreneurs treat business failure as a milestone on the road to success. They count on learning from their mistakes, and use the experience to move to the next idea. But why not learn from the mistakes of others, without all the pain and suffering?

HERE IS MY LIST OF 10 TOP STARTUP FAILURE

CAUSES AND HOW TO AVOID THEM:

1. No Written Plan: Don't believe the myths business plan isn't worth the effort. The discipline of writing down a plan is the best way to make sure you actually understand how to transform your ideal into a business.

2. Slim Or No Revenue Model: Even a non-profit has to generate revenue (or donations) to offset operating costs. If your product is free, or you lose money on every sales, it's hard to make it up in volume. You may have the solution to world hunger, but if your customers have no money, business won't last long. Related: 8 Tips for finding focus and Nixing Distractions.

3. Limited Business Opportunities: Not every good ideal can become a blockbuster business. Just because you passionately believe that your product or service is great, and everyone needs it, doesn't mean that everyone will buy it. There is no substitute for market research, written by domain experts, to supplement your informal poll of friends and family.

4. Can't Execute: When young entrepreneurs come to you with that "million dollar idea," you have to tell them that an ideal alone really worth nothing. It's all about execution. If you're not comfortable making hard decisions and taking risk, you won't do well in this role.

5. Too Much Competition: Having no competitors is a red flag - it may mean there's no market, but finding ten or more with a simple Google Search means your area of interest may be a crowded. Remember, sleeping giants can wake up. So don't assume that Microsoft or Procter and Gamble are too big and slow for you to worry about. Related: How to craft a Business plan That'll Turn Investors Heads.

6. No Intellectual Property: If you expect to have a sustainable competitive advantage against giants in your industry, you need to register for patents trademarks and copyrights, as well as enlist non - compete and non - disclosure agreements to protect trade secrets. Intellectual Property is also often the largest element of early - stage company valuations for professional investors.

7. An Inexperienced Team: In reality, investors fund people, not ideals. They look for people with real experience in the business domain of the startup, and people with real experience running a startup. If this is your first time around, find a

partner who has "been there and done that" to balance your passion and bring experience to the team.

8. Understanding Resource Requirements: A major resource is cash funding. But other resources, such as industry contacts and access to marketing channels may be more important for certain products. Having too much cash, not managed wisely, can be just as devastating as too little cash. Don't quit your day job until new revenue is flowing. Related: How to know when It's Time to Walk Away.

9. Not Enough Marketing: Having a slick word – of mouth marketing strategy isn't enough to make your product and brand visible in the relentless onslaught of new media out there today. Even viral marketing costs real money and time. Without effective and innovative marketing across the

range of media, you won't have customers – or a Business.

10. Giving In Too Early: In my own thinking, the most common cause of startup failure is the entrepreneur just gets tired, gives up and shuts down the company. Despite setback, many successful entrepreneurs like Steve Jobs and Thomas Edison kept slugging away on their vision until they found success.

ENCOURAGEMENT: Whatever personal challenge you have to overcome, you must be brave enough to accept that you are different. You must have the courage to trust your instincts and be ready to question what other people don't. If you do that you can seize opportunities that others would miss. Believe in yourself, and use everything you can – including the obstacle to propel you along the road to success.



Article by Nkiru Chima

Have you paused for a moment and stood still to survey with praise and gratitude this marvellous work of Creation in which we are all lovingly permitted to experience in full glory.


To know that we can manifest our inner truths, our true self, wishes and desires to bring Heaven to Earth, to love as everything has already been gifted to us in this beautiful Creation.

In manifesting these glorious blessings, we must open ourselves to the beautiful, Majestic Laws in Creation, which we all know deep within our souls and which weaves along in nature, clearly every second for all to see.

Are you allowing the healing wind, breeze to flow through your hair, your being. Are you inhaling and exhaling the breath of life correctly and following the correct, healing rhythm of sleep.

Can you hear the sweet, heavenly melodies from birds in the morning, absorb the miracle raindrops, bright, glorious, healing sunshine, trees, flowers, plants, constantly blooming and weaving vibrantly inside Mother Earth.

Start now to connect to your higher self, our true self. Joyfully sing praises and speak gratitude in words, thought and deed to heal the body and give thanks for this great gift of life.

A portrait of Barrister Orbbby Agwuncha, a Black woman with long, curly hair, wearing a teal patterned vest over a dark collared shirt. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a blurred indoor setting with wooden paneling.

Barrister Orbbby Agwuncha

BARRISTER ORBBY AGWUNCHA holds a Bachelor's degree in Law from Kingston University, London, and a Master's degree in International Law from the University of Liverpool, United Kingdom. She is a certified international lawyer, a solicitor of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, and a member of Lincoln's Inn, London.

Before pursuing her legal degrees, Orbbby obtained a Bachelor of Science in Economics from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria, followed by a Master of Science degree in Finance from the University of East London, United Kingdom.

Her professional experience encompasses law, banking, and corporate commercial practice. Orbbby began her career at Standard Trust Bank PLC (now UBA Bank) and served as a partner in two well-established law firms, where she gained extensive expertise. She also possesses international exposure, having worked as a paralegal at the London firm Howell Jones. Then the head of Business development department at the Legal Resource Alliance.

In addition to her legal practice, Orbbby is the executive producer of "The Big Break Moment Africa," an edutainment reality TV show designed for talented students from tertiary institutions

across the continent, particularly those skilled in singing, acting, and dancing. The show's mission is to bridge the gap between classroom education and the entertainment industry, providing students with a platform to showcase their talents to the world. This initiative has successfully engaged thousands of undergraduates throughout Nigeria.

As an author, Orbbby has penned "The Big Break," a transformative book that inspires and guides young talents on their journey to success. The book combines her wealth of experience with practical insights, offering invaluable advice to aspiring entrepreneurs and artists, empowering them to pursue their dreams with confidence.

Orbbby is a member of both the Nigerian Bar Association and the International Bar Association. As a certified international lawyer, she brings a global perspective to legal practice, leading the business development and commercial law initiatives at her firm.

Currently, she serves as the Principal Partner at BossladyLaw Chambers, where she combines her legal expertise with her entrepreneurial spirit as a business consultant. And as her speaking engagements evolve, she is noted to be a Professional Speaker. And a devoted Mother of 4.



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