BUSINESS DAY
WEEKENDER
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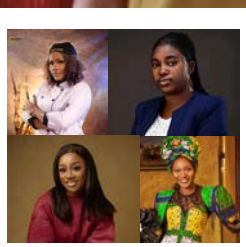
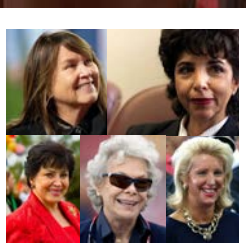
Netflix spotlights Nigerian women filmmakers on IWD 2024

...behind-the-scenes conversation with Nigeria's female filmmakers, discussing their journeys, industry shifts, and showcasing their latest Netflix titles.



WOMEN

IWD 2024_ Celebrating 20 young women making strives in unique ways



SPORTS

Meet 5 Billionaire Women in Sports Business worth over $20Billion

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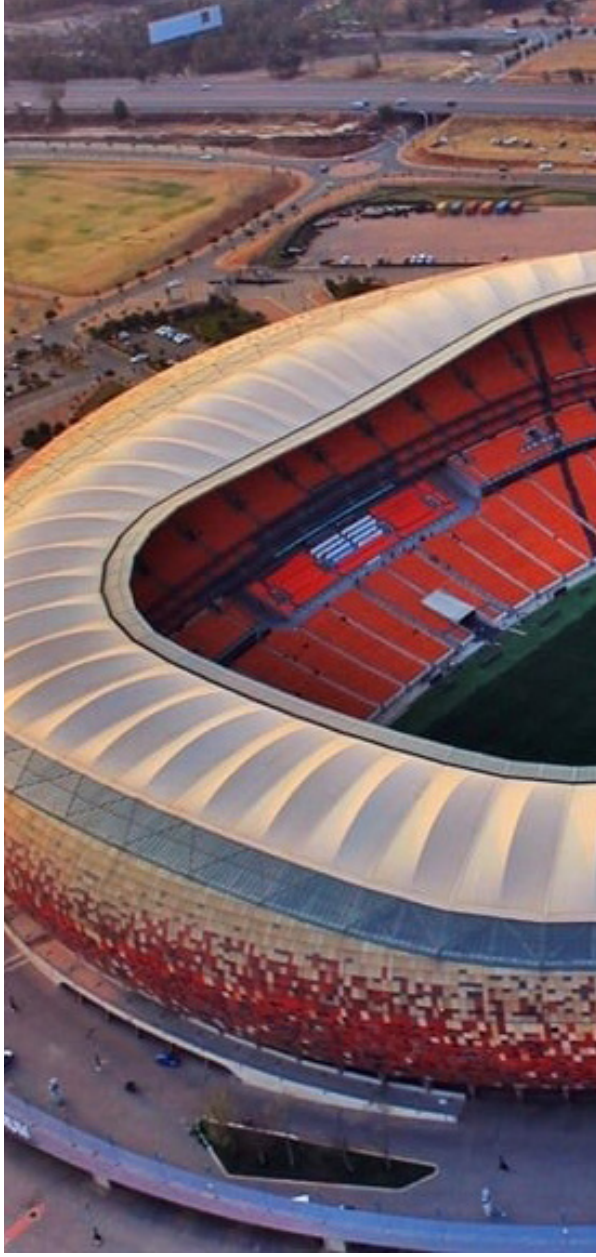



Hey Happy Foodies,

Indulge in Chef SiA's Supper Club experience arriving on Sunday, March 17th.

Join us for 'Olori Ebi,' a tantalizing 6-course blind tasting menu, crafted as a creative ode to my passion for exquisite Nigerian cuisine. I plan to take you on a culinary journey, so get ready to savor exquisite dishes in a cozy and intimate setting.

Come over to 83 Dalston Lane and elevate your Sunday with delectable dishes and engaging conversations. We look forward to serving you soon and always remember that 'To Cook is to be Happy'.

To book your seat(s) please follow this link, HERE. Please take time to read all the information available and if you need clarity don't hesitate to contact me. Thank you so much & we look forward to serving you.

Sincerely Yours,

Chef SiA

BUSINESS DAY



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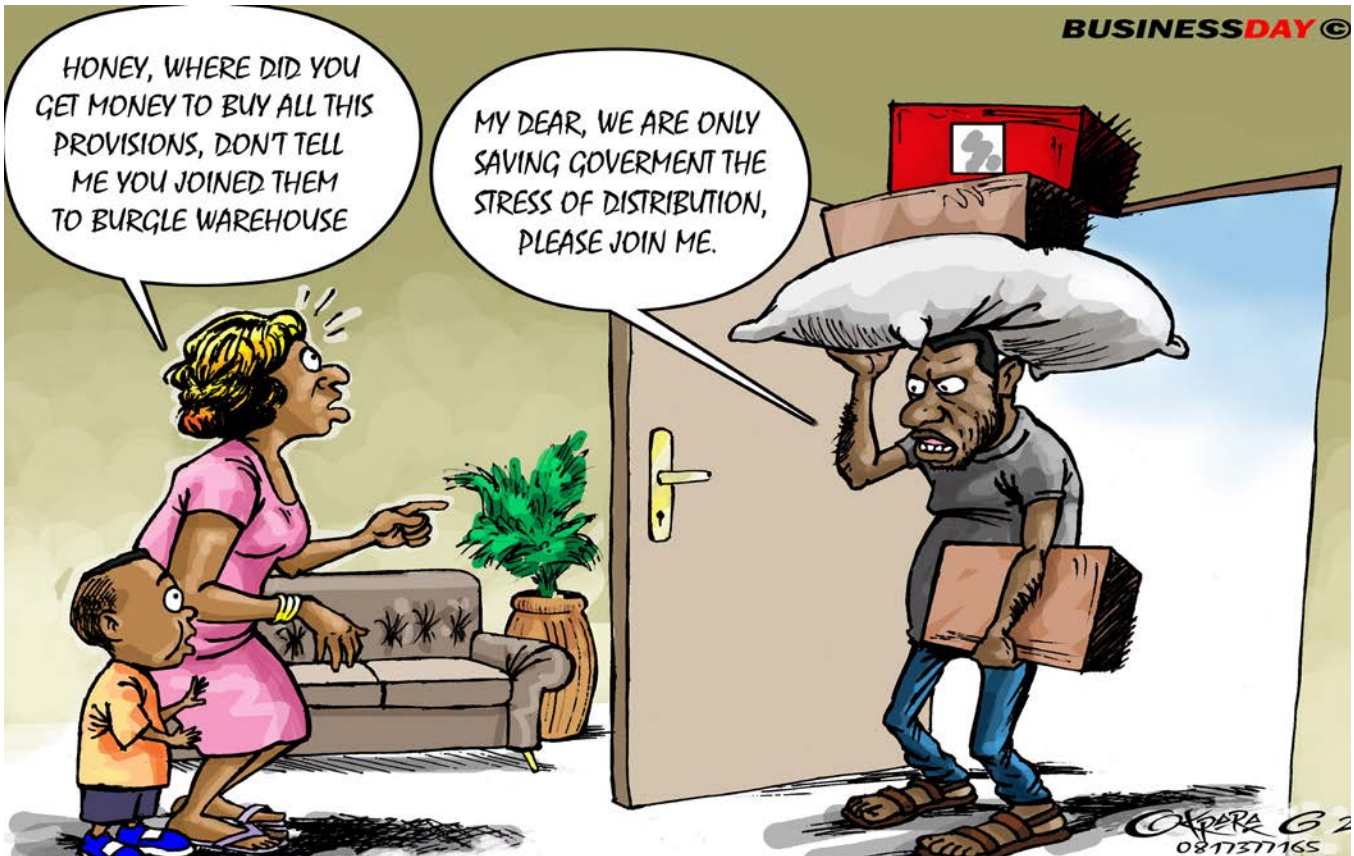
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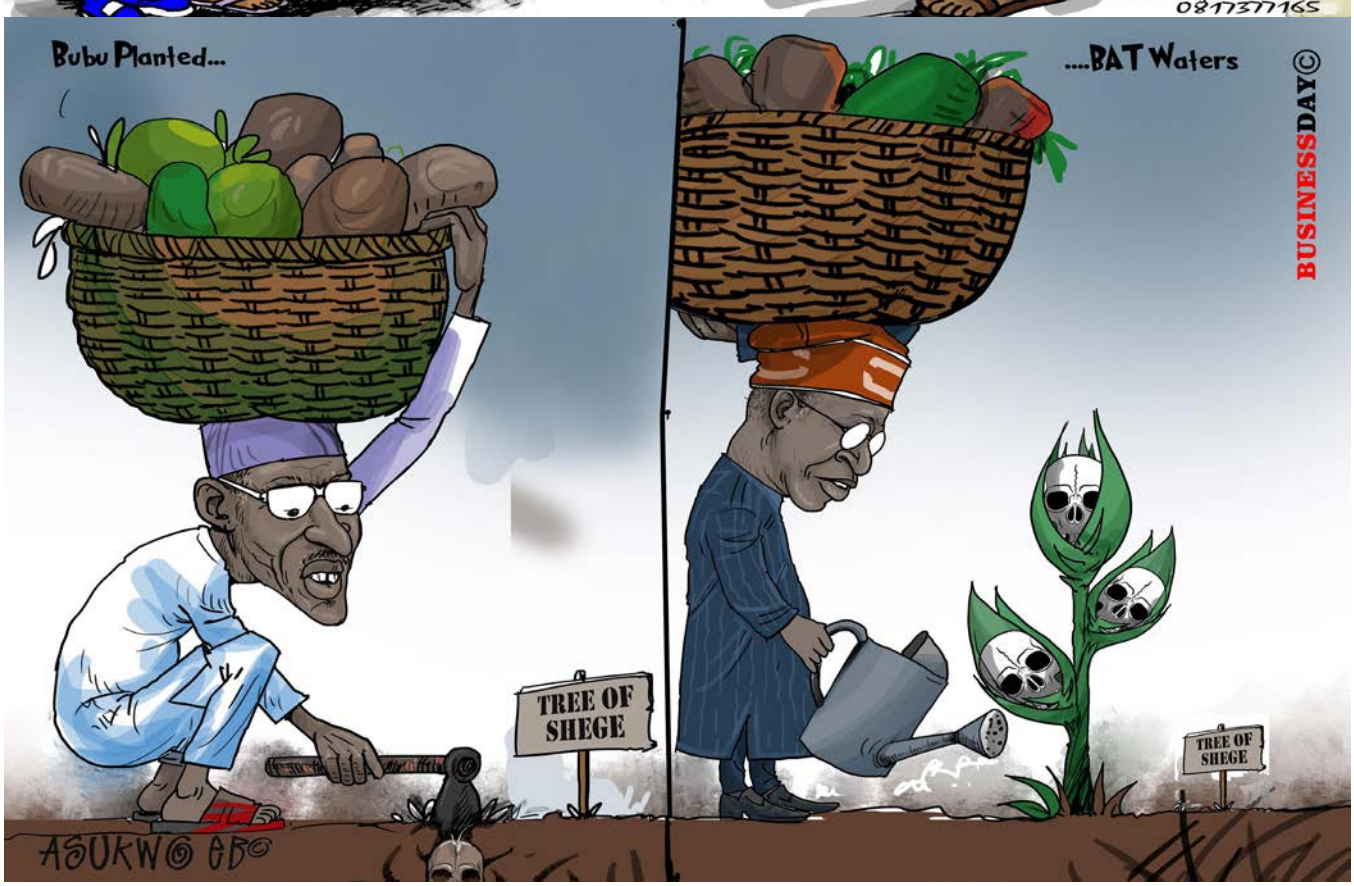
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In organisations I co-founded, I ensured equal gender opportunities for recruitment - Sesay

LEHLÉ BALDÉ AND IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



Christine Sesay is Kepler's Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Finance & Partnerships. She leads finance and operations for all Kepler entities in the US, Canada, Ethiopia, and Rwanda. She has overseen the establishment of a new campus in Rwanda, raised over $60 million during the COVID-19 pandemic, and led a student loan system that raised $4 million while supporting students to gain access to quality education. In this interview with Lehlé Baldé and Ifeoma Okeke-Korieocha, she speaks on how her success stories as regards various projects you have managed in different organisations as well as her efforts to ensure women empowerment in various organisations she co-founded.

How have your operations as Chief Financial Officer of Kepler been since you assumed that position? (challenges and opportunities)

I moved to Rwanda in 2019 to take on the role of Chief Financial Officer. It was exciting as I always wanted to work in East Africa. I was curious what the tax systems were and do they work with the same IFRS. Rwanda was particularly appealing as it was developing fast and with an amazing gender focus. Joining Kepler so much has happened over the years, with our budget size tripling over the first two years. We have also acquired our campus and are now building it out with very modern amenities. It was amazing managing the college funds over the Covid period. My background is managing a finance department during crisis periods. I believe this was the most challenging period.

On the other hand, the opportunities are endless, especially in the education sector for young people, youth and refugees in particular. The most exciting is to have a shift in the mindset of the organization from one that relies on philanthropy to an organisation that is looking to be sustainable.

You lead Kepler entities in the US, Canada, Ethiopia, and Rwanda. How are you able to do this considering the differences in the various business environments?

The amazing feature of financial accounting is that the foundational principles remain the same. We just must learn the laws of the different countries and how to apply them. To date, I have been working on Rwanda and the US and have done the accounts for the last five years, Canada for at least a year and Ethiopia for the last two years.

In cases where it is unclear, I do know how to seek the necessary support. We also have the necessary support to move into these different countries and now know what necessary information I need to get when we start.

Take us through the journey of establishing the new campus in Rwanda, and raising millions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic posed a different challenge when compared to my time working in the health sector. In the case of Kepler, I wasn't a frontline worker, and, in this case, we needed to ensure our students were safe.



During the pandemic there was no desire to buy a campus, we however knew that the space we had didn't meet our requirements as an educational institution or match our future strategic plans. Therefore, there was a desire to move to a new space that would meet the needs of the market but also give us room for expansion. Eventually, we had to move to meet these needs.
The decision to purchase was a case of opportunity meets preparation because we reached out to our donors. it was a much easier conversation.

What are some of your success stories as regards various projects you have managed in different organisations?

At Kepler, my greatest joy is to see some of our refugee students go through the program and complete it. They have successfully got jobs and good paying jobs which could also help their families who reside in camps to improve their livelihoods. In some cases, the graduates/ alumni have eventually moved their families out of those camps. Personally, it gives me great joy to see some of those stories.

As for Kepler, access to student loans in Rwanda from a private sector organization is a success. I can imagine families that can't afford our education would not be able to attend (that speaks discrimination in my mind). This is among many other successful projects we have worked on and continue to work on.

You also served as the Deputy Country Director for the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI). Do you have any medical background that helped you while you manned this position or are there skills you acquired that enabled you to understand the health dynamics at the organisation?

My role at Clinton Health was purely a Systems/ Operations management role. I don't have a medical background. I was hired to set up the new office in Freetown and assist in fundraising.

In terms of my career, I am amazed at how many spaces I have worked without even having the necessary educational background. There is so much you learn on the job. So, by the time I was promoted to Acting Country Director, there was a lot I had picked up on the job.
Also, at certain levels, it is all about who you hire. I have always hired some of the best brains around the public health space and so I don't necessarily have to know it all.



Did your family background in any way influence your choice of profession?

My family background didn't influence my choice of accounting. I found out my grandfather was an accountant much later in my career. I come from a home where my dad was an Engineer, and my mom was in the hospitality sector. Most of my siblings did follow suit and are engineers or working in a similar sector.

Nevertheless, my parents didn't push for me to get into the sciences even though that's what I studied in high school. I was free to choose whatever course I wanted at the end of the day. What was key to them was I needed to be able to do well at whatever I chose.

Are there projects you have spearheaded specifically targeted at women's empowerment? If you have, kindly share some with us.

In organisations I have co-founded, I have always ensured discounts for women and in cases where recruitment was involved, equal opportunity to be recruited.

I also founded Africa's Moneypreneur. Africa's Moneypreneur was born to provide women with the tools needed to make informed decisions about their finances. Our online resource centre is a one-stop shop for all financial questions and needs. The sessions that were organized were specifically for women, to get them to improve their financial literacy. However, it is now extended to include the family so that they can work as a unit.

Who are some of the women that you draw inspiration from and why ?

Finda Koroma, Amini Kanjuju, my CEO, Nathalie Munyampenda and many more for the amazing work that they have done to attain the heights and what they continue to do. However, I find the older I get my mother is becoming my biggest source of inspiration. I think this is important because one of the values she holds and that has been passed on. I am a believer that what makes us stand out is not just the work but the values we hold and to what extent we are willing to ensure that they hold till the end.

Can you speak to the theme of this year's International Women's Day, 'Invest in women: Accelerate progress'?

The theme "Invest in women: Accelerate progress" for International Women's Day emphasizes the importance of investing in women from all spheres of life. This theme signifies:

Recognition of Women's Potential: It acknowledges the untapped potential of women and the need to invest resources, support, and opportunities into realizing This includes investing in education, economic opportunities, leadership positions, and more.

Economic Empowerment: Investing in women economically means providing them with equal access to employment, entrepreneurship opportunities, financial services, and support networks.

Gender Equality: The theme shows the importance of achieving gender equality in all aspects of life which involves removing barriers and biases that prevent women from fully participating and succeeding in society.

Personally, in organisations such as Freetown Business School or Kepler, we have put in place initiatives such as 50 percent recruitment policy for female applicants and discounts for women to encourage them to apply and afford our programs.

INTERVIEW



Netflix spotlights Nigerian women filmmakers on IWD 2024

...behind-the-scenes conversation with Nigeria's female filmmakers, discussing their journeys, industry shifts, and showcasing their latest Netflix titles



The African woman is not a monolith, we're not just one directional - Austen-Peters

Bolanle Austen-Peters," director and founder of Terra Kulture in this spotlight with BDWeekender, dismantled the idea of the singular "African woman" and discussed how streaming services like Netflix are changing the one-sided narrative, altering perceptions worldwide. Her coming project “House of Ga’a” will be released globally on the streaming service in 2024. The film set in 18th century old Oyo Empire, is an ancient biopic based on true life events surrounding Bashorun Ga’a, a ferocious and feared Prime Minister/kingmaker who became more powerful than the kings he enthroned.

How did you transition from being a lawyer to a producer and filmmaker?

I began my career as a lawyer but always had a passion for storytelling and delving into different worlds. When I decided to leave law, I followed my passion for storytelling.

Over the last two decades, I've dedicated myself to narrating stories about our art, food, and culture. Initially focusing on stage productions for about 10 years, we later ventured into the film industry, recognising its broader reach. The rest, as they say, is history.

What really inspired you to pursue this path?

I found joy in doing what I love. I've always been drawn to storytelling, even as a child. Sometimes at nights, I turn off the lights and dive into books to explore other worlds. I constantly questioned the world around me, trying to comprehend our existence and the reasons behind things.

This innate curiosity led me towards artistic expression. I believe in questioning, whether you're a science student or an artistic individual, as it helps understand the world.

I will add that my obsessive nature and relentless pursuit of excellence in anything I do also fueled my success in theater and movies over the years. Notably, it was not an overnight achievement but a continuous effort towards perfection that has shaped my creations over the past few years.

Your biopic, 'Funmilayo: The Lioness of Lisabi,' skillfully portrays the life of women's rights activist Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti. Did you have a personal encounter with her, or what qualities of hers inspired you to tell her story so vividly?

I didn't meet her, but I was alive during her time. Funmilayo’s story is crucial for many reasons. Her fearlessness stands out—she confronted colonial and traditional powers and aligned with people across social classes to fight for truth.

She also embodied the courage needed for progress. Additionally, she exemplifies what a woman can achieve—accomplished, educated, a leader in various fields, successful in marriage, and a political activist. Funmilayo covered every aspect of life—motherhood, wife, business, politics, activism—making her story incredibly powerful; she is a perfect example of what a woman can be.



What fascinated you about the 18th-century Oyo Empire, portrayed in your upcoming film "House of Ga'a," and what challenges did you face in creating this historical biopic?

The Ga'a story is a powerful African narrative that delves into human nature and the pursuit of power, exploring the dangers of megalomania and the belief in invincibility. It follows a man who, in his quest for power, eliminated four kings using methods like juju (voodoo), power connivance, deceit, and backstabbing. The Ga'a story is crucial for historical understanding, showcasing the sophistication of our political structures before colonial influence.

The film highlights the well-structured Oyo Empire, with checks and balances through entities like the 'Oyomesi' Council, including the 'Oba', the "Are-Ona-Kakanfo" for war, the 'Basorun' as the prime minister, and the roles of women, such as 'Iyaloja' and 'Iyalode'. The biopic emphasizes the intricate and excellent structure of our society.

Secondly, we showcase the richness and beauty of our culture through proverbs, remarkable costumes, and compelling storytelling. Featuring a star-studded cast including Funke Akindele, Toyin Abraham, Lateef Adedeji, Ibrahim Chatta, Adebayo Salami, and others, we delivered a hot, captivating experience.

Importantly, House of Ga'a was a big story that needed to be told but we couldn't do it alone. So, Netflix throwing its might and financial resources behind it, enabled us to tell the story on the scale we envisioned. The collaboration allowed us to successfully bring this significant narrative to a global audience.

Why did you establish BAP Productions and Terra Kulture?

In my journey as a lawyer entering the entertainment industry, I faced challenges in learning the ropes due to the absence of dedicated academies. Although some industry veterans shared valuable insights, formal training avenues were lacking.

To address this gap, I founded an academy to share my knowledge and make the learning process smoother for future enthusiasts. Thanks to support from the MasterCard Foundation and Netflix, our Terra Academic for the Arts has trained over 20,000 young individuals in Ogun, Kano, and Lagos. We also offer workshops, equipment, and scripting classes, aiming to empower aspiring talents.

In bullet points, what significant challenges have you encountered during your filmmaking career, and how did you overcome them?

In my years of filmmaking, challenges abound, but I can't pinpoint the worst.

Whether it's securing investors or facing other hurdles, the key is to persist. The worst mistake is to stop and succumb to setbacks; there's no such thing as failure, only lessons. My advice? Just do it. The more you engage, the better you become, with helpers always around.

Along my 20-year journey, I've encountered supportive individuals who lift you, even when you falter. Remember, they can only cheer if you're in the race. So, join, be counted, and embrace the unknown.

In light of International Women's Day, how has your gender influenced your storytelling?

The first thing is, I'm very excited that women are being celebrated. African women are recognized for their strength, but the rest of the world often lacked access to our stories and this led to misconceptions about who we are. But by sharing our narratives, like those of Funmilayo Ransome Kuti and other Nollywood actresses, we showcase the diverse roles African women play, showing us that the African woman is not a monolith. We're not just one directional. There's a lot that we bring to the table and it's that knowledge that we're transferring to the rest of the world.

Personally, having studied abroad and worked with the United Nations, and travelled to so many countries, I have seen that African women are equals on all levels with every type of woman that I've seen. And so it's for me, it's a beautiful time to be alive as an African woman

As the world celebrates the International Women's Day, what advice do you have for women aspiring to excel in this industry, and how can they achieve success?

It is important for women to realise that, like men, success isn't handed to you; you must seize it, 'jagba'. Whether aspiring to be a director or any other role, take the initiative—no one will guide you step by step. There's a tendency for women to seek perfection before starting, unlike men who dive in confidently. Women should embrace the spirit of taking calculated risks and learning as they go.

And then to the younger generation, witnessing other women already thriving in the industry is a powerful motivator. When I saw female directors like Kemi Adetiba, Jade Osiberu, and Omoni Oboli, I was inspired to join them. Honestly, the best encouragement is leading by example, and by showcasing successful women in the field, we can attract more talented individuals to the industry.



Where do you envision the industry in the next five to ten years?

The industry is on a promising trajectory. Visibility-wise, our stories are reaching global platforms, altering perceptions worldwide. Establishing more infrastructure, like film schools, and providing training for practitioners, from scripting to sound, is also crucial to have more reach and audience. Investment and additional streaming platforms and cinemas will broaden our reach and audience. Ultimately, I aspire for our industry to flourish akin to the Korean phenomenon, where our narratives captivate the world overnight.

In addition to that, more training for the key practitioners in the space; from scripting to lighting, to sound and more investment in this case. I think we need more streaming platforms as well, more cinemas to make sure that we

”

The African woman is not a monolith. We're not just one directional. There's a lot that we bring to the table and it's that knowledge that we're transferring to the rest of the world

House of Ga’a was a big story that needed to be told but we couldn't do it alone. So Netflix throwing its might and financial resources behind it, enabled us to tell the story on the scale we envisioned

The worst mistake is to stop and succumb to setbacks; there's no such thing as failure, only lessons. My advice? Just do it.

Hamisha Ahuja: How restauranteur-turned-director merged Nollywood and Bollywood

…became a mother twice while on set



Hamisha Daryani Ahuja, the mastermind behind the Nollywood-Bollywood fusion film "Namaste Wahala," wasn't afraid to swap recipes for reels. In this exclusive interview with BDWeekender, she revealed how she traded her restaurant, Bistro 7, for filmmaking. This wasn't just a career change but also a multitasking masterpiece for Ahuja who became a mother twice while on set.

Her coming project “Postcard” will be released globally on the streaming service in 2024. In the series, four conflicted Nigerians in India find identity and acceptance as they face their fears and desires through a journey of love and self-discovery.

How did you become a film producer and director, navigating challenges in the industry?

My journey was like magic. Despite a childhood dream of entering the industry, my conservative upbringing led me to pursue a business degree and run restaurants for seven years. While conducting motivational workshops on the pursuit of happiness, I realised my childhood dream of entering the movie industry was still alive.

Selling my restaurant, Bistro Seven after running it for seven years, I ventured into filmmaking with the idea of merging Nollywood and Bollywood.

Choosing to direct "Namaste Wahala," I utilised my business experience for tasks like scheduling and team selection. Being on set for the first time, I was both a director and a student, but the experience was invaluable.

The movie aimed to convey messages of female empowerment, twisting the traditional Bollywood narrative by having the heroine save the day. Despite facing challenges, including the impact of COVID-19, Netflix's arrival in Nigeria became a silver lining. The movie was acquired, released on Valentine's Day, and its success marked a turning point in my career.

In Namaste Wahala, the Igbo tribe in Nigeria, accustomed to receiving bride prices, faced a cultural shift when asked to pay dowry to an Indian groom. Can you explain the reason behind this, and how do you anticipate it playing out?

The situation was left for you all to interpret, but it's truly fascinating. It reflects a custom where, in India, the girl's family pays the boy's family, which many find perplexing.

However, in this case, it's the reverse. This reversal led to much debate and confusion about who should pay whom. Consequently, we decided to abolish the practice altogether, promoting a stance where no one should pay anyone.

Can you share details about your upcoming projects with Netflix?

Certainly! I decided to switch things up for my next venture, to learn again. While I cherished my movie-making experience, this time around, I opted for a miniseries. We took Nollywood to India, a first for us. Unlike the previous shoot in Lagos for Namaste Wahala, about 80 percent of the new show, Postcards, was filmed in Bombay. I wanted a distinct approach—steering away from the tree-dancing, cheese, and romance of Namaste Wahala, the focus is now on drama.



In Namaste Wahala, I subtly explored the differences between India and Nigeria, emphasizing an interracial couple without making it a prominent theme. In Postcards, the story features an interracial couple, but I refrain from explicitly highlighting the India-Nigeria connection. The characters wear what reflects their style, and cultural nuances naturally weave into the narrative. For instance, Rahama, a Nigerian living in India, infuses a bit of Nigerian touch into her attire.

'Postcard' takes a different path. I'm eager to gauge audience preferences and hope you all enjoy it.

As an Indian running a business in Nigeria, how do you handle cultural shocks? Can you share your experiences and insights on balancing these two identities?

I grew up in Nigeria, it's home, and although I am of Indian descent, I have embraced both cultures. Having grown up in Nigeria, it feels like home, despite my Indian roots. I've been raised in an Indian household, relishing Indian cuisine, yet I also enjoy Nigerian suya.

Balancing Indian and Nigerian cultures is not difficult, as there are many similarities and despite surface-level differences like traditional attire or customs, at the core, we are all the same. I try to blend both cultures by incorporating elements like saris with Ankara tops or combining Jollof biryani with suya chicken.

This approach, emphasising common ground, also reflects in business. Running restaurants in Nigeria guided me in navigating cultural nuances and was valuable when working on our new movie series in India. Business is business, and it's about how you navigate and adapt, which growing up in Nigeria has greatly prepared me for.

As a first-time director, what do you believe contributed to the valuable lessons you've learned and what can aspiring female filmmakers draw from your achievements?

I think if anybody ever says they're not nervous, scared, that is not true. Everyone experiences nervousness and fear, and that's true for me as well. However, my guiding principle, inspired by Lisa Nichols, a Law of Attraction coach, is that if something doesn't scare you, there's little point in doing it.

I was genuinely scared on day one, but embracing new energy fueled my passion. Being a woman behind the camera adds another layer to the narrative we're discussing today – proving a point and representing women.



Adding to that, determination played a crucial role for me. Despite facing challenges, I learned to trust my instincts, a unique strength often considered a woman's superpower. Knowing whom to trust, identifying competence, and having a guiding force were vital.

How did you handle multitasking and comfortably juggle all these responsibilities?

There's a saying, "If you want something done, give it to a busy person." During the filming of Namaste Wahala, I had my son, and surprisingly, I accomplished more then when I was pregnant.

With Postcards, I had just given birth but still managed to make a movie. It's ironic, but it seems the more you do, the more you can do. Time becomes precious, and you become more focused. I live by the motto 'Go big or go home.' If it's not impactful or valuable in time, why leave my baby? The stakes feel higher when you're doing more.

How did you manage being a mother and shooting movies, considering motherhood is a full-time job on its own?

It is, but I have a strong support system. I have a dedicated team both behind and on the scenes. My husband, a feminist and my partner for 14 years, plays a crucial role. We've learned to balance and support each other.

Having a good team and support network is vital. I've also mastered working with different timings. During movie shoots, I may spend a whole month on set, but for projects like Postcard, I can work from home. It's about mental positioning, using time wisely, and being present without guilt.

As a woman, has your identity shaped your storytelling in any way?

Being a woman undoubtedly influences my storytelling by offering a unique perspective. Collaborating with a male Director of Photography proved beneficial, as our viewpoints often diverged on certain aspects. Gender plays a role in depicting fights or actions while on set, aligning with how women and men approach such situations based on lived experiences.

Also breaking a stereotype, I demonstrated that a boss can exude feminine energy, challenging the notion of aggression or yelling as a prerequisite for leadership. I believe in the power of subtlety; a single glance can be as effective as a loud command. The ability to multitask and pay attention to detail, often considered superpowers, contributes to changing the narrative. Multitasking and attention to detail, often associated with feminine qualities, contribute to altering the narrative surrounding leadership.

How did you secure financing for shooting a movie in Nigeria and India?

Securing funds for the project was challenging, especially considering the current situation in Lagos. However, the success of Namaste Wahala made the process smoother the second time.

I had supporters who believed in both the project and me, willing to invest. While the hustle is constant, having a proven track record makes things easier. It's crucial to be meticulous – having a business plan and a budget is essential.

Namaste Wahala also taught me the importance of hiring professionals to guide spending wisely. Despite my tendency to hurry, I believe in efficient filmmaking, aiming for one or two takes. This approach not only saves time but also proves cost-effective. In my



productions, I've observed that more takes rarely result in improved performances. I encourage actors to be natural, letting their true selves shine through. I like when people act as themselves and be, not do.

Namaste Wahala resonated with people from various regions across Nigeria and the world at large. How does cinema contribute to fostering cultural understanding and unity globally?

Oh, I think it's very important. I say this a lot and maybe I'll repeat it, but I think the two forms of impact and the two ways to influence the world, influence mass audiences, influence everyone is through politics and through entertainment; two ways. Those are the best ways.

Whatever you're watching in life, it goes into your system. And like right now, there's a lot of content going out there that's real. Sometimes I feel like we're showing unhappy endings and that's reality and there's nothing wrong with that.

From my side, my content, I like to put out happy endings, I like to put out joy because I feel like that's also what I do as a motivational speaker. Being happy is an inherent thing we have as a child, and I want to continue putting that out there. What you watch is what you're taking in, it's what you're being influenced with and I definitely think it plays a huge part. And we as filmmakers have a responsibility to make sure the messages we're putting out there are good because it is influencing the world because film indeed holds the power to influence the world.

What are your hopes for female representation in the future of this industry?

I admire the progress of Nollywood, where women hold significant positions of power. Unlike Bollywood's historical male dominance, Nollywood showcases a more balanced landscape.

In my experience shooting in India, I noticed a scarcity of female team members. However, I am committed to actively involving more women in my teams moving forward. Culturally, Nollywood emphasises female empowerment, a stark contrast to the gradual shift in Bollywood. Nollywood's rise signifies a space where women not only participate but also lead—an encouraging trend that sets it apart.

How would you advise women who are afraid to take bold steps, like you did?

As Lisa Nichols would advise, "Be scared but do it anyways." Even I felt fear today, despite being on stage numerous times. Recently, I entered the Big Brother house and taught happiness live on TV to millions of viewers. When I opened the doorbell, I knew millions were watching.

Putting Namaste Wahala on Netflix reached a global audience of about 260 million people. I didn't anticipate this, coming from a background as a restaurateur. Despite exposing my weaknesses and strengths, I'm here today, happy. People genuinely want you to succeed; they're supportive. Be kind, work hard, and take the leap even when scared, because if you're not scared, it's not worth it.



This movie has thrust you into the limelight globally. What significance does this recognition hold for women in the film industry, especially on International Women's Day? How should we celebrate and support our women?

I am thrilled with where we stand on International Women's Day. It feels normalised now, compared to the battles we fought when I was younger. I appreciate being interviewed as a woman, with my niece filming, aspiring to be a DoP. Few women are DoPs, but being a woman shouldn't hinder you. I believe women can achieve more. After all, they give birth; can men do that? You can truly do it all.

You've depicted filmmaking as accessible to anyone, but were there challenges that made you want to quit? How did you regain your strength to persevere?

It wasn't all rosy; my lowest moments were in the restaurant industry during seven years. I've learned from experience that ups and downs are inevitable. Occasionally, I'd lose my cool, but it was okay; it was part of growth. There's always a solution, even if it means improvising on set. If things don't go as planned, we rise the next day and keep going.

Accept that problems will arise, like missing props on set. Instead of getting emotional, manage the situation, find alternatives, and keep moving forward. Challenges are inevitable, but they are opportunities for growth.

Any final thoughts?

In a nutshell: be grateful, dream big, and just go for it, even if it scares you.

”

Being on set for the first time, I was both a director and a student, but the experience was invaluable

Selling my restaurant, Bistro 7, after running it for seven years, I ventured into filmmaking with the idea of merging Nollywood and Bollywood.

Unlike the previous shoot in Lagos for Namaste Wahala, about 80 percent of the new show, Postcards, was filmed in Bombay. I wanted a distinct approach—steering away from the tree-dancing, cheese, and romance of Namaste Wahala, the focus is now on drama.

Balancing Indian and Nigerian cultures is not difficult, as there are many similarities.

How Chinenye Nworah wields storytelling and cinema to tackle social issues head-on



Chinenye Nworah, producer of 'Shanty Town,' in this interview with BDWeekender, delved into the impactful realm of using cinema to tackle prevalent societal issues head-on.

She also laid emphasis on the essential role of research for success in filmmaking

What influenced your decision to pursue a career in filmmaking?

I didn't originally plan to be a filmmaker. After studying Computer Science, I explored various opportunities and took a course in computers, discovering my aptitude for creative tools like Microsoft PowerPoint.

This interest led me to enroll in the New York Film Academy, sparking my passion for filmmaking. That's how my journey into this field began.

What sparked the inception of 'Shanty Town,' and do you take pride in its impact on the audience?

Embarking on the Shanty Ttown journey began in early 2019, driven by my inspiration to shed light on societal issues through film. Beyond being a filmmaker, I see myself as an educator, using cinema to address prevalent social concerns.

Shantytown served as a medium to confront issues like drugs and prostitution, urging society to reject these negative aspects. The film aimed to bridge the gap between the affluent areas of Lagos and the struggles in the ghetto, offering a glimpse into the challenges faced by those in shanties.

This project provided an opportunity to unveil the harsh realities of ghetto life, fostering awareness and encouraging solutions.

By showcasing these struggles, my intention was to prompt a collective response towards creating positive change.

Following up, how did you approach the selection of the cast to bring your envisioned story to life?

The casting process was a collaborative effort; credit for it isn't solely mine. While I contributed to the creative concept, the selection of the cast was a collective decision involving the director, co-executive producers, and myself.

Upon receiving the story, the focus shifted to finding actors capable of breathing life into the narrative. Numerous individuals read the script, and the final cast members were chosen based on their ability to interpret the characters effectively.

Dimeji Ajibola, the director, played a pivotal role in orchestrating this synergy. The collaborative effort in casting ensured that each actor brought a compelling interpretation to their role, aligning seamlessly with the vision we had for 'Shanty Town.'

What did you do differently to ensure that Shanty Town stood out?

To ensure Shanty Town's uniqueness, we meticulously planned every phase – from scripting to pre-production, production, and post-production. Our approach involved a dedicated timeframe to guarantee the right execution.



When handing out scripts to actors, we emphasised the need for a distinctive performance. We encouraged them to immerse themselves in the characters, exemplified by Chidi Mokeme, who portrayed Scar.

His dedication included absorbing the script, living the role, and projecting authenticity on screen. Each actor internalised their character, making the portrayal exceptionally realistic.

Given the exceptional performances by the actors, did your personal experiences contribute to the relatable storytelling in Shanty Town?

Research. Research is pivotal for any storyteller. When conceiving a concept like Shanty Town, extensive research is imperative.

Exploring the lifestyles, struggles, and dynamics within shanties became my focus. Witnessing oppression, poverty, and inadequate infrastructure during this research provided profound insights.

For example, Scar's character, residing in a shanty, was paradoxically an oppressor. This revealed that even within shanties, there exist oppressors.

Researching these stories is crucial, as ideas require development through exploration and understanding of the realities surrounding them.

How do you see storytelling contributing to a broader social conversation regarding female inclusion?

Female filmmakers in Africa, including notable figures like Mo Abudu, myself, Kemi, and Bolanle Austen-Peters, are crafting inspiring and impactful stories, particularly in Nigeria.

Netflix also empowers us to share vital narratives, providing women with a creative space and a platform for their work.

Currently, women are excelling in the storytelling industry, making significant contributions to society and the impact is undeniable.

In navigating the male-dominated landscape of your industry, have you encountered any gender-based challenges, and if so, how did you overcome them?

Absolutely none, I have not faced any challenge in this context. In my role as the head of development at Ibaka, a VOD platform, I had the support of a male boss who was exceptionally encouraging.



While personally, I haven't faced challenges, I'm cognizant of the hurdles women often confront in similar positions.

Thankfully, platforms like Netflix are pivotal in providing opportunities to surmount these challenges. They offer a stage for our voices to resonate, fostering a positive shift. It's a commendable initiative, even though my own experience has been relatively smooth.

Could you share insights into your upcoming Netflix project, detailing its theme and what your fans can anticipate?

Our storytelling ethos centers around authenticity, creating narratives that feel incredibly genuine. Viewers can expect a blend of entertainment and education, delving into current societal dynamics.

Our upcoming projects explore love stories, unraveling the complexities of true love, genuine connections amid contemporary challenges.

Although fictional, our tales mirror societal nuances, aiming to both entertain and enlighten the audience. Brace yourselves for captivating storytelling, stellar performances, and innovative concepts that promise an immersive experience.

In honour of International Women's Day, as a prominent figure in the film and TV industry, what guidance would you offer to aspiring female professionals seeking to carve their niche in filmmaking?

As someone deeply invested in the industry, and with a daughter pursuing a degree in filmmaking, I wholeheartedly advocate for aspiring female filmmakers to prioritize learning the intricacies of the craft and the business aspect alike.

Understanding the business side is paramount. Creativity flourishes when complemented by a solid grasp of industry fundamentals. Take your time to familiarize yourself with the business landscape. Seek mentorship from seasoned professionals, whether locally or globally.

Immerse yourself in cinema; watch a lot of films to discern your unique storytelling style. Your voice in filmmaking should be distinct, recognizable amidst the multitude.

Strive for mastery by acquiring foundational knowledge and don't hesitate to seek guidance from those ahead of you. Collaboration and mentorship pave the path to success. Embrace learning, ask questions, and remain open to growth. Your journey in filmmaking will flourish through shared knowledge and perseverance.

Your insights make the filmmaking industry seem effortless. From your experience, what challenges have you faced, and how did you navigate them?

Filmmaking isn't a walk in the park; it demands a profound understanding of the industry. Firstly, one must grasp the intricacies of filmmaking as a business.

Key considerations include the clarity of the story, the intended voice, and the chosen tone or storytelling style. Collaboration is crucial—know your team, writers, and workshop partners. Seek diverse opinions and feedback.

Navigating the financial aspects is equally vital. Creatives must delve into the world of finances, mastering the art of pitching ideas to investors.



Recognize that filmmaking is a marriage of creativity and fiscal responsibility. Having a dedicated manager for the business side can be indispensable.

Also, treat filmmaking as a serious profession, balancing the artistic and financial facets. Grow steadily, and success will follow.

Is a sequel to Shantytown in the works?

Promising titles often birth new seasons, and we're optimistic about the potential for Shantytown Part 2. Stay tuned for updates!

Do you have plans to appear on screen soon?

Not necessarily. While not everyone can be in front of the camera, some, like myself, prefer working behind the scenes.

It's about fostering the next generation of filmmakers, providing a platform, and addressing challenges I encountered.

For instance, I guide my daughter in the film industry, outlining the path I envision for her. Moreover, I actively support aspiring filmmakers through internships in my office, aiming to pave their way with fewer obstacles and struggles.

The goal is to empower them to succeed in the industry, let them come up, and know how to get there with minimal problems, minimal struggles.

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Research is pivotal for any storyteller. When conceiving a concept like Shanty Town, extensive research is imperative.

Embarking on the Shanty Town journey began in early 2019, driven by my inspiration to shed light on societal issues through film

‘At Netflix, we want to amplify more stories by, for, and about women’



Dorothy Ghettuba, Netflix’s Director of Content in Sub-Saharan Africa, walks the walk and talks the talk. In this exclusive interview with BD Weekender, she shared her success story and revealed Netflix's blueprint to amplify African women's voices, creating new stars in the entertainment industry.

What inspired you to pursue a career in content creation and storytelling, particularly focusing on African narratives?

My passion for storytelling and the desire to showcase the richness and diversity of African stories to the world have always been my driving force. While I initially aspired to be an actor in my teenage years, it wasn't until later that I actively pursued storytelling.

Moreover, observing the growth of local creative industries and the increasing appreciation for local content, I left a comfortable job in Canada to establish a TV production in Kenya. Despite lacking formal education or experience in the field at the time, I recognized the opportunity to create high-quality content in response to the growing demand for well-produced African stories for TV.

Can you share some key milestones and challenges you encountered in your journey from co-founding Spielworks Media to becoming Netflix’s Director of Content in Sub-Saharan Africa?

The journey from founding Spielworks Media to becoming Netflix’s Director of Content in Sub-Saharan Africa has been a lengthy one. I started Spielworks Media just before returning to Kenya, where I worked as a production manager for a local TV show for about six months to learn the ropes. Despite the difficulties, I am grateful for that experience. My first production, the drama series Block D, presented challenges as I needed funds for the pilot. Fortunately, I managed to secure seed funds from family and friends, allowing me to kick off the project.

Following the success of Block D, we produced additional TV shows such as Lies that Bind, Higher Learning, Saints, Ladies 1st, and the civic education drama series Know Your Constitution, marking a significant journey. Throughout the early challenges, I had a support system comprising family, close friends, and generous industry colleagues who stood by me through rough patches. I can confidently attest that when women support each other, the possibilities of success and impact are boundless.

Reflecting on these experiences, what lessons or qualities can women draw from your journey to success in the creative field?

I encourage women, not just in entertainment, to embrace fearlessness. It's vital for women to challenge, inspire, and support one another. Giving up should never be an option. Had I given up during my early career struggles or quit film production after initial hurdles, I wouldn't be here today.

As Elizabeth Gilbert asks, "Do you have the courage to bring forth those treasures hidden within you?" I



hope your answer is a resounding yes! Embrace the courage to step out of your comfort zone, confront new challenges, because growth and comfort cannot coexist.

As a leading figure in the African creative industry, what initiatives do you believe have been most effective in promoting African storytelling on a global scale?

I would say investment in local talent - especially when it comes to finding ways to strengthen the pipeline through capacity building, skills development and training. For us at Netflix, this is very important.

We understand that being involved in Africa's local creative community entails certain commitments, especially in nurturing emerging talent and providing opportunities for new voices to emerge. Thus far, we've had the privilege of collaborating with remarkable female creators, crafting narratives featuring resilient female characters like King of Boys, Blood Sisters, and Shanty Town. We also advance this commitment to fostering talent through initiatives like post-production workshops, in partnership with the Realness Institute, to discover and collaborate with fresh talent in the industry.

We also focus on enriching the creative environment by engaging young writers and actors, evident in projects like "Far from Home" featuring a cast of fresh, youthful faces. Our goal is to showcase a wide spectrum of experiences in local narratives. Netflix lays emphasis on inclusivity by telling diverse stories centered around women, addressing issues relevant to them.

How does Netflix collaborate with female creators to produce original content, and what unique opportunities does the platform provide to make it appealing for women in the industry?

While there's a significant presence of women in the entertainment industry, it's not yet enough. At Netflix, we've made strides in inclusion, but recognise there's more work ahead. Entertainment isn't just about amusement; it's about reflecting society's complexities, struggles, and joys. More women deserve to see their lives portrayed on screen. We have more female-led titles coming out in 2024, from Mo Abudu's I tūré: The Journey, Bolanle Austen-Peters's House of Ga'a, Kemi Adetiba's To Kill a Monkey, and Hamisha Daryani Ahuja's Postcards.



At Netflix, we want to amplify more stories by, for, and about women because well-crafted representation in entertainment holds immense power, impacting millions who watch and when you see yourself reflected on screen, it gives power to your experience. Also, our programming serves as both a mirror for our members and a window to previously unseen lives. The journey for women in entertainment hasn't been easy, and there's still ground to cover. Yet, we owe our progress to the inspiring stories of women who dared to dream big.

What advice would you give to aspiring African creatives, especially women, who aspire to make a significant impact in the entertainment industry?

Keep creating and innovating, recognising the importance of your creativity. Build and nurture your inner core, valuing your creative potential. Cultivate a business mindset, ensuring it harmonizes with your creative capacity. As Vincent van Gogh said, "Great things are done by a series of small things brought together."

In your opinion, how can we further empower and support women in the creative sector, both in Africa and globally, especially in light of International Women's Day?

This year's Women's Day theme, #inspireinclusion, encapsulates our responsibility to foster inclusivity in the creative sector. It is crucial to provide women with opportunities to share their stories, promoting diversity and creating a safe space for their creativity.

We stand on the shoulders of female creative leaders who paved the way for us and we must hold open the door for those who will come after us to further the cause.

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Entertainment isn't just about amusement; it's about reflecting society's complexities, struggles, and joys. More women deserve to see their lives portrayed on screen.



Breaking barriers:

Netflix's bold move to amplify female voices in film

As the world celebrates International Women's Day and the entire month dedicated to honoring women, Netflix is taking a bold step in recognising the contributions of women filmmakers in Nigeria and Africa at large.

The streaming giant, in collaboration with EbonyLife TV's Mo Abudu, hosted the 'Her Voice, Our Story' International Women's Day event in Lagos, where female film creators shared their experiences and aspirations in the industry.

Dorothy Ghettuba, Netflix's Director of Content in Africa, expressed the company's commitment to diverse storytelling, saying, "At Netflix, we want our stories to reflect as many lives as we can. We are happy to work with the female powerhouse in the creative industry and bring to life the awesome projects that reflect their stories and promote our culture."

The event unveiled a compelling slate of upcoming films and series, each a testament to the creativity and resilience of women in

the industry. Mo Abudu, Bolanle Austen-Peters, Kemi Adetiba, Chichi Nworah, and Hamisha Daryani Ahuja are among the female filmmakers whose projects will grace the Netflix platform in 2024.

Executive Producer Mo Abudu introduces " I tūré: The Journey", a gripping series featuring Sharon Ooja, Omoni Oboli, and others, following a young journalist undercover in Nigeria, fighting corruption on her perilous journey to Europe.

Another promising series, "Baby Farm", sees Rita Dominic in the lead as Adanna, a pregnant woman entrapped in a sinister baby trafficking operation. Her fight for freedom promises to unveil the dark secrets behind Doctor Oliver Evans and his wife.

"Postcards", a series by Hamisha Daryani Ahuja, explores the self-discovery journey of four Nigerians in India, played by Sola Sobowale, Tobi Bakre, and others, as they confront their fears and desires.

Bolanle Austen-Peters brings "House of Ga'a", a film set in the 18th-century Oyo Empire, depicting the intriguing life of Bashorun Ga'a, a powerful kingmaker.

Kemi Adetiba's "To Kill a Monkey" is a series featuring Bucci Franklin and others, telling the tale of Efemini, whose life takes an unexpected turn into the world of cybercrime, leading to moral dilemmas.

Fan-favorite reality series "Young Famous and African" returns for its third season, while "Blood and Water" brings back the chaos of Parkhurst High School in its fourth season.

Apart from these Nigerian gems, Netflix will also be streaming global stories throughout Women's Month, including "Furies" (1 March), "Damsel" (8 March), and "Shirley" (22 March), starring Regina King as the trailblazing Shirley Chisholm, the first Black congresswoman to run for president of the U.S.



How Female African Artists are Rewriting Western Narratives through Artistic Expression

10 to 20 years ago, if you asked an average westerner who had never been on the continent, their imagination of what Africa is would most likely be Safaris, breathtaking landscapes, endless lush green, rife with conflict, poverty, and what have you. Some may have concluded that Africa is one big country. Interestingly, many still hold true to such perceptions.
This is why art is so powerful. Whilst mainstream Western media may portray an aspect of Africa as best as it profits them, African art captures moments and tells the stories of the African reality; what is and what could be.

For centuries, African art has been a potent force for change; one that has been rewriting narratives and touching on subjects that may be too sensitive for mainstream media to delve into. Africa is rich with a multifaceted beauty and African artists are not shy to portray this. Contemporary African artists are reclaiming the African narrative, using art as a powerful weapon to dismantle stereotypes and redefine the African story.

This new wave is led by female African artists, using their works to challenge the Western narrative of how African women are perceived. Through their artistic expressions, they tell stories of the amazing strength, resourcefulness, love, beauty and care of an African woman.

In this digest, we will discuss how emerging female African artists are rewriting Western narratives through creative and artistic expression.

1. Utilizing Art as a Catalyst for Change

Art has always been a powerful tool for social commentary and change and female African artists are leveraging this power to address a multitude of issues. Artists like Kenya's Wangechi Mutu, known for her captivating multimedia collages that address issues of race, gender, and colonialism, challenge the power structures that have historically marginalized African women. Nigeria's Ndidi Dike is known for her mixed-media works that explore themes of colonialism and gender. These artists, and countless others, are using their art to spark conversations, provoke thought, and demand a more nuanced understanding of Africa.

small & Iconic

This digest is brought to you by small & Iconic miniature art exhibition. This series is currently in its 6th edition and works exhibited are miniature in nature, intended to spark memorable and inspiring conversations in our African art-collecting communities. Artists participating in this group exhibition are female-led, promoting diversity and inclusion among the African art community. Reach out: to sic@patronsmcaa.com or visit www.smallandiconic.com.



Title: Second Born|Artists: Wangechi Mutu|Medium: 24-karat gold, collagraph, relief, digital printing and hand-colouring, on wove paper, the full sheet | Dimensions: 91.4 × 109.2 cm | Year: 2013



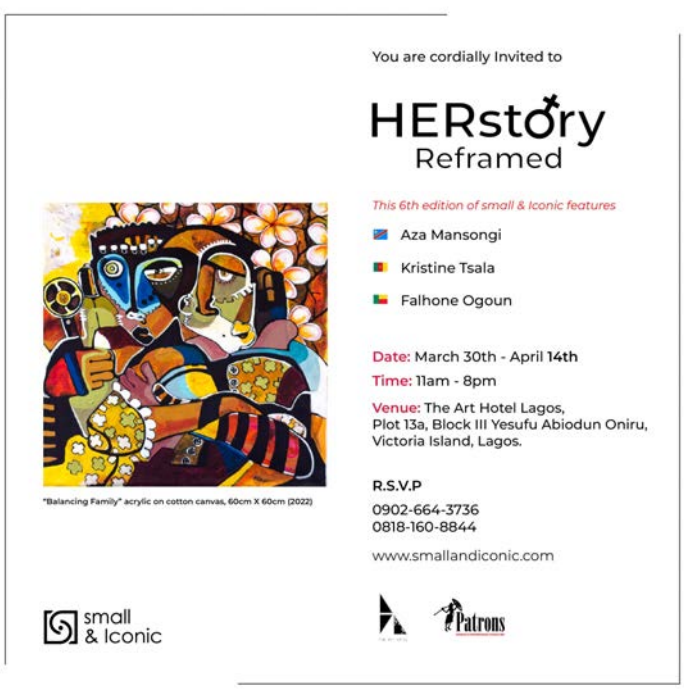
Title: Nwantinti|Artists: Njideka Akunyili Crosby|Medium: Acrylic, charcoal, colour pencil, collage and transfers on paper|Dimensions: 172.7 x 243.8 cm|Year: 2012

2. Redefining Narratives

The Western gaze often portrays Africa as a passive recipient of history, shaped by external forces. Female African artists are dismantling this narrative by reclaiming their cultural heritage and showcasing its enduring strength. Njideka Akunyili Crosby, a Nigerian-born artist based in Los Angeles, seamlessly weaves her African heritage into her art, challenging the often monolithic portrayal of Africa. Her work not only challenges stereotypes but also invites viewers to question their assumptions about identity, belonging, and representation. Through their art, female African artists are rewriting the script, showcasing Africa as a vibrant, dynamic continent with a rich history and a future full of possibility.

3. Impactful African Art Exhibitions

The impact of these remarkable women is being felt across the globe. Renowned international art exhibitions are increasingly showcasing the work of female African artists. In Nigeria, exhibitions like small and Iconic continue to be a platform to promote female African artists. For instance, its upcoming 6th edition, HERstory Reframed, is one such exhibition that drives a change in the narrative of how African women are perceived. The exhibition which will see three female African artists from Francophone Africa, is set to hold from March 30th to April 14th, 2024



To RSVP for HERstory Reframed exhibition, click here https://www.smallandiconic.com/rsvp or call; (234) 902-664-2736, (234) 818-160-8844

4. Amplifying Voices through Digital Art and Social Media

The rise of digital art and social media has given female African artists unprecedented access to a global audience. Artists like Senegal's Linda Dounia whose NFTs explore the social construction of power and the cultural implications of how it is distributed, use social media platforms to showcase her work, connect with audiences worldwide, and engage in critical conversations about race, gender, and representation. These platforms allow them to bypass traditional gatekeepers and share their work directly with the world.



Digital art by Linda Dounia

5. Nurturing a New Perception

The work of these groundbreaking artists is not only changing the art world but also nurturing a new perception of Africa on a global scale. By showcasing the continent's artistic richness, cultural diversity, and the powerful voices of its women, they are challenging outdated stereotypes and fostering a deeper understanding of Africa's place in the world. This shift is particularly crucial for young African girls who can now see themselves reflected in the works of these inspiring artists. Role models like South African photographer Zanele Muholi and Ivorian painter Aboudia provide a powerful message: African women are not just victims of circumstance, but creative forces shaping the future of the continent and the art world.



Title: Siyikhokonke, Sheraton Hotel, Brooklyn|Artists: Zanele Muholi|Medium: Baryta Print|Dimensions: 60 × 44 cm|Year: 2019

The artistic renaissance led by female African artists is a story that continues to unfold. As they experiment with new media, explore diverse themes, and engage their communities, their voices are becoming increasingly impossible to ignore. Their work is not just about aesthetics; it's a call to action, a celebration of identity, and a testament to the enduring power of art to transform realities.

By giving these female artists a platform and allowing their stories to be told, we can move beyond tired stereotypes and embrace a new perception of Africa – a continent brimming with vibrant cultures, powerful voices, and a thriving artistic scene that is redefining the global art landscape. Let us continue to celebrate the artistry, innovation, and sheer brilliance of female African artists as they rewrite the narrative, not just of African art, but of the world itself.
Until our next digest,

Keturah Ovio.



Lagos Theatre Festival: A fusion of urban artistic diversity, creativity

AMAKA ANAGOR-EWUZIE

The recently concluded Lagos Theatre Festival 2024 brought together diverse theatrical performances, captivating audiences, providing a platform for cultural exchange and bridging the artistic landscapes between Nigerian talents and their global counterparts.

It showcased the talent and creativity of local and international theatre artists with plays, musicals, and poetry performances.

From immersive conversations around the theatre to thought-provoking dramas, attendees were treated to a rich tapestry of storytelling that reflected the cultural vibrancy of the festival.

Theatre lovers could not contain their excitement at the rich array of drama productions curated by Lydia Idakula, the artistic director. Each of the plays showcased, including Anatomy of a Woman by Nevana Productions, Tuti by Kininso Koncepts Productions, and

Before I Let You Go by B/Rated, was overwhelmingly attended, eliciting different emotions from the audiences.

Meanwhile, the showcase of the LTF highlighted the power of theatre to bridge gaps and foster understanding in a world marked by differences with captivating performances from Niall De Burca, one of the top storytellers from Ireland.

Speaking at the LTF showcase event in Lagos, Bikiya Graham-Douglas, executive director of Lagos Theatre Festival, said the event presented an opportunity for more collaboration, and amazing, created pieces which bring to the fore the fact that theatre is the bedrock of all entertainment.

According to her, the event is not just about celebrating the creative art industry, but it creates opportunities for artists to express themselves in any sort of medium they choose, capacity building, and engaging the youth.

She said the past years have been challenging especially with the Covid, adding that this has enabled the organisers to grow and expand their knowledge in the theatre business.

Gbemi Shasore, chief executive officer of Quramo said the festival is very rich with lots of plays, different directors, styles and varieties that any theatre lover would not want to miss.

Shasore said theatre is a very collaborative platform as it represents the coming together of theatre lovers, directors, and artists with a niche and presents the opportunity for everyone willing to convey a message through their work.

She lauded the board and running committee of the LTF for keeping it alive with the correct narrative that prompted cheers from theatre lovers.

On her part, Tola Akerele, incoming director general of the National Arts Theatre, said the organisation of the Lagos Theatre Festival is very commendable.

She said the renovation of the National Arts Theatre, provides creatives with the opportunity to come up with theatre production in the space all year round and not just during the festive period.

She said that part of her agenda in her new role is to ensure that theatre producers and artists no longer create works in silos but collaborate to be able to embark on production which can eventually be exported to earn foreign exchange.

Akerele said the renovation work going on at the National Art Theatre presents an opportunity to align with creativity, culture, and community on a grand scale and redefined standards of theatre art space.

How Fu'ad Lawal is archiving Nigeria's history on cloud

CHINWE MICHAEL



Fu'ad Lawal is the Chief Archivist at Archivi.ng, an artificial intelligence (AI) startup that digitises old Nigerian newspapers and makes them accessible to everyone online.

In 2020, he shared his dream on how he intends to archive old newspapers online that centred on Nigeria's political, social and cultural history. However, the company couldn't push through until it became a legal entity.

Archivi.ng is a digital archive and search engine for every important news story published since Nigeria's independence in 1960 to create an open resource for the public, researchers and journalists.

According to a report by the rest of the world, Lawal biggest motivation came from life in the newsroom.

"As a journalist, it was frustrating to write about a particular place but not find any information online. It's hard to build context, which is very crucial in creating deep reporting."

"So, we started asking questions like - What's the past, how has it led to the present, and where can we access the past? After a while, we decided to scan old newspapers that were only available in hard copy and make them readily accessible online. Then, we realised how much this will help Africa's advancement in AI. Now, we will be a point of sourcing for most generative AI, which currently lacks African context," he said.

In an interview, Lawal said starting Archivi.ng required a lot of effort, from seeking publishing rights to purchasing a scanner, as that was the major equipment needed to get this information uploaded online.

"We ensure that once a paper is being scanned we check for quality, then we upload and send to the cloud, this allows everyone to access the newspapers seamlessly."

"So far, we have scanned over 4,000 newspapers, across 50,000 pages in two decades (1994 to 2010). And have raised over $37,000 in funding since 2020."

"We have full access to the archive papers from P.M. News, a Lagos-based publication founded in 1994. Other legacy publications like Punch and The Guardian are in the pipeline. After collecting the papers, we tag them manually, scan them, and then upload them on the platform with keywords. When people search for a particular keyword, scanned papers relevant to the search pop up."

"Think of a person, place or event, and hit search, you'll get results instantly. We will continue digitising these papers, so you have more results until we've digitised every newspaper and magazine published" he said.

The company's goal is to archive at least one newspaper each day from January 1st, 1960 - December 31st, 2010, scan at least 360,000 pages of everything from articles to obituaries, and even vintage ads, and 700,000 Stories about the mundane to the magnificent aspects of daily life from past Nigeria.

"Funding is important for every startup, and so our company will be raising more funding going forward," he added.

Inspiring inclusion: Non-profit organizations paving the way for women in tech

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



As we celebrate International Women's Day 2024, the theme "Inspire Inclusion" takes center stage, urging us to reflect on the progress made and the work that still lies ahead in achieving gender equality, particularly in the tech industry.

Despite significant strides, a stark reality persists, women remain underrepresented, comprising less than a third of the world's workforce in technology-related fields, according to a report by The World Bank. However, amidst these challenges, there is hope, and that hope is embodied in the tireless efforts of non-profit organizations dedicated to empowering women in tech.

These nonprofit organizations act as rays of hope,actively working to dismantle barriers and foster an environment where women not only thrive but also feel valued and included. Through a variety of initiatives, such as mentorship programs, educational initiatives, and advocacy efforts, these organizations are making tangible progress towards gender equality in the tech sector. By providing support, resources, and opportunities, they are equipping women with the tools and confidence needed to excel in traditionally male-dominated fields.

Here are 4 of such organizations inspiring inclusion:



Tech4Dev

With a visionary goal of empowering 5 million African women over the next decade through its Women Techsters program, Tech4Dev is committed to providing access to essential digital, deep tech, and soft skills necessary for success in the technology ecosystem. Through a series of activities spanning various African countries, the fellowship seeks to cultivate a community of tech-savvy women who not only have equal access to job opportunities but also possess the entrepreneurial mindset to build and scale tech-enabled businesses and startups. By addressing the digital gender gap and fostering economic growth, Tech4Dev's Women Techsters Fellowship is driving meaningful change and empowering women to uplift themselves and their communities.



Women in Data

Women in Data is a dynamic community dedicated to empowering women to pursue careers in data, irrespective of their backgrounds or skill levels. With a bold vision set for 2030, Women in Data aims to impact the lives of 10 million individuals and achieve a significant milestone of 30% female representation in data careers. Through their inclusive approach, Women in Data seeks to break barriers and increase diversity within the data industry. By providing support, resources, and opportunities for women to thrive in this rapidly evolving field, Women in Data is not only shaping individual careers but also driving meaningful change towards a more inclusive and diverse data workforce.

She Code Africa

She Code Africa is a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering girls and women across Africa to thrive in STEM careers. With a mission to bridge the gender gap in technology, She Code Africa offers hands-on training and events focused on technical and soft skills development. Through offline workshops, bootcamps, and virtual communities, they provide a supportive environment for women to learn, inspire, and educate one another. With core values centered around teamwork, community, technical growth, leadership, and visibility, She Code Africa is not only empowering women to excel in STEM but also creating a vibrant and inclusive community where every woman's voice is heard and valued.

HerTechTrail

Her Tech Trail, a non-profit organization, envisions an Africa where women stand proportionally represented in every facet of the tech industry. With this vision in mind, their mission is clear: to empower and inspire women to excel and lead in tech careers and businesses throughout Africa. Anchored by core values such as Gender Inclusion, Technical Growth, Community and Teamwork, Leadership, and Visibility, Her Tech Trail is dedicated to creating a more inclusive and diverse tech landscape. Through their initiatives and advocacy, they provide support, resources, and opportunities for women to trailblaze their paths to success in the tech industry.

As we reflect on the efforts of these non-profit organizations, it's clear that their impact extends far beyond individual empowerment. They are catalysts for change, shaping a more inclusive and diverse tech landscape for generations to come. By continuing to support and champion women in tech, these organizations are not just inspiring inclusion; they are driving a fundamental shift towards equality and empowerment in the tech industry.

Together, we can create a tech industry where women not only thrive but also lead the way in shaping the future of technology.



Nigerian students shaping the future of the entertainment industry

ESTHER EMOEKPERE

Look beyond the award shows and celebrity gossip, the real revolution in Nigerian entertainment is happening on university campuses.The future of Nigerian entertainment is being shaped by a new generation of students who are not just watching, they are directing, producing, and performing.

Fueled by passion, entrepreneurial spirit, and a collaborative spirit, these students are pushing boundaries, amplifying unheard voices, and creating ideas that will resonate far beyond Nigeria's borders. In this space where talent meets opportunity, Nigerian students are the future, the game changers, the true "giants" redefining the entertainment landscape with their unwavering determination and bold visions.

Here are 6 of such students who are charting the course of the entertainment industry with their unwavering determination and bold visions.



Olatunji Zainab Mosunmola

Olatunji Zainab Mosunmola, popularly known as DJ Moslat, is a talent to look out for in the world of DJing, currently pursuing her studies in Food Science and Technology as a 500-level student at the Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (FUNAAB).

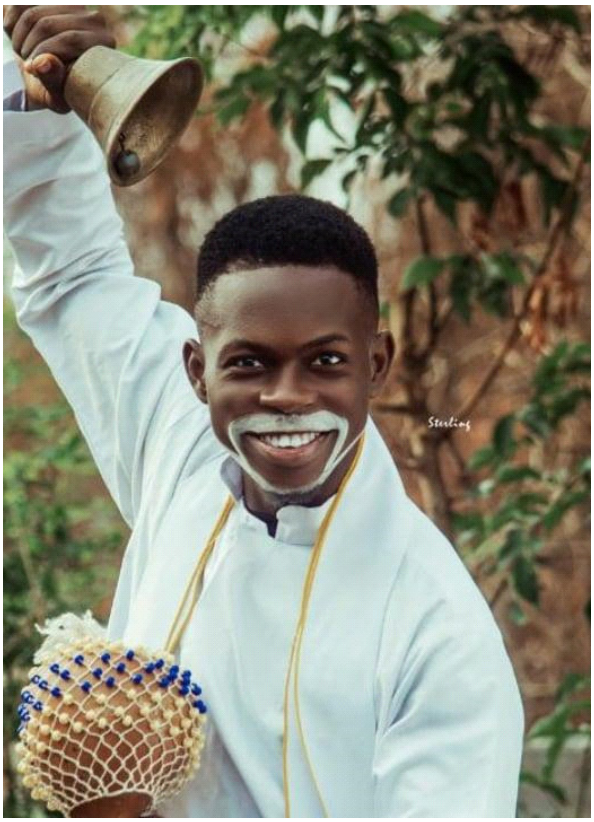
Her journey into the world of DJing commenced in November 2021, a passion she had long nurtured but was previously unable to explore due to restrictions at home. However, her determination knew no bounds, and by February 2022, she had mastered the art of DJing, navigating controllers with finesse and confidence. In her quest for skill refinement, DJ Moslat found a mentor in DJ Diamond during her 300-level studies. Under his guidance, she immersed herself in the intricacies of DJing, often accompanying him to events, eager to absorb as much knowledge as possible. Despite the long hours and overnight stays, her dedication remained unwavering as she honed her craft and prepared for solo performances. Inspired by the talents of DJ Zheey, DJ Moslat's admiration for her skills is boundless, having witnessed her prowess firsthand. Although she may not have had many opportunities to perform alongside renowned stars, her journey has been highlighted with significant events such as the Soundcity campus tour, Showmax on campus, and the Big Bhang with Niphkeyz DJ competition at FUNAAB. Impressively, she showcased her talent before esteemed judges like Candybleakz and Niphkeyz himself.With aspirations to venture into beats production and an unwavering faith in God's guidance, she remains steadfast in her pursuit of excellence.



Jabez Nwadishi

Jabez Nwadishi, known by his stage name Jayw9rld, is a talented individual who recently completed his National Diploma program in Computer Engineering at Yaba College of Technology (Yabatech) and is now gearing up for his Higher National Diploma.

His journey into the world of music began in 2017 while working, demonstrating his commitment to his passion despite other obligations. As a versatile artist, Jayw9rld wears multiple hats as a singer, songwriter, and producer. His dedication to his craft reflects in his ambition to inspire others and set a standard of success for himself. He envisions creating avenues or platforms to support those who are less privileged or struggling, empowering them to pursue their own dreams. Through his music, Jayw9rld not only aims to achieve personal success but also to uplift and empower others, making a positive impact in the lives of those around him. As he embarks on his journey toward a Higher National Diploma, Jayw9rld exemplifies determination, passion, and a commitment to making a difference in the world.



Anthony Bamidele

In the heart of Nigeria's entertainment scene, Anthony Bamidele is making waves like never before. Despite studying Horticulture at the Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Anthony's true passion lies in comedy. Under the alias "Woli Android," Anthony began his comedic journey during his freshman year, parodying the quirks of church culture with his unique blend of sarcasm and observation.

His talent quickly caught the attention of his peers, propelling him to stardom within the campus comedy scene.Teaming up with fellow comedians, Anthony formed the Inspire Movement Ministry (i2M), which swiftly became a campus sensation. Their performances, filled with wit and charm, earned them opportunities to share the stage with industry giants like Akpororo and Kennyblaq. In 2019, Anthony took his vision to new heights with the launch of SSCE (Standup Skit Comedy Extravaganza), a comedy show that soon became a citywide phenomenon.

For Anthony, comedy isn't just about laughter, it's a platform for expression and a gateway to new opportunities. As he sets his sights on the movie industry, Anthony Bamidele is carving out his own path to success, one laugh at a time.



Cole Ayomide Eniola

Cole Ayomide Eniola, popularly known as Colex Guii, is not just a 200-level Adult Education student at the University of Lagos (UNILAG),he's also a dynamic dancer charting the course of the Nigeria's entertainment industry. Colex Guii's journey into the world of entertainment began in 2019 during his time in the College of Education.

Despite his academic commitments, he quickly gained recognition for his talent and dynamic performances, earning him the opportunity to dance alongside notable artists such as Bella Shmurda and Mayorkun and featuring in tracks like "Mafa Mafa".Colex Guii aims to push the boundaries of creativity in the entertainment industry, aspiring to innovate and inspire others through his performances and choreography. As a young talent, Colex Guii serves as an inspiration to fellow students and aspiring artists, leaving a lasting impression on Nigeria's entertainment landscape with his passion, dedication, and talent.



Adewole John Ayotunde

Adewole John Ayotunde, also known as Holtie Drizzy, a 400-level student of Hospitality and Tourism (HTM) at the Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (FUNAAB), is not only pursuing academic excellence but also making waves in the music industry. His musical journey began officially in 2019 during his time as an ND II student at The Oke Ogun Polytechnic Saki. Driven by an innate passion for music, Adewole's journey as an artist has been marked by determination and ambition. Inspired by the iconic Olamide Badoo, he aspires to become a global artist, leaving a lasting impact on the music scene. While prioritizing his academic pursuits, Adewole has already achieved notable milestones in his music career. He has shared the stage with artists such as Base One, Airboy, and Rexxie, and has graced events across various states including Ekiti, Lagos, Ilorin, Oyo, and Ogun.

While music remains his primary focus, Adewole also harbors ambitions in the hospitality industry, showcasing his diverse interests and entrepreneurial spirit. With over 20 songs to his name, Adewole John Ayotunde is poised to take the music industry by storm, aiming to share the stage with industry giants like Wizkid and his role model, Olamide Badoo, as he continues to pursue his dreams with unwavering determination and passion.



Akinsola Gabriel

Akinsola Gabriel, known by his stage name Giizo, is a promising talent from Yaba College of Technology (Yabatech). His musical journey began in 2019 during his secondary school days, where he discovered his passion for both singing and rapping.

As a student at Yaba College of Technology, Giizo is balancing his academic pursuits with his budding music career. With dreams of making a significant mark in the entertainment industry, he aspires to be recognized as one of the biggest names in the field. Giizo's ambition knows no bounds as he strives to carve out his path and make his voice heard. With his dedication to honing his craft and his unwavering determination to succeed, Giizo is poised to make waves in the music industry, leaving an indelible mark on audiences around the world.

These six students are just a glimpse into the future of the Nigerian entertainment industry, a future brimming with talent, innovation, and the relentless drive for success. As they chart their courses amidst the ever evolving entertainment industry, their journeys promise not only to shape the industry but also to ignite the aspirations of generations yet to come.

Digital platforms allow artists to by-pass traditional gatekeepers – Akideinde

JOSEPHINE OKOJIE



With a deep-rooted passion for merging technology and creativity, Oye Akideinde, managing director at Airtel Nigeria has been dedicated to leveraging technology to solve complex problems and drive innovation within sectors.

Oye underscored the critical role of digital platforms in revolutionizing Nigeria and Africa's creative industries. "By simplifying content creation, distribution, and analytics, technology serves as a great equalizer, democratizing access for artists and creators," he said at the Emphasizing the need for collaborative efforts between the public and private sectors, he advocated for policies that support digital innovation and inclusion.

He pointed out the importance of tapping into the continent's youthful demographic and rich cultural heritage for digital transformation.

He also highlighted the power of DIY distribution platforms to transform the continent's music industry by providing artists with comprehensive analytics and distribution channels.

According to him, this empowers artists to make data-driven decisions, while tailoring their marketing strategies to reach their targeted audience more effectively.

"The creation of DIY distribution platforms is a testament to the empowering role of technology in the creative industry," he noted.

"Such platforms democratize the music and film production landscape, allowing artists to bypass traditional gatekeepers, directly reach their audience, and retain greater control over their work," he explained.
He stated that inadequate infrastructure for data collection and analysis remains a major hurdle limiting players in the creative industry from leveraging real-time analytics.

He pointed out that the solution to address the problem lies in making these platforms more accessible while providing educational resources to help artists and creators harness the power of data.
A thoroughbred professional, who has spent his time promoting real-time data analytics to support independent creatives.

Over his two decades-long career, Oye has worked with a broad range of organisations from startups to enterprises and has moved through the ranks all the way upstream.

He brings a wealth of experience to Airtel Nigeria from companies such as Boomplay Music and 360nobs.com.
He holds a specialist degree in Music Business from Berklee College of Music, an MSc in Business





Information Systems from the University of Hertfordshire, and a BSc in Computer Science from the University of Lagos.

He is a well-versed tech professional and an accomplished senior executive with over two decades of specialised experience growing and managing businesses.

Oye possesses interdisciplinary experience, having worked in the technology, financial, FMCG and entertainment sectors.
He is reputed for developing digital solutions for issues. He is a venture builder and a pioneer of several businesses.

The rise of food blogging and influencer culture

CHIGOZIRIM ENYINNIA



In an age where Instagram feeds are flooded with mouthwatering food photos and YouTube channels offer step-by-step cooking tutorials, the influence of food bloggers and social media personalities on culinary trends has become undeniable.

Now a dreadful cook of a bachelor could find himself quite capable in the kitchen from exposure to simple recipes online. Or a home cook could evolve beyond her culinary knowledge.

From viral recipes to restaurant recommendations, these digital tastemakers are shaping the way we eat, cook, and experience food culture.

With the era of social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, food blogging and influencer culture have exploded onto the scene, creating a vibrant ecosystem of food enthusiasts, amateur chefs, and seasoned professionals alike.

Right now Michelin star chefs like Marco Pierre White, Gordon Ramsay, Christopher Cipollone and much more share iconic recipes on YouTube, engaging their audience through a step by step guide on how to prepare signature and basic dishes.

What began as a hobby for some has evolved into a full-fledged industry, with food bloggers and influencers commanding large followings and brand partnerships.



The Power of Visual Storytelling:

One of the driving forces behind the rise of food blogging and influencer culture is the power of visual storytelling. Through stunning food photography, captivating videos, and engaging captions, content creators are able to transport their audiences into a world of culinary possibilities.

Whether it is a mouthwatering close-up of a delicious soup or a video tour through the local market, these visuals have the ability to evoke emotions and inspire action.

Driving Culinary Trends:

Food bloggers and influencers have become tastemakers in their own right, with the ability to influence consumer behaviour and shape culinary trends.

From viral funny food challenges to niche dietary trends like spin the bottle or spicy noodles challenge, these digital personalities have a direct line to their followers' tastes and preferences. As a result, they often play a key role in popularising new ingredients, cooking techniques, and dining experiences.

Building Communities:

Beyond just sharing recipes, food bloggers and influencers have also fostered vibrant online communities centered around food culture. These communities provide a space for like-minded individuals to connect, share their culinary creations, and swap tips and tricks.

Whether it is through virtual cooking classes, live Q&A sessions, or collaborative recipe challenges, these interactions deepen the sense of belonging and camaraderie among food enthusiasts.

Navigating Challenges:

However, the rise of food blogging and influencer culture is not without its challenges. As the industry becomes increasingly saturated, standing out from the crowd requires creativity, authenticity, and consistency. Moreover, there are growing concerns about transparency and authenticity, with some influencers facing backlash for promoting products or experiences that may not align with their values or interests.

Despite these challenges, the influence of food bloggers and influencers continues to grow, reshaping the way we discover, consume, and engage with food. Whether they are sharing family recipes passed down through generations or uncovering hidden culinary gems in their local neighbourhoods, these digital tastemakers play a vital role in preserving and evolving food culture in the digital age.

IWD: LAPO MFB inspiring Women inclusion

HOPE MOSES-ASHIKE

The obstacles women encounter in attaining financial support and bridging social disparity gaps are intricate and firmly established. Despite progress in gender parity, women persist in facing systemic hurdles that impede their access to financial resources and pathways for socioeconomic progress. The economic landscape presents a significant challenge for women due to their limited assets, impeding their access to traditional financial avenues for loans and credit.

This barrier is further exacerbated by social inequalities, disproportionately affecting women in underserved communities like rural areas and low-income households. These marginalized women face heightened obstacles in obtaining vital services such as education, healthcare, and employment opportunities, perpetuating cycles of poverty and hindering their progress toward socioeconomic advancement.

LAPO Microfinance from its early formative stages prioritized women's inclusion and empowerment. The microfinance bank's transformative journey began with the disbursement of N300 to three market women by Godwin Ehigiamusoe, Founder of LAPO, in Ogwashi-Uku, Delta State.

This initiative has since expanded significantly and has evolved in the disbursement of over N1 trillion in micro-credits to low-income households and owners of micro, small, and medium enterprises, largely consisting of women throughout our over 500 branch network across 34 states, including the FCT Abuja, Nigeria.

In alignment with the 2024 International Women's Day, themed Inspire Inclusion, LAPO Microfinance Bank highlights significant milestones in its journey of financial inclusion, women empowerment, and social intervention for women and women-owned businesses in Nigeria. The Bank has consistently catalyzed positive change, equipping women with the necessary resources, support, and opportunities to excel in the realm of business and beyond.

An outcome of our deep research is the Supporting Female Entrepreneur (SUFEN) product which caters to the financial needs of women entrepreneurs by providing easy access to credit at a highly competitive rate. In addition, the LAPO My Pikin & I account is carefully designed with a very low entry requirement of N200 to enable mothers to save easily for their children with a huge opportunity to qualify for scholarships, and access insurance that covers health while enjoying interest on their savings.

To bridge identified social and material deprivation gaps such as lack of access to basic education and social services, LAPO Microfinance bank has deployed several interventions: LAPO Scholarship scheme, Skills acquisition programme, health awareness/ health check services and legal aid services to help women who are disenfranchised or abused in partnerships. Over 4,000 of our clients' children have benefitted from the scholarship scheme, over 900 have benefited from skills acquisition and over 20,000 women have benefited from our health care sensitization and services.

In 2021, LAPO MfB was adjudged by StatiSense, a leading data analytics company, as the 5th largest employer of labor in Nigeria. LAPO is deliberate about providing gainful employment, especially to women. The bank's over 7,000 staff have a 60:40 ratio of women and men, respectively. It is also worthy of note that the board composition has 70% female members.

In recognition of LAPO Microfinance's impact on women, LAPO Microfinance Bank has garnered multiple accolades: Excellence in Inclusive Finance Award by Digibank Summit (2024), Banks and Other Financial Institutions (BAFI) Awards (2023) for the 9th consecutive time, the Most Female-Centric Microfinance Bank by Women in Marketing and Communications (WIMCA) award (2021), Microfinance Bank with the Highest Disbursement to Women & Youths Award by Development Bank of Nigeria (DBN) Bank in 2021 amongst others.

LAPO Microfinance Bank on this occasion of International Women's Day celebrates with women redefining and making an impact across the world and reiterates our commitment to continue to lead the campaign for women's empowerment through the provision of equal economic opportunities, gainful employment, and social interventions in the most sustainable manner.

Through our efforts, we aim to inspire women to pursue their ambitions and achieve remarkable success.

TOP 10 MOST COMMON PHOBIAS

BABATOLA AYOMIDE VICTORIA



Phobias are a type of anxiety disorder that can be defined as a strong, unjustified, or intense dread of particular objects or circumstances. People who suffer from phobias frequently go to considerable lengths to keep themselves away from the situation or thing they are afraid of.

According to Baptist Health, some symptoms of phobias may include excessive or unreasonable fear of some triggers, being unable to regulate one's reaction to terror, fear, panic, or anxiety, an accelerated heart rate, breathing difficulty, and avoidance measures.

The degree of these symptoms can vary, from moderate to seriously impairing one's capacity to operate.

TYPES OF PHOBIAS

Phobias fall into three categories.
Simple or specific phobias: As the name implies, these phobias centre on a particular fear or trigger. These phobias are the most prevalent ones. Irrational amounts of fear are produced by specific or basic phobias towards circumstances or items that are not essentially threatening. When faced with their trigger, people with basic phobias feel anxious, even though they know their dread is unfounded. Spiders, heights, driving a car, and flying are a few examples.



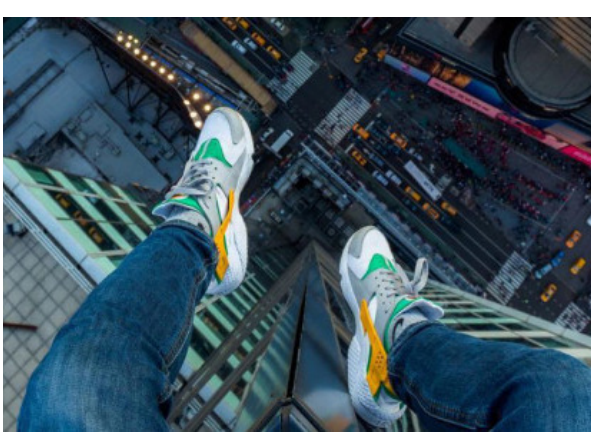
SOCIAL PHOBIA: This is the fear of being in the company of other people. Low self-esteem and a fear of appearing silly in front of others could be the cause of this. A person with social anxiety may find it difficult to establish acquaintances, go to school, or find and maintain employment.

Agoraphobia: The dread of open areas is experienced by those who have it. Panic attacks can sometimes get so bad that the fear of experiencing another one causes agoraphobia. Extreme agoraphobia can make a person terrified to leave their house.

There are several ideas as to why phobias arise, including behavioural and evolutionary ones. Regardless of the underlying cause, phobias are curable disorders that can be reduced or even completely eradicated with the use of medicines and cognitive and behavioural therapy methods.

Here are the top 10 most common phobias known to man

ACROPHOBIA (FEAR OF HEIGHTS)
The fear of heights, known as acrophobia, impacts almost 6% of the population. Acrophobics are prone to anxiety attacks that make them avoid elevated locations like skyscrapers, bridges, and towering buildings. While some level of anxiety is typical when one is around heights, this particular phobia is characterised by an extreme fear that can cause panic episodes and voidance behaviours.



AEROPHOBIA (FEAR OF FLYING)
Although aeroplane accidents are extremely rare, 10% to 40% of adults suffer from aerophobia, or the fear of flying. Aerophobia is frequently accompanied by shaking, a fast heartbeat, and disorientation. Some may completely avoid flying as a result of this anxiety. Exposure treatment, which involves introducing a patient to flying gradually, is frequently used to treat aerophobia.



ARACHNOPHOBIA (FEAR OF SPIDERS)
The fear of spiders and other insects known as arachnids is known as arachnophobia. Although the mere sight of a spider can elicit a terror response, there are situations in which the mere notion or picture of a spider can induce severe anxiety and panic. The idea that these animals formerly threatened our ancestors, who had the skills and knowledge to treat wounds from animals and insects, is one of the most widely accepted theories explaining this and related animal phobias.

OPHIDIOPHOBIA (FEAR OF SNAKES)

The fear of snakes, or ophidiophobia, is one of the most prevalent phobias. Personal experiences, evolutionary reasons, or societal factors can all be blamed for it. Some claim that because snakes can be toxic, those of our ancestors who were spared these risks had a higher chance of surviving and dispersing their genes.

CYNOPHOBIA (FEAR OF DOGS)
The fear of dogs, known as cynophobia, is frequently linked to certain personal experiences, such as a childhood dog bite. Even throughout maturity, these traumatic experiences may trigger fear reactions. Cynophobia is an extreme and illogical dread that can seriously impact your daily life, unlike a natural fear of strange dogs.

TRYPANOPHOBIA (FEAR OF INJECTIONS)
Injection phobia is known as trypanophobia. People may avoid doctors and medical procedures as a result of this anxiety. This kind of phobia is thought to affect 20% to 30% of individuals. Those who suffer from this fear may feel extremely anxious and have an elevated heart rate in the moments before the injection. Some even faint while getting the shot.



ASTRAPHOBIA (FEAR OF LIGHTNING AND THUNDER)
The fear of lightning and thunder is known as astraphobia. People who suffer from this phobia have intense sensations of fear in response to weather-related occurrences. Individuals who suffer from this anxiety often get overly fixated on the weather. Shaking, an accelerated heartbeat, and laboured breathing are among the symptoms.



AGORAPHOBIA (FEAR OF PLACES THAT ARE DIFFICULT TO ESCAPE)
The fear of being by oneself in a situation or place where escape may be difficult is known as agoraphobia. The fear of crowded places, wide open spaces, or events that could set off a panic attack are all examples of agoraphobia. Some people with this phobia, choose not to leave their houses to avoid situations that could provoke them. Agoraphobia affects about one-third of patients with panic disorder.



MYSOPHOBIA (FEAR OF GERMS OR DIRT)
The overwhelming fear of dirt and germs is known as mysophobia. Individuals with this fear may clean excessively, wash their hands obsessively, and stay away from anything or anyone they perceive to be unclean. This fear may occasionally be connected to obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).



SOCIAL PHOBIA (SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER)
The fear of social events is known as social phobia. This phobia can be extremely crippling and, in extreme cases, force a person to miss occasions, locations, and persons that are likely to set off an anxiety attack. Socially anxious people worry about being scrutinised or made fun of in public. If left untreated, social phobias can persist throughout a person's life and usually begin in adolescence. The dread of public speaking is the most prevalent type of this phobia.

Meet Ayana, 29, laid off from hotel job, now earning $125,000 in tech without bachelor's degree

CHISOM MICHAEL



Against the odds, Ayana Dunlap entered a lucrative tech career without a degree. Following her 2020 layoff from a hotel job due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dunlap boldly transitioned into the tech industry.

Now, at 29, she holds the position of Assistant Vice President of Operations and Information Technology at the Bank Policy Institute, commanding an impressive $125,000 salary.

Like countless others in the hotel and restaurant industry, Dunlap experienced job loss during the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Faced with prolonged furloughs and lockdowns, she redirected her career path. While her childhood dream job remained elusive, Dunlap found a fulfilling passion in the field of technology.

Ayana Dunlap envisioned her dream job before high school graduation – an adult life spent behind a hotel front desk in exotic locations,

inspired by polished women she admired on vacations with her mom.

Actualizing this childhood fantasy, she secured her first front desk role at 18 near Cheltenham, Pennsylvania, continuing in hotel positions into her 20s.

“I thought I found my forever career,” she tells CNBC Make It.

In college, Ayana Dunlap pursued an associate's degree in business administration, aiming for a faster route to becoming a hotel manager.

She graduated from Montgomery County Community College in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania, in 2016. Looking back almost a decade later, the 29-year-old laughs at her earlier plans.

Ayana Dunlap playfully notes her early tech support role among older colleagues. Post-college, she spent years in sales at Widewaters Hotel Group & Magna Hospitality Group across DMV area hotels. Before the pandemic, she worked as a senior sales manager at the Hilton Garden Inn Tysons Corner.

“I was the youngest person on my team, and always getting pulled to unfreeze computer screens, edit documents, and refresh WiFi connections,” she says. “But I didn’t mind it, I always thought it was fun.”

Ayana Dunlap only thought about turning her computer skills into a career when she got laid off from her sales job in June 2020.

Dunlap has been working in tech since 2020. Currently, she’s the assistant vice president of operations and information technology at the Bank Policy Institute, a public policy, research, and advocacy group that represents U.S. banks in Washington, D.C.

A few weeks post job loss, she recalls sitting cross-legged on her bedroom floor, expressing her frustrations to friends on FaceTime, feeling “anxious and unsure” about what to do next.

“I spent years working in the same industry and building up my career, only for the pandemic to put it on an indefinite hold,” she recalls.

Following her friend's suggestion, Ayana Dunlap enrolled in a 15-week IT support course by Per Scholas, a national tech training non-profit based in New York, offering Google IT support, CompTIA Security+, and CompTIA Network+ certifications. Graduating in November, she secured a hybrid role as a tier 2 technical support engineer at designDATA, headquartered in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

Assigned to help organizations prepare for the return to the office, she caught the attention of the Bank Policy Institute during this process. After initially hesitating, Dunlap accepted a full-time role with the Institute, leaving designDATA where she had worked for just under a year.

Recognizing Ayana Dunlap's talents, the Bank Policy Institute offered her the role of Assistant Vice President of Operations and Information Technology, accompanied by a starting salary of $80,000— “competitively more” than her previous earnings at designDATA.

Since joining in August 2021, Dunlap received two raises based on job evaluations and increased responsibilities. Her 2022 raise elevated her salary to around $98,000, and a subsequent raise in January further increased her annual compensation to $125,000.



Here are top 10 must-read books for emerging entrepreneurs

CHARLES OGWO



According to Seuss, an American children's author, political cartoonist, illustrator, and poet, "The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn the more places you'll go."

This supports the views of Henry David Thoreau, a philosopher, who said, "Success usually comes to those who are too busy to be looking for it."

One of the avenues to look for success is through reading books, especially those written by men and women who have walked the talk.

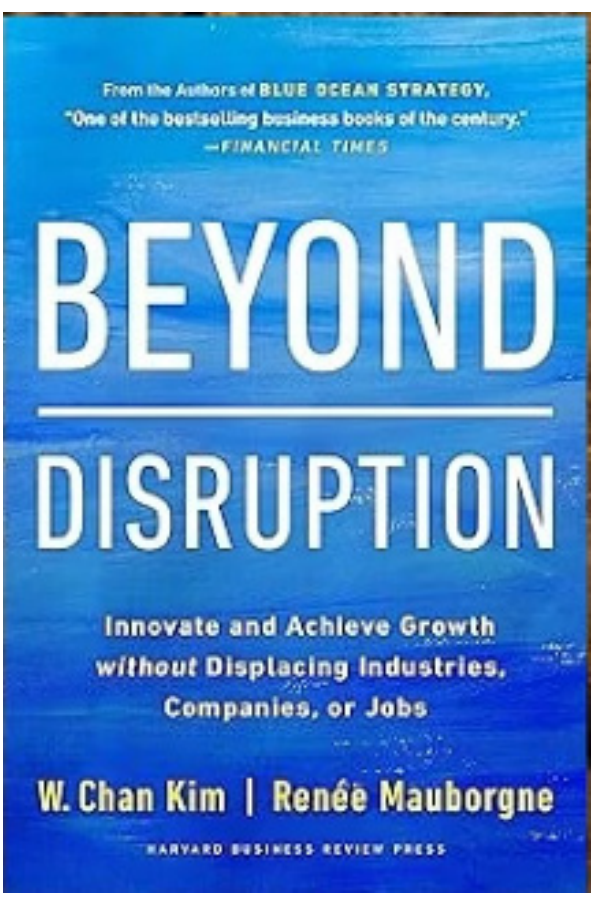
Here is a selection of the top ten books for emerging entrepreneurs, leaders, and innovators, among others.

Beyond Disruption:

The book was written by Renee Mauborgne and W Chan Kim in 2023.

Beyond Disruption redefines and expands the existing view of innovation by introducing a new approach, non-disruptive creation that is free from the destructive displacement that happens when innovators set out to disrupt. Kim and Mauborgne are the authors of the bestsellers Blue Ocean Strategy and Blue Ocean Shift.

In this new book, they suggest that not all innovation has to be disruptive, and offer examples ranging from Grameen Bank and Square to Halloween costumes and IPL. The authors argue that entrepreneurs and companies can also pursue their growth and innovation strategies in a way that better balances business and society.

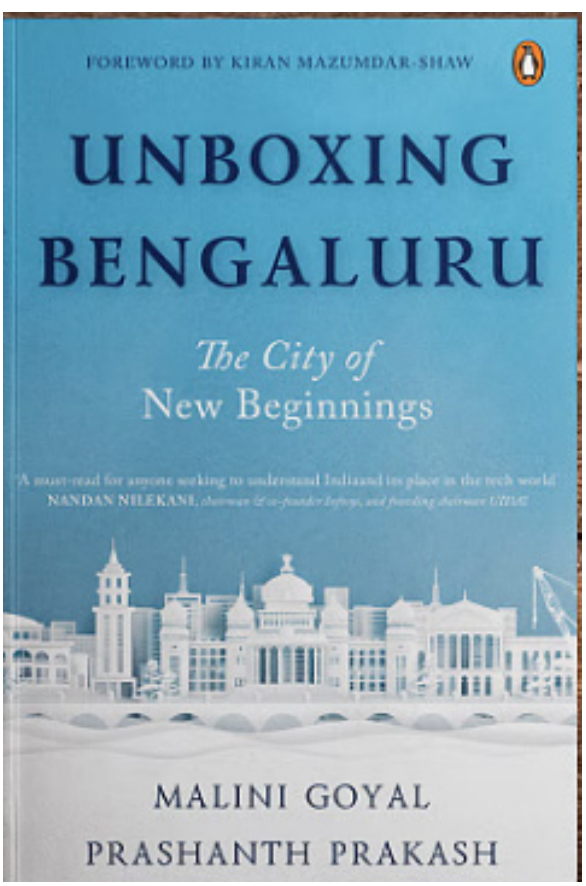


Innovating for Social Change:

This book authored by Leah Kraal is a compelling book that provides instructive and engaging case studies on social change from a range of non-profits such as Habitat for Humanity, World-reader, and Mayo Clinic, among others.

The book will be particularly useful for social entrepreneurs, fundraisers, donors, and other professionals in the non-profit ecosystem.

The 13 chapters cover a wide range of material: tools for sparking innovative ideas, transforming ideas into action via small experiments, building organisational innovation capacity via creative collaboration, and scaling up by winning over others to the cause.

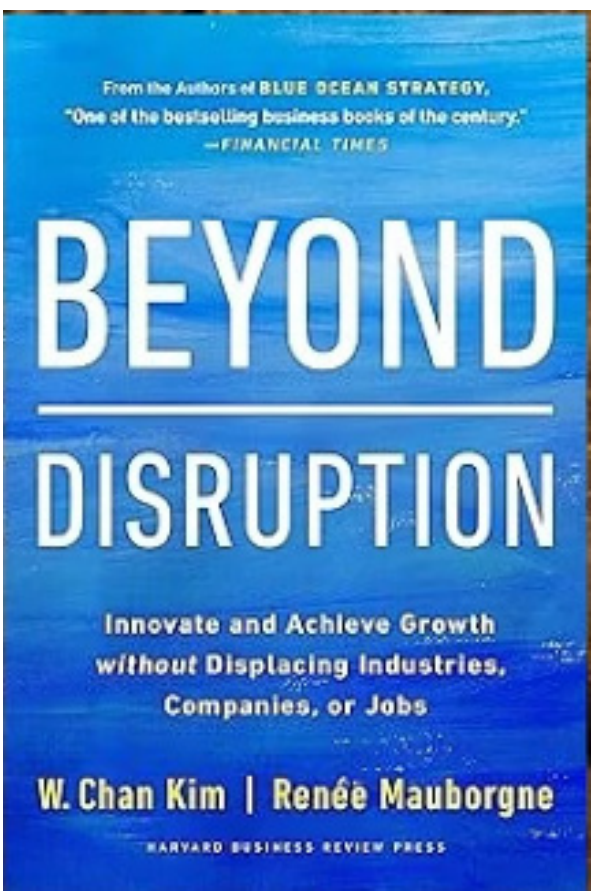


Open Labs and Innovation Management:

David Versailles and Valerie Merindol in this scholarly book examine the role of ecosystem engagement in corporate innovation and start-up ventures.

The authors show how collaboration and co-creation are needed across dimensions like communities, physical spaces, events, and service portfolios.

The five-year study features more than 40 cases such as hacking health, communitech, TransMedTech, and provides useful insights and tips for innovators leaders across the spectrum.



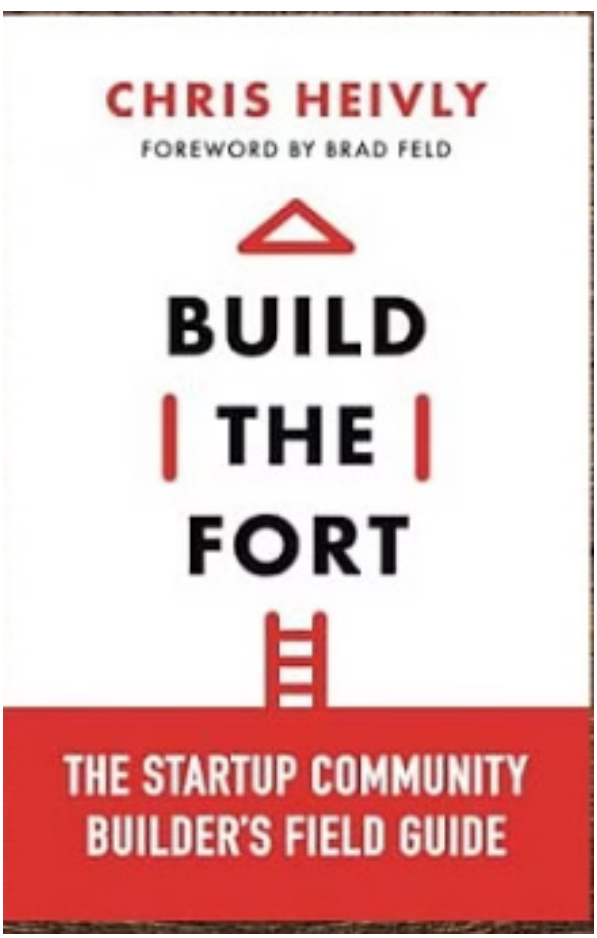
Build the Fort:

Chris Heivly in this book explains that it is not just companies but ecosystems that compete with each other.

In this useful guidebook, MapQuest co-founder Chris Heivly shows how cities and regions can create effective start-up communities.

Asset frameworks described include actors, activities and attitudes. Key stakeholders are incubators, accelerators, angel networks, co-working spaces, and mentor networks.

The author identifies four levels of maturity of a start-up ecosystem: nascent, developing, emerging and leading, along with metrics and measures.



The Leader's Guide to Lateral Thinking Skills:

Paul Sloane in this engaging book gives the tips and examples for individual and organisational creativity, which describes lateral thinking as a problem-solving approach using indirect and creative standpoints.

Hidden Potential:

The author, Adam Grant in his trademark blend of storytelling, research and insights, shows that progress depends not just on how hard you work but how well you learn.

Growth is not only about the genius you possess, according to Grant, it is about the character you develop.

The Unicorn Quest: India Learns to Start Up;

This book written by Archana Rai covers the rise of the start-up movement in India in three phases: 2006-2012 (ecommerce, gig economy), 2013-2018 (fintech, entry of big money), and 2019-2022 (digital transformation, the Bharat story).

Founder stories of prominent startups are woven along with a broader narrative of India's economic growth. The last chapter is aptly titled 'Big Dreams and Doubting Thomases'. The book will be valuable for founders, investors, and entrepreneurship educators.

Back to Bharat:

Nagaraja Prakasam, the author of this thrilling book tried to spread his business ideology across 400 pages, where he combined investor story, entrepreneurship advice, chronicle of India's start-up journey, and tips for policymakers and founders to make an interesting read.

The 16 chapters are grouped into three sections covering social enterprise, environmental crises, global opportunity, national strategy, and financial models.

Profiled organisations include Association for India's Development, NSRCEL, Sattva, IAN Impact, Uniphore, Nativeland Foundation, KisanMitr, Lumiere Organic, Saahas Zero Waste, and GoCoOp.

Startup to Proficorn:

Rajesh Jain in this book explained that not all startups need external funding from investors; he clarified that start-up businesses can grow from customer revenues alone.

Jain, a renowned entrepreneur for over three decades garnered his knowledge from hard-earned lessons from his ventures in IndiaWorld and Netcore which he shared in a storytelling format.

He defines a 'proficorn' as a private, bootstrapped, profitable, and valuable venture (worth $100 million).

Unboxing Bengaluru:

This intellectual works of Malini Goyal and Prashanth Prakash emerged on the global stage as a shining example of tech prowess, business model creativity, and favourable policy environment.

This book dips below the surface to unearth the dynamics of founder communities, startup couples, parallel services economy, and migrant influx.

The city is simultaneously science city, startup city, and pub city–but faces challenges in infrastructure and planned growth.

The authors call on all Bengaluru residents to take greater initiative in co-creating a better future for the city, state, nation, and broader society.



IWD 2024: Celebrating 20 young women making strives in unique ways

CHIOMA ONUH



Chidinma Love Aladi,
Creative Director, DinnysCakes

Aladi is an entrepreneur gaining grounds in the baking industry in Owerri. She is the Creative Director of DinnysCakes.

The mother of two has baked over 500 hundred cakes for different occasions and has made an impact by training countless people already. She graduated from Imo State University in 2017. She went into baking fresh after school, then got married, got pregnant, and the real struggle started. She was able to juggle being a wife, a mother, and a career woman at the same time.

Aladi said her secret to success is continuous learning and consistency. Over the years she has paved the way for herself by being very determined and docile. Quote: 'When you are consistent, growth automatically finds its way to you, I'm not where I want to be yet, but I'm grateful for how far God has brought me' ~ Chidinma Love Aladi



Ella Chuku celebrates her journey from being a UNILAG Student to a leader in the event industry In 2007, as a second-year Economics student at UNILAG, she was brimming with dreams but lacked real-world experience. Fueled by a desire to make a difference, she took a leap of faith and entered the world of event planning, starting with no prior expertise. Despite facing initial uncertainty, her first project proved successful, igniting a fire within her. With the unwavering support of her family, she embraced a multifaceted approach to the industry, delving into various aspects like decoration, baking, catering, and even crafts. After graduating, she

leveraged her existing 3D design skills and ventured into stage design, even before fully mastering the craft. This bold move proved to be a turning point. Securing a major project for an MTN concert opened doors to further opportunities and collaborations with renowned clients.

Her journey is a testament to the power of perseverance, self-belief, and the willingness to embrace diverse skill sets. Today, on International Women's Day, she celebrates her story and hopes to inspire others to forge their unique paths to success.

Quote: "For Women Who Dare to Dream: Embrace innovation and find your unique approach: Don't be afraid to break away from the mold and carve your path. Build a business model that fosters sustainability and scalability. Consider long-term growth and adaptability as you build your venture. Focus on solving real-world problems. Let your business solutions address genuine needs and create a positive impact." ~ Ella Chuku



Ifeyinwa Okafor,
a digital parenting coach and entrepreneur

Okafor, a digital parenting coach entrepreneurship journey is marked by a commitment to empowering parents and individuals, steering them through the complexities of parenting in the 21st century. According to her, she came into this space two years ago with a mission to foster a balanced and healthy relationship using technology.

Within the space of two years in the industry, I've been able to impact over 600 parents and individuals across 14 countries globally,

Quote: 'In offering advice to parents and individuals seeking digital wholeness, open communication, setting clear boundaries, and actively participating in a child's virtual life' ~ Ifeyinwa Okafor



Grace Oyeniyi:
Serial intrapreneur, HR professional

Grace Oyeniyi is a well-versed professional, an accomplished scholar, and a public speaker with several years of specialised experience growing and managing businesses. Over her multi-year career, Grace has worked with a broad range of organisations from start-ups to enterprises and even multinationals, ascending from grassroots levels to strategic positions, Grace has cultivated a multifaceted career trajectory, progressively advancing her expertise and influence within organisations.

As a woman, she has faced several challenges, being a top female executive in sectors dominated by men, but she remains undaunted.

She holds an MBA from Rome Business School and is a recipient of the Rising Star Award at the PAWENPreneur Women in Professions Award in Africa as well as the Girlity Recognition Award in Abuja.

QUOTE: "One of my significant challenges has been instrumental in shaping the type of HR professional I am today" ~ Grace Oyeniyi

Meet Rebecca Osewa, an agripreneur and dynamic creative designer

Rebecca Osewa is the founder and chief executive officer of Yield Initiatives with the desire to contribute her quota in building and reclaiming Nigeria's economy using the fashion industry.

Osewa has an extensive skill set in textile production from weaving to printed fabric with over 10 years in the creativity industry.

QUOTE: "It's time to break the systemic barriers and bring the once-thriving industry back to Africa" ~ Rebecca Osewa



How Hadiza Ali Amodu is building a thriving fast-food business in Abuja

Hadiza Ali Amodu, a 25-year-old entrepreneur and founder of Six7 Restaurant, a fast-food business in Abuja, has proven that following one's passion can lead to remarkable success in the world of entrepreneurship.

After graduating with a degree in human physiology from the University of Bingham, Nasarawa state, Hadiza knew that she wanted to be self-employed and then delved into the food business, despite her parents' initial reservations.

Recognizing the importance of marketing, Hadiza invested in online digital classes to improve her promotional strategies. Slowly and steadily, her efforts paid off, and Six7 Restaurant began to gain traction.

QUOTE: "To succeed, it is important to have a creative mind, strong work ethic, and passion for your craft. Be consistent, and proactive, remember that you are the face of your brand." ~ Hadiza Ali Amodu



Meet Olatorera Balogun co-founded Natavi Consulting and Investment

Supply chain disruptions have remained one of the major challenges facing entrepreneurs globally, as it affect their ability to get raw materials for operations and finished goods out to customers.

To help Nigerian businesses solve supply chain issues, Olatorera Balogun co-founded Natavi Consulting and Investment. Since then, she has been at the forefront of driving innovation and growth across businesses.

Her passion for improving operational efficiency, combined with her extensive experience has positioned her as a trusted partner for organisations seeking to achieve seamless business operations. Over the years, she has built an exceptional career as a supply chain professional with outstanding results to show.

One of these notable achievements is her role in streamlining supply chain operations for multinational corporations, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

QUOTE: "The untapped innovative potentials that reside in our youth can be harnessed through learning the applicable standards required, and then commit to continuous improvement." ~ Olatorera Balogun



Aderinsola Jolaosho, co-founder, ThePush Consulting

Aderinsola Jolaosho undoubtedly stands out as a voice in today's communication sphere. Like numerous others, she faced her fair share of challenges in the past while seeking a suitable career path for herself. However, little did she realize that destiny had reserved a special place for her within the realms of digital communications in the country.

Inspired by her strong desire and passion to help brands, especially small businesses that require assistance to showcase their products and services, Aderinsola with Tobi Durosinmi-Etti – her co-founder established ThePush Consulting in 2021.

Since its establishment, ThePush Consulting has emerged as one of the leading start-up consultancy and communication firms in the Lagos metropolitan.

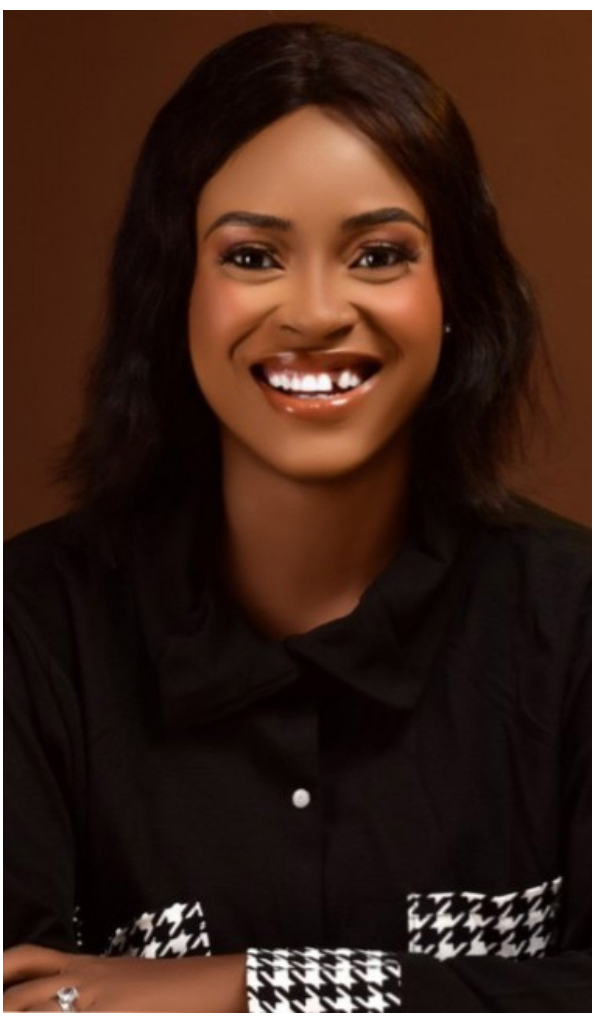
QUOTE: "Money is not the first thing in starting a business, rather building capacity and social capital should come first. Money follows value, which is my most important piece of advice to other entrepreneurs." ~ Aderinsola Jolaosho



Chiemela Anosike, founder of Solaris Green Tech Hub

Chiemela Anosike is the founder of Solaris Green Tech Hub – a renewable energy company providing solar power charging booths and micro-power solutions to rural communities across Nigeria.
To help tackle energy poverty in Africa's biggest economy and drive green jobs and clean energy, Chiemela was inspired to launch Solaris.
The young entrepreneur used her personal funds to kick-start Solaris and built the company before seeking investors' funds.

QUOTE: "Before you venture into something, consult people in that field on the right steps to take." ~ Chiemela Anosike



Chenaniah Bamishile, Founder, Niah Foundation

In the face of the glaring lack of mental health awareness programmes in Africa's biggest economy, Chenaniah Bamishile, a social entrepreneur is on a mission to make a difference.

With unwavering dedication, she founded the Niah Foundation in 2021, a social enterprise that combines innovation, outreach, and empathy to foster a nation where mental health is understood, accepted, and nurtured.

The 22-year-old recognized that effective education requires tailored strategies, so she and her team have harnessed the power of creativity.

Today, Niah Foundation's uniqueness lies in its commitment to raising awareness and its ingenious approach to breaking down barriers to knowledge consumption.



Ayishat Olanrewaju - Founder, Corporately Lucid Limited

Ayishat Olanrewaju, Founder of Corporately Lucid Limited, a digital media agency offering effective digital media solutions to help them communicate with their ideal audience, achieve their goals, and make an impact. She has a BSc and a Master's degree in Mass Communication from Caleb University and University of Lagos respectively. She is also a PhD Candidate at Pan-Atlantic University, studying Media and Communication.

She is certain that great ideas need to reach the right people. What is the use of an excellent idea if it does not get to the right people who need such an idea? An idea can be great, but who knows about it? Who benefits from it?, she asked. This goes the same for brands who build effective services and outstanding products, but their ideal audience has yet to learn such brands exist.

Her journey into the digital media industry began when she was searching for jobs in her early career days. She tried hands on several personal projects and later took on some clients as a side gig while working full time for my 9-5 jobs. Later, she launched Corporately Lucid. Today, Corporately Lucid is a full-service digital media agency working with brands globally to help them tell their stories, connect with their audience, and make an impact.

QUOTE: "Be a lifelong learner: Digital media is a fast-paced industry, so it is essential that you are up-to-date about the updates and changes on relevant platforms. You cannot rely on your previous knowledge alone; you must find ways to stay current and offer relevant value. You can take courses, read informative articles, follow the right people on social media, attend suitable events, etc. Learn the business side of things: Regardless of your business's field, you must never forget you are a business owner. Learning the business aspect of what you do is not negotiable. It would advance you in the industry."



Odirachukwunma Ugwu soaring from University of Nigeria to Morgan State University

Odirachukwunma Ugwu is the second child of eight siblings. She is currently a second-year PhD student at Morgan State University in Baltimore, MD. Her educational journey began in northern Nigeria at Therbow School in Zaria where passion for mathematics was laid. The 25 year old, studied Pure and Applied Mathematics at the University of Nigeria, where she graduated with a First-Class degree. Eze attributed her success to God's grace and favour combined with hardwork and determination. Despite her initial doubts, she obtained admission and a fully funded scholarship to do my PhD degree at Clarkson University, Potsdam NY and later transferred to Morgan State University to work with her PhD advisor who has been very supportive throughout my PhD journey.

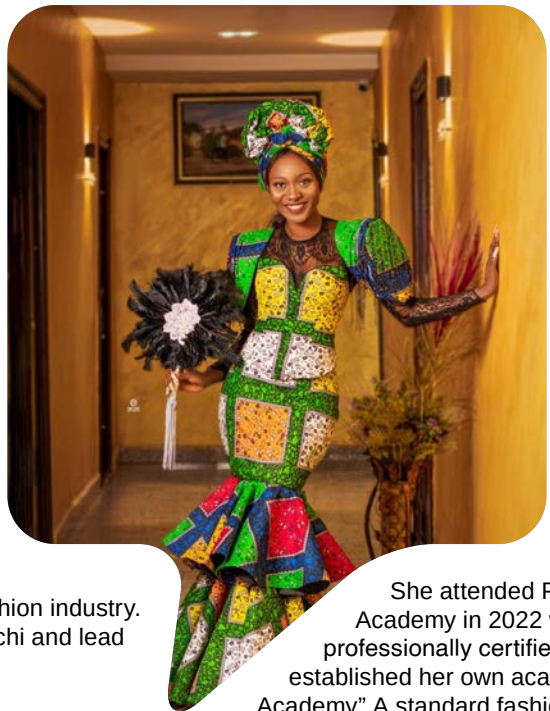
Currently, in her second year of PhD program, she is passionate about her research on "Developing Efficient Iterative Schemes for Solving Bilevel Variational Inequality Problems." She aims to develop algorithms that address real-life problems through mathematical optimization.

QUOTE: "Pursue your dreams fearlessly and seek information and guidance from the right sources. The traditional timeline for obtaining a PhD is evolving, and opportunities abound for those willing to seize them. Applying directly for a PhD after your bachelor's degree is very possible, and there are many fully funded opportunities available, I am a living proof of that. Also, bear in mind that the journey is rigorous but the rewards are immeasurable".



Quincy Archibong

Creative Director, Kwinarchi Fashion Academy



A fashion tutor who started tutoring fashion designers from her father's sitting room and has grown into the owner of one of the fastest rising fashion Academy in Nigeria.

Archibong is gaining ground in the fashion industry. She is the Creative Director of Kwinarchi and lead tutor at Kwinarchi Fashion Academy.

The passionate fashion designer has impacted the lives of many designers through tutoring both on-site and off-site.

Her journey into the fashion industry started in 2013 when she was in JSS 3, she has consistently nurtured and grown her brand to what it is today.

In 2019, she graduated from University of Calabar with a bachelor's degree in History and international studies, shortly after she took a bold step of Upgrading and graining mastery in her craft.

She attended Prudential Fashion Academy in 2022 where she was professionally certified. In less than a year, she established her own academy "kwinarchi fashion Academy" A standard fashion Academy in Calabar first of its kind.

Amara Rebecca Eze, overcoming odds to excelling in Mathematics: A journey of persistence and passion

Amara Rebecca Eze, overcoming odds to excelling in Mathematics: A journey of persistence and passion
Amara Rebecca Eze has made a deep impact in the mathematical field and has become a mentor for many. She pursued Mathematics education at the Federal college of education (Technical), Umunze, where she finished with distinction as the best graduating student. Then graduated with a first class in pure and applied mathematics from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

She got a fully funded offer to do her Ph.D. in mathematics at Clarkson University U.S.A , she later moved to Morgan State University,U.S.A, where she is currently pursuing her fully funded Ph.D. in Computational and Industrial Mathematics. There are so many areas to explore in the mathematical field, which Eze is excited about. Eze is not only a Ph.D. student but also a teaching assistant, chasing her passion by inspiring the younger generation of mathematicians.

QUOTE: "Never give up on your passion, no matter the obstacles. Work hard, be prepared and remember, opportunities often meet those who are ready."
It would advance you in the industry."





Arinze Chinazom: Succeeding where peers fear to tread

Globally, the automobile business is mainly controlled by men, but Arinze Chinazom the founder of Autogirl, is not deterred from an industry dominated by the male gender.

Chinazom, a law graduate, was inspired to establish Autogirl owing to her love for cars and the challenge she faced during her undergraduate studies.
She identified an opportunity in the automobile industry and grabbed it with both hands.

Chinazom formally established and registered Autogirl in 2019 as a one-stop shop for vehicle sales and rentals, Private Jet, Boat/Yacht rentals, and security escort services.

QUOTE: "Do not limit yourself, it is possible. There is no level that is unattainable," she says. "If you put your mind to it, you can do it"

Dora Enwere, entrepreneur empowering communities

Dora Enwere's foray into entrepreneurship and philanthropy is fueled by her commitment to effecting positive change and nurturing hope.

As a serial entrepreneurs and a psychology expert, Enwere aims to make a meaningful difference in her community and beyond.

As the founder of OnDeemove logistics, Girlsential, Hydeparksocialhouse and House of Slayers, Enwere's ventures are diverse yet united by a common thread: positive impact and her education at the South African College of Applied Psychology (SACAP) have been instrumental in this journey.

QUOTE: "Entrepreneurship is never easy but always worth it. Hard work and consistency are key. Start small, understand your market, and don't follow the crowd. Create your own wave."



Bashiru Bolatito Arinola, the banker turned fashion designer



Bolatito, founder of StyledByTito quitted her banking job to pursue her passion for fashion in 2016, was inspired to establish StyledByTito owing to the disappointment and constant frustration experienced by individuals and businesses when patronizing designers in the country.

She was also inspired to change people's perceptions of the profession by building a trustworthy and successful brand.

QUOTE: "Be consistent! Be loud and unapologetic about your business. Tell everyone who cares to listen about what you do."



Daramola Fiyinfoluwa, entrepreneur making unique accessories

Daramola Fiyinfoluwa is the chief executive officer of Mad About Scrunchies (MAS), a business that sells scrunchies, claw clips and gift boxes in Lagos and Ogun State.

Fiyinfoluwa was inspired to establish MAS in 2022 to spice up the corporate look on her campus – Covenant University. The young entrepreneur says her business started with N40,000, but it made its first sale five days after its launch.

QUOTE: "Start wherever you are with whatever you have because nobody has it all figured out, You do not need to do something big for it to be great, you can simply fill a gap nobody has identified and create value."



How Eneghalu is supporting Africans get into tech seamlessly

To help young African talents get into tech seamlessly, Joy Eneghalu, founded More Techies in 2021. The business develops African no-code talents in tech and provides companies with access to a high-skilled resource pool. Talents in More Techies participate in the academy or the Talent Accelerator Program after which they work with companies across the globe.



Grace Amuzie

Grace Amuzie is the founder of Isrina Schools – a low-cost learning centre that offers basic quality education to less privileged children.

Amuzie accepts plastics and other waste materials that can be recycled from parents as payments for their ward's school fees.

As an advocate for Sustainable Development Goal 4 – quality education, she is committed to seeing children from low-income households in Ajegunle have access to basic quality education.

QUOTE: "I am not close to where I intend to get to, but one thing I'm always thankful for is the fact that I started."

How India's richest man throws $120m pre-wedding party

CHISOM MICHAEL



Some of the wealthiest and most influential individuals celebrated in grand style in Jamnagar, India, during a three-day pre-wedding event, a $120 million extravaganza to mark the upcoming wedding of billionaire Anant Ambani and his fiancée Radhika Merchant.

The entrepreneur has spared no cost for the extravagant event, extending invitations to 1,200 affluent individuals from across the globe.

Anant Ambani, aged 28, is the youngest son of India's wealthiest individual, Mukesh Ambani, the chairman of Reliance Industries, with a staggering net worth of $116.5 billion as of March 7.

Ivanka Trump, Jared Kushner, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, and Rihanna attended the kick-off festivities on Friday, mingling with other affluent guests.

At 42, Trump looked stunning in a sequined silver and gold gown, capturing photos with her 43-year-old husband and their 12-year-old daughter, Arabella.

Meanwhile, Zuckerberg, aged 39, appeared sleek alongside his wife, Priscilla Chan, also 39, as they cozied up together. The Facebook founder wore a dinner jacket adorned with dragonfly images, while Chan donned a matching black and gold dress, completing her look with smokey eyeshadow and a bold red lip.

Bill Gates, aged 68,entered the event, where 36-year-old Rihanna delivered a 90-minute performance on stage.







Not only were international elites invited to the exclusive event, but local Indian celebrities also attended the billionaire's party, including Bollywood stars Ajay Devgn and Akshay Kumar.

The opulent festivities extended throughout last weekend, the upcoming wedding of Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant will be coming up later this year.



WHY ENTERTAINERS NEED TO HAVE MULTIPLE STREAMS OF INCOME - Baanty

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



For rising artist, Ikpon Kelvin a.k.a Baanty, music is not just about melody, harmony and rhythm, it's also a tool to touch lives. Baanty, who also doubles as the founder of BNM Entertainment said: "Music has always held the transformative power to touch lives, inspire change, and ignite revolutions.

Through the beats of their melodies and the depth of their lyrics, iconic musicians like Fela Kuti, Sound Sultan, and Bob Marley have exemplified the profound impact that music can have on society.

Fela Kuti, the pioneer of Afrobeat, used his music as a platform to confront social and political injustices in Nigeria and beyond.

His songs, such as "Zombie" and "Water No Get Enemy," challenged corruption and oppression, sparking movements for justice and freedom. Sound Sultan, a beloved figure in the Nigerian music scene, embraced his role as a cultural ambassador, using his music to address societal issues with wit, humor, and wisdom.

From advocating for peace in "Motherland" to championing unity in "One," Sound Sultan's music resonated deeply with audiences, fostering a sense of community and empathy.I want my music to touch lives".

Born and raised in Agbor, Delta State, Baanty's passion for music started as a child. The vibrant rhythms and soul-stirring melodies of his homeland's music captured his heart and sparked a passion that would shape his life's journey.

From the infectious beats of Afrobeat to the heartfelt lyrics of highlife and the captivating sounds of indigenous genres, Baanty found inspiration in the rich tapestry of Nigerian music.

He said: "As I listened to iconic artists like Fela Kuti, King Sunny Ade, and Oliver De Coque, I felt a deep connection to the stories, emotions, and rhythms woven into their songs. Each note resonated with me, stirring my soul and fueling my desire to create music that would touch lives and leave a lasting impact".

Beyond his musical talents, Baanty's entrepreneurial spirit has led him to explore various ventures, including fashion and real estate.

Advising artistes to have multiple streams of income, he said: "The entertainment industry in Nigeria can be highly unpredictable, with income fluctuating based on factors such as project availability, popularity, and market demand.

"Having multiple income streams helps cushion the impact of these fluctuations and provides a more stable financial foundation. While some entertainers enjoy long and prosperous careers, many experience a relatively short period of fame and relevance. Diversifying income streams allows entertainers to capitalize on their popularity while it lasts and build sustainable wealth that extends beyond their peak years".

When he's not busy strategizing or making deals, Baanty enjoys unwinding with strategic games like chess and snooker. His competitive spirit extends beyond the boardroom, as he also engages in kickboxing sessions, showcasing his dedication to physical fitness and personal growth.

Asked the artists he will love to collaborate with, he said: "I will love to work with the likes of Rema, Crayon, Boyspyce, Ruger, Fireboy, Joeboy and others. They inspire me".

6 amazing African inventions

OCHOWECHI ELIJAH



Africa is home to many innovative ideas, cutting-edge technology that can rival that of Western countries, and an abundance of bright, aspirational brains.

Although there have been significant advancements in mathematics, metallurgy, architecture, and other fields throughout Africa, the continent's scientific and technological history has not gotten as much attention as it has in other parts of the world.

The African continent is the birthplace of countless incredible inventions that the rest of the world is unaware of. These are a few of the most notable, patriotically African discoveries and innovations.

CAT scan machine (South Africa)

Amazingly, the CAT scan was invented in Africa and is now utilized extensively in the medical industry worldwide. Allan Cormack, a South African, devised this technology.

Nonetheless, the United Kingdom is where the concept was created and commercialized. For his creation, the creator received the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize. A precise cross-sectional map of the body's tissue slices is obtained by the radiologist during the rotation of the CAT scan, electronic detectors, and X-ray source around the body.



Emergency Blood Transfusion System (Nigeria)

The Emerg ency AutoTransfusion Device, often known as the Eatset, was created by a Nigerian medical doctor Otu Oviemo Ovadje after he witnessed years of pregnant women dying from internal bleeding. With the use of this device, blood can be extracted from a patient's internal bleeding organs and reinfused into the patient's bloodstream.

Dr. Ovadje's gadget prevents blood loss, especially in expectant mothers, and operates without electricity.



Mathematics (Egypt)

African prehistory is firmly credited with the invention of mathematics. Discovered in Swaziland's Lebombo Mountains, the Lebombo bone dates to around 35,000 B.C. and is the oldest known probable mathematical item. Additionally, Africa is where many of the math ideas taught in schools now originated. Math textbooks including fraction division and multiplication as well as geometric formulas for calculating the area and volume of forms were written by Ancient Egyptians more than 35,000 years ago.



Cardiopad (Cameroon)

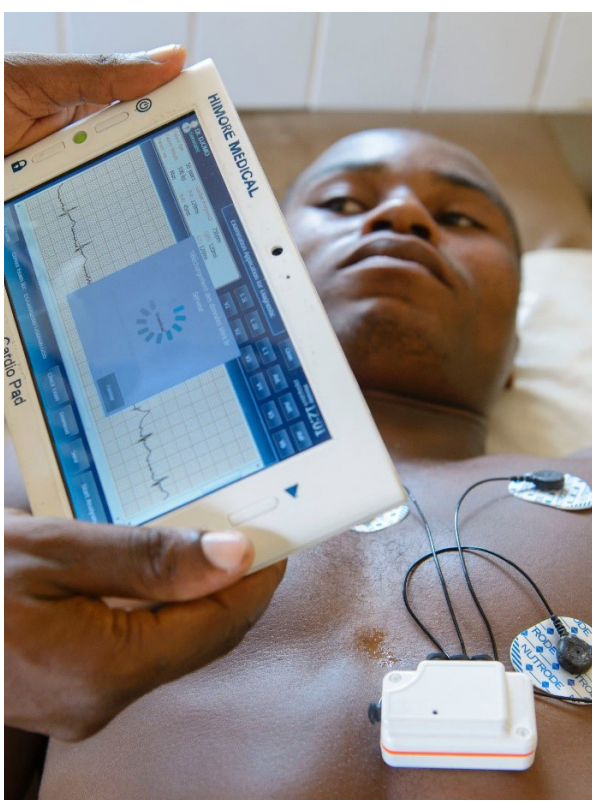
The Cardiopad is a remarkable technological innovation from Africa. Invented by Marc Arthur, a Cameroonian entrepreneur, it is the first touch screen medical tablet manufactured in Africa. It is a tablet computer used for cardiac diagnostics.

The device makes it possible to do tests like electrocardiograms in remote and difficult-to-reach areas.

Electrodes are applied to the patient and attached to the model, which is connected to the tablet, via the Cardiopad.

For instance, when a patient receives medical attention in a far-off village, the nurse's tablet transmits the data to the doctor, who then interprets them. The device is mostly utilized in locations that are inaccessible but require really urgent diagnostic testing.

Many heart patients can now receive an early diagnosis thanks to this innovation, which is a luxury as previously they would not have been able to receive the treatments unless they traveled to an urban location. The gadget is anticipated to make treating heart disease patients easier throughout Africa, but particularly in Cameroon.





Charging shoes (Kenya)

One of the new African inventions is the charging shoe, which was created by Anthony Mutua, a Kenyan inventor.

With the help of this technology, phones can be charged utilizing the electricity produced by pedestrians. Thin crystal chips that are attached to the shoe sole make up this idea. When an individual walks, their weight applies pressure to their sole, which causes electricity to be produced.

And you don't need to keep walking to create energy because the shoes can also continue to charge phones after walks by releasing the stored energy after the shoe remains static. The chips transport the electricity through an extension cable that extends from the show to the phone in the pocket. In this scenario, you can afford to run or walk without the wire system and yet produce and store energy that can be used to power your mobile devices later.

SIGN-IO (Kenya)

Sign IO has the ability to completely change how sign language speakers communicate. Roy Allela invented the device in Kenya, which essentially converts sign language into voice in real time.

Wearing a glove with hardware that can recognize hand movements is how this is accomplished. Through the use of an internal database based on American Sign Language (ASL), the glove is connected to an app that does the translations.

The voice that portrays the user can have its speed, pitch, and gender adjusted. The goal is to facilitate communication for ASL speakers in a society where sign language is not widely understood.



Japa: Top 5 cheapest countries to study in Europe 2024

CHISOM MICHAEL



Embarking on a European education journey offers a chance for international exposure and cultural immersion.

Despite the significant costs associated with studying abroad, various budget-friendly options exist for students looking to minimize expenses and make the most of their overseas education experience.

Here are 5 cheapest countries to study in Europe in 2024

Poland

Poland stands out as an affordable and attractive destination for international students due to its low cost of living and reasonable tuition fees. With a rich history and vibrant culture, Polish universities, such



as the University of Warsaw and Jagiellonian University, offer high-quality education in English at an average annual tuition fee of N3.4m to N6.8m (€2000 to €4000).

Beyond academics, Poland's cultural heritage, showcased in cities like Krakow and Warsaw, provides a compelling backdrop for a well-rounded student experience.

Hungary

Hungary remains a top choice for budget-conscious international students, offering diverse study programs and globally-ranked universities. Recognizing the value of attracting international talent, Hungarian higher education institutions have kept tuition fees low, averaging around N5.1m (€3000) per year.

With its renowned academic tradition, captivating landscapes, and vibrant cultural heritage, Hungary provides an exciting and affordable environment for students pursuing various fields of study, such as medicine, engineering, and business.

Estonia

Estonia, renowned for its tech-driven education and innovation, is ideal for budget-conscious international students seeking a top-notch academic experience. The country's universities offer diverse courses in an entrepreneurial environment, attracting those interested in technology and engineering.

With average tuition fees ranging from N3.4m - N5.1m (€2000-€3000) per year and a reasonable cost of living, Estonia provides an affordable yet high-quality educational landscape for students pursuing fields such as computer science and business.

Czech Republic

The Czech Republic is a sought-after destination for international students seeking quality education at a more affordable rate than many other European counterparts. Renowned institutions like Charles University and Czech Technical University offer a diverse range of programs in English, making Czech language proficiency optional for international students. With a generally lower cost of living, including accommodation ranging from N516,592 - N774,889 (8,000CZK -12,000 CZK) per month and tuition fees typically ranging from N1.7m - N25.5m (€1000-€15000) per academic year, the Czech Republic provides an attractive academic and cultural environment for students worldwide.

Greece

Greece, renowned for its ancient history and scenic landscapes, is increasingly popular among international students seeking affordable education. The country's universities, both public and private, are well-funded by the state, offering low tuition fees, averaging around N2.5m - N5.1m (€1,500- €3,000) per year for undergraduate and graduate programs.

With a reasonable monthly cost of living ranging from N850,000 - N1,1m (€500 - €700), Greece provides students with a unique blend of academic and cultural experiences, despite the predominantly Greek language of instruction, which some universities offset by offering English-taught programs in fields like engineering, business, and tourism.

Meet 5 Billionaire Women in Sports Business worth over $20Billion

ANTHONY NLEBEM

It's interesting to note that numerous remarkable billionaire women are deeply engaged in the sports business. Through ownership of sports teams, investments in sports-related ventures, or leadership in companies with sports affiliations, these women have made significant contributions to the sports industry. As per Forbes Billionaire List 2024, BDWeekender explores five exceptional billionaire women who are spearheading investments in sports.

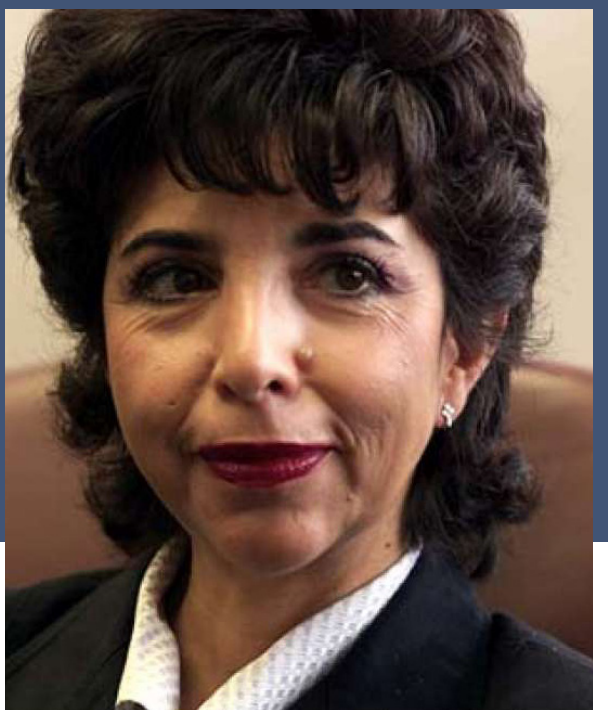
Gayle Benson

Age: 77 Years
Worth: $6.1 billion



Gayle Marie LaJaunie Bird Benson stands as a prominent personality in the sports business industry, holding the distinction of being the wealthiest woman in the field with a staggering net worth exceeding $6.1 billion. At 77 years old, Benson's entrepreneurial prowess shines through her ownership of the New Orleans Saints in the National Football League (NFL) and the New Orleans Pelicans in the National Basketball Association (NBA). Her journey to principal ownership of both teams began in 2018 following the passing of her husband, Tom Benson, when she assumed the helm of these esteemed franchises.

In addition to her stewardship of the Saints and Pelicans, Benson oversees a diverse portfolio of at least ten other businesses that were once under the purview of her late husband. Despite her substantial responsibilities, she dedicates a significant portion of her time to actively managing the teams. Benson's commitment is evident as she attends every Pelicans home game and travels extensively to ensure her presence at every Saints game across the country. Raised in Algiers, New Orleans, Benson's upbringing laid the foundation for her future success. She pursued her education at esteemed institutions such as St. Joseph, St. Anthony, and Holy Name of Mary schools before graduating from Martin Behrman High School in 1966. Through her visionary leadership and unwavering dedication, Gayle Marie LaJaunie Bird Benson has solidified her place as a trailblazer in the world of sports business, leaving an indelible mark on the industry.



Denise DeBartolo York

Age: 73 years
Worth: $5.8 billion

Denise DeBartolo York, an American billionaire businesswoman, commands a significant presence in the sports world. She, along with her family, holds a staggering 90% ownership stake in the San Francisco 49ers American football team, and through 49ers Enterprises, they also own Leeds United, one of the ten most valuable teams in the NFL. Born into the lineage of construction tycoon Edward J. DeBartolo Sr. and Marie Patricia Montani DeBartolo, York's familial ties run deep in the world of business and sports.

York's father, Edward DeBartolo Sr., acquired the San Francisco 49ers for a modest $13 million in 1977. According to Forbes, York's net worth stands at a formidable $5.8 billion, ranking the 49ers as the sixth most valuable team in the NFL. In 2000, Marie Denise DeBartolo York assumed control of the 49ers from her brother, Edward Jr., who encountered legal issues after overseeing the team for 23 years. Her husband, John, joins her in this journey, and together they have four children, with their eldest, Jed, currently serving as the CEO of the 49ers.

Denise's leadership of the 49ers began during a challenging financial period for the team. However, with her astute financial acumen and adept management skills, she steered the franchise through turbulent waters, leading to its resurgence and continued success in the world of professional sports.



Janice McNair

Age: 87 years
Worth: $5.6 billion

Janice Suber McNair, the co-founder, and current owner of the Houston Texans, assumed her position after the passing of her husband, Bob McNair, in 2018. Following Bob's demise, Janice inherited his substantial 80% stake in the NFL's Houston Texans, elevating her to the role of principal owner of the franchise.

Leading the day-to-day operations of the team is her son, Cal, who serves as the CEO. The couple's journey began when they met at Columbia College in South Carolina during the late 1950s, eventually settling in Houston. Bob McNair amassed his fortune through the sale of his power generator company, Cogen Technologies, to Enron for $1.5 billion in 1999. Utilizing the proceeds from this sale, he invested $600 million to acquire the 32nd NFL franchise for Houston that year. Since then, the value of the Houston Texans has surged, reaching an impressive $5.6 billion according to the Forbes Billionaires list of 2024.



Amy Adams Strunk

Age: 68 years
Worth: $1.6 billion

With a net worth exceeding $1.6 billion, Amy Adams Strunk holds the reins as the controlling owner of the National Football League's Tennessee Titans. She assumed control in March 2015 following a familial transition. Amy inherited a portion of the Titans from her father, Bud Adams, the team's founder, upon his passing in 2013.

Before her leadership role with the Titans, the 68-year-old was involved in managing the family's car dealerships, oil interests, and horse breeding endeavours. Notably, in October 2022, Adams Strunk finalized an agreement with the city of Nashville to construct a new state-of-the-art stadium for the Titans for $2.1 billion. Before Amy's ascension to controlling owner, the position was held by her sister, Susie Adams Smith, whose husband, Tommy Smith, served as the team's president and CEO.



Jennifer Steinbrenner Swindal

Age: 64 years
Worth: $1.3 B

Jennifer Steinbrenner Swindal serves as a general partner of the New York Yankees, the most valuable team in baseball with an estimated worth of $7.1 billion. Her father, George Steinbrenner, spearheaded a consortium of investors that acquired the team from CBS for $10 million in 1973.

The Steinbrenner family's influence extends beyond the Yankees, collectively holding over 25% ownership of the YES Network, a 20% stake in MLS's New York City FC, shares in Legends Hospitality, and a 10% interest in the Italian soccer club AC Milan. Following George's passing in 2010, Jennifer and her three siblings inherited an estimated one-fourth of his estate each.

The World's Top 10 Largest Football Stadiums

OCHOWECHI ELIJAH

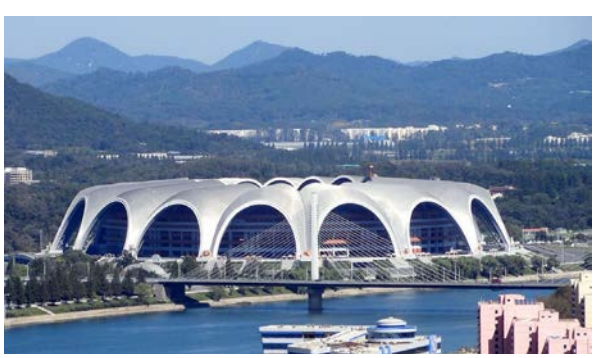


There is no sport that arouses enthusiasm like football, or soccer as it is known in some other parts of the world. And where better to take in the thrilling atmosphere than in a stadium brimming with passionate supporters. Today, we delve into the breathtaking realm of the Top 10 Largest Football Stadiums in the World, where the magnificent game is played on a massive scale and the crowd scream reaches deafening proportions.

1. RUNGRADO 1ST OF MAY STADIUM (NORTH KOREA) – 114,000

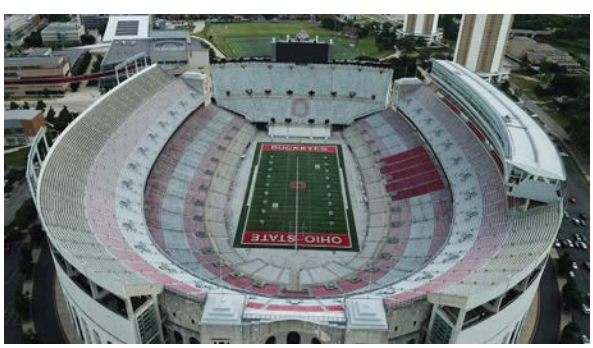
In spite of its lower football popularity than South Korea and Japan, North Korea has the largest stadium in the world. The Pyongyang stadium, which can accommodate 150,000 spectators, was inaugurated in 1989, but as of right moment, it can only hold 114,000. The stadium was constructed, according to government records, to accommodate a variety of sporting activities, including football games and track meets. Every year, in August and September, the Rungrado stadiums are also the site of the large-scale Arirang Festival.

The stadium last hosted the Mass Arirang Festival in 2018, and it also served as the site of six group stage matches for the 2018 Asian Football Championship (AFC) U23 Championship qualifying in 2017.





2. MICHIGAN STADIUM
(UNITED STATES) – 107,601
Michigan Stadium, which can accommodate 107,601 enthusiastic sports fans, is renowned for its adaptability as well as its size. There are also games of lacrosse, ice hockey, and American football to be played.
The 2014 International Champions Cup match between Manchester United and Real Madrid set a record for the largest-ever football match to take place on American soil.



3. OHIO STADIUM
(UNITED STATES) – 102,780
The most remarkable feature of the Ohio-based site, which is well-known for its décor, is that it has consistently exceeded 100,000 visitors since 2001.
This venue hosted Major League Soccer (MLS) matches from 1996 to 1998, thanks to the Columbus Crew; nevertheless, because of the low attendance, its capacity was lowered to 25,243.



4. MELBOURNE CRICKET GROUND
(AUSTRALIA) – 100,024
The first stadium on the list to hold more than 100,000 spectators is in Melbourne, a stunning city in Australia. Known for its excellence in cricket, the MCG stands as the world's fourth-largest football stadium.
Known affectionately as "The G," the stadium has hosted Australian national team international matches. In 2022, Manchester United used it for their preseason campaign.



5. CAMP NOU (SPAIN) – 99,354
The storied Camp Nou, home of Barcelona, is poised to become one of the most iconic stadiums of all time, holding just under 100,000 spectators. When Warsaw, a Polish team, was first shown to the world in 1957, they were the first team to play the Spanish giants at their brand-new, glittering home field.

Barcelona is now renovating as they want to match Real Madrid's efforts in the El Clasico, their adversary. For the time being, the Catalan team plays their home games in the Estadi Lluis Companys.

6. NEW ADMINISTRATIVE CAPITAL STADIUM (EGYPT) – 93,940
Egypt's New Administrative Capital is home to the New Administrative Capital Stadium. It is the largest stadium in Egypt and the second largest in Africa, with a capacity of around 93,940 spectators.
It will be a component of the massive sports complex, Egypt International Olympic City, which has been under development since 2015.



Aiming to prepare the nation for potential bids to the FIFA World Cup or the Olympic Games, it will feature an Olympic-sized swimming pool, two indoor halls (one of which can hold a 15,000 capacity arena), and other buildings.



7. FNB STADIUM
(SOUTH AFRICA) – 94,736
The First National Bank Stadium, sometimes referred to as "Soccer City" and abbreviated as FNB Stadium, is situated in Johannesburg, South Africa.

It is most recognized for its distinctive exterior appearance, earning it the nickname "The Calabash" due to its resemblance to an African pot or gourd.
The South African national team and the most well-known local team in the nation, the Kaizer Chiefs, are among its tenants. Most famously, Siphiwe Tshabalala scored that iconic goal to kick off the 2010 World Cup at the FNB Stadium. What a fantastic occasion.

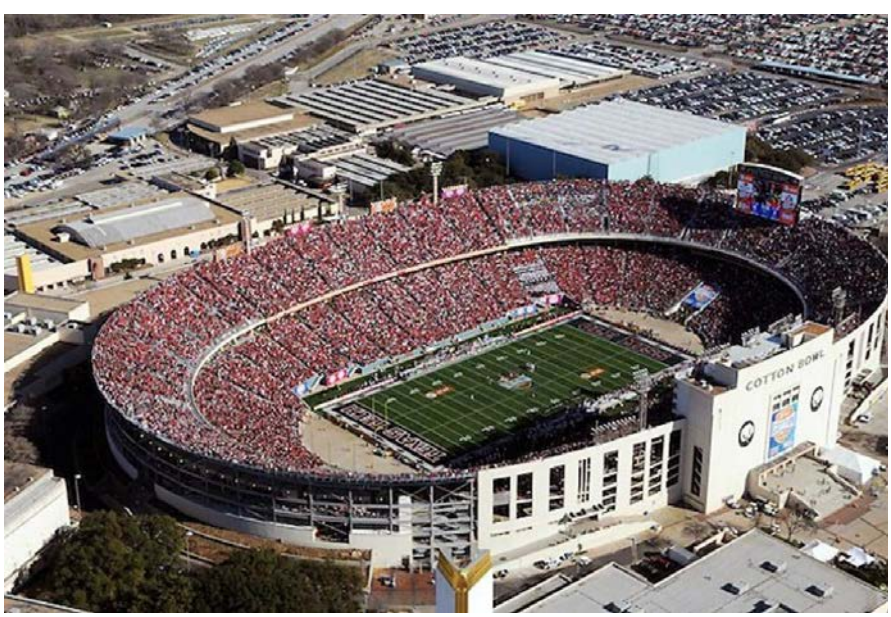
8. SANFORD STADIUM
(UNITED STATES) – 92,746
Known as the University of Georgia's on-campus football stadium, it held all of the 1996 Olympic football games. The stadium has 92,746 seats. Constructed in 1929, this stadium is regarded as one of the most beautiful for collegiate sports in America and served as an appropriate venue for football (or soccer, as it were) during the 1996 Olympic Games.





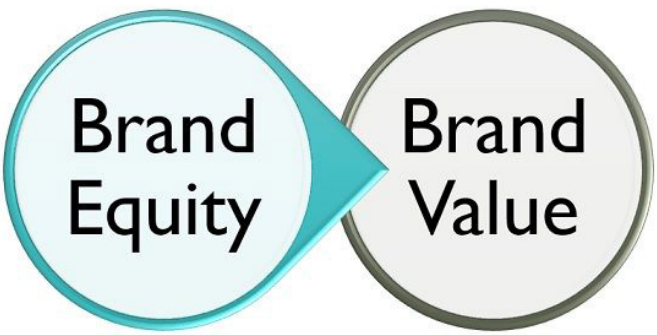
9. ROSE BOWL STADIUM
(UNITED STATES) – 92,542
To go up above Sanford Stadium on this list, the Rose Bowl Stadium has to add 54 seats.
Mostly recognized for its yearly American Football competitions, it's also widely acknowledged as one of the nation's premier football stadiums. It hosted eight World Cup matches in 1994, including the championship game. The legendary stadium served as home to Los Angeles Galaxy until they up and moved to a new era in 2003.
Throughout the years, the stadium has hosted some of Europe's top teams, including Chelsea, Liverpool, and Barcelona.

10. COTTON BOWL STADIUM
(UNITED STATES) – 92,100
Though it has played host to a long list of spectacular events throughout the years, it is still America's largest stadium without a regular fixture, especially one hosted by a celebrity.
Rather, matchups between Oklahoma and Texas teams, held in the midst of the yearly State Fair, are what make Cotton Bowl famous.
In addition to being one of the nine locations used for the 1994 World Cup, it is the home of Dallas football teams FC Dallas and Dallas Tornado.



Brand Equity vs. Brand Value: What's the Difference?

FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA



In answering the poser in the title, the first layer to unravel is understanding that brand equity and brand value offer different ways to increase loyalty, but require different metrics. Brand equity refers to the importance of a brand in the customer's eyes, while brand value is the financial significance the brand carries. Both brand equity and brand value are educated estimates of how much a brand is worth.

Brand Equity

Brand equity is a set of assets or liabilities in the form of brand visibility, brand associations and customer loyalty that add or subtract from the value of a current or potential product or service driven by the brand.

In the late 1980s, brand equity helped create and support the explosive idea that brands are assets that drive business performance over time. That idea altered perceptions of what marketing does, who does it, and what role it plays in business strategy.

Brand equity also altered the perception of brand value by demonstrating that a brand is not only a tactical aid to generate short-term sales, but also strategic support to a business strategy that will add long-term value to the organization.

Brand Value

Brand value, on the other hand, is the financial worth of the brand. To determine brand value, businesses need to estimate how much the brand is worth in the market – in other words, how much would someone purchasing the brand pay? It is important to note that a positive brand value does not automatically equal positive brand equity.

How Should Brand Equity and Brand Value Be Measured?

While measuring brand value is fairly straightforward, the process for brand equity is not quite so simple. Brand equity is a set of assets or liabilities in the form of brand visibility, brand associations and customer loyalty that add or subtract from the value of a current or potential product or service driven by the brand.

a. Brand Visibility

This means that the brand has awareness and credibility with respect to a particular customer need—it is relevant. If a customer is searching for a buying option and the brand does not come to mind, or if there is some reason that the brand is perceived to be unable to deliver adequately, the brand will not be relevant and not be considered.

b. Brand Associations

Brand associations involve anything that created a positive or negative relationship with or feelings toward the brand. It can be based on functional benefits but also a brand personality, organizational values, self-expressive benefits, emotional benefits or social benefits.

c. Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty provides a flow of business for current and potential products from customers that believe in the value of the brand's offerings and will not spend time evaluating options with lower prices.
Driving Brand Value in the Short Term

The value of a brand represents its impact on the short-run and long-run flow of profits that it can generate. With respect to short-term profitability, the problem is that programmes that are very good at driving short-run products – like price promotions – can damage brands.

Looking at the ways a brand can help drive short-term financial performance can help mitigate this tendency. These include brand loyalty, reduced marketing costs, trade leverage, attracting new customers via awareness and reassurance, reason to buy and brand associations, among others.

One of the ongoing challenges of brand equity proponents is to demonstrate that there is long-term value in creating brand equity. The basic problems are that brand is only one driver of profits, completive actions intervene, and strategic decisions cannot wait for years.

There are, however, some perspectives that can be employed to understand and measure the long-term value of brand equity.

Approach #1: Estimate the Brand's Role in Business
One approach is to estimate the brand's role in a business. The tangible and intangible assets are identified and the relative role of the brand is subjectively estimated by a group of knowledgeable people, taking into account the business model and any information about the brand in terms of its relative visibility, associations and customer loyalty.
The value of the brand is then aggregated over products and markets countries to determine a value for the brand.

Approach #2: Observe Investments in Brand Equity
A second approach is to observe that, on average, investments in brand equity increase stock return, the ultimate measure of a long-term return on assets.

Approach #3: Reflect on Other Valuable Brands
A third approach is to look at case studies of brands that have created enormous value. Consider, for example, the power of the Apple personality and innovation reputation, BMW's self-expressive benefits connected to the "ultimate driving machine," and the ability of the Chicken Republic brand to define an entire subcategory.

Approach #4: Consider the Conceptual Model
It's important to consider the conceptual model surrounding a business strategy. What is the business strategy? What is the strategic role of the brand in supporting that strategy? How critical is it? Is price competition the alternative to creating and leveraging brand equity? What impact will that have on profit streams going forward? Management guru Tom Peters said it well: "In an increasingly crowded marketplace, fools will compete on price. Winners will find a way to create lasting value in the customer's mind."

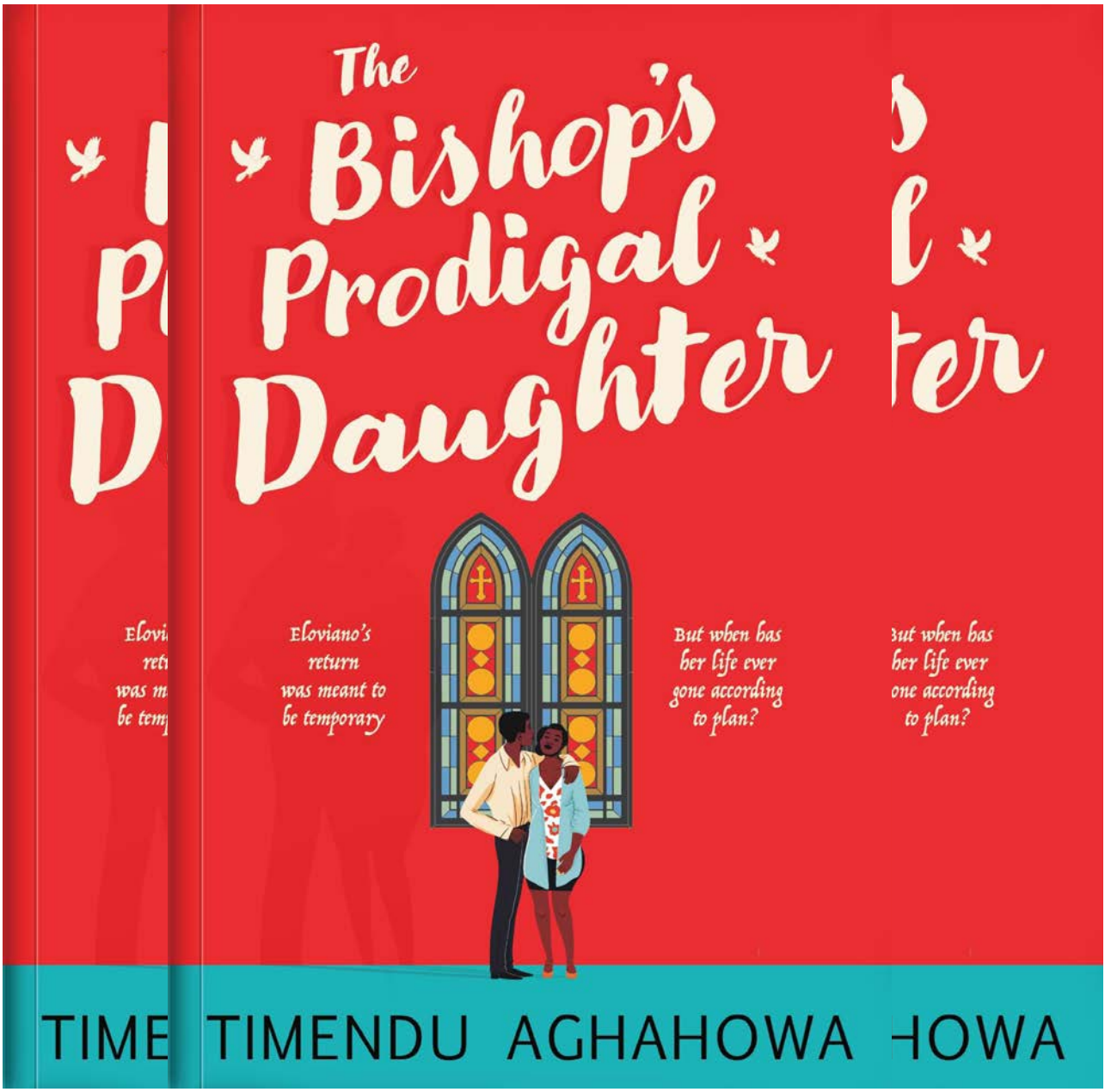
LAST LINE

Brand equity refers to the value that a specific brand adds to a product or service. It is the positive perception or emotional attachment that consumers have towards a brand, which can influence their purchasing decisions and overall loyalty to the brand. It is created through consistent marketing efforts, positive customer experiences, and the overall reputation of the brand. Companies with strong brand equity often have a competitive advantage in the market and can command higher prices for their products or services.



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



When A Wayward Daughter Comes Back Home -A Review of Timendu Aghahowa's The Bishop's Prodigal Daughter

Title: The Bishop's Prodigal Daughter
Author: Timendu Aghahowa
Year of Publication: 2023
Number of Pages: 303
Category: Fiction

The Dawn

TITILADE OYEMADE

Chika Onyenze's book, 'The Dawn,' comprised of 18 chapters, offers a smooth and easy-to-follow narrative style that authentically captures the voice of a 14-year-old author.

Throughout the book, readers will encounter familiar challenges that teenagers often face, such as bullying, competition, and envy from peers. These themes are vividly depicted, resonating with the experiences of adolescence. Additionally, the main character deals with typical issues surrounding relationships with parents and authority figures, providing a comprehensive look into teenage life.

As the story unfolds, the protagonist, a bright student, navigates through school difficulties and encounters a mystery that sets off a series of intriguing events, testing her curiosity and resilience.

The diary-like structure of the book improves its accessibility and makes it more relatable for teenage readers, leading to an engaging and immersive reading journey.

Readers will be drawn into the captivating drama of the narrative, fueled by the author's apparent passion for movies and potential background in tennis, which adds authenticity and excitement to the story.

The chapter titles, resembling titles for short stories, offer glimpses into each chapter's content, teasing readers with anticipation and suspense. The narrative skillfully moves between familiar and unfamiliar territory, keeping readers engaged and intrigued.

The inclusion of Yoruba and Igbo languages adds cultural depth to the narrative, enriching the overall reading experience.

By the end of the book, readers may find themselves longing for more, as it appears that the author has left the story unfinished, perhaps hinting at the possibility of a sequel in the works.

For those interested in psychic powers and compelling storytelling, 'The Dawn' promises an enjoyable and engaging read, showcasing the promising talent of its young author, Chika Onyenze.

Titilade Oyemade
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She spends her weekends attending women conferences, events and book readings. She loves to have fun and to help other women have the same in their lives.
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WEEKENDER
MOVIE REVIEWS

ONE TOO MANY (2022)

This was a very sweet and touching Nigerian story, one that revealed the vices that occurred in the police force and among the men of power and influence. Adesuwa was a very smart young girl, who was excelling at school till some police men rapped her one night while she sold food for her mom, despite reporting the case nothing was done, and she had to leave with the trauma and her adorable son she decided to keep. To protect her only treasure she made strict rules so strict for a 22 year old who was now a graduate, he asked so many questions, but Adesuwa just couldn't answer, well she promised that after his service to the Nigerian government for one year, she will tell him the entire story of her life. Little did Adesuwa know that her hug and farewell was the last she would see of her son, on their way to camp himself and his best friend the worse struck and Adesuwa only begotten son Otas was taken to jail. Never the less you will need to watch the entire movie to see the length Adesuwa went to prove her sons innocence and fight for his freedom. The 91m Nollywood, crime, drama movie was directed by Kayode Kasum, they featured amazing actors like Dakore Egbuson- Akande, Chimezie Imo, Omowunmi Dada, Tope Telade, Jide Kosoko, Rachel Oniga, Funsho Adeolu, Paul Utomi and many more.



Linda Ochugbua

A SOWETO LOVE STORY (2024)

For some weird reason the movie reminds me so much about a Nollywood movie called "A Naija Christmas", the storyline was so similar, it felt like I was watching the same movie twice. In this movie a mother who was a widow, was so desperate to see her sons get married, she had faced all kinds of humiliation from other women in church and just couldn't take it anymore, to push her 3 sons to settle down on time, she promises them a reward, she promised that any of her sons who find a wife and gets married before the end of the year, owns the main family home. All the boys were super excited with this challenge and the search for a good wife began, you need to watch this movie to see the length they had to go, to pull each other just to win the price, this was a simple and funny movie, one to just watch and relax. The 102m South African, Romantic comedy, African movie was directed by Rolie Nikiwe, they featured actors like Lunga Shabalala, Duduzile Ngcobo, Zenzelisphesihle Sparky Xulu, Ray Neo Buso, Motsoaledi Setumo, Mamodibe Khunou, Monnye Kunupi, Mike Mvelase,Shile Ndaba and many more.





THE ABYSS (2023)

Figga lives in small mining town, that has faced serval disasters, at some point it felt like the mountain was shifting base, but a few people who loved the city still wanted to stay back, despite being warned of the crisis that was approaching. Figga was having issues with her Ex-husband and was seeing someone else, on the very day her new partner arrived town, a disaster struck and everyone was caught with only one mission, and that mission was to stay alive and protect their loved ones. Well you will have to check this simple movie out to see how they protected each other and searched for the lost family members. The 104m Swedish, drama, thriller movie was directed by Richard Holm, they featured actors like Tuva Novotny, Peter Franzen, Kardo Razzazi, Felicia Maxime Truedsson, Angela Kovacs, Edvin Ryding, Asa Simma, Jonathan Fredriksson etc.



Linda Ochugbua