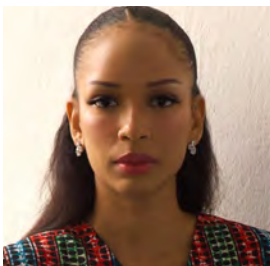


BUSINESS DAY WEEKENDER

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WORLD CUP 2026: SIX FAVOURITES TO WIN FOOTBALL'S BIGGEST PRIZE



OPINION

Talent Is Not Enough: Why
Africa's Most Promising
Consumer Businesses
Struggle to Scale



PROFILE

Jennifer Ihuoma,
researcher focused on
early biological changes
behind brain decline

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BUSINESS DAY
WEEKENDER

C O N T E N T



6

LAUGHTER IN THE MIRROR-



13

PROFILE

Legacy Mentorship:
How Robert Ogirri
is Shaping Africa's
Next Generation of
Executives



17

WOMEN

Business Women Hub
Africa conference
highlights funding,
structure for women-led
growth

23

HEALTH

Beyond the
buzzwords: Daniel
on what healthcare
systems really need

30

ENTERTAINMENT

Curtains Up:
Nollywood's Greatest
Actors Take Center
Stage as 22&Alfred
TV Wraps IMPROV-

41

ART INDEX

Africa's Art Critics Are
Finally Speaking for
Themselves

47

UDY'S CHAPTER

Yara's Easter Story

49

BOOK REVIEW

How God Arrested Me:
A True Story of Injustice,
Faith and Redemption

53

MOVIE REVIEW



A photograph of Dr. Femi Oyetunji, a man wearing a patterned cap and glasses, speaking into a microphone at a podium. The background is a solid blue color.

Celebrating 70 Years of a Distinguished Life

We are thrilled to commemorate the 70th birthday of our esteemed **Chairman, Dr. Femi Oyetunji** — a distinguished gentleman and accomplished actuary.

Dr. Oyetunji's sharp intellect, principled leadership, and decades of professional excellence have been invaluable to our board and organization. His steady presence and wise counsel are cherished qualities that inspire us all.

Join us in extending warm wishes to Dr. Oyetunji on this milestone birthday, celebrating a lifetime of achievements and contributions.

Dr Femi Oyetunji
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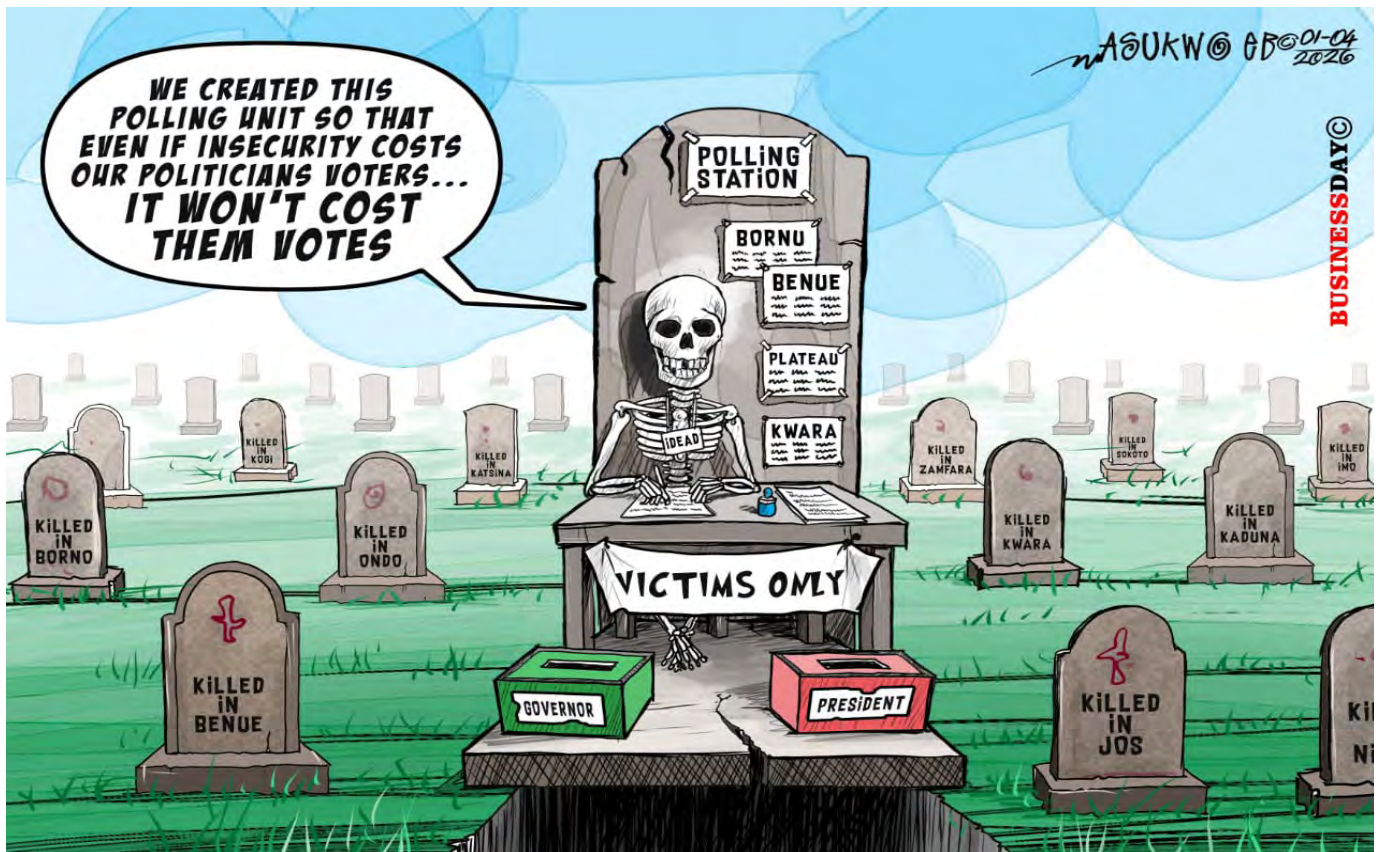
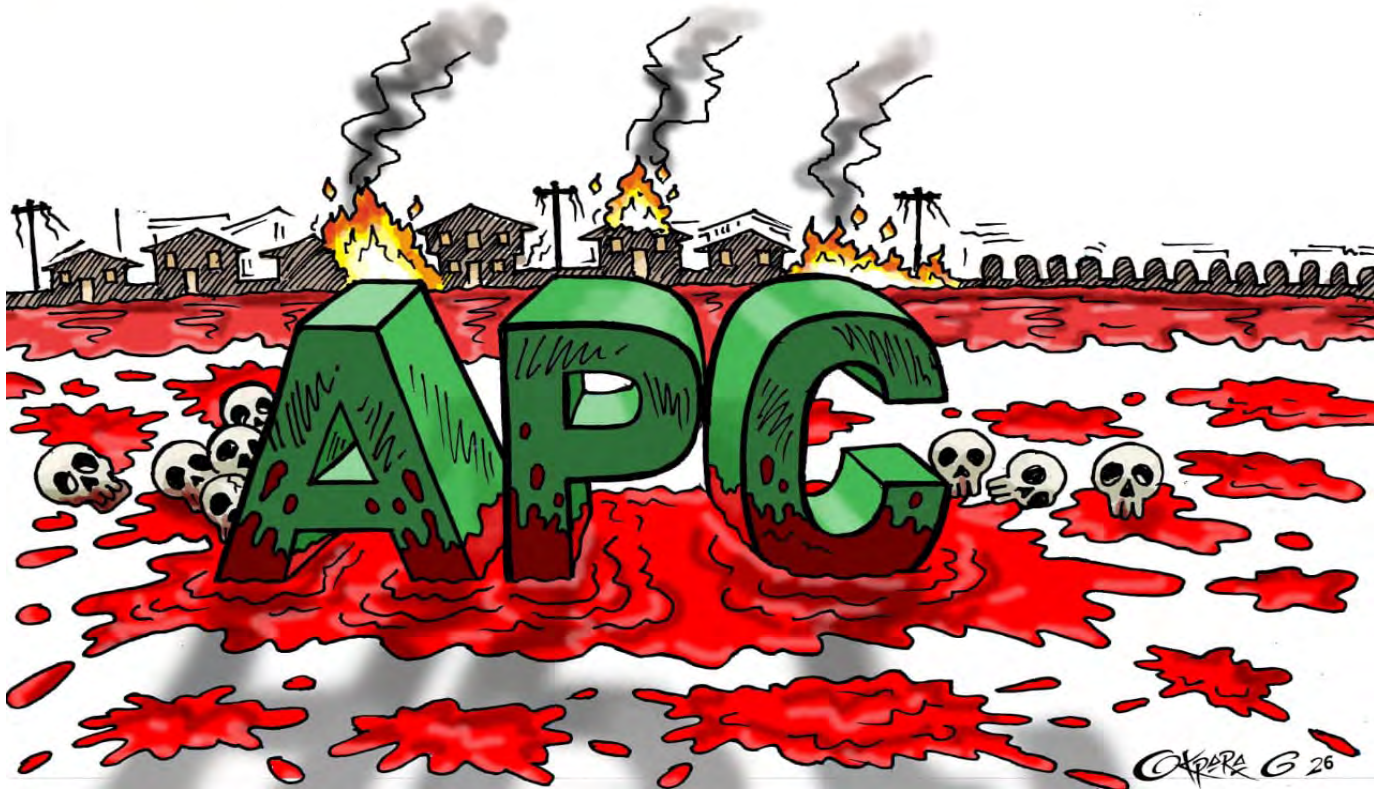
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WORLD CUP 2026: SIX FAVOURITES TO WIN FOOTBALL'S BIGGEST PRIZE

ANTHONY NLEBEM



With the field now set following the final round of playoffs across Europe and North America, attention has shifted to the leading contenders for the expanded 48-team 2026 FIFA World Cup.

The tournament, set to kick off on June 11 across the United States, Mexico, and Canada, will feature 104 matches, making it the largest edition in World Cup history. With less than three months to go, bookmakers and analysts are already zeroing in on the nation most likely to lift the trophy.

Here are six favourites heading into the tournament:

Argentina – Defending Champions Eye Back-to-Back Titles

Argentina's national football team arrive as defending champions and will be aiming to become the first nation since Brazil (1958, 1962) to win consecutive World Cups. With Lionel Messi, who will be 39 during the tournament, still leading the squad and Lionel Scaloni maintaining continuity on the bench, Argentina remain a formidable force.



Brazil – Chasing a Sixth Star Trophy

The Brazil national football team, the most successful nation in World Cup history but, are currently enduring a rare drought, having not won the tournament since 2002. Interestingly, Brazil have historically thrived in North America, winning the tournament the last two times it was hosted in the region. That trend could boost confidence as they chase a sixth title.



France – Consistency at the Highest Level

France remain one of the most consistent teams in global football, having won the 2018 World Cup and reached the 2022 final. With stars like Kylian Mbappe and Ousmane Dembélé under the guidance of Didier Deschamps, Les Bleus possess both experience and attacking firepower.



Portugal – A Golden Generation's Opportunity

Portugal have never won the World Cup, but this could represent their best chance. Managed by Roberto Martínez, Portugal boast a balanced squad blending experience and youth and arrive with momentum following recent success in European competition.



Spain – Youth and Identity

Spain, European champions, are targeting their second World Cup title after their 2010 triumph. With emerging talents like Lamine Yamal, Nico Williams, and midfield orchestrator Pedri, Spain combine technical quality with a new generation of attacking flair.



England – Depth and New Leadership

The England national football team continue their pursuit of a first World Cup title since 1966. Now led by Thomas Tuchel, England boast one of the deepest squads in the tournament, featuring Harry Kane, Jude Bellingham, Bukayo Saka, and Cole Palmer.

With an expanded format, increased global representation, and deeper squads across the board, the 2026 World Cup promises to be one of the most competitive in history. While these six nations lead the pack, the tournament's new structure leaves room for surprises.



TALENT IS NOT ENOUGH: WHY AFRICA'S MOST PROMISING CONSUMER BUSINESSES STRUGGLE TO SCALE

ANNETTE BEGG ONYEMA



Across Africa, there is no shortage of talent. Every day, I encounter founders building compelling consumer brands, innovative skincare products, thoughtfully designed fashion labels, and locally relevant consumer solutions that rival global standards.

The creativity is undeniable. The ambition is clear. The opportunity is vast. And yet, many of these businesses never scale. Not because they lack product-market fit. Not because they lack passion. But because they lack one critical element: structure.

This is one of the most overlooked challenges within Africa's consumer ecosystem today. We are producing exceptional talent, but we are not consistently building structured, scalable businesses.

The Talent–Structure Gap

At an early stage, talent can carry a business. A great product, a strong founder, and a loyal customer base can generate initial traction. But beyond a certain point, growth begins to stall. This is where structure becomes essential.

Structure is not just about formality; it is about how a business is designed to grow. It includes governance, financial discipline, operational systems, and strategic clarity. Without these, even the most promising businesses struggle to transition from small, founder-led operations into scalable enterprises.

In many cases, businesses remain heavily reliant on the founder, with limited delegation, informal processes, and little visibility into financial performance. Decisions are made instinctively rather than strategically. Growth becomes inconsistent, and over time, the business plateaus.

The Fear of Capital and External Support

Alongside the absence of structure is another critical barrier: fear. Many founders are hesitant to bring in external investors or partners. This fear is often rooted in concerns about losing control, being misunderstood, or having their vision altered. While these concerns are valid, they can also be limiting.

The reality is that capital, when aligned with the right partners, is not just about funding, it is about unlocking expertise, networks, and strategic guidance. The right investor does not come in to dismantle a business, but to strengthen it.

However, without a proper understanding of fundraising, governance, and deal structures, many founders either avoid raising capital altogether or approach it from a position of uncertainty. As a result, they miss out on opportunities to accelerate growth.

A Structural Problem, Not a Talent Problem

It is important to be clear: this is not a talent problem. Africa is one of the youngest and most dynamic regions in the world, with an abundance of entrepreneurial energy.

But talent alone does not build enduring businesses. Globally, the most successful consumer companies are not just creative, they are structured for scale. They invest early in governance, financial systems, and operational excellence.

They understand that growth is not accidental; it is engineered. In contrast, many African businesses are still built to survive, not to scale. This is why we often see strong brands struggle to expand beyond one city, one store, or one product line. The foundation required for growth has simply not been put in place.

What Needs to Change

If we are to unlock the full potential of Africa's consumer sector, we must begin to shift the conversation from talent to structure. This starts with the founders.

Building a scalable business requires a mindset shift, from operating day-to-day to thinking long-term. It means embracing financial discipline, investing in systems, and being open to external expertise.

It also requires a greater understanding of capital. Fundraising is not just about raising money; it is about choosing the right partners and structuring the business for sustainable growth. Founders must be equipped with the knowledge and confidence to engage with investors effectively. Finally, there is a role for platforms and advisory ecosystem.

There is a growing need for institutions that can support founders in bridging this gap, providing not just capital, but also the strategic and structural guidance required to scale. When businesses receive this kind of support, the results can be transformative.

The Opportunity Ahead

The opportunity within Africa's consumer landscape remains immense.

We are a continent defined by a young, growing population, increasing urbanisation, and evolving consumer preferences. The demand for high-quality, locally relevant products will only continue to rise. The question is not whether the talent exists.

It is whether we can build the structures that allow that talent to thrive. Because ultimately, talent may start a business, but structure is what allows it to endure, to scale, and to compete globally.

Annette Begg Onyema is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Idia Africa, a consumer-focused platform dedicated to building, backing, and strengthening high-growth consumer businesses across Africa.

Through Idia Africa, she leads both Idia Ego, an investment platform focused on high-potential consumer companies, and Idia Legacy, a strategic growth and capital readiness platform supporting ambitious brands and businesses preparing to scale.

Graduate College
GPBS

Jennifer Ihuoma

JENNIFER IHUOMA, RESEARCHER FOCUSED ON EARLY BIOLOGICAL CHANGES BEHIND BRAIN DECLINE

CHINWE MICHAEL



Jennifer Ihuoma's journey into biomedical research began in Imo State, Nigeria, and extends across public health systems and laboratory science in the United States.

Her work focuses on understanding the biological processes that take place in the brain before clinical signs of cognitive decline emerge, with a focus on prevention and early intervention as pathways to long-term brain health.

Her academic path reflects a shift from foundational biological sciences to a multidisciplinary approach that connects laboratory research with public health outcomes.

Ihuoma, originally from Imo State, earned a Bachelor of Science in Zoology from Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Anambra State, followed by a Master of Public Health from the Federal University of Technology, Owerri. This combination positioned her to link biological mechanisms with population-level health challenges.

From public health systems to biomedical research Ihuoma's early professional experience shaped her transition into research. At the World Health Organization, Imo State Office, Nigeria, she supported routine immunization and maternal and child health programs. Her role in supervisory field operations exposed her to prevention strategies and the structure of health systems.

That experience influenced her decision to move upstream into biomedical research, focusing on the biological drivers of disease rather than only its outcomes.

"Serving in field roles showed me the importance of early intervention and prevention. It shaped my decision to focus on the biological processes that influence long-term neurological health," she said.

In 2022, she began a Master of Science in Biology with a biomedical emphasis at the University of Texas Permian Basin. The programme marked a transition into focused biomedical investigation and research training, laying the groundwork for doctoral study.

Investigating cholesterol, aging, and brain function Ihuoma started her Ph.D. in Biomedical Science, with a concentration in neuroscience, at the University of Oklahoma in Fall 2023. Her research examines how aging and dyslipidemia, particularly elevated and oxidized forms of LDL cholesterol, affect the brain's microvasculature.

Specifically, she investigates how oxidized LDL cholesterol can disrupt blood vessel function and mitochondrial health in the aging brain, with the potential to impair cognitive function.

Ihuoma disclosed that the significance of her work lies in its relevance to both science and public health. Aging and high cholesterol levels can quietly damage the brain's smallest blood vessels, which play a vital role in supplying oxygen and nutrients to brain tissue. When these vessels no longer function properly, the consequences may accumulate over time and contribute to cognitive decline later in life.

"By uncovering the biological mechanisms behind vascular dysfunction, the research aims to identify ways to protect the brain and preserve cognitive health, especially in older adults," she explained.

Her work has gained recognition through an American Heart Association Predoctoral Fellowship for her study titled "Oxidized LDL-Induced Endothelial Mitochondrial Dysfunction as a Driver of Brain Aging and Cognitive Impairment."

She said the AHA Predoctoral Fellowship is designed to enhance the training of promising students in pre-doctoral or clinical health professional degree programs who intend to pursue careers as scientists, physician-scientists, clinician scientists, or related professionals committed to improving global health and well-being.

"In addition to providing resources for rigorous mechanistic studies, the fellowship further strengthens a long-term path in research and teaching," she added.

For Ihuoma, the award represents both validation and responsibility.

"The fellowship strengthens my path in research and teaching, and it reinforces the importance of studying vascular contributors to cognitive impairment and dementia, an area that closely aligns with the AHA's mission to reduce the burden of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease through prevention and scientific discovery," she said.

Her work sits at the intersection of neuroscience, vascular biology, and public health, with implications for understanding how early biological changes influence long-term outcomes.

As she continues her research, she maintains a focus on contributing to knowledge that informs prevention strategies.

Her message to emerging researchers reflects her approach to science, "Stay curious, embrace challenges, and enjoy the journey of learning and discovery. Seek mentors and collaborators who inspire you and let your passion for science guide you. Steady progress and persistence will take you far," she said.

LEGACY MENTORSHIP: HOW ROBERT OGIRRI IS SHAPING AFRICA'S NEXT GENERATION OF EXECUTIVES

...Mentorship is the Competitive Edge Our Workplaces Need, Says Robert Ogirri

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA





Robert Ogirri, an expert in manufacturing and supply chain is committed to nurturing future leaders. He balances his professional pursuit, academic works and mentorship, a way he redefines what leadership and legacy mean in practice. Currently at the University of Lagos Business School (ULBS) he guides emerging executives to navigate real-world industry challenges.

The global corporate space today is experiencing a positive shift. Organizations are carefully rethinking how they operate and the type of talent they nurture to remain resilient and competitive. Increasingly, companies are now prioritizing individuals who can combine technical expertise with sound judgment, ethical leadership, and the ability to navigate complex, fast-changing environments. Even Nigeria, like many other countries, is experiencing this shift firsthand.

As a result, seasoned leaders are deepening the conversation on developing the human side of leadership. Many are intentionally investing time in mentoring and equipping younger professionals with capabilities that go beyond traditional management training.

These include emotional intelligence, the creation of psychologically safe environments where ideas can flourish, strong leadership fundamentals, and cross-functional exposure that broadens perspective. With time, these competencies have shown to be essential in preparing aspiring executives for the uncertainties and opportunities of the global business landscape.

As leadership thinker Tony Dungy observed in his quote, “Mentorship empowers you to impart your legacy”, today’s leaders have recognized mentorship as a strategic investment in the future of their organizations.

Ogirri shares this sentiment. As a respected voice in manufacturing and supply chain management, he views mentorship as a driver of growth. For him, guiding emerging professionals is not an afterthought but a deliberate commitment. “I have always wanted to share my knowledge and insights with others to help them get to their next stage,” he expressed during a conversation on mentorship at the UNILAG Business School.

He strongly holds that by sharing his knowledge and experience with those just beginning their journey, he is able to help build a new generation of leaders prepared to meet the demands of tomorrow’s business world.

Ogirri’s Journey from boardroom to classroom

“The idea of mentorship takes me back to some of the most meaningful moments in my academic journey,” Ogirri said. “It has always been a dream.” Part of the attributes that make him a transformative leader is looking at opportunities to teach the shop floor workers, opportunities to show others how we could do it better. That just became part of my lifestyle.

“It was easier for me because it was something I have always wanted to do, share knowledge and to be able to shape the next generation, to be able to get people to be better in what they do. That was already a lifestyle.”

After 33 years of focusing on his career, he is now balancing his professional life with his passion for academia, taking on the role of adjunct facilitating Executive MBA courses in Operations Management at the Unilag Business School in 2024. It was at that moment, a certainty settled over Ogirri. “It was time,” he heaved a sigh of relief, smiling brightly.

“I jumped at it. A lifestyle that now culminated in my mentoring and teaching. I was teaching executives. I was able to pass knowledge. I was able to inspire them with some words of affirmation, “You can do it. I did it before. I’m still doing it. So you can do it”.

Thanks to his career and work experience, becoming a transformational leader came naturally for Ogirri.



"I was always looking for opportunities to teach shop floor workers and show others how we could do things better. The IL6S journey reinforced this because I was at the top of the leadership pillar. I had to guide, teach, and develop them, and that experience was truly deep."

Executive MBA learning

For Ogirri, showing these participants the ropes is the most important. "A lot of the cases we have from Harvard, Yale, and many other places are live examples. Sometimes some of these cases are from foreign companies, but I often tell participants, 'Some of the things you are reading here, I did it in my career and these are the examples'."

He is able to blend these cases with his own experiences to corroborate them, thereby giving them a view of reality. As a top-executive and mentor, Ogirri is confident about total quality management (TQM), which is about getting it right the first time, every time.

"You are showing them that this is achievable. You are putting systems, processes, and standards in place. "One of your key responsibilities is to ensure that these systems, processes, and standards actually work. Standards are essentially your rules. Operations management is embedding quality, cost, delivery, sustainability, safety, and your people's agenda, your morale, tying it all together as the foundation upon which you build. It talks about efficiency, effectiveness and continuous improvements and how you can get it done better."

Mentoring emerging CEOs and operations leaders

2024 was a year to remember for Ogirri when he began to coach and mentor future leaders besides those he has had the opportunity to impact in the work space.

"I work closely with a group of CEOs, who know they can reach me anytime; my door is always open. We often meet over lunch, exchange ideas, and share practical insights drawn from experience.

"The world today is very competitive. And what gives organizations an edge is mentorship. I often say the 'half-life' of a CEO is getting shorter because the weight of responsibility rests squarely on their shoulders. That is why adaptability is not optional; it is an essential skill they must continuously sharpen."

For Ogirri, being a CEO demands qualities like speed, focus, and flexibility essential for success. He describes flexibility as an adaptive skill that must be woven into daily work life. "I try to be as practical as possible," he emphasized.

Shaping an African management mindset with other future leaders When Ogirri attended the first Global CEO Program for Africa in 2018, he said it came with fulfilment because he met like-minded entrepreneurs and career

professionals where he networked and made meaningful connections.

He said the experience was really about seeing themselves as future leaders in Africa; future CEOs of African corporations, where they asked important questions, “How do we make Africa a shining example to the world? How do we ensure that Africans take charge and successfully run organizations? We must break the stereotype that Africans cannot manage corporations. That is simply not true.”

Top of the discussions that these leaders dissected were trade policies, the African Free Trade Agreement, and how to break barriers within the continent. African countries should be able to sell goods to each other more easily. Goods from Nigeria should move to Kenya without unnecessary obstacles. Travel within Africa is still too expensive, and it should not be that way.

With the continent’s youthful population, Ogirri pointed out that Africa has a huge advantage that the continent is not yet fully tapping into. “It is a powerful market on its own. Another important part of their discussions was ethics.

He frowned at the corruption label Africa is often associated with. “But as emerging leaders, we believe change can start with how we run our organizations. By putting strong governance structures in place – rejecting bribery, corruption, and cutting corners – we can begin to shift the mindset around leadership in Africa.”

Ogirri recalled that there were leaders from across the continent including South Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya and South Africa. “Together, we agreed that the mindset must change. We already have examples of Africans who have built successful global businesses. We must believe in our younger generation and create platforms that enable them to succeed.”

Leadership legacy beyond corporate roles

Leadership becomes legacy through how you lead. Ogirri told this reporter he did not set out to build a legacy. “It grew naturally through being accessible, listening well, and valuing community.

“Good leaders are accessible, emotionally intelligent listeners, and they are transformational. Leadership is not just about achieving results; it’s about continuous improvement. More importantly, it is about how results are achieved.

Indeed, Ogirri views legacy not as titles or achievements but as the lasting impact one has on people. He believes true leadership means developing others, caring about their growth, and supporting their futures. Many of those he’s mentored still reach out for guidance, which he finds deeply fulfilling. This is because he believes that legacy is built through people.



BUSINESS WOMEN HUB AFRICA CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS FUNDING, STRUCTURE FOR WOMEN-LED GROWTH

CHISOM MICHAEL



Business Women Hub Africa's 2026 annual conference brought focus to the role of structured growth, access to funding, and shared networks in shaping women-led enterprises, as stakeholders called for a shift from survival-driven entrepreneurship to long-term scale.

Held on Friday, March 27, the conference convened industry leaders, professionals, and emerging entrepreneurs under the theme, "Balance to Scale: Empowered Women and Its Gain," aligning with the global "Give to Gain" focus observed during International Women's Month. Discussions throughout the event examined how women can build sustainable businesses through deliberate planning, collaboration, and access to opportunity.

The Special Guest of Honour, Princess Damilola Sonayon James, Assistant Women Leader of the APC in Lagos State, represented by Olubukola Odetayo, Executive Assistant to the Deputy Women Leader, set the tone in her

opening address, drawing attention to the link between women's participation in business and broader economic outcomes. She noted that enabling women to thrive in enterprise strengthens leadership pipelines and supports more inclusive growth.

Across keynote sessions and discussions, speakers framed empowerment as a process tied to identity, access, and structure. Actress and advocate Stella Damasus urged participants to reject limiting labels and take ownership of their roles in business and society, while maintaining clarity in decision-making.

Toun Okewale Sonaiya, Chair and Co-Founder of Women Radio Nigeria, expanded on the theme "Give to Gain," describing empowerment as intentional access supported by consistency and shared networks.

In a keynote that centred on internal capacity and business discipline, Yetunde Bankole-Bernard, Director at Finchglow



Holdings and Chief Executive Officer of YBB Company, spoke on the need for specialisation, delegation, and self-trust in scaling enterprises. She positioned structure as critical to managing growth, noting that clarity in roles and systems allows founders to focus on long-term direction. Adedoja Allen, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of City 105.1 FM, reinforced this position through her experience in media leadership, pointing to persistence, value creation, and legacy as central to sustained impact.

Contributions from Mercy Agbeti, Nnenna Jacob-Ogogo, Precious Adesina-Ola, Zusi Inegbeniki, Ella Ezeadijie, Linda Ochugbua, Oyindamola Fawehinmi, Moyosoreoluwa Eleso, Ayanime Edem, Abiola Adelana, and Mobolaji Ajayi extended the conversation into practical areas including business visibility, leadership positioning, and long-term sustainability. Their sessions formed part of interactive engagements designed to connect strategy with execution for participants.

A recurring message across the conference was the positioning of balance not as a constraint, but as a strategic tool. Speakers emphasised that growth driven by constant activity without structure can limit long-term outcomes, while deliberate planning enables clarity, stronger decision-making, and sustainable expansion.

Founder of Business Women Hub Africa, Imelda Usoro-Olaoye (also CEO Thinkmint Nigeria & Green Mortgage), in her welcome address, reaffirmed the organisation's focus on supporting early-stage female entrepreneurs

through access to resources and networks. She noted that since 2020, the Hub has reached over 1,200 women across Nigeria and the diaspora, providing training, funding opportunities, and market access aimed at strengthening business capacity.

The conference also underscored the role of financial support in enabling scale. Through the Business Women Hub Grant, a combined total of N3,750,000 was awarded to eight women-led businesses, including Dharkag Foods, Pemnia Wellness, Anesi Lifestyle, Shammah Drinks, Evani. ng, Educare, AA Foods, and Cassia Lily. The selection process, handled by the judges, assessed applicants based on defined business criteria and growth potential.

Beyond funding, the conference created pathways for increased market visibility, with 20 media slots awarded to members of the Business Women Hub community through Women FM 91.6 and City FM 105.1. The initiative is expected to support brand exposure and audience reach for participating businesses.

With a combination of funding support, strategic conversations, and access to platforms, the conference reflects a broader effort to reposition women-led enterprises within the economy. As stakeholders continue to push for structures that support scale, the emphasis is shifting towards ensuring that women are not only participating in business but are equipped to build enterprises that deliver sustained value and impact.

EASTER SUNDAY FITS: 15 STUNNING ANKARA STYLES THAT EXUDE CLASS

CHIOMA ONUH



Easter remains one of the most significant moments in the Christian calendar, a time set aside to reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, His resurrection, and the hope of new life.

It is also a season of renewal and celebration. For many, it is expressed both in worship how they show up...dressed with intention on Easter Sunday.

Looking good for Easter does not have to come at a high cost. Ankara fabric continues to prove that style can be both affordable and beautiful. With the right design and tailoring, it offers a simple way to stand out without stretching your budget.

Attending church on Easter Sunday is a moment of reverence for Christians, it is a way of honouring the meaning of the day...so dressing well becomes part of that expression, a reflection of joy, gratitude, and faith.

Ankara styles offer versatility for various occasions you might want to grace this period, they have a way of exuding elegance and modesty.

With the right fabric, a good fit, and simple styling, even the most understated look can feel complete. Sometimes, it is not about how much you spend, but how well the outfit comes together.

Here are Ankara styles to inspire your Easter Sunday look.

THE MAKEUP FAIR SERIES ENTERS SOUTHERN AFRICA WITH INDUSTRY MEETUPS IN ZIMBABWE, ZAMBIA



The Makeup Fair Series announces its first Southern African industry meetups, signalling a new phase in its continental expansion strategy.

One of Africa's most enduring beauty trade platforms is extending its footprint beyond West Africa.

The Makeup Fair Series (TMUFS), widely recognised as Nigeria's pioneer beauty trade fair, has announced the launch of curated industry meetups in Zimbabwe and Zambia this April—its first deliberate entry into Southern Africa and a clear signal of its continental ambitions.

Scheduled to take place in April 2026, the meetups will be hosted as intimate breakfast and evening dialogues, bringing together makeup artists, beauty entrepreneurs, distributors, and key stakeholders within each country's beauty ecosystem.

The format is designed to foster meaningful engagement in relaxed settings that prioritise connection over transaction.

The choice of format reflects a deliberate market-entry strategy. Rather than launching immediately with a full-scale trade fair, TMUFS is approaching new markets through listening,



engagement, and relationship-building—laying the groundwork for long-term ecosystem development.

“Our goal is to build strong, connected beauty ecosystems across African markets. These meetups allow us to engage directly with local communities, understand market dynamics, and establish meaningful relationships before launching full-scale fairs.”

— Omolola Faleye, Founder, The Makeup Fair Series

Founded in 2012 by Omolola Faleye, TMUFS has evolved from a single event in Abuja into a multi-city trade platform, delivering over 135 editions across 14 cities, including Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, Warri, Kano, Owerri and Benin.

The platform attracts approximately 16,000 attendees annually and hosts more than 400 participating brands, with an exhibitor return rate consistently exceeding 85 percent.

Its operating model combines exhibitions, direct-to-consumer sales, and business networking—providing beauty brands with structured access to visibility, distribution channels, and market growth.

The Zimbabwe and Zambia meetups represent the first phase of a broader, phased continental expansion. While TMUFS has not disclosed its next target markets, the approach signals a strategy anchored in local ecosystem engagement ahead of full-scale rollout.

The expansion comes amid sustained growth in Africa’s beauty and personal care sector, where demand continues to rise for platforms that connect brands directly with consumers and distributors.

Industry observers will be watching closely. If successful, TMUFS’ model could offer a scalable blueprint for pan-African beauty commerce—built not through rapid rollout, but through deliberate, relationship-led expansion.

WHY YOUR KNIFE SKILLS DEFINE YOUR COOKING

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



Have you ever wondered why a dish at a top-tier restaurant tastes so ‘balanced,’ even when it’s just a simple stir-fry? The secret isn’t just in the seasoning; it’s in the size, form, and arrangement.

Beyond just making your plate look attractive, knife skills are the foundational infrastructure of a great meal. When your vegetables are diced into uniform pieces, they all hit the heat at the same time.

This means you avoid that frustrating kitchen moment where half your onions are burnt while the rest are still crunchy and raw.

Safety is a Skill, Not an Accident

Most people fear a sharp knife, but in reality, a dull blade is far more dangerous.

A sharp knife bites into the food; a dull one slips off the surface—usually toward your fingers. By mastering the “Pinch Grip” (holding the base of the blade for control) and the “Claw Grip” (tucking your fingertips away), you aren’t just cooking faster; you’re cooking with a safety net.

Efficiency: The Professional’s Currency

In the high-pressure environment of a professional kitchen—and increasingly in our busy homes—time is the most valuable ingredient.

Proper technique reduces your prep time by half, turning a forty-minute meal prep into a twenty-minute breeze.



Sustainability and Savings

In an era where we are all more conscious of waste, skilled knife work is an economic win. Being able to utilize more of an ingredient and reducing what ends up in the bin saves money and respects the produce. Ultimately, the blade is an extension of your intent. Once you master the cut, you stop following recipes and start leading the kitchen with true confidence.

BEYOND THE BUZZWORDS: DANIEL ON WHAT HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS REALLY NEED

CHISOM MICHAEL



The global conversation on healthcare innovation continues to centre on technology, but a growing number of experts are questioning whether this focus is misplaced. While artificial intelligence, machine learning, and automation are often presented as signs of progress, some argue that their value lies not in their presence but in their impact on care delivery.

Daniel Abaneme, a Research Program Manager at CentraCare Health in Minnesota, is among those calling for a shift in thinking. Speaking from his experience within a health system serving rural and micropolitan communities, he said the sector risks losing sight of what matters most.

“AI doesn’t improve healthcare by existing,” he said. “It improves healthcare when it’s designed to fit people, workflows, and accountability structures.”

According to him, many systems invest in building tools but fail to integrate them into daily clinical practice. He explained that the main challenge is not the development of models or platforms, but what happens after deployment.

“The hard part is what comes after: aligning new tools with real workflows, regulatory demands, data integrity, clinician trust, and patient needs,” he said. “Without that alignment, even the most sophisticated solutions stall as pilots, slide decks, or abandoned ambitions.”

Abaneme’s approach is shaped by his earlier work at the National Institute on Aging at the National Institutes of Health, where he helped build a high-throughput proteomics workflow within a regulated environment. The project required coordination across procurement, protocols, and data systems, laying the foundation for his current focus on system-level infrastructure.

“Healthcare research isn’t just about answering questions,” he said. “It’s about building systems that allow good questions to be asked repeatedly, ethically, and at scale.”

In his current role, he oversees research initiatives that cut across departments, including clinical studies, observational research, and partnerships with external organisations. Each project, he noted, depends on coordination between clinicians, analysts, and compliance teams, with infrastructure serving as the backbone.

His work in machine learning research also reflects this perspective. As a contributor to studies on early disease detection and mental health assessment, he has focused less on model performance and more on how outputs are used in practice.

“An algorithm that lives in a paper doesn’t save lives,” he said. “An algorithm that’s embedded into care teams, with clear escalation paths and governance, can.”

He stressed that this distinction is important in areas with limited access to specialised care, where delays in diagnosis can affect outcomes. In such settings, he said, the value of AI lies in whether health systems can act on predictions in a safe and consistent way.

For Abaneme, innovation in healthcare extends beyond advanced systems. He pointed to the role of machine learning in identifying patients at risk, the use of automation in reducing administrative work, and the need for stronger data systems that support decision-making.

However, he cautioned against measuring success based on technical capability alone.

“The question isn’t whether a tool is impressive,” he said. “It’s whether it improves access, timeliness, consistency, and equity in care delivery. Those are the metrics that matter. Everything else is a prototype.”

Alongside his work in data and systems, Abaneme has also focused on workforce development. He has supported research internships and mentorship programmes aimed at building capacity within local communities.

“Technology doesn’t build capacity, people do,” he said. “Our responsibility is to design systems that make people better at what they do, not smaller.”

He added that traditional measures of success, such as delivery timelines and budgets, are no longer enough on their own.

“Being on time and on budget is the baseline,” he said. “The real question is whether the work improved decisions, reduced inequities, and built institutional capability.”

As healthcare systems face rising demand and ongoing challenges linked to workforce pressure and the use of AI, Abaneme’s message points to a need for balance. While innovation will continue to shape the sector, its success will depend on how well it is integrated into care.

“The question is not whether innovation is coming to healthcare,” he said. “It already has. The real question is whether healthcare systems are prepared to use it in ways that improve care rather than simply modernising its appearance.”

“That’s where the next chapter of progress will be written,” he added. “And it will not be written by technology alone.”

TOP 10 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WITH BIRTHRIGHT CITIZENSHIP UNDER DEFINED CONDITIONS

CHISOM MICHAEL



Citizenship laws across Europe show that birth within a country does not always lead to nationality. Many states apply rules based on descent or legal residence, limiting automatic access at birth.

However, some still provide pathways to citizenship for children born on their soil under defined conditions. These rules often consider factors such as parental status, length of residence and the need to prevent statelessness, shaping how nationality is granted across the region.

Here are the top 10 European countries with birthright citizenship

1. Portugal

Portugal grants citizenship by birth under conditions. A child must be born in the country, and at least one parent must be Portuguese or legally resident. Citizenship may also apply if the child is stateless, if a parent has lived in Portugal for five years, or if the child completes primary education there. In some cases, eligibility can come later if a parent acquires citizenship.

2. Spain

Spain follows “the right of blood”. A child becomes a citizen if one parent is Spanish, regardless of birthplace. It also applies where a child would otherwise have no nationality, including cases involving stateless parents or where the parents’ country does not recognise the child.

3. Greece

In Greece, citizenship is linked to both descent and residence. A child qualifies if one parent is Greek. It may also apply where a parent has lived in the country for at least five years, especially if the child completes elementary education there.

4. Latvia

Latvia allows citizenship for children born in the country in cases involving stateless or non-citizen parents. Since January 1, 2020, the law has expanded to cover mixed-status situations, helping reduce statelessness.

5. Malta

Malta grants citizenship if one parent is Maltese. It also recognises “unconditional Jus Soli” for people born in the country before 1 August 1989, regardless of parental nationality.

6. Germany

Germany offers citizenship through descent and residency. A child born in Germany can qualify if one parent has lived there for eight years and holds permanent residence. In some cases, the child may need to choose between nationalities between ages 18 and 23.

7. France

France provides several routes. A child born in France gains citizenship if one parent is French or was also born there. Children born abroad to French parents are citizens. Those born in France to foreign parents may qualify at 18 if they have lived there for at least five years from age 11. Stateless or abandoned children are also covered.

8. Belgium

Belgium grants citizenship if one parent is Belgian or if the parents are stateless. It may also apply where a parent was born in Belgium and lived there for five years, or where the child has lived in the country since birth and a parent has long-term residence. Adoption can also lead to citizenship.

9. Finland

Finland bases citizenship on parentage. A child qualifies if the mother is Finnish, or if the father is Finnish and married to the mother. Recognition by the father or legal recognition of maternity also allows citizenship under current law.

10. Ireland

Ireland no longer grants automatic citizenship for all births. Children born before January 1, 2005 may qualify under earlier rules. For those born after, at least one parent must be an Irish or UK citizen, or have lived in the country for three of the previous five years. Citizenship also applies where the child would otherwise be stateless.

YOU MAY BE SMARTER THAN YOU THINK, STUDY FINDS

CHISOM MICHAEL



A growing body of thought on human intelligence suggests that many people may overlook their own intellectual ability, especially when it does not fit traditional views of creativity. While creativity is often linked to art, experts say intellectual creativity plays an equal role in shaping how people think, learn and solve problems, according to Psychology Today.

The idea centres on recognising patterns in thinking that point to a deeper level of awareness and curiosity. According to recent insights, individuals who display these traits may not always identify themselves as “smart”, yet their habits reveal consistent engagement with ideas and reflection.

One key sign is the ability to notice creative thinking in others. People with strong intellectual awareness often pay attention to how others form ideas, build arguments or use analogies. A simple comparison or explanation can trigger extended thought, leading them to examine “ways the analogy fits and ways it doesn’t”. This process reflects a sensitivity to patterns in reasoning.

Another sign is the sense that ideas are constantly active in the mind. Individuals report that it feels like concepts “ping against each other” as they move between detailed analysis and broader reflection. In one moment, they may focus on practical issues, and in the next, they consider larger questions. This movement between levels of thought often creates a steady flow of curiosity.

Experts also point to experimentation as a defining behaviour. Intellectual creativity is not limited to thinking alone. It involves action. People test ideas, explore outcomes and remain open to results. They “sow a few seeds and see what grows”, rather than waiting for certainty before acting. This approach allows them to learn through experience.

Reflection is another consistent feature. Many individuals revisit ideas they have heard, read or observed. Their minds return to questions such as, “They seem

really smart, but I can’t put my finger on exactly why,” or “I hadn’t thought about X that way.” These moments often occur during routine activities, when the mind has space to wander. The process helps them make sense of new information.

In addition, self-awareness plays a role. People with strong thinking habits often monitor how their own knowledge affects their judgement. They recognise that past learning or confidence can limit future understanding. As a result, they work to manage these influences, a process linked to “metacognition (thinking about thinking)”.

Finally, a focus on improvement appears across all areas of their lives. Rather than seeing tasks as complete, they revisit them with the aim of doing better. This may involve small adjustments, such as reflecting on a meal and thinking, “I should try adding lime next time,” or reviewing communication and noting. These reflections guide future action.

Taken together, these signs suggest that intelligence is not always visible in obvious ways. It often appears in how people think, question and adapt. By recognising these patterns, individuals may begin to understand their own abilities and use them with greater intent.

NIGERIA'S BEST 10 PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES BY AD SCIENTIFIC INDEX 2026 RANKINGS

CHARLES OGWO



As competition intensifies in Nigeria's higher education sector, the 2026 AD Scientific Index ranking provides a data-driven look at the private universities excelling in research productivity and scholarly influence.

With more than 159 accredited and over 53 percent of all university ownership, private universities dominate the higher education sector in Nigeria.

Experts believe that the growth of the Ivory Towers in the country is driven by private investment, improved infrastructure, and a focus on science and technology. Hence, some Nigerian private universities are gaining recognition globally.

According to the AD Scientific Index 2026, which ranks institutions based on H-index, citations, and research impact, several Nigerian private universities have secured top positions.

Here are the 2026 best 10 ranked private universities in Nigeria according to the AD Scientific Index.

Covenant University

Covenant University is a faith-based private institution founded in 2002 by the Living Faith (Winners) Church, located in Ota, Ogun State.

The university is one of the country's best ranked institutions by global organisations such Times Higher Education (THE) rankings, and QS Global University ranking.

Covenant University is renowned for its focus on research, innovation, and leadership development.

According to the AD Scientific Index 2026, Covenant University ranks 1,857 in the world, 36 in Africa, and third in Nigeria.



Afe Babalola University (ABUAD)

Afe Babalola University, founded in 2009, is named after its founder, Afe Babalola, a legal luminary and is located in Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State.

Since commencement, the university has made inroads in the academic space, with emphasis on excellence and infrastructure development. The university operates across multiple colleges, including law, medicine, and engineering.

According to the AD Scientific Index report, ABUAD ranks 2,631 in the world, 112 in Africa, and 18 in Nigeria.

Maryam Abacha American University of Nigeria (MAAUN)

Maryam Abacha American University of Nigeria was established in 2021 and is located in Kano.

It is one of the private tertiary institutions in Northern Nigeria, and it is known for focusing on global-standard education, with programmes in law, business, social sciences, and health.

According to the AD Scientific Index, MAAUN is ranked 2,948 globally, 131 in Africa, and 19 in Nigeria.



Redeemer's University of Nigeria (RUN)

Redeemer's University is a faith-based institution founded in 2005 by the Redeemed Christian Church of God, and it is located in Ede, Osun State.

The university is known for its focus on research, particularly in science and public health, as well as its structured academic environment.

RUN is ranked 3,007 in the world, 136 in Africa, and 20 in Nigeria, according to the index.



Bowen University

Bowen University, founded in 2001 by the Nigerian Baptist Convention, is located in Iwo, Osun State.

The faith-based university combines academic learning with strong moral and religious values, offering programmes across various disciplines.

Bowen ranks 3,070 globally, 140 in Africa, and 21 in Nigeria.



Landmark University

Landmark University was established in 2011, and it is located in Omu-Aran, Kwara State.

Landmark University has more focus on agriculture, science, and technology, with a mission to drive food security and innovation in Nigeria.

It ranks 3,121 in the world, 143 in Africa, and 22 in Nigeria.

Babcock University

Babcock University is a faith-based institution owned by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, established in 1959, and it is located in Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State.

Babcock offers programmes across medicine, law, and social sciences, with a strong emphasis on discipline and academic structure. The university ranks 3,605 globally, 180 in Africa, and 31 in Nigeria.

African University of Science and Technology (AUST)

The African University of Science and Technology was established in 2007 and is located in Abuja.

AUST has its focus mainly on postgraduate education in science, engineering, and technology, with a strong research orientation.

The university ranks 4,177 in the world, 205 in Africa, and 38 in Nigeria.

Bells University of Technology

Bells University of Technology was established in 2005 by Olusegun Obasanjo, former president of Nigeria, and it is located in Ota, Ogun State.

Bell University specialises in engineering, environmental sciences, and technology-driven programmes.

It ranks 4,690 globally, 234 in Africa, and 46 in Nigeria.

Augustine University

Augustine University is a faith-based institution located in Ilara, Epe, Lagos State, and was founded in 2015.

Augustine University offers programmes in humanities, sciences, and management, with a focus on character development and academic discipline.

It ranks 4,967 in the world, 258 in Africa, and 54 in Nigeria.

CURTAINS UP: NOLLYWOOD'S GREATEST ACTORS TAKE CENTER STAGE AS 22&ALFRED TV WRAPS IMPROV-ED



22&Alfred TV has officially wrapped principal photography for the inaugural season of its non-scripted TV show; IMPROV-ed.

The show, which boasts of housing Nollywood's greatest Actors, wrapped production on the 23rd of March 2026 with its first season promising 12 distinct episodes, slated for a 2026 release.

IMPROV-ed as the name suggests, is a non-scripted TV show where actors meet their scene partners for the first time on set, are given a prompt and a few minutes to Improv.

No script, No rehearsal. Each episode pairs two of Nollywood's finest talents and drops them in a scene built around a themed prompt.

After having spent months in pre-production, the show's Creator Desmond Ebuwa Ekunwe is excited to bring this vision to life and to an audience. In his words, "IMPROV-ed was born from a simple truth: Nollywood has some of the most powerful actors in the world, but not all of them are truly seen. This show puts the spotlight exactly where it belongs, on their talent, their instincts, and their brilliance."



IMPROV-ed is produced by the dynamic group of Desmond Ebuwa Ekunwe, Fisayo Ojabodu, Nneoma Amadi and Bemigho Bella Nadia, and is directed by Mayowa Daramola of

How I Met
Your Father Naija.

This season brings to center stage, some of Nollywood's greatest actors including Folu Storms, Desmond Bryce, Etta Jo Maria, Ebunoluwa Oluwarinu, Tj Omusuku, Isoken Aruede, Promise Agbor, Jessica Gabriel Ujah, Mo Amosu, Darasimi Nadi, Wunmi Tuase-Fosudo, Eyiemi Olivia Rogbinyin, Kayode 'Jnr' Ojuolape, Kuchi Chris, Nneoma Amadi, Mojolaoluwa Abayomi, Bobby Ekpe, Chukwu Martin, Oluchi Odii, Sharon Rotimi, Nimi Adekambi, Ejio Onojaife, Chimsom Chuka, Fadesaye Olateru-Olagbegi and Adeoluwa Akintoba.

IMPROV-ed is set to release on 22&Alfred Tv in 2026, although the official date remains unconfirmed.

22&Alfred Tv blew Nollywood away with its debut short film 'The Delectable Azeezah Sama' and other subsequent titles like 'The Text' and 'Baby Girl'.

It is set to do the same in 2026 with two confirmed titles, one of which is IMPROV-ed, the second being a webseries titled Dear Lagos Men.



SECRETS OF THE MULTIVERSE UNVEILS CAST AS NIGERIAN ANIMATION TAKES ITS NEXT STEP

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



Hot Ticket Productions has announced the voice cast for *Secrets of the Multiverse*, a 13-episode animated sci-fi series and spinoff of *Lady Buckit* and the *Motley Mopsters*, Nigeria's first feature-length animated film. The series is set for a 2026 release on major streaming platforms.

The story follows two children who fall into a multiverse and must navigate a parallel realm to prevent an extinction-level event. Executive producer Blessing Amidu, who developed the project alongside her daughter and screenwriter Emmanuella Amidu, described the stakes simply: "It's a world of danger that challenges not just their survival, but their sense of morality."

Leading the cast is Nollywood actress Adesua Etomi, who voices *Iyabo*, a maternal figure at the centre of the series. For Etomi, the role required little distance from herself. "Iyabo is basically me," she said. "She's a mother, a nurturer. I just had to pull from my own personal experiences." A mother of two, Etomi said the character's Nigerian specificity was part of the appeal, including the vocal intonations of a Nigerian mother, the shift in tone

between affection and discipline, and the way a child's full name, when called out, signals something entirely different from a nickname.



Her reasons for joining the project went beyond the character. Etomi spoke about growing up watching Super Ted and Danger Mouse and her long-held concern that Nigerian children had too few animations of their own. "This is African, this is Nigerian, made by us, for us," she said, "but we're going to share it with the entire world."

She added that the values the series teaches were central to her decision. "It's not just about how much am I being paid. I want to know the message you're trying to pass across."

Jessica Edwards returns to voice Bukky, the character she originated in the 2020 film. Now older, Bukky is pulled into the multiverse and must confront a group of villains threatening her world. Edwards also takes on a second role, voicing the villain. She was 11 when she recorded the original film. She is now 16.



Asked what it meant to be called back, Edwards said it reinforced something she was still learning to trust. "There are people in this world that trust my abilities more than I trust myself." She described approaching the villain role through close reading of the script, finding that understanding the character's background made the performance easier to inhabit. On preparation more broadly, she was direct: "You can never fully express your talent because you are always growing."

Korede Lawal joins as a new addition to the cast, voicing William Tam, a character he described as morally complex rather than straightforwardly evil. "He's not just being wicked because he wants to be wicked," Lawal said.

"He's trying to protect his own multiverse." Lawal auditioned for the role and went through a process of finding the right vocal timbre for a character younger than himself. Playing the part, he said, taught him not to judge people without understanding what shaped them.

The series is directed by Adebisi Adetayo, technical director of 32ad Animation Studio and director of the original film, alongside Hollywood director Robert Sledge. It is produced in 4K. The ensemble cast also includes Akorede Bobo, Fiyin Asenuga, Maryam Ibrahim Yarkasa, and Emmanuella Amidu.

Secrets of the Multiverse is already in production. On the broader ambition of the project, Etomi put it plainly: "I want to see our culture, our ideologies, our accents, our stories, raw and authentic, reach a global audience."



MIKANO CHANGAN CHALLENGE SIGNALS RISE OF NIGERIA'S CREATIVE INDUSTRY, YOUTH INNOVATION

JULIET ONYEMA



Nigeria's creative industry is gaining fresh momentum, with initiatives like the Mikano Changan Creators Challenge reflecting growing youth innovation and digital platforms in shaping new opportunities for emerging talent.

What began as a social media entry has evolved into a defining moment for Nigerian content creators, opening new pathways within the country's fast-growing creative industry.

To support creativity and talent, Mikano Motors recently championed an initiative created to recognise and invest in Nigeria's growing community of digital creators.

The challenge was designed with a clear intention to create a platform where young creatives are seen, heard, and rewarded for their originality, effort, and storytelling.

Creators were tasked with showcasing their creativity and ideas around MikanoChangan Cars. Across weeks of participation, they expressed their voices, perspectives, and ideas, turning everyday creativity into meaningful expression.

After a series of intense selection of winners, the contestants were shortlisted and the winner was chosen by a panel of notable judges including Bovi Ugboma, Doris Ogah, Chioma Ude, Joelle Haykal represented by Syam Abdul Kadir, and Oluseyi Asurf Amuwa, whose experience

and perspective helped shape a fair and thoughtful selection process.

The grand finale hosted at Mikano Motors showroom in Victoria Island, Lagos, brought together Mikano executives, creators, industry leaders, media professionals, and notable personalities for a moment that went beyond competition.

Chibundu Victor Chisom emerged as the overall winner and was awarded the grand prize, a brand new Mikano Changan CS35 car marking not just a win, but a recognition of his creative journey.

The vehicle also comes with a 6-year warranty and nationwide after-sales support, reflecting long-term value and reliability.

In the company's commitment to the creative economy, Princess Tony Jessica Omusuku, the first runner-up, received a cash reward of N3 million, while Oluwamayowa Philip, the second runner-up, received a cash reward of N1.5 million.

In addition, the remaining top finalists were each awarded N500,000 in recognition of their dedication, consistency, and creative excellence throughout the challenge.

The event also featured a panel session with respected voices in the creative and media space, who shared insights on the importance of nurturing creativity, the evolving landscape of digital expression, and the role of platforms that create real opportunities for emerging talent. Notable personalities from the entertainment and

film industry, including Jemima Osunde, KieKie, Rita Dominic, and Patrick the Bassist, winner of the previous challenge, alongside the 19 shortlisted creators were also present.

Speaking at the event, Syam Abdul Kadir, national head of operations, Mikano Motors, reaffirmed the brand's commitment to empowering the creative ecosystem, emphasising its belief in the value of creativity as a driving force for growth, expression, and opportunity.

Kadir noted that the main aim of the initiative is to support creators in their creative journey and enable them to grow exponentially.

The challenge stands as one of the ways Mikano continues to contribute meaningfully to society by investing in people, supporting talent, and creating opportunities where creativity can thrive.

It represented the company's commitment to giving back, building pathways, opening doors, and recognising the individuals who are shaping the future through their creativity.

Speaking on the recognition, Chisom, expressed deep appreciation for the opportunity, describing the moment as a meaningful recognition of their creativity and a reminder that when given the right platform, creativity can truly open doors.

He further expressed that Mikano and Changan's support for content creators played a significant role in creating opportunities like this and encouraged other creators to stay consistent and continue pursuing their creative journey.

ENTERING NIGERIA'S VENTURE CAPITAL MARKET: REGULATORY CLARITY, CAPITAL THRESHOLDS, AND STRUCTURING PATHWAYS FOR INVESTORS

ADERONKE ALEX-ADEDIPE

Nigeria's venture capital (VC) sector has evolved from an informal, relationship-based market into a structured ecosystem shaped by various laws and regulatory requirements including regulations provided by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

As local and international VCs provide capital to high-growth businesses, VC firms must adeptly navigate Nigeria's dynamic regulatory landscape which governs capital raising, fund structuring, portfolio management, and exits.

In this newsletter, we examine some key aspects of the SEC regulations for VC firms in Nigeria, highlighting recent registration and compliance amendments essential to the operations of VC firms amid evolving capital requirements.

SEC's Registration Requirements

The SEC registration threshold for full registration of VC funds was raised from ₦1 billion to ₦5 billion in April, 2025. Consequently, while VCs with a target fund size of ₦5 billion or less are exempt from full registration, they are required to file governing documents and obtain a "no objection" certificate from the SEC.

Additionally, the SEC's 2025 Ease of Doing Business guide mandates smaller funds to provide a notarized compliance checklist duly executed by the boards of both the fund manager and sponsor, containing various details including, the investment policy and objectives of the funds, profile of the Fund Manager and its experience, material risks of investing in the fund, duration of the fund and provisions for extension of the fund.

By reducing the registration threshold, the SEC aims to reduce the regulatory burden on smaller funds. For funds above the ₦5 billion threshold, the documentation requirements include the information memorandum, partnership agreements amongst many others.

Minimum Capital Updates

The SEC in its circular of January 16 2026, raised the minimum share capital for VC fund managers from twenty million naira (N20,000,000) to two hundred million naira (N200,000,000). Existing fund managers of VCs, are required to increase their share capital to meet the minimum requirement of N200,000,000 on or before June 30, 2027.

The primary goal of the increase in the capital requirement is to enhance market stability, protect investors, and align regulations with global standards by ensuring that only VC managers with sufficient capital to handle operational risks are licensed to operate, thereby deterring unqualified entrants.

Practical Compliance Touchpoints for VC Firms

In practice, VC firms in Nigeria need to navigate both fundlevel regulation and deallevel compliance. Some practical touchpoints include:

□ Fund formation: VC firms are advised to critically select an appropriate vehicle (Limited Partnership, Limited Liability Partnership or company), and ensure that its agreements are robust and align with SEC rules on the operations of VC funds.

□ Licensing and filings: VC firms are required to determine whether the manager or adviser requires SEC registration, whether the fund must register or only submit documents for "noobjection". They are also required to keep up with exposure drafts and guidance notes released by the SEC from time to time, in respect of their operations.

□ Investor protection and disclosures: VC firms are to ensure that they adhere to valuation policies, fee and expense disclosures, and conflict of interest management in their operations.

□ Exit planning: In exit planning, VC investors must carefully consider initial public offerings, secondary sales, or buybacks within Nigeria's corporate, securities, and tax frameworks, alongside exchange control regulations applicable to foreign investors, to secure optimal returns on their investments.

Conclusion

The recent amendments to the SEC rules and regulatory framework for venture capital firms mark a coming of age moment for Nigeria's VC ecosystem, signaling a more mature, transparent and investorfriendly environment for capital formation. For VC firms, smart legal and regulatory planning is no longer just a compliance chore, it has become a strategic edge that builds trust and unlocks opportunities.

HUMAN CAPITAL: THE MISSING LINK IN AFRICA'S ENERGY SECURITY AND INDUSTRIALISATION

ANIBOR KRAGHA



Across Africa, governments and investors are accelerating plans to build or revamp refineries, gas processing plants, petrochemical complexes, pipelines and storage terminals to industrialise and cut imports of fuels and finished goods. At this time, however, the continent lacks the skilled human capital required to operate, manage and sustain these facilities and deliver the anticipated business results over the long-term without relying heavily on expatriates.

Africa's biggest risk in ensuring energy security is not funding, technology or natural resources. It is the absence of a structured pipeline of talent capable of running the continent's industrial assets efficiently and profitably. As Africa develops its infrastructure, it must systematically develop the people who will run it successfully over the coming decades.

Human capital as an investment risk factor

Downstream projects are typically designed with investment horizons ranging from 10 to 20 years, and often longer. These assets require highly specialised skills across engineering, operations, safety management, environmental compliance and digital monitoring systems.

However, the African professionals who will initially lead and implement such projects may retire or move on within a few years. Without structured succession planning and skills development, there is no guarantee that the next generation of critical African operations management professionals will possess the required expertise.



This challenge is particularly evident in the refining sector. Despite holding around eight per cent of global oil reserves, Africa remains heavily dependent on imported refined petroleum products. Many refineries operate below global efficiency levels, with utilisation rates averaging roughly 40 per cent compared with more than 70 per cent globally. More refineries shut down in Africa for operational reasons than elsewhere.

While ageing infrastructure and financial constraints have remained key concerns, skill shortages across the operational workforce have been a silent killer. Refinery operations demand expertise in process optimisation, equipment reliability, safety management and complex digital control systems. When these capabilities are limited, plant efficiency declines and operational risks increase.

For investors, this creates uncertainty. Capital-intensive energy projects rely on stable operational capacity over decades. If investors cannot see evidence of a sustainable talent pipeline, the perceived risk of long-term investments rises significantly. In other words, human capital is not merely a workforce issue; it is an investment risk factor.

Lessons from the covid-19 pandemic and local capacity

The COVID-19 pandemic provided a demonstration of the risks associated with skills dependence. When international travel restrictions disrupted global supply chains and movement of technical experts, many energy projects across Africa slowed or halted. Facilities that relied heavily on expatriate engineers struggled to maintain operations.

Meanwhile, projects with stronger local participation and expertise proved more resilient. Operations where African engineers and technicians were deeply embedded in technical processes continued functioning more effectively despite the global disruption.

The continent still relies too heavily on expatriate quotas. While international knowledge transfer remains valuable, long-term sustainability requires the development of local professionals who understand both the technical systems and the regional operating environment.

For Africa, this is not simply a matter of workforce localisation. It is a strategic imperative in achieving economic sovereignty, energy security and industrial competitiveness.

Youthful population and the skills paradox

Africa's great advantage is that nearly 60 per cent of its population is under the age of 25, representing the world's largest emerging workforce. With proper training, this generation could form the backbone of the continent's industrial transformation. The global energy transition is expected to create millions of new jobs in energy production, infrastructure development and digital energy management. Africa can capture a significant share of these opportunities if it aligns education systems with emerging industry needs. However, without deliberate investment in training and capacity building, this demographic advantage could be lost.

Despite Africa's large and youthful population, companies across the continent consistently report difficulty finding skilled professionals in specialised technical fields. Several structural barriers explain this paradox.

First, academic training often fails to match industry needs, leaving many engineering graduates without practical experience in refinery operations, digital process controls, or industrial safety systems. Second, the sector faces a shortage of specialised operational profiles, particularly in areas such as advanced process control, equipment reliability, and plant turnaround planning.

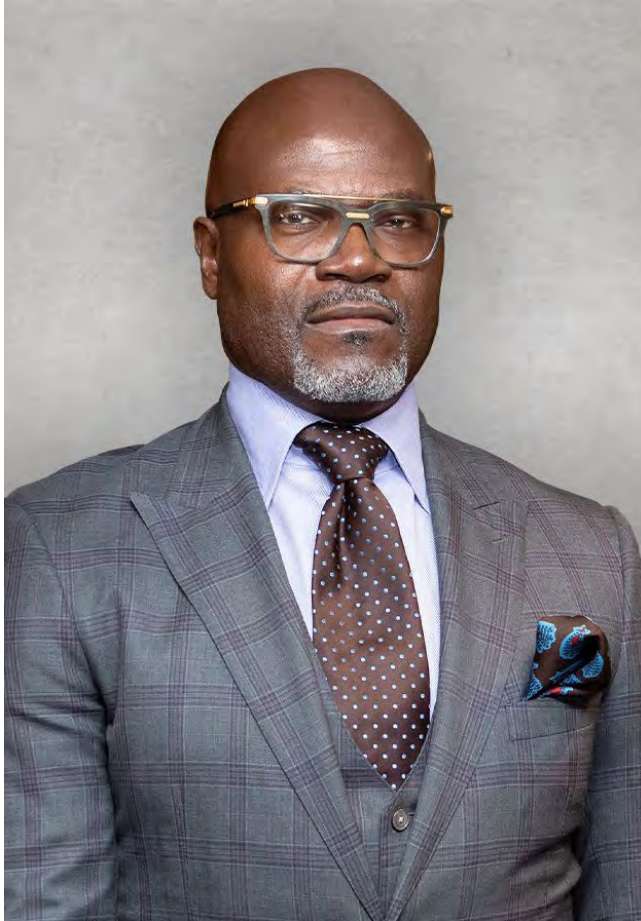
Third, brain drain continues to affect the energy sector, as skilled professionals migrate to other industries or regions offering more competitive opportunities.

Finally, lack of strong coordination between universities, industry, and government often leads to fragmented training initiatives that do not meet real labour market demands. The result is a cycle in which companies struggle to recruit qualified staff, while graduates struggle to find employment in specialised technical roles. Breaking this cycle requires systemic collaboration rather than isolated training programmes.

Artificial intelligence and the future workforce

The rise of artificial intelligence and digital technologies adds a new dimension to Africa's energy skills challenge. Modern energy infrastructure increasingly relies on digital monitoring systems, predictive maintenance algorithms and real-time data analytics. These technologies require professionals who can combine engineering knowledge with digital competencies.

AI can also support human capital development itself. Adaptive learning platforms can analyse individual performance and customise training pathways, while digital tools can map skill gaps across organisations and forecast future workforce needs.



However, AI also introduces new energy demands. Data centres, machine learning systems and digital infrastructure consume substantial electricity, contributing to rising carbon footprints.

This creates a new interdisciplinary challenge where energy professionals must understand both industrial systems and the digital technologies that increasingly shape them. Training programmes must therefore integrate knowledge across energy engineering, data analytics and environmental sustainability.

ARDA's role in driving skills development across Africa

Addressing Africa's downstream skills gap requires sustained collaboration between industry, governments and academic institutions. The African Refiners and Distributors Association (ARDA) has sought to advance this conversation at a continental level by promoting stronger human capital development across the sector.

Through industry dialogues, technical forums and engagement with policymakers, companies and universities, ARDA advocates closer alignment between academic training and the operational needs of the downstream petroleum industry. Its platforms – including technical workgroups, policy discussions and the annual ARDA Week conference – bring together regulators, operators and researchers to exchange knowledge on refining operations, fuel standards, supply chains and evolving energy transition priorities.



These initiatives, alongside programmes such as the ARDA Training School in Abidjan, form part of broader efforts across the sector to strengthen the technical capacity required to manage Africa's expanding downstream infrastructure.

Oil companies, engineering firms and technology providers must collaborate with universities to design curricula aligned with operational realities. Structured rotations across engineering, technical services and field operations can expose trainees to real-world industrial environments, while advanced digital simulators allow operators to practice start-up procedures, shutdown scenarios and emergency responses without risk to physical infrastructure.

Rapid technological change requires ongoing professional development, rather than one-time certification.

There is also a need to promote recruitment & career development best practices for high-potential employees, including succession planning and dual-career paths to develop a pool of African technical & commercial subject matter experts (SMEs).

Investors should incorporate workforce development into project planning, ensuring long-term infrastructure investments

include provisions for local talent development and knowledge transfer.

Corporate leaders must recognise that building internal talent pipelines is as critical as securing financing or technology partnerships. Companies that invest in structured mentorship and training programmes will gain a competitive advantage in operational performance and resilience.

Ultimately, the goal is to create a continent-wide network of technical excellence, capable of producing globally competitive professionals.

Without sustained investment in human capital, Africa risks building infrastructure that it cannot fully operate or expand. With the right training ecosystems, however, the continent can transform its demographic strength into a strategic advantage. Industries do not drive people – people drive industries, and Africa's industrial future depends on getting it right.

Anibor Kragha is the Executive Secretary, African Refiners and Distributors Association (ARDA).

AFRICA'S ART CRITICS ARE FINALLY SPEAKING FOR THEMSELVES

The question of who gets to interpret African art has never really been an aesthetic one. It has always been about authority: who holds it, who grants it, and who has had to petition for it from the outside. For most of the twentieth century, that authority resided far from the continent whose art was under discussion.

That arrangement was not accidental. It was built, brick by brick, through the architecture of institutions that decided what African art meant before most African critics had a platform from which to disagree.

In this digest, we will look closely at how that dynamic is shifting. We will trace the long history of African art being framed through external critical lenses before turning to the emergence of African-led platforms and writers who are reshaping the conversation.



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Interior of the Centre for the Moving Image, with works by Samson Kambalu on view

A History of Being Spoken For

When Western museums began acquiring African objects in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they did so under categories that had nothing to do with art. The British Museum's ethnographic collections, the trophied accumulations of colonial expeditions, the reclassification of sacred objects as "artefacts" — these were not curatorial oversights. They were frameworks.

They told a story about what African creative production was: primitive, anonymous, anthropologically interesting, but not quite art in the way that European painting was art.

Even as attitudes shifted through the late twentieth century — as exhibitions like *Primitivism in 20th Century Art* at MoMA in 1984 sparked genuine debate — the debate was still largely conducted in New York and London. Artforum published the reviews. Sotheby's set the prices. Frieze determined whose work was worth a profile. African artists were discussed; African critics were rarely the ones doing the discussing.

The Rise of African Critical Voices

Something has been building, quietly but unmistakably, over the past two decades. African critics, editors, and cultural writers have not simply found more space within existing publications — they have built their own infrastructure, shaped by different priorities and different questions.

Contemporary And (C&), a bilingual magazine covering African and diasporic contemporary art, has become essential reading precisely because it refuses the tourism of the outside gaze. Chimurenga, founded by Ntone Edjabe in Cape Town in 2002, operates as part journal, part archive, part provocation — a publication that treats African intellectual and artistic

life as the subject, not the specimen. Africa is a Country has consistently published sharp cultural criticism that refuses to separate aesthetics from politics. The Republic, based in Nairobi, has given rigorous editorial space to East African arts writing that once had nowhere to go.

These are not simply African alternatives to Artforum. They are doing something different — asking different questions, privileging different relationships between criticism and community. A review published in C& is accountable to a readership that includes the artist's peers, neighbours, and contemporaries. That changes what a critic is willing to say and how.

Tensions within The Shift

It would be dishonest to describe all of this as a completed transformation. The structural problems are real, and they are stubborn. Arts writing does not pay well anywhere in the world, but in contexts where the cultural philanthropy infrastructure is thin, where government support for the arts is unreliable, and where advertising markets are still calibrated to older assumptions about where cultural authority lives, the economics of African arts criticism remain genuinely difficult. There is also the fracture along linguistic lines. The Anglophone conversation, Lagos, Nairobi, Johannesburg, and Accra, has more institutional weight and international reach than the Francophone one, which is doing equally urgent work but with less cross-continental visibility. Lusophone Africa, Angola and Mozambique have produced extraordinary artistic output that remains largely unintegrated into the broader pan-African critical conversation simply because the platforms are not yet there.

And then there is the particular gravitational pull of global validation. Some African critics find themselves writing for international audiences in ways that subtly reshape their work, softening references, over-explaining contexts, and translating rather than asserting. The pressure to be legible to New York and London has not disappeared simply because more African voices are in the room.

What Changes When the Narrative Changes

The shifts that African-led criticism is producing are not always dramatic. They are often quiet, granular, and cumulative. An artist in Kampala gets a serious review in a platform her peers actually read, and that review shapes how her next exhibition is framed, which curators pay attention, and which collectors are alerted. An essay published in Chimurenga on photography and memory in post-independence West Africa enters a different archive than one published in Frieze would — it is closer to the work, closer to the world the work came from.

Cultural memory is being written differently. When African critics document exhibitions, biennales, and studio practices,

they produce records that do not require the mediation of a foreign gaze to make sense of. Future African researchers will find something waiting for them that reflects the terms in which the work was actually made and received. That might sound modest. It is not.

There is something worth sitting with in all of this. African art has always been interpreted by traders, missionaries, anthropologists, museum directors, auction specialists, and critics writing from a comfortable distance. What is different now is not simply that African critics exist, but that they are building the conditions under which African art can be understood on its own terms, accountable to its own contexts. What that produces, over time, through the accumulation of reviews and essays and arguments and disagreements, is something that has never fully existed before: a critical tradition for African art that does not begin by asking permission.



Interior of Nubuke Foundation in Accra, Ghana



Keturah Ovio

Keturah Ovio is an Executive at Patrons Modern & Contemporary African Art. She is also an engineer and Founder of Dukka, a Fintech startup providing bookkeeping and payments solutions for small businesses. Keturah is passionate about African Art and has been collecting art since her early 20s. Now, she advises, curates, and manages collections for individuals and corporate organisations looking to start or diversify their wealth management through art collecting. She strongly believes that a fine marriage exists between Art and Technology

ELIZABETH OHAKA CHAMPIONS KIDS' SPORTS AT REDWOOD MAIDEN INTERHOUSE SPORTS

CHARLES OGWO



Redwood Academy launched its maiden interhouse sports event amid fanfare, despite the downpour inside the Ejigbo mini stadium, with Elizabeth Ohaka, the director of the academy, calling for increased involvement of children in sporting activities.

Ohaka, speaking at the occasion, applauded the management of the academy for putting together the school's first ever interhouse sports event.

The early childhood specialist emphasised the need for children to be involved in sporting activities, especially in their early stage in life.

"Sport activities will help children grow stronger and healthier. Such activities will teach children discipline, focus, and perseverance.

"They build teamwork, leadership, and respect for others. Most importantly, they give children confidence, the kind that helps them believe in themselves in every area of life," she said.

To all the participating athletes, she said, "Today marks a special milestone, our very first interhouse sports competition.

"It is more than races, games, and cheering; it is a celebration of growth, courage, teamwork, and dreams coming alive."

In addition, she urged the children to seize the opportunity and enjoy themselves as well.



"Today is your day. You have trained, practiced, laughed, and maybe even worried a little. What matters most is not who comes first or last, but that you show up, give your best, and learn what it means to try.

"In life, champions are not only those who win medals, but they are also those who never give up," she emphasised.

Moreover, she encouraged the children to run with confidence.

"When you fall, rise with courage. When your teammate wins, celebrate them with joy; that is the true spirit of sportsmanship," she said.

Ohaka reiterated that, beyond the excitement, sports play an important role in people's lives by helping them lead a healthier and stronger life.

She applauded the parents trusting the school with their children and for the continuous support.

"Your presence, your cheers, and your encouragement mean more than words can express," she said.

Meanwhile, Ohaka announced that the Redwood Academy Interhouse Sports Competition will now be a bi-annual event.

This, she said will give the children ample opportunities to prepare, participate, and grow through healthy competition and shared experiences.

She buttressed that such an event is geared to building strong bodies, resilient minds, and confident individuals, a foundation that will carry the children far beyond the classroom.

"As we begin, let us remember: it is not just about winning, but about becoming.

"So, let every child leave here feeling proud, seen, and inspired," she counseled.

At the end of the thrilling events Blue House emerged as champions, while Green House and Red House emerged as first and second runner-up, respectively. Prizes were also given to outstanding athletes.



THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON MODERN BRAND IDENTITY

FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA

It's no secret that today's brands and businesses connect better with their people (customers, employees etc.) with the help of social media. With billions of active users across various social media platforms, these channels have become indispensable for shaping a brand's personality, message, and overall perception. Brands no longer rely solely on traditional marketing methods; social media now play a pivotal role in defining and maintaining brand identity in the modern world. Here's how social media influences the identity of brands in today's dynamic market.

1. Enhancing brand awareness and recognition

One of the most significant impacts of social media is its ability to boost brand awareness. With platforms like Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and X, brands can quickly reach a global target audience and communicate their message directly. Through strategic social media marketing, companies can showcase their products or services, ensuring they stay top of mind for consumers.

By regularly engaging with their audience, brands can strengthen their brand recognition. A solid brand recognition strategy ensures that consumers can instantly identify a brand based on logos, colour schemes, or even tone of voice. As users continue to see and engage with a brand on various social media networks, they develop a deeper connection with it, building long-term associations that enhance both brand identity and loyalty.

2. Crafting a strong brand persona

A brand's identity, or essentially its persona, is formed by its distinctive traits and values. Social media branding allows companies to craft and showcase their persona in a dynamic and engaging manner.

By tailoring their tone, style, and visuals on social platforms, brands can communicate who they are and what they stand for.

For example, a tech brand might adopt a professional yet friendly brand voice, while a fashion brand could use trendy and bold language. Social media content like videos, infographics, and posts can bring a brand's persona to life, offering an opportunity to connect with the target audience on a deeper level. With creative social media interaction, brands can reinforce their values and create an authentic relationship with their customers.

3. Building Brand Loyalty and Customer Loyalty

Brand loyalty is cultivated through consistent interactions, quality products or services, and customer-centric marketing. Social media has made it easier for businesses to foster customer loyalty by being more accessible and responsive. Through engaging social media content and personalised communication, brands can make their followers feel valued and appreciated.

Regular updates, contests, and user-generated content campaigns on social media channels invite customers to participate and engage with the brand, promoting stronger bonds. Brand ambassadors—whether celebrities, influencers, or even loyal customers—play a huge role in enhancing a brand's identity. These brand ambassadors act as trustworthy voices, helping to attract new customers and reinforcing loyalty among existing ones.

4. Shaping brand perception and image

A brand's image and brand perception are crucial elements of its identity. How consumers perceive a brand on social media can impact their willingness to engage or purchase from the company. Social media channels allow brands to

share stories, values, and messages that shape their brand image over time. For example, a brand that emphasises sustainability can post about eco-friendly initiatives, aligning itself with socially conscious consumers.

Furthermore, real-time feedback from users, reviews, and social media interaction gives brands the ability to monitor how their brand perception evolves. With efficient social media monitoring, businesses can track mentions, comments, and sentiment, ensuring they remain aware of their audience's views and feelings. This helps align the social media strategy with the brand's desired image.

5. Driving engagement through brand marketing

Social media has transformed brand marketing into a more interactive experience. To maintain relevance, brands must consistently produce engaging contents that resonate with their audience. Interactive polls, live streams, and stories have transformed how brands communicate with followers, driving higher engagement rates and increasing brand awareness.

Moreover, through strategic social media management, companies can ensure that their message stays consistent across all platforms, strengthening their identity. By analysing audience preferences and behaviour, brands can tailor content, leading to a more impactful and coherent brand identity.

6. Empowering through user-generated content

One of the most influential factors in shaping modern brand identity is user-generated content. Encouraging customers to create and share content related to a brand enhances credibility and trust. Brands that successfully incorporate user-generated content into their social media strategy can demonstrate that they value their customers, which strengthens both brand loyalty and overall identity.

For instance, a fashion brand might encourage users to share pictures wearing their outfits, tagging the company in their posts.

This not only provides the brand with free advertising but also positions it as community-driven, reinforcing its identity in a highly authentic manner.

LAST LINE

Social media is no longer just a tool for sharing updates; it's a powerful medium for shaping and evolving brand identity. Through strategic social media marketing, consistent social media content, and active engagement with the target audience, businesses can establish a recognizable and loyal brand. Whether it's increasing brand awareness through effective brand recognition strategy or building lasting customer loyalty through meaningful social media interaction, the influence of social media on modern brands is undeniable. Brands that prioritise their presence on social media platforms and invest in solid social media management will continue to thrive in today's competitive market, creating a lasting impression on consumers while defining their unique identity.



FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA

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

YARA'S EASTER STORY

UDY OSARO-EDOBOR

It is another Easter season and Yara finds herself thinking about Tony again.

He was the love of her life, the kind of love that never fades with time. The kind that leaves a quiet warmth in her heart. She smiles whenever she remembers him. He was the most amazing man she ever knew. And after his death, she never found the strength to be with another man.

They met on a Good Friday at a colleague's birthday party. It was a small gathering, quiet and almost lifeless. People sat with their phones, scrolling and barely talking.

Then Tony arrived with a basket. He asked everyone to drop their phones inside. Before anyone could protest, he took control of the room. He became the master of ceremony. He turned silence into laughter. The party transformed completely. It became so lively that the celebrant eventually had to chase everyone home.

From that day, Tony became the life of every gathering. He planned events, hosted them and made each one special. No two parties were ever the same. Yara once suggested he could make money from it. He laughed at first but weeks later, he called her and asked if she truly believed in the idea. She did more than believe. She drew up a business plan and promised to support him.

They worked on the first job together. Then another. Then many more. What started as help became partnership. What started as partnership became love. And soon, it became marriage.

But the marriage almost did not happen because Tony's mother and his older sister, Ozi, did not like Yara. They found reasons that made no sense. They said she was too dark, too tall, too proud. They called her unfit to be a wife. They fought against the union with everything they had but Tony refused to listen. He loved Yara and made it clear there was no other woman for him.

Yara almost walked away because of the tension but she loved him too much. He treated her with respect and care. She believed that with him by her side, his family would eventually accept her.

They never truly did. They only tolerated her. Yara accepted that because her husband loved her deeply and that was enough.

Three years into the marriage, they still had no child. They tried everything but the waiting grew heavy. The silence in the house became louder. Then Tony suggested adoption. Yara agreed.

Baby Daisy came into their home and changed everything. The joy was overwhelming. Their home became full again... bubbly and alive.

But Tony's mother and Ozi rejected the child. They called Yara barren. They accused her of trapping Tony in a childless marriage. They said adoption was wrong. Tony was furious. He cut them off completely and stopped them from coming into his home.

Two months later, everything changed. On another Good Friday, Tony went to bed and never woke up.

The loss broke Yara. But it was only the beginning of her pain.

His family accused her of killing him. They said the child was forced on him. They questioned everything about her. They insisted that Daisy must never bear Tony's name.

They moved into the house and made her life unbearable. Every day became a battle. Every moment, a weight.

One Easter Sunday, after church, Yara returned home to yet another storm. That was when she knew she could not stay any longer. For her safety and her child's, she gathered what she could and left. She went straight to the house she and Tony had bought before he passed. There, she started again.

She raised Daisy alone. She kept her regular job and continued running the event business. It was not easy. Some days were unbearable. But she kept going.

Every Easter came with fear. She always wondered what could go wrong.

But year after year passed without incident.
Time moved.
Yara grew stronger. She built a life for herself and her daughter. The business expanded. Her name became respected.

Ozi's life, however, took a different turn. Karma does not rush. It waits. Life has a quiet way of returning what we give and when it comes, it comes fully.

Ozi, who had once made Yara's life heavy with insults and rejection, found herself walking a similar path. She got married but her marriage did not last. She was sent away by her in-laws because she could not have children.
She faced the same judgment she once gave.

Meanwhile, Daisy grew into a brilliant young girl. She became Yara's pride. She excelled in school and in everything she did. Then she discovered a love for music and entered an international competition... She won!
Her name spread across the media. People began to notice her talent even those you would never expect.

Then, unexpectedly, Tony's family reached out. Ozi and her mother said they wanted to be part of Daisy's life. They demanded access. They even threatened legal action if Yara refused.

But Yara was no longer the woman they once knew. Life had changed her. Pain had shaped her. She had learned how to stand her ground. She firmly responded and told them off.

Then came the call... on Good Friday.
It was Tony's mother.
She was no longer demanding.
She was begging.

She admitted her wrongs and she asked for forgiveness. She said she was tired and wanted peace. She apologized not just for her actions but for allowing Ozi to influence her.

Ozi had been jealous. She could not accept that her younger brother was settling down before her. She resented that Yara refused to bow to her or seek her approval. And instead of standing for what was right, she had followed her daughter's lead.

Yara listened.
But her heart was not ready.
She held her phone a little tighter as the call ended.
Then it hit her.

It was Good Friday.
Her chest tightened.
The same day she met him.
The same day she lost him.
And now... this.

For a moment, it did not feel like coincidence. It felt like something was circling back— something unfinished, something waiting.

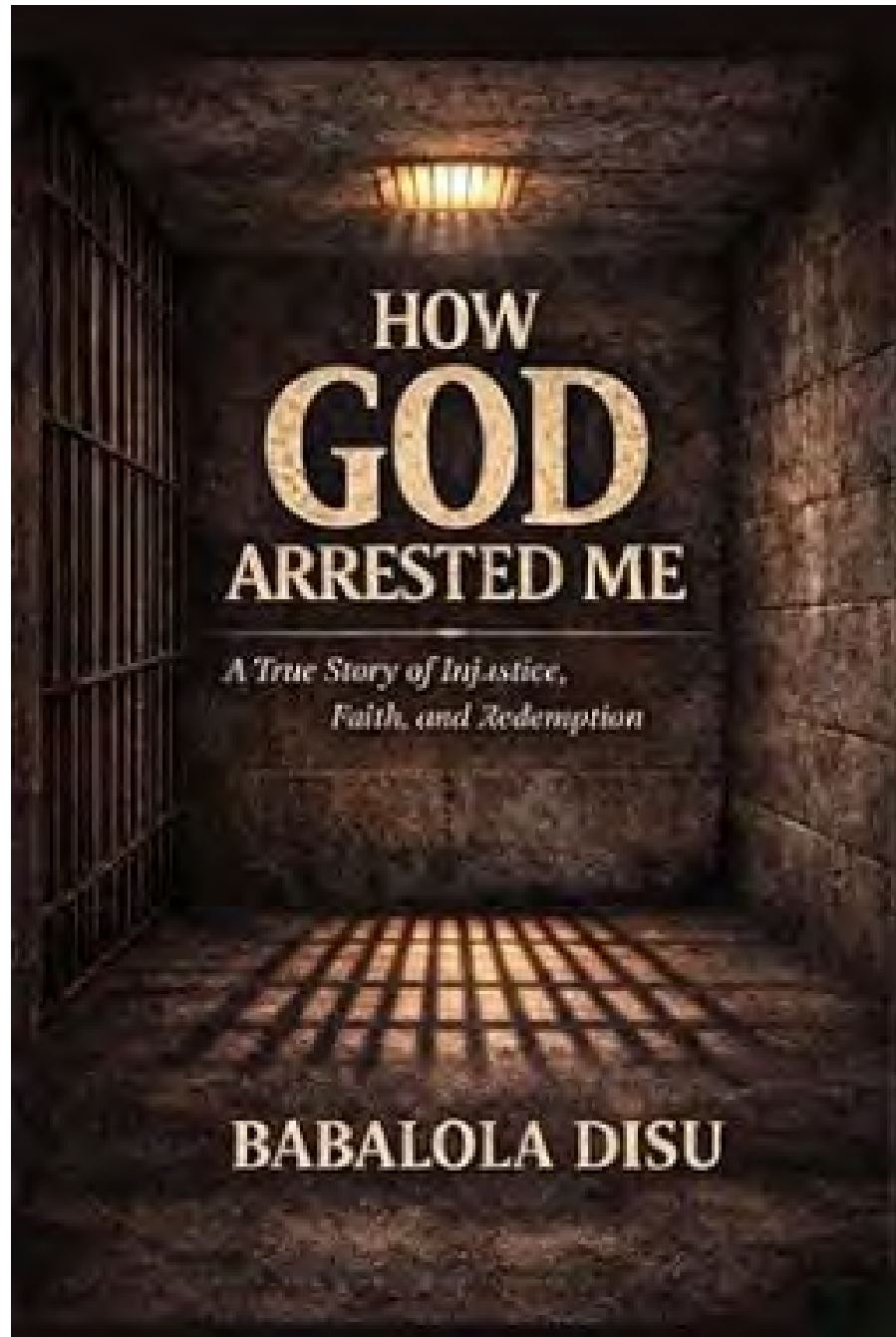
She paused.
And wondered
Was this season cursed or was it mere coincidence?
Whatever it was... a memory, coincidence or something unseen, Yara was not ready to find out.



Udy Osaro-Edobor

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More Than a Prison Story-A Review of Babalola Disu's How God Arrested Me

Title: How God Arrested Me: A True Story of Injustice, Faith and Redemption

Author: Babalola Disu

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Number of Pages: 142

Category: Memoir

HOW GOD ARRESTED ME: A TRUE STORY OF INJUSTICE, FAITH AND REDEMPTION

TITILADE OYEMADE

Being wrongly arrested in Nigeria is one of the worst things that can happen to anyone. It is the kind of experience you would not even wish on your enemy. People disappear into the system, sometimes forgotten not out of neglect but because no one even knows where they are. Some never return.

This is what makes Babalola Disu's *How God Arrested Me* such an unsettling read. From the very beginning, you feel the weight of his experience. Unlike many others, he was fortunate, his family and friends knew he had been taken. But what starts as a painful and frightening ordeal slowly unfolds into something deeper and unexpected.

The title already points you in a spiritual direction, but the story still manages to hold your attention. That said, the book might have felt even more personal if the author had put a face to the story perhaps his image or something more visual on the cover to draw readers in and create a stronger connection.

What stands out immediately is how real the book feels. If you are Nigerian, you won't find anything here hard to believe. The harsh realities of the police and prison system are laid bare, and nothing feels exaggerated. Lines like "freedom is fragile" hit hard and stay with you long after you've read them.

Surprisingly, prison becomes a turning point for the author. Not because his conditions improved, but because he changed. He begins to confront his pride, his need for control, and the way he had been living his life. These moments of reflection give the book its depth and make it more than just a prison story. It becomes a story of personal transformation.

Themes of fear, hope, surrender, and faith run through the book. Disu comes to believe that

his time in prison had a purpose. For some readers, especially those who are not religious, this idea may feel difficult to accept. It raises uncomfortable but important questions: why must something so painful happen for someone to find meaning or growth?

The writing has a poetic tone, which sometimes softens the harshness of the experience. But the honesty remains. One of the most striking things about the author is his empathy. He does not judge the people around him; instead, he understands them. This shift in perspective leads to something powerful, a desire to help others who find themselves in similar situations.

By the time you finish the book, it stays with you. You find yourself thinking about the author, about the many others like him, and about what can be done. It is not just a story. It is a reminder, a challenge, and, in some ways, a call to action.



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WEEKENDER

MOVIE REVIEW

ALL THE BRIGHT PLACES (2020)

This movie left me in so much pain, I kept hoping and wishing otherwise but I was wrong, I went to bed in pain and woke up still hoping that things could have gone the other way, but my wishes didn't come through. In this movie Violet goes quiet and shuts out all her friends after she lost her sister to a car crash, she just couldn't move on. One morning Violet goes to the bridge to jump but gets accosted by her classmate "Theodore Finch" who stops her from jumping. Theodore then chooses to work with Violet on a new school project before the school year ends. "Two wonders of Indiana", what started as a new school project quickly moved into something deeper for these two broken people who found solace in one another and changed their lives for good. Well, you will need to check out this movie to see how these 2 strangers became friends, how they completed the project and how they both saw the bright places of life. The 108m Drama, romance, teen films, violence, sex, language, suicide movie was directed by Brett Haley, they featured actors like Elle Fanning, Justice Smith, Luke Wilson, Keegan-Michael Key, Alexandra Shipp, Lamar Johnson, Virginia Gardner, Kelli O'Hara and many more.



ROYALTEEN (2022)

If you enjoy Norwegian, drama, romantic movies, then this would be worth your while. It was a simple movie, but was okay after all. In this movie Lena leaves her former city after facing different issues and moves to a new location, with a new school she will have to adjust and make new friends. On her first day at school, she meets the famous Prince Karl Johnson only to discover that he would be her seat mate for the session. For some weird reasons the prince fell in love with Lena, the new girl. His friends couldn't understand why and how that happened considering the number of beautiful girls who were head over heels in love with him. Also, Lena's parents had also pre-warned her to stay off the prince as he was a playboy or so they thought. You will need to go check out this movie to find out how their parents took the news and if the relationship lasted despite the Princess frustrating Lena. The 107m romance, drama movie was directed by Per-Olav Sørensen, Emilie Beck, they featured actors like Ines Høysæter Asserson, Mathias Storhøi, Elli Müller Osborne, Inga Ibsdotter Lilleaas, Filip Bargee Ramberg, Amalie Sporsheim, Petter Width Kristiansen.



ROYALTEEN: PRINCESS MARGRETHE (2023)

If you enjoyed "Royalteen 1" of 2022, then this new edition will be worth your while. In the first edition the prince fell in love with a normal new student. In this one, the Polish perfect Princess in the quest for love becomes very vulnerable and makes a very big mistake. The perfect Princess is caught on camera taking drugs and starts misbehaving and the young guy with the video begins to threaten and blackmail her to do things she doesn't want to do. Princess Margrethe must fight back and find a way to get him to delete the video before he destroys her perfect image. Do check out the movie to find out how she was able to manage the crisis on her hands & how she managed her family drama. The 98m Norwegian, drama, teen film was directed by Ingvild Söderlind, they featured actors like Elli Müller Osborne, Yas Waddi, Amalie Sporsheim, Mathias Storhøi, Johannes Gjessing etc.



WEEKEND QUOTES



1

Don't rely on your expertise
when you ought to pray. There
are things your brains can't
handle only your knees
.....WhispersbyTEN

2

Subject means 'under your
jurisdiction' so it is just a subject
therefore, excel and succeed
.....WhispersbyTEN

3

What really matters may
not be important, however,
whatever is important should
matter
.....WhispersbyTEN

4

Be careful not to mistake
pressure for the voice of God.
He speaks to give peace
.....WhispersbyTEN