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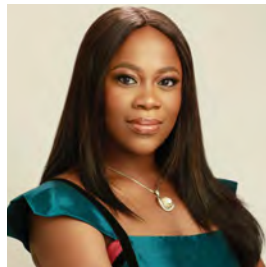


## ELIZABETH OSHOBA: NIGERIA'S WORLD CHAMPION DRIVING WOMEN'S BOXING REVOLUTION



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### INTERVIEW

From Microsoft to Music:  
How Addy Awofisayo is  
Scaling Africa's Creative  
GDP

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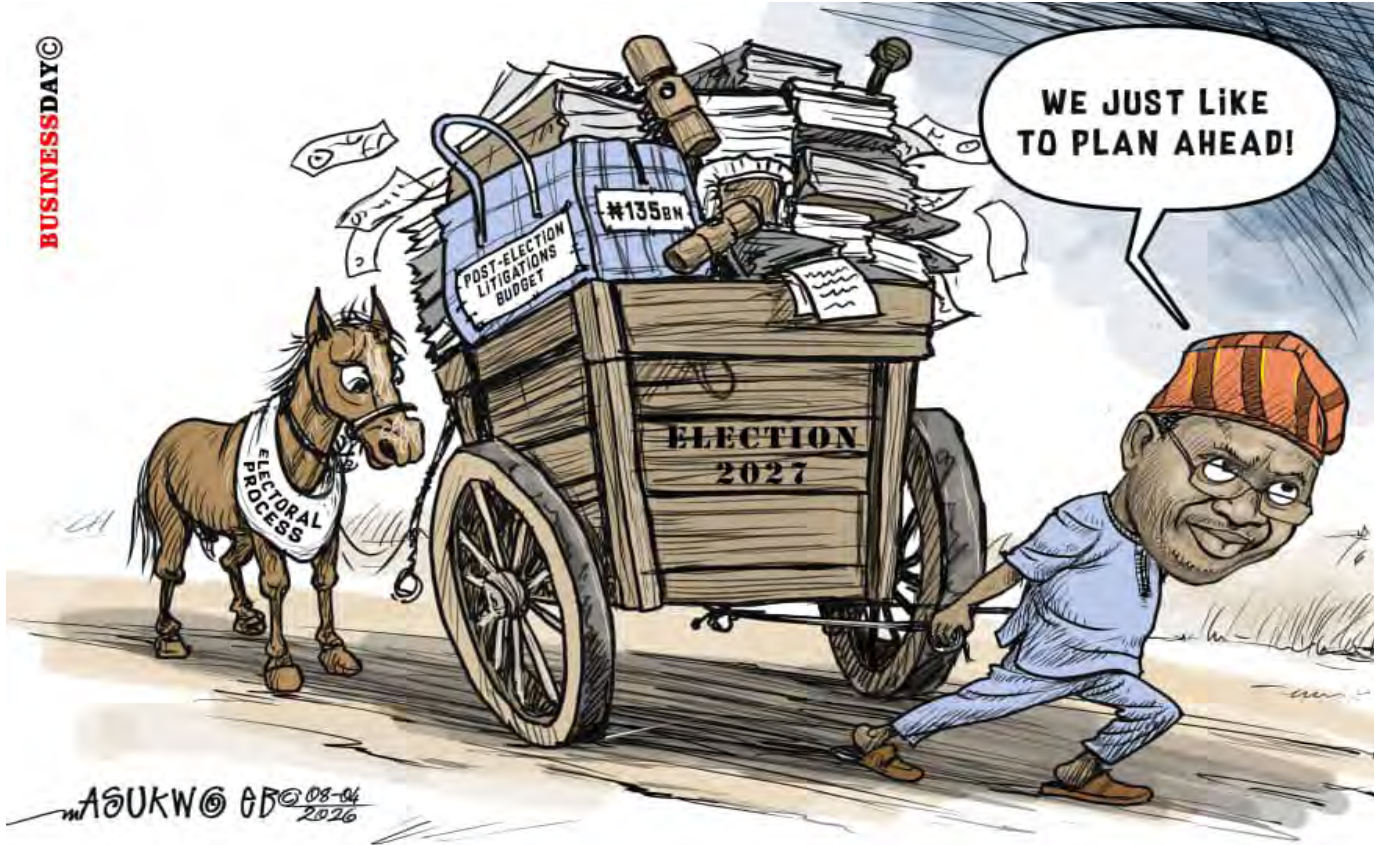




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# ELIZABETH OSHOBA: NIGERIA'S WORLD CHAMPION DRIVING WOMEN'S BOXING REVOLUTION

ANTHONY NLEBEM



From the humble training grounds of Ogun State to the bright lights of London's Olympia, Elizabeth Oshoba has forged a path defined by dominance, resilience, and historic milestones. After becoming the first Nigerian woman to win a world boxing title, the 26-year-old "Empress" has evolved from a rising prospect into a formidable global force.

On April 5, 2026, Oshoba extended her perfect professional record to 10–0 with a clinical third-round technical knockout of Chelsey Arnell. The stoppage, just 42 seconds into the round, marked a statement debut under Most Valuable Promotions, the outfit led by Jake Paul and Nakisa Bidarian, and reinforced her ambitions of unifying the featherweight division.

**The Journey: From Agbado to the Global Stage**  
Born on December 23, 1999, in Agbado, Lagos State, Oshoba's early life unfolded in Tigbo-Ilu, Ogun State, where her boxing journey began at Ilogbo-Asowo Community High School. Training in modest conditions, often sparring with male counterparts, she developed the physical toughness and mental edge that now define her in-ring identity.

What started as a grassroots pursuit quickly transformed into a professional calling, with Oshoba steadily rising through the ranks with discipline and purpose.

## Historic Breakthrough on the World Stage

Oshoba's defining breakthrough came in January 2024 when she defeated Michela Braga in Copenhagen to claim the WBC Silver featherweight title. The victory made her the first Nigerian female boxer to secure a world title—an achievement that reverberated across African boxing.

More than a milestone, it positioned her as a serious contender on the global stage and signalled Nigeria's growing influence in elite women's boxing.

## Dominance Continues in the Professional Ranks

Her recent victory over Arnell further underlined her upward trajectory. With a record of 10 wins and six knockouts, Oshoba is showcasing a blend of technical precision, controlled aggression, and composure beyond her years.

Her alignment with Most Valuable Promotions has also elevated her global profile, placing her on bigger fight cards and accelerating her commercial and competitive growth.

## Built on a Strong Amateur Foundation

Before turning professional in 2022, Oshoba laid a solid foundation in the amateur ranks. A six-time Nigerian national

champion, she represented the country at the 2019 African Games in Rabat, earning a bronze medal.

Her international breakthrough came at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, where she claimed silver, becoming the first Nigerian boxer since 2006 to reach a Commonwealth final.

These experiences sharpened her tactical awareness and prepared her for the demands of professional boxing.

### Rankings Rise and Global Ambition

Oshoba’s consistency has propelled her into the upper echelon of her division, alongside elite names such as Alycia Baumgardner, Delfine Persoon, and Mea Motu.

Yet, her ambitions remain firmly fixed on the summit.

“My eyes are set on the top three and ultimately the number one spot. With hard work and dedication, I know it’s possible,” she said.

A potential showdown with Nina Meinke looms as the next defining step in her ascent.

### Faith, Discipline, and a Growing Legacy

Oshoba credits her success to faith, consistency, and a strong support system.

“Victory, God did it. I stayed consistent, trusted the process, and it paid off.”



Beyond titles and rankings, her journey reflects a broader shift in the perception of Nigerian women in combat sports. From Tigbo-Ilu to international arenas, Oshoba is not only winning fights; she is redefining possibilities.

### The Bigger Picture

In an era where African boxing seeks new global standard-bearers, Elizabeth Oshoba stands at the forefront. Her combination of power, technique, and mental resilience positions her as a potential long-term face of women’s boxing.

If her current trajectory continues, Oshoba is not just a rising star—she is a future undisputed champion in waiting.



# THE TOP 5 MOST SIGNIFICANT ANCIENT SITES TO SEE

CHISOM MICHAEL

**A**cross continents, ancient sites continue to draw global attention for what they reveal about early civilisations, belief systems and human ambition.

These landmarks shape cultural identity, historical research and tourism. Built as temples, tombs and defensive walls, they proclaimed power and faith, and today these five enduring monuments remain among the world's most remarkable ancient wonders.

**Here are five of the most significant ancient sites to visit.**

## 1. Great Pyramid of Giza, Egypt

Built around 2550 BC, the Great Pyramid of Giza remains one of the most studied structures in history. Commissioned by Khufu, it was originally 146.6 metres tall and held that record for thousands of years. Its alignment with the cardinal points and the scale of its construction continue to prompt research into ancient engineering methods.

Visitors can enter the pyramid through narrow corridors leading to the King's Chamber, where the stone sarcophagus still stands. The surrounding plateau includes other pyramids and the Great Sphinx of Giza, offering a broader view of Egypt's Old Kingdom period.



## 2. Machu Picchu, Peru

Located high in the Andes, Machu Picchu was built in the 15th century during the rule of Pachacuti. The site remained unknown to the outside world until Hiram Bingham documented it in 1911.

Historians say the settlement may have served as a royal estate or a centre for ritual activity. Its terraces, drainage systems and stonework reflect knowledge of agriculture and planning.

Travellers reach the site through the town of Aguas Calientes or by walking the Inca Trail. Key features include the Temple of the Sun, the Room of the Three Windows and the Intihuatana stone, often described as an astronomical marker.



## 3. Stonehenge, England

Stonehenge dates to around 2500 BC and continues to be the subject of new findings. Recent studies suggest it may have been built to connect early farming communities during a period of change.

Research has shown that some stones were transported over long distances, including from what is now Scotland. This indicates a level of coordination between groups.

Efforts to protect the site have led to changes in its surroundings, including the removal of nearby roads. A visitor centre now provides historical context while preserving the setting.



#### 4. Petra, Jordan

Petra was established as early as the 5th century BC and became the capital of the Nabataean Kingdom. It served as a trade centre linking Arabia, Egypt and the Mediterranean.

The city is known for structures carved into rock, including “Al-Khazneh” or “The Treasury”. These structures combine elements from different architectural traditions.

Visitors enter Petra through the Siq, a narrow passage that leads to the main façade. Other sites include the Monastery and a theatre. The layout reflects how the Nabataeans adapted to their environment.



#### 5. Colosseum, Italy

The Colosseum was built between AD 72 and 80 under Roman rulers. Also known as the Amphitheatrum Flavium, it remains the largest amphitheatre constructed in the Roman world.

It could hold up to 80,000 people and was used for public events such as “gladiatorial combats”, animal hunts and staged performances. These events reflected the structure of Roman society and governance.

Below the arena floor lies the hypogeum, a system of tunnels where animals and performers waited before entering the arena. Today, the site is one of the most visited landmarks in Europe and a symbol of Roman history.

## FROM MICROSOFT TO MUSIC: HOW ADDY AWO FISAYO IS SCALING AFRICA'S CREATIVE GDP





**A**ddy Awofisayo is an accomplished media and tech executive with over 15 years of global experience. Born with a passion for innovation and creativity, Addy has built an impressive career spanning various strategy, finance, content, and partnerships roles across Africa, Europe, and North America.

Addy began her career at Microsoft in Seattle, WA, where she worked in Finance & Strategy. She later transitioned to the media industry, working at Discovery Communications on the content team for international markets. Addy also served as the Director for content and business strategy for a Pan-African media organization.

In 2018, Addy joined YouTube as Manager of Content Partnerships for Africa, where she negotiated partnerships deals with large media companies and implemented initiatives for Creators to grow the creative economy on the continent.

**Her leadership and expertise led** to her promotion to Head of Content Partnership for Sub-Saharan Africa in March 2020. Currently, Addy serves as the Head of Music, Sub-Saharan Africa at YouTube, where she defines and executes strategies for African music, working with artists, labels, and music companies to grow their businesses on the platform. She has pioneered initiatives such as

the Africa Day Concert and YouTube Black Voices Fund, providing growth opportunities for creators on the continent.

Addy holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia and a Master's degree from Harvard University. Her impressive educational background, combined with her extensive experience and passion for innovation, has established her as a leading expert in Africa's creative economy.

In this interview with IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA, she discusses her evolution into a 'Sponsor-in-Chief' for African talent. Moving beyond the discovery phase of African music, Awofisayo explains how she leverages the rigor of her Seattle roots to advocate for economic diplomacy and meritocracy. She shares her vision for 'The Great Reconnection'—a future where the dialogue between Africa and its diaspora is a permanent economic engine—and why she is committed to ensuring that the revenue of African culture stays on the continent.

### **You began your career in Finance and Strategy at Microsoft. How does that “Big Tech” analytical rigor influence the way you evaluate the success of an African artist or a content creator today?**

My time in Finance and Strategy at Microsoft taught me that data isn't the enemy of creativity—it's the map. In 'Big Tech,' we didn't just look at whether a project worked; we looked at why it worked and if it was scalable.

Today, I apply that same rigor to the African creative ecosystem. When I evaluate a creator or an artist's success, I'm looking beyond the viral moment. I'm looking at consumption patterns, audience retention across different regions, and the long-term sustainability of their brand. That rigor helps me strip away the noise and focus on the fundamental metrics that indicate whether they are building a 'career' or just having a 'moment.' However, the real magic happens when you use that data to support, rather than dictate, the creative process. I use that analytical background to provide the 'proof of concept' for the gut feelings we have about African creativity.

### **With a Master's from Harvard and a focus on Public Health earlier in your journey, how do you view the “health” of the African creative ecosystem? Is it currently sustainable for the average independent artist?**

My background in public health taught me that 'an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.'

In the music industry, the most effective 'vaccine' against a failed career is financial and legal literacy.

Right now, the ecosystem's 'health' is imbalanced. We have elite artists who are thriving, but the 'middle class' of



independent creators is still vulnerable. Sustainability for the average artist depends on their ability to own their IP and understand the ‘vitals’ of their business—their data, their royalties, and their contracts. It’s all about equipping creators with the tools to build a career that doesn’t just survive a single hit but sustains them for a lifetime.

**You’ve moved across continents and industries. What is the one ‘transferable skill’ from your days in Seattle that has been most critical to your leadership at YouTube Music in Sub-Saharan Africa?**

If I had to pin it down to one, it would be Systems Thinking. In my previous jobs, you learn that no product or strategy exists in a vacuum; it’s part of a massive, interconnected ecosystem.

When I transitioned to the creative scene, I didn’t just see ‘creators’ and ‘content’; I saw an ecosystem that needed the same level of structural integrity I saw in Big Tech. Whether it’s improving monetization frameworks for creators or scaling our support for emerging genres like Amapiano, I use that building systems mindset to build sustainable rails. It’s about moving away from one-off wins and toward building a platform where African creativity can scale predictably and globally.

**You are an advocate for women in tech and the creative arts. What is the most significant “systemic hurdle” you see female executives facing in the African media space today, and how are you working to dismantle it?**

The hurdle I see most often is the ‘Credibility Gap’—both in terms of financial capital and professional recognition. For women in African media, the ‘cost of capital’ (be it social or financial) is often higher. Investors and partners often look for ‘proven’ male archetypes, making it harder for female-led creative ventures or executives to get the same level of backing.

I’m using my platform at YouTube to institutionalize equity. Whether it’s through the Black Voices Fund or our localized creator programs, I ensure that our selection processes are designed to bypass traditional ‘old boy’ networks. We look at the data—the engagement, the growth, the talent—not just who an artist or executive knows. By creating data-driven, transparent pathways for success, we ‘de-bias’ the ecosystem. My goal is to make the African creative space so meritocratic that gender becomes a secondary note to the sheer brilliance of the work.

## **In your 15-year journey, did you find that mentorship (advice) or sponsorship (opening doors) was more vital to your promotion to Head of Music?**

If I look at my journey—from Public Health to Finance to Music—Mentorship provided the map, but Sponsorship provided the passport.

Early in my career, I sought out mentors to help me refine my ‘hard skills.’ But as I moved into executive leadership at YouTube, I realized that the most ‘systemic’ hurdle for African leaders is the lack of global sponsors. Being ‘Head of Music’ for a continent requires more than just good advice; it requires institutional backing.

I was fortunate to have sponsors who saw Sub-Saharan Africa not as a ‘charity project’ but as a ‘growth engine.’ Today, I view my role as a Sponsor-in-Chief. I use my position to open doors for African labels and artists that they didn’t even know existed. Advice is helpful, but an introduction to the right decision-maker is transformative.

In a 15-year career that spans from Seattle to Lagos, I’ve learned that mentorship is the engine, but sponsorship is the fuel. Mentorship—the advice, the late-night deck reviews, the ‘Harvard’ level of critical thinking—prepared me to be ready for the role. It gave me the internal tools to lead. But in a global organization like Google or Microsoft, merit alone isn’t always enough to break through the noise of a billion-dollar region. Sponsorship was the vital force that actually moved the needle.

I had leaders who didn’t just give me advice; they put their own professional reputation on the line to say, ‘Addy is the one to lead Sub-Saharan Africa.’ You can be the most mentored person in the room, but without a sponsor to open the door, you’re just a very well-prepared person standing in a hallway.

## **As a leading voice for Africa at global events (like the World Public Summit), how do you balance being a “Corporate Executive” for a US-based giant with being a “Cultural Diplomat” for the African continent?**

To be an effective Corporate Executive, I have to be a Cultural Diplomat for Africa. My job is to ensure that the global ‘system’ understands the local ‘nuance.’ In the boardroom, I use the analytical rigor I learned at Microsoft to advocate for the African creator. I translate ‘culture’ into ‘data’ so the global headquarters understands why a specific genre like Amapiano or a movement like Pamoja deserves dedicated investment. I’m not just a representative of a US company in Africa; I’m Africa’s representative inside that company, making sure the ‘pipes’ we build globally are wide enough to carry the immense volume of African creativity.

Being a ‘Cultural Diplomat’ in this era means moving past the ‘discovery’ phase. We’ve been discovered. Now, as an executive, my focus is on economic diplomacy. When I speak at global summits, I’m not just talking about how beautiful our music is; I’m talking about how it contributes to the global GDP. My corporate role gives me the tools—the analytics, the funding, and the platform—to ensure that when African culture goes global, the revenue and the intellectual property rights flow back to the continent. I balance the two by ensuring that every corporate goal we set at YouTube SSA has a direct, positive ‘diplomatic’ impact on the African creative economy.

## **When you look back at your tenure at YouTube SSA five years from now, what is the one story you want to be remembered for?**

I want to be remembered for the story of ‘The Great Reconnection.’ There was a moment in the mid-2020s where the musical dialogue between the Continent and the Diaspora—from Brazil to London to the Caribbean—became a permanent, high-speed highway.

I want my legacy to be that I helped build that bridge using YouTube as the primary vessel. Whether it was through the Africa Day Concerts or the Black Voices Fund, I hope the story told is that we stopped being ‘the next big thing’ and became the center of the global cultural conversation.

I want to be remembered as the executive who ensured that when the world looked for the future of sound, they looked at Africa first, and they found an ecosystem that was ready, professional, and world-class.



# WHY SUSTAINABLE GROWTH DEPENDS ON SYSTEMS, NOT CAMPAIGNS – AFAM ANYIKA

CHISOM MICHAEL





**A**fam Anyika, a growth and marketing strategist and CEO of MediaKing Nigeria, with over two decades of experience, has been shaping brand and market expansion across Africa and the Middle East. He was also a founding member of Jumia, where he helped lead early growth strategies during the company's formative expansion phase. In a recent discussion, Anyika highlighted his focus on building scalable growth systems that deliver long-term enterprise value. He has led market entry, product launch, and expansion initiatives in over 16 industries, including fintech, healthcare, FMCG, and energy.

Anyika has worked with companies such as Jumia, Konga, MAX Nigeria, and Helium Health, helping them translate complex market dynamics into actionable strategies, strengthen brand positioning, acquire customers, and align teams across diverse markets. In this interview with CHISOM MICHAEL, Anyika explains that sustainable growth comes from scalable systems, a clear strategy, and adapting to local markets. He balances data with intuition and emphasises that lasting impact aligns business success with social value.

## You have worked across more than 16 industries; how has this breadth shaped the way you approach market entry and expansion?

Working across multiple industries teaches you that while sectors differ, the fundamentals of growth are often consistent: access, trust, and distribution.

For example, whether you're working in media, energy, or consumer products, the first real question is always: how do people discover and adopt what you're offering? In one market, that might be driven by digital channels. In another, it could be physical distribution or community influence.

In a previous project expanding into a new regional market, we found that what looked like a pricing problem was actually a trust issue. Once we partnered with the right local channels and aligned with trusted intermediaries, adoption improved significantly without changing the product itself.

So that breadth allows you to recognise patterns early, but also to respect local nuance. It's really about applying proven principles, but adapting execution to the realities on the ground.

In your experience, what distinguishes a growth strategy that lasts from one that only delivers short-term results?

Short-term growth is often campaign-driven, promotions, discounts, or heavy marketing bursts. It can create quick traction, but it tends to fade once that activity stops. Long-term growth is usually built on systems.

A good example is what we're doing with MediaKing. Instead of relying on recurring campaigns to drive usage, the focus is on building infrastructure, connectivity that people can rely on daily, and a communication layer that institutions can consistently use. That creates compounding value. The more people connect, the more useful the system becomes, and the more embedded it is in everyday life.

In contrast, if growth depends on constant spending or intervention, it becomes difficult to sustain.

## You mentioned MediaKing as an example of building growth through systems rather than campaigns. In practical terms, how does that model work, particularly in markets like Nigeria where connectivity infrastructure is still evolving?

In practical terms, it's about building for daily utility, not periodic attention.

With MediaKing, the focus is on making connectivity consistently available in environments people already



use, transport hubs, campuses, markets. Once that reliability is established, usage becomes habitual rather than campaign-driven.

Over time, the platform becomes part of how people access the internet, and how institutions and businesses communicate. Growth then comes from repeated use and embedded value, rather than continuous marketing activity.

### **You often operate at the intersection of strategy and execution; how do you ensure that ideas translate into measurable outcomes?**

The biggest gap between strategy and execution is usually clarity.

In one rollout I was involved in, the strategy itself was strong, but execution stalled because teams interpreted objectives differently. Once we broke the plan into very clear deliverables, timelines, and ownership, progress became measurable almost immediately.

I focus on three things: defining success in specific terms, assigning clear ownership, and building feedback loops early.

For instance, instead of saying “increase adoption,” you define what metric represents adoption, over what period, and what actions directly influence it.

That level of clarity makes execution less subjective and easier to manage.

### **Having worked in both startups and established organisations, what differences have you observed in how they pursue growth?**

Startups are typically driven by urgency. They need to prove viability quickly, so they move fast and experiment more freely. Established organisations, on the other hand, are often managing complexity, existing customers, systems, and reputational considerations, so they move more cautiously.

I've seen startups scale quickly but struggle to maintain structure as they grow, and I've also seen large organisations miss opportunities because decision-making becomes too slow. The most effective approach tends to combine both.

For example, in one organisation, we created smaller, agile teams within a larger structure, allowing faster experimentation without compromising overall governance. That balance, speed with discipline, is what sustains growth.

## **Many markets across Africa and the Middle East are fragmented; how do you make sense of complexity when entering such environments?**

Fragmentation can look overwhelming at first, but it usually becomes clearer when you identify the key points of influence.

In one expansion project, the market appeared highly dispersed, with multiple regions, different consumer behaviours, and fragmented distribution. But once we identified a few dominant channels and key aggregation points, the complexity reduced significantly.

It's rarely necessary to solve the entire market at once. Instead, the approach is to identify where adoption is most likely, build a strong presence there, and then expand outward from that base.

In many African markets, for example, transport hubs, marketplaces, or institutional environments can act as anchors for broader expansion.

## **When deploying a platform like MediaKing's high-density public Wi-Fi network in fragmented markets, what kinds of environments or urban nodes become the most effective starting points for adoption?**

The most effective starting points are high-density, high-frequency environments, places where people gather and return regularly.

Transport hubs, commercial districts, universities, and public institutions are typically strong entry points because they already have built-in volume and repeat usage. If the experience is reliable in those locations, adoption happens quickly. From there, expansion becomes more structured, connecting adjacent areas into what effectively becomes a dense, city-wide network over time.

## **You have led several product launches; what do you consider the most overlooked factor in a successful go-to-market strategy?**

Clarity of positioning is often underestimated. I've seen strong products struggle simply because the value wasn't immediately clear to the audience. In one case, a product had multiple features and benefits, but the messaging tried to communicate everything at once.

Once we simplified the positioning, focusing on a single, clear value proposition, adoption improved significantly. People don't adopt complexity; they adopt clarity.



So before distribution or marketing spend, it's critical to answer what problem we are solving, why it matters now, and why this audience should care. If that's clear, everything else becomes easier.

### **How do you approach building systems that are not only effective but also repeatable across different markets?**

The key is separating what must remain constant from what needs to adapt. For example, with MediaKing, the underlying technology and system architecture remain consistent across markets, forming the foundation.

But deployment strategy, partnerships, and communication vary based on local conditions. In one market, adoption might be driven by government partnerships, while in another, it could be driven by commercial or institutional use cases. The system itself is stable, but its application is flexible, and that's what allows it to scale without losing relevance.

### **In your work on customer acquisition and brand positioning, how do you balance data with intuition?**

Data provides valuable insight, but it often reflects what has already happened. Intuition, particularly when informed by experience, can help anticipate shifts before they are fully visible in the data.

For example, in a campaign we ran, early data suggested moderate engagement, but based on behavioural signals and contextual understanding, we adjusted messaging and channels before the data fully reflected the trend, and that decision improved overall performance.

In practice, data validates while intuition guides. This balance is important, especially in fast-moving or emerging markets where data may not always tell the full story.

### **You have also been involved in corporate social responsibility initiatives; how do you see the relationship between business growth and social impact?**

The relationship is becoming increasingly interconnected. In many cases, the most impactful businesses are those that address structural challenges, access to services, information, or opportunity.

For example, improving connectivity in underserved areas doesn't just create business value; it also supports education, access to information, and economic participation.

When growth is aligned with solving real problems, it tends to be more sustainable. Rather than treating social impact as a separate initiative, it is more effective to embed it into the core business model.

### **As competition increases across emerging markets, what should organisations rethink about the way they pursue long-term growth?**

There is a shift from transactional models to more integrated, ecosystem-driven approaches. In competitive markets, it's no longer enough to offer a product or service in isolation; organisations need to think about how they fit into daily life, how they create ongoing value, and how they build systems that others rely on.

For example, platforms that combine access, communication, and service delivery tend to create stronger, more durable positions in the market, and over time, those are the models that are harder to replicate and more resilient to competition.



# SUN SETS ON A VISIONARY: YINKA OGUNDE AND THE LEGACY OF HOPE IN EDUCATION

CHARLES OGWO



She was an alumna of the University of Lagos, where she studied Mass Communication with marketing comms speciality. Ogunde began her professional life in advertising and media before transitioning fully into the education sector.

That cross-sector experience would later define her strategic, communicative, and deeply people-oriented approach; she embodied leadership in its most practical form.

She was not merely a team leader in title, but in action by galvanising individuals and institutions alike toward shared goals. She treated people with respect, irrespective of their ages. As a philanthropist and education rights advocate, her impact cut across multiple layers of society.

Through Edumark Consult, she created a rallying point for stakeholders in the education sector. Beyond offering branding and strategic support to schools, the organisation became a hub for collaboration and growth.

**T**he passing of Yinka Ogunde at 62 marks the end of a life devoted to expanding access to education, but her enduring impact continues to inspire hope for generations to come.

The sun set in Nigeria's education sector on Sunday, April 5, as the country lost one of its foremost mobilisers and tireless cheerleaders in the person of Ogunde.

Her demise has left a vacuum that will be difficult to fill, particularly for those who encountered her passion, energy, and unwavering commitment to a better education system in Nigeria.

Ogunde was ever supportive to the privileged ones who were fortunate to come in contact with her, even on her sickbed; she was a builder of people, nurturer of dreams, and a steady voice in Nigeria's education community.

Edumark reportedly worked with over 6,000 educational institutions, a testament to its wide reach and the trust it commanded across the sector. One of its flagship contributions, the Total School Support Seminar and Exhibition (TOSSE), stands as a testament to her vision.

Within a decade, TOSSE evolved into a vibrant ecosystem where stakeholders met to learn, share, exhibit, and build capacity. The editions I attended were always rich in content and connection. There was never a dull moment.

Her influence extended even further through the Concerned Parents and Educators Initiative (CPE). What began as a simple Facebook group grew into a formidable network and nongovernmental organisation with reach beyond Nigeria's borders.



Through CPE, Ogunde mobilised parents, teachers, and advocates to speak up on critical issues, defend education rights, and support the vulnerable. Under her watch, the platform became a voice for the voiceless and a channel for tangible impact.

One could easily misread her at first glance, perhaps assuming she belonged only to the elite, given the corporate outlook of some of her initiatives.

But a closer look revealed a different reality. She was as comfortable in high-level engagements as she was in grassroots mobilisation. Whether in underserved communities in Makoko, in Bida, or within IDP camps in Borno State, her presence was felt where it mattered most. She believed deeply in a Nigeria that works for all, regardless of social status, and she lived out that belief.

Ogunde showed up selflessly for people across the education spectrum: journalists, school administrators, academics, civil society actors, and consultants alike. Her ability to connect, inspire, and mobilise was rare.

In all, Nigerians, especially education stakeholders, believe that the legacy she built should be preserved and advanced.

Eniola Akintunde, speaking about Ogunde, described her as her 'personal person'. "Aunty Yinka was phenomenal, down-to-earth, strong-willed, full of energy, playful yet no-nonsense, kind, and open-minded.

"She was a truly detribalised Nigerian and a selfless humanitarian. A goal-getter, a leader of leaders, my cheerleader."



# 10 STUNNING TRADITIONAL WEDDING OUTFITS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

CHIOMA ONUH

While the white wedding dress dominates Western traditions, many cultures embrace colour and texture through their traditional wedding attire.

Here are 10 stunning traditional wedding outfits from different parts of the world.

## 1. Nigeria (Edo traditional attire)

Nigeria's traditional weddings are known for their bright colours.

Brides of other tribes wear fabrics like aso-oke or george, paired with coral beads and elaborate headpieces. Colours such as red, gold and royal tones symbolise wealth, strength and celebration.



## 2. India (Saree / Lehenga)

Indian brides typically wear red or gold outfits, symbolising love and prosperity.

These garments are often heavily embroidered with beads, sequins and intricate patterns, making them one of the most visually striking bridal looks globally.



### 3. China (Qipao / Cheongsam)

The Chinese bridal dress is traditionally red, a colour associated with luck and happiness.

The qipao features a fitted silhouette with delicate embroidery, often incorporating symbols of harmony such as dragons and phoenixes.



### 4. Japan (Kimono – Shiromuku / Uchikake)

Japanese brides wear elegant kimonos, often starting with an all-white “shiromuku” for the ceremony.

They may later change into a colourful kimono, representing joy and good fortune.



### 5. South Korea (Hanbok)

The hanbok is known for its flowing skirt and structured top.

Bridal versions are often brightly coloured and symbolise prosperity, harmony and new beginnings.



### 6. Morocco (Takchita)

Moroccan brides wear layered garments known as the takchita, often richly decorated with embroidery and jewels.

The look is regal and typically worn across multiple wedding ceremonies.



### 7. Ghana (Kente bridal attire)

Ghanaian brides often wear kente, a brightly coloured woven fabric.

Each pattern carries meaning, representing status, culture and family heritage.



### 8. Scotland (Kilt attire)

Scottish weddings often feature tartan kilts worn by the groom.

Each tartan represents a clan or family lineage, making it deeply symbolic.



### 9. Peru (Pollera dress)

Peruvian brides may wear polleras — layered skirts paired with embroidered tops.

The look is colourful and reflects indigenous Andean culture.



### 10. Indonesia (Kebaya)

Indonesian brides often wear the kebaya, a fitted blouse paired with a patterned skirt.

It is usually detailed with embroidery and worn with ornate accessories.



# THE MUM FUND 2.0: LEADING A ₦6 BILLION MOVEMENT TO EMPOWER NIGERIAN MOTHERS

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



**T**he Mum Fund is one of Nigeria's most talked-about financial empowerment events for mothers.

Following a sold-out debut that drew over 300 registered attendees and sparked a national conversation about women, wealth, and legacy, The Mum Fund returns on Friday, 15 May 2026 with its second edition: My Sister's Keeper. The event will be held at The Chair Centre, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos, with a virtual component opening the experience to women across Nigeria and the diaspora.

Sparkle Bank joins The Mum Fund 2026 as its headline sponsor, a partnership that reflects the bank's commitment to Nigeria's most ambitious, financially engaged women.

## The Origin: A Friendship That Changed Everything

The Mum Fund was born from a friendship. Feyi Bello and Ibiyinka Ibru have known each other since childhood, long before either of them could have imagined what they would go on to build.

Over the years, it was Ibiyinka who played a pivotal role in helping Feyi become a more intentional steward of her finances and through that lived experience, both women came to understand something profound: having a trusted friend who will speak honestly about money, hold you accountable, and open you up to the world of financial literacy is one of the most powerful assets a woman can have.

That realisation led to a question that would change the course of both of their careers: what would happen if more women had access to that kind of financial sisterhood? The Mum Fund was created to answer it.

## The Founders

Feyi Bello is the Founder and CEO of Motherwell Group, a holding company building infrastructure for the modern mother. Motherwell Group is home to Swaddle, an AI-powered digital village app for mothers launched in February 2026.

Through the Motherwell Podcast, which has amassed over 13,400 followers and speaks directly to African millennial and Gen Z mothers through a faith-based lens, Feyi has built one of the most engaged maternal communities in Nigeria.

With 12 years of experience in PR and marketing through her boutique agency Locke & Pewter, she brings deep expertise in brand, storytelling, and community building to everything she creates.

Ibiyinka Ibru is the Founder and CEO of MoneyStart, an award-winning financial planning firm on a mission to help young professionals and entrepreneurs build wealth.

MoneyStart has helped over 2,000 clients start investing, manage their money better, and increase their overall income through workshops, events, and one-on-one HNI financial planning services. Under Ibiyinka's leadership, MoneyStart's community has collectively unlocked over ₦6 billion in new investments in just two years, demonstrating that financial education, when done right, translates directly into action.

## The Debut: A Movement is Born

The first Mum Fund event, held in Lagos in June 2025, exceeded expectation. Tickets sold out in under two months of planning. 450 tickets were sold, with 250 women attending in person and 200 online.

Attendees came together for a day of honest conversations about money, wealth-building, and the financial realities of motherhood. Through expert panels, money affirmations, and curated experiences, women left feeling not just inspired but equipped.

The 2025 event recorded over 450 sold tickets, N51million new investments unlocked, N20M sponsorship raised and 155 percent sponsor ROI, the organisers disclosed.

Before the event had even ended, women were asking when the next one would be.

The Community Behind the Movement

The Mum Fund sits within a broader ecosystem built for the modern African mother. Its audience is not a general one.

According to the organisers, across the Motherwell Podcast, MoneyStart's platforms, and The Mum Fund's own community, this movement reaches a highly specific, high-value demographic with over 13,400 motherwell podcast followers, over 19,000 MoneyStart Instagram, 200 Avg. workshop attendees and 67.9 percent Nigeria-based audience.

Attendees are 78 percent women, 80 percent married, and 70 percent active mothers with an average of two children under the age of 10.

They are professionals and entrepreneurs, well-travelled, digitally engaged, and deeply intentional about their financial futures. Core age range is 25 to 44, with the broader community spanning 22 to 65, based primarily in Nigeria and the UK, USA, Canada and the wider diaspora.

## The Mum Fund 2.0: My Sister's Keeper

The theme of this year's edition, My Sister's Keeper, is said to be a natural evolution of the movement's founding story.

"It deepens the conversation from individual financial empowerment to collective responsibility: what it means to walk alongside another woman, to be her financial confidante, her encourager, her accountability partner.

"It is a theme that reflects the reality of how wealth is often built in community, not in isolation.

"The 2026 event is targeting 250 in-person attendees and 200 virtual participants. The speaker lineup reflects an elevated vision of sisterhood as a tool for economic transformation and includes some of Nigeria's most respected voices in business, finance, and leadership," Bello said in a statement.

This year's speakers include Ibukun Awosika, Founder/CEO, The Chair Centre Group, Non Executive Director, Cadbury Nigeria PLC, Chairperson First Bank, Omobola Johnson former Nigerian Minister for Information and Communications, and Yewande Zaccheus founder and CEO of Eventful Nigeria and Harbour Point. Bidemi Zakariyau, Founder and CEO of LSFPR, and Rolake

Akinkugbe-Filani CEO of EnergyInc Advisors, with a keynote address by Mojisola Hupunu-Wusu, President of Woodhall Capital.

With Sparkle Bank as the headline sponsor, the event is positioned to build on the commercial and community impact of year one and set a new benchmark for what women-focused financial events can achieve in Nigeria.

Feyi Bello on the vision: "We want every mother in Nigeria to know that her financial future is not an afterthought. We are building a movement that makes financial empowerment a cultural norm for African women, not a privilege. My Sister's Keeper is about reminding us that we do not have to figure this out alone."

Ibiyinka Ibru on the mission: "MoneyStart was built on the belief that financial education can lead to transformation that can change lives. The Mum Fund is where that education and transformation meets the catalytic effect of community. When women invest in each other's financial growth, the impact multiplies."



# 3 GHANAIAN SOUPS TO RECREATE THIS WEEKEND

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



Ghana's soup repertoire does not get nearly enough attention outside the country. While the jollof debate takes up most of the conversation, the soups are where a lot of the real cooking happens. Light soup, palm nut soup and groundnut soup each have their own character, and all three are straightforward enough to make at home.

**Here is what you need to get started.**



## Light soup (Nkrakra)

Light soup is one of the most common dishes in Ghanaian cooking. Known as Nkrakra, it is a spicy, tomato-based broth made with fresh tomatoes, ginger, garlic, scotch bonnet peppers and onions. It is deeply rooted in Akan culture, particularly among the Ashanti and Fante people,

though it is made across the country. What distinguishes it from most other West African soups is its consistency. It is thin and watery by design, and the tomatoes, peppers and onions are boiled before being blended rather than blended raw. It is traditionally served with fufu.

## Ingredients

Meat (chicken or goat), fresh tomatoes, onions, garlic, ginger, scotch bonnet peppers, tomato paste, fish, spices of choice, salt and seasoning to taste, water.

## Steps

- Season the meat with blended onions, garlic, ginger and spices. Steam until tender.
- Add fresh tomatoes, onions and peppers to the meat, then add water and cook until the vegetables are tender.
- Remove the boiled vegetables, blend them smooth and pour back into the soup through a sieve.
- Add tomato paste and fish, then simmer until the soup is light and fragrant.
- Serve with fufu, rice balls (omo tuo), boiled yam or banku.



## Palm nut soup (Abenkwan)

Known as Abenkwan, palm nut soup is a rich, oily and nutritious soup made from the pulp of boiled and pounded palm fruits. It is widely eaten in Ghana and appears in varying forms across West Africa. It is traditionally paired with fufu, banku or rice balls.

## Ingredients

Palm nut extract (from fresh palm fruits or canned palm cream), assorted meats (goat meat, oxtail, beef, chicken or cow foot), smoked and dried fish (tilapia, catfish, tuna or mackerel), herring powder, smoked shrimp powder or crayfish, fresh tomatoes, onions, garlic, ginger, scotch bonnet or habanero peppers, anise seeds, bay leaves, bouillon cubes, prekese (aidan fruit), turkey berries (abeduru), okra, garden eggs, salt and water.

## Steps

- Boil fresh palm nuts for 30 to 45 minutes until the skin softens. Pound in a mortar to separate the pulp from the kernels without breaking them. Add 4 to 6 cups of hot water to the mash, massage to release the oils, then strain through a fine sieve into a clean pot. If using canned cream, mix the concentrate with 3 to 4 cups of warm water until smooth before adding to the pot.

- Blend onion, ginger, garlic and anise seeds into a paste. Place the meat in a pot, pour the paste over it, add salt and a bouillon cube and steam on medium heat for 15 minutes until halfway cooked.
- Pour the palm nut liquid into the pot with the meat. Add whole tomatoes, onion and peppers. Bring to a vigorous boil uncovered for 20 minutes until dark red oil begins to rise to the surface.
- Remove the softened tomatoes, onion and peppers, blend into a smooth puree and stir back into the soup. Add the bruised prekese and turkey berries if using.
- Add the smoked and dried fish, shrimp or crayfish powder, and okra or garden eggs if using. Reduce to medium-low heat and simmer for 20 to 30 minutes. The soup is ready when it is thick, deep red and a clear layer of palm oil has settled on top. Leave the pot slightly open while simmering to help the oil rise.



onions, 4 to 5 cloves garlic, 2-inch piece of ginger, 3 large tomatoes, 2 tablespoons tomato paste, 2 to 4 scotch bonnet peppers, salt to taste, water. Optional: okra, garden eggs or mushrooms.

## Steps

- Season the meat with salt and a blended mixture of one onion, ginger and garlic. Place in a pot on medium heat and steam in its own juices for 10 to 15 minutes.
- In a separate saucepan, mix the groundnut paste with 2 cups of water and 1 tablespoon of tomato paste until smooth. Heat on low to medium heat, stirring

constantly, until the mixture thickens and a layer of clear oil rises to the surface, about 15 to 20 minutes.

- Add the whole tomatoes, remaining onion and scotch bonnets to the meat pot. Add enough water to cover and boil until soft. Remove the vegetables, blend into a smooth puree and strain back into the pot.
- Pour the cooked groundnut mixture into the pot with the meat and vegetable base. Add 1.5 to 2 litres of water depending on your preferred consistency.
- Bring to the boil then reduce to medium-low heat and simmer for 30 to 45 minutes. The soup is ready when the foam disappears and red oil pools on the surface. Taste and adjust seasoning.

## Groundnut soup (Nkatenkwan)

Also known as Nkatenkwan in Twi or Azidetsi in Ewe, groundnut soup is a rich, creamy staple of Ghanaian cooking made primarily from natural peanut butter and a tomato-based broth, seasoned with ginger, garlic and scotch bonnet peppers. It is commonly made with chicken, beef, goat meat or smoked fish, and the consistency can range from a thin broth to a thick stew depending on preference. The key indicator that the soup is ready is when the natural oils from the peanut butter rise to the surface. It is served as a swallow dish, paired with fufu, rice balls (omo tuo), banku, kenkey or kokonte.

## Ingredients

1 to 2 lbs chicken, beef or smoked fish, 1 cup natural unsweetened groundnut paste (peanut butter), 2 large

# 3 TIPS TO MAKE YOUR JOLLOF RICE TASTE LIKE PARTY JOLLOF

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



If you have ever eaten jollof rice at a Nigerian owambe and immediately wondered why yours at home never tastes the same, you are not alone. The difference is not luck. It comes down to a few specific choices made during cooking, most of which have nothing to do with a secret ingredient.

**Here is what actually separates home jollof from the kind you enjoy at parties.**

## Roast your tomatoes and peppers before blending

Most home cooks blend their tomatoes and peppers raw and go straight to frying. Party jollof cooks often roast or char their peppers and tomatoes first, either in an oven or directly over a flame. Roasting reduces the water content and adds depth to the base before any cooking begins. The result is a tomato base that fries down faster and tastes more concentrated.

## Fry the tomato base until the oil floats

This is the step most home cooks cut short. The blended tomato and pepper mix must fry on medium heat until the oil visibly separates and rises to the surface, the sauce thickens to a stew-like consistency, and the raw pepper smell disappears entirely. The sauce should look like fried stew and smell nothing like raw pepper before the rice goes in. Skipping this stage is the most common reason home jollof tastes flat or slightly sour.

## Let steam do the work

Steam is what finishes party jollof, but water starts the process. You need both, and the balance between them is where most home cooks go wrong. Too much liquid and the rice turns wet and soft rather than cooking through with distinct grains. To keep the steam trapped, seal the pot tightly with aluminium foil before placing the lid on top. The foil creates a near-airtight seal that holds the steam in. Several Nigerian cooks flag this as one of the most important steps in the entire process.

# SIPS, SNACKS, AND STYLE: WHY DELTA'S NEW SPRING MENU IS A WIN FOR PREMIUM TRAVELERS



**D**elta's spring refresh brings tasty new treats to the skies, and includes a gluten-free MadeGood® Chocolate Chip Chewy Granola bar and the arrival of Tito's Handmade Vodka on board.

This spring, Delta is refreshing its onboard experience with a lineup of new snacks and sips designed to bring more flavor, choice and inclusivity to the skies. Headlining the update: new gluten-free options for customers.

Delta deepens its roots in Texas by adding Tito's Handmade Vodka to its beverage lineup. The Austin-born, gluten-free vodka debuts onboard starting April 1, first on domestic flights before expanding to international flights in early summer.

Known for its smooth and balanced flavor that elevates every sip, Tito's is customers' most requested spirit onboard. This addition to our in-flight offerings is another proof point in our journey to deliver premium and trusted brands that give customers confidence in the quality of every pour.

Delta continues to invest in onboard snacks, focusing on what customers want most: simplicity, ingredient transparency, variety and options that fit varying dietary needs. As of April 1, MadeGood Chocolate Chip Chewy Granola Bar joins Delta's complimentary snack lineup on domestic flights as a gluten-free option for customers.

Delta's approach to onboard snacks is intentionally designed and grounded in customer and flight attendant feedback. With a focus on simple, organic ingredients and purpose-driven values, MadeGood mirrors Delta's emphasis on thoughtful curation. Its flavor and "easy-to-eat" format makes for an ideal in-flight snack.

With MadeGood onboard, Delta's complimentary snack lineup expands to four choices: MadeGood Chocolate Chip Chewy Granola Bars, Lotus Biscoff Cookies, SunChips® Garden Salsa Flavored Whole Grain Snacks and CheezIt® Original Baked Snack Crackers.

"Bringing Tito's Vodka and MadeGood onboard elevates our entire snack and beverage program, adding new depth and variety to the flavors our customers already love," said Stephanie Laster, Managing Director of Onboard Dining Experience.

"It also reflects Delta's commitment to listening to our customers, partnering with purpose-driven brands and delivering a thoughtful, consistently high-quality experience in every cabin."

## More fresh flavors taking flight this season

The snack and beverage refresh is just one part of Delta's broader spring update. Starting April 1, customers will also find new Delta One, Delta Premium Select and Delta First menus on both domestic and international routes.

Highlights from the spring menu refresh include: classic French toast, roasted chicken salad, Mashama bailey's shrimp and grits, spinach & ricotta ravioli.

Fan favorites, like the shake shack cheeseburger (limited selection) and Delta's Belgian-style waffles, aren't going anywhere. As new offerings roll out, Delta said it will continue listening closely to customer and employee feedback to shape what's next.

# TOP 8 PLACES TO LIVE ABROAD FOR YOUNG ADULTS - EXPERTS

CHISOM MICHAEL

Young adults are increasingly looking beyond their home countries in search of opportunity, flexibility and a better quality of life, as global mobility continues to rise.

Experts say remote work, digital nomad visas and lower travel costs are making it easier to live and work abroad without putting careers on hold. From Asia to Europe and South America, cities are gaining attention for their balance of affordability, job prospects and social networks.

For many young professionals, the decision is no longer just about income, but about building a lifestyle that aligns with personal goals, community and long-term mobility in an interconnected world.

Here are eight destinations identified by experts as suitable for young adults seeking a new chapter abroad.

## 1. Chiang Mai, Thailand

Thailand has strengthened its appeal to remote workers after launching the Destination Thailand Visa (DTV) in 2024. The visa allows long-term stays and supports flexible work arrangements.

Tim Leffel, author of "A Better Life for Half the Price", says Chiang Mai remains a leading choice. "The long-time champ for remote workers and business owners is now even more attractive thanks to Thailand's five-year, multi-entry digital nomad visa, the best one of its kind in the world," he says.

Many residents spend about \$500 per month on rent. Food options are widely available, and there are regular social events for expatriates. Travel within the region is also accessible, with domestic flights often priced below \$100.



## 2. Toronto, Canada

Canada continues to attract young professionals seeking structured career paths and public services.

Luther Yeates, founder of U.K. Expat Mortgage, says many migrants build careers in cities such as Toronto and Vancouver. He notes that Toronto offers a balance between cost and opportunity.

"We see clients who have developed fantastic careers in Canada... while benefiting from an all-round high quality of living," he says.

He adds that while rent remains high, access to jobs, healthcare and transport supports long-term settlement.



## 3. Dublin, Ireland

Dublin is recognised as a centre for technology firms and international employers.

Experts say this has created job opportunities for young workers.

Yeates points to the link between income levels and living costs. "Dublin has a surprisingly low cost of living compared to the local employment opportunities and the average salary on offer," he says.

The city also has a social culture that supports networking. Public transport systems and healthcare services are widely used, although weather conditions remain a concern for some residents.



## 4. Da Nang, Vietnam

Da Nang is emerging as an alternative to more established remote work hubs. It combines access to beaches with a growing workforce.

Leffel says the city is gaining attention due to its affordability and location. “The current runner-up to Chiang Mai is coming on strong, with equally reasonable prices, terrific beaches nearby, and a young population that’s learning English fast,” he says.

Monthly expenses for a single person are estimated at about \$423, excluding rent. The city also provides access to neighbouring countries including Laos and Cambodia.



## 5. Bangkok, Thailand

Bangkok continues to attract freelancers and entrepreneurs working remotely. Experts say the cost of living allows residents to maintain stable lifestyles without high income levels.

Yeates describes the city as accessible for young professionals. “The cost of living is so low that you can afford to not be earning thousands and still have a high quality of life,” he says.

He adds that the presence of digital nomad communities supports collaboration and networking among residents.

## 6. Bansko, Bulgaria

Bansko has developed into a year-round base for remote workers. It hosts events such as the Bansko Nomad Fest, which brings together location-independent professionals.



Leffel highlights its affordability and location. “Bansko has bargain apartments to rent for 300 to 600 euros per month, and there’s a thriving co-working and social scene,” he says.

The town is a few hours from the capital, Sofia, and offers access to outdoor activities. Bulgaria has also introduced a digital nomad visa for non-EU residents.

## 7. Montevideo, Uruguay

Montevideo is identified as one of the more stable cities in South America. Experts say it attracts residents seeking safety and consistent living standards.

Leffel notes that while Uruguay is more expensive than neighbouring countries, it provides other advantages. “It’s also one of the safest countries in the Americas,” he says.

Monthly costs for a single person are estimated at under \$1,000, excluding rent. Popular areas among expatriates include Ciudad Vieja, Centro and Pocitos.

## 8. Lisbon, Portugal



Lisbon continues to draw international residents due to its property market and growing expatriate population. Experts say the city appeals to both professionals and remote workers.

Yeates says it offers a mix of lifestyle and opportunity. “For Gen Z, I think this is a great place to consider... lots of expat communities already established,” he says.

While rents in central areas remain high, overall living costs are lower than in several European capitals. The city also benefits from transport links and access to coastal areas.



# HOW IYEOGÉ IS ADVANCING AI-INTEGRATED LUXURY INFRASTRUCTURE FOR AFRICAN FASHION

CHISOM MICHAEL



The discourse around AI in fashion has largely fixated on the visible: robots on runways, CGI models, and generative campaign imagery that often collapses into backlash.

In 2025, shopping-related searches on generative AI platforms grew 4,700 percent year-on-year. Nearly a quarter of global consumers now use AI as their primary entry point when shopping. The checkout itself has shifted. AI search engines like ChatGPT and Gemini are no longer simply surfacing products; they are completing the transaction.

While AI's real impact was never going to be aesthetic, it is infrastructural. Quietly, more than 35 percent of fashion executives are already deploying generative AI across customer service, product discovery, image production, and inventory management.

Leading the push in advancing AI-integrated luxury infrastructure for African fashion is IyeOgé Africa's first AI-integrated luxury fashion e-commerce platform.

The platform founded by Zig Okungbowa has an ambitious strategy of not just selling products, but building the underlying system that enables African luxury to scale on its own terms.

According to Okungbowa, through AI-driven personalisation, intelligent discovery, and operational efficiency, the platform allows designers to present, distribute, and grow with the same sophistication expected of any Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy (LVMH) backed ecosystem.

She said the timing is not incidental, adding that a new global consumer is emerging that is defined not only by geography, but by taste and cultural fluency. Adding that alongside this is a rapidly expanding, high-net-worth African and diasporic consumer class seeking access to design that reflects both identity and excellence.

Okungbowa opines that the future of fashion will not be decided solely by heritage houses in Paris or Milan, but will be shaped by those who build the infrastructure through which taste is discovered, validated, and distributed.

"The platforms that will define this next era are those with a clear point of view about who they serve. The opportunity lies in what existing systems fail to see: that the next major luxury market has not yet been fully recognised and that the next globally influential designer may emerge not from traditional fashion capitals, but from Lagos".

She further said that what is unfolding in African fashion is not a trend; it is a structural shift.

To her, for decades, African design has been mined for inspiration, its aesthetics absorbed into Western luxury houses with little attribution and even less participation in value creation. At the same time, the infrastructure required for African designers to build globally competitive businesses on their own terms has remained largely absent: no true aggregation platforms, no luxury-grade digital presentation, and no intelligent personalisation for a high-value consumer base.

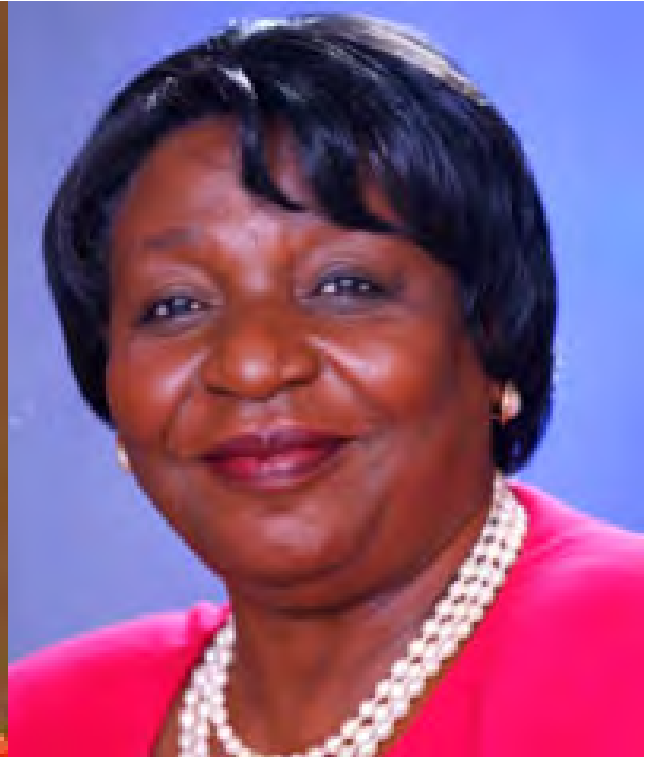
"That absence is precisely what defines this moment. The global fashion-tech stack is still being built. The dominant luxury e-commerce platforms Net-a-Porter, Farfetch, and Mytheresa were not designed with African designers in mind. They were built for a supply chain in which Africa was peripheral, not central. This is the gap that IyeOgé addresses not as a cultural gesture or niche culture moment, but as a structural intervention in global fashion infrastructure," she said.

McKinsey estimates that generative AI could contribute up to \$275 billion in operating profits to the fashion and luxury sectors by 2028, with value concentrated in pricing intelligence, demand forecasting, returns optimisation, personalised sizing, and supply chain responsiveness.

She further said that the most consequential application of AI in luxury is not to replace craftsmanship, but to protect it and remove the operational burden that sits beneath creativity. Commenting further, she said that the technology itself is not the story, but what it enables.

# MEET THE NIGERIAN MINDS BEHIND 5 LAGOS' PREMIUM PRIMARY SCHOOLS

CHARLES OGWO



**F**rom vision to reality, the success of Lagos' elite primary schools is rooted in the passion and foresight of the Nigerians who built them from the ground up.

Here are five premium primary schools championed by Nigerians in Lagos State. BusinessDay's choice of the schools is functional to tuition and surveys.

## Christland School

Winifred Awosika, the founder, started the school in 1977 with just five students

Awosika pioneered the school with a vision for quality education in a conducive learning environment.

With a space of 49 years, the school has spread from its Ikeja campus in Ladipo Oluwole and Opebi to Victoria Garden City in Ajah, Festac, and Lekki, offering both primary and secondary education

Tuition at Christland School, Opebi, is about N1.3 million per term for primary school, with subsequent terms around N900,000, bringing the total annual tuition to approximately N2.7 million, excluding other additional costs.

## Greensprings School

Lai Koiki, an educator, founded Greensprings School in January 1985. The school has campuses in Anthony, Lekki, and Ikoyi, offering premium education from early years through to secondary level.

Koiki, with her team from the Greensprings Educational Services Limited, which she is the executive director/chief executive officer, has grown the school from a modest Montessori nursery into a leading institution with multiple campuses and a reputation for academic excellence

The tuition for Greensprings Elementary School is estimated at around N4 million per year.

## Grange School Lagos

Grange School Lagos, a not-for-profit British international school, was founded in Ikeja in 1958 by British expatriates, and Segun Ogunsanya is the chairman of the board.

is a long-established non-profit British international school located in GRA, Ikeja, founded in 1958, by British expatriates to deliver education of the same standard as what is obtainable in the United Kingdom.

Ogunsanya holds a degree in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from Obafemi Awolowo University and has held several top executive positions in many corporate organisations.

Tuition at Grange School varies by year group, with fees for primary pupils ranging from N2.9 million for Years 1 and 2, N4 million for Years 3 to 5, and N4.3 million for Year 6, while new students pay up to N5 million with additional fees inclusive.



### Meadow Hall School

Kehinde Nwani founded Meadow Hall School, a private school located in Lekki, in 2002.

Nwani, a trained lawyer and education entrepreneur, left her legal career to pursue her passion for education after struggling to find a school that matched her vision for her child.

She envisioned a school model that would offer both the development of children’s minds while keeping them rooted in their heritage and values.



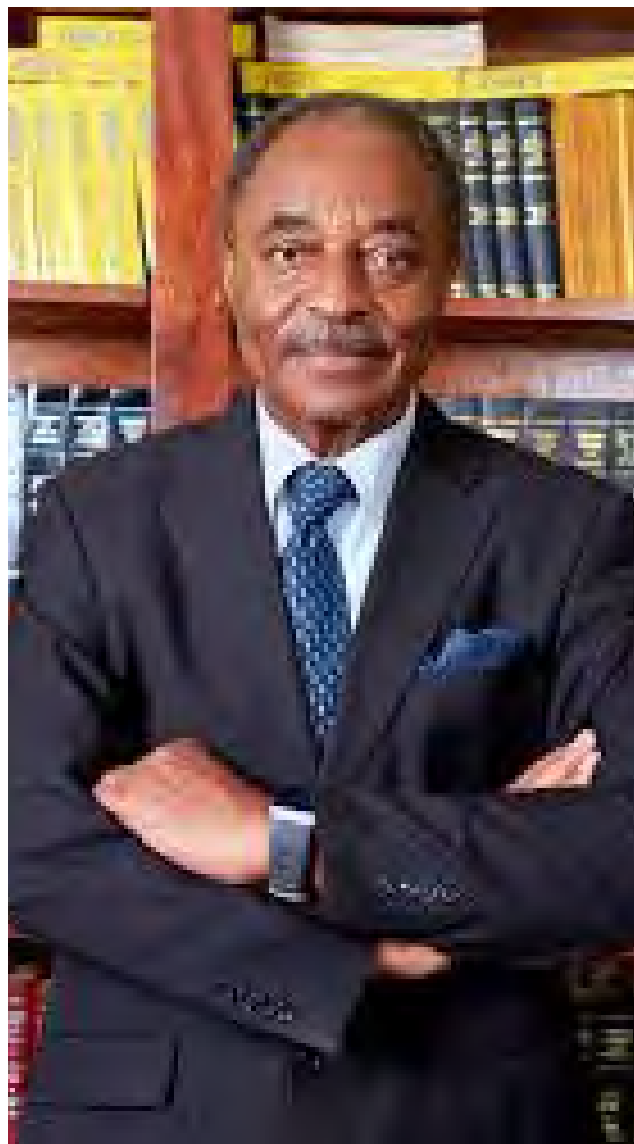
This led to the establishment of Meadow Hall, a hybrid institution that blends the British National Curriculum with key elements of the Nigerian Curriculum. Tuition at Meadow Hall Junior School is N3.8 million to N4.3 million annually for returning students, depending on the year group, excluding additional costs. For new students, fees are about N4.4 to N4.9 million depending on the class.

### St. Saviour’s School, Ikoyi

St. Saviour’s School, Ikoyi, a not-for-profit institution, was founded in 1951 by prominent members of the Nigerian and British communities, and Louis Mbanefo is the chairman of the board of trustees.

The school is built on the principles of the Anglican Christian tradition, and has maintained a strong reputation for academic excellence over the decades.

The tuition at St. Saviour’s School, Ikoyi, is approximately N3,5 million per term.



# FROM CERTIFICATES TO SOLUTIONS: FG, UNDP LAUNCHES NATIONWIDE UNIPOD NETWORK TO DRIVE INNOVATION

..as UNILAG Flags Off Initiative



The Federal Government of Nigeria, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), recently launched a nationwide network of University Innovation Pods (UniPods), with the national rollout which was officially flagged off on 7 April 2026 at the University of Lagos (UNILAG).

The landmark initiative positions Nigeria at the forefront of Africa's innovation and digital transformation agenda.

With this development, Nigeria becomes the first country in Africa to scale UNDP's timbuktoo innovation model through direct government co-investment - marking a shift from pilot initiatives to a nationally owned innovation system.

Activities commenced at an Innovation Marketplace, where indigenous, AI-powered solutions were showcased during the launch across sectors including Health, Fintech, Agriculture,

Education, Tourism, Data Science and Deep technology.

The UniPods are a core delivery platform under the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, translating bold economic reforms into tangible outcomes in job creation, youth empowerment, innovation and digital transformation and industrialisation and economic diversification.

The high-profile event drew several dignitaries, innovators, tech entrepreneurs, academics, and students, who converged to witness what stakeholders described as a transformative step for public universities in Nigeria.

Speaking during the event, Elsie Attafua, Resident Representative, UNDP Nigeria said the launch of the UniPods is not just infrastructure but a system that ensures that ideas do not end as ideas, but become solutions, enterprises, and opportunities.



Attafuah said the launch of the UniPods is happening at a W time when the global economy is undergoing profound change, driven by technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, digital systems, and advanced innovation platforms that are fundamentally reshaping how countries produce, compete, and create value.

“In such a moment, the real question for any nation is not whether change is coming, but whether it is prepared to shape that change – or to be shaped by it,” she said.

She commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for his leadership, and that of the Federal Government under the Renewed Hope Agenda, for providing not only the vision, but also the commitment and public investment required to move from intention to implementation.

Attafuah also appreciated the leadership and collaboration of the Federal Ministry of Education, the Federal Ministry of Finance, the Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, the Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, and the Tertiary Education Trust Fund, whose combined efforts, she said made it possible for this initiative to move beyond concept and into reality.

Representing the Vice President, Ibrahim Hassan Hadejia, the Deputy Chief of Staff to the President described the project as a “quantum leap” in repositioning universities as solution hubs where research, talent, and capital converge for national development.

Sonny Echono, Executive Secretary, TETFund said in partnership with UNDP, TETFund is catalysing Nigeria’s Tertiary Education Sector from a “certificate-based” culture to an “innovation-driven” reality through the National Innovation and Digital Transformation Partnership Programme (NIDTPP).

According to Echono, across the globe, the successful innovation and commercialisation of cutting-edge research is recognized as the fundamental engine driving industrial growth and economic prosperity.

He said the Memorandum of Understanding signed by TETFund and UNDP underlines the joint commitment to propel Nigeria towards an era where innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship drive sustainable national development.

“It is an effort to enable Nigeria’s transition toward a knowledge-based economy as the framework focuses on institutionalizing innovation systems, advancing research commercialization, and cultivating digital human capital, while securing sustainable financing to support a thriving innovation ecosystem,” Echono added.

Echono explained that under the partnership, they are activating seven University Innovation Pods (UniPods) and one Polytechnic Pod, starting with UNILAG.

He said 12 TETFund Innovation Hubs will be operational across the country, bringing the total to 20 for the current year.

“These innovation pods/hubs are not just buildings but they are collision spaces where scientists and innovators meet the engineers, where students meet the mentors, and where the raw idea meets the industrial transformation.

“By equipping these hubs to meet global standards, we are creating a pathway towards ensuring that the academic world synergises with the Nigerian consumers,” he explained.

In her welcome address, Folasade Ogunsola, the Vice-Chancellor, the launch of the UniPod represents the beginning of a transformative endeavor that will shape the future of scholarship and drive national progress.

Ogunsola said the University of Lagos is delighted and honoured to be contributing to this movement that will transform not just the country but Africa and the world.

She described Artificial Intelligence as a pivotal force reshaping the world with potential to augment human capabilities, accelerate scientific discovery, and solve complex global challenges is immense.

She said the hub represents its unwavering commitment to harnessing this transformative power for the betterment of humanity.

“For us in academia, the AI Innovation Hub will serve as a crucible for interdisciplinary research, fostering collaboration across diverse fields.

“AI gives us the capacity to unlock new avenues of inquiry and empower our scholars to push the boundaries of knowledge. It will equip our students with the critical skills and forward-thinking mindset necessary to thrive in an increasingly AI-driven world,” the Vice chancellor said.

# FILMHOUSE GROUP, CARE4HER INITIATIVE TO TRAIN 100 WOMEN IN CINEMATOGRAPHY



EMPOWERING WOMEN

Filmhouse Group has announced a partnership with Care4Her Initiative to train 100 women in technical cinematography skills as part of Project Empower 2.0.

The five day programme is designed to build a strong pipeline of female technical talent within Nigeria's creative industry. Participants will receive hands on training through structured classes in videography and content creation, alongside practical sessions focused on camera operations and on set best practices amongst other things.

The initiative targets women aged 18–35 who are passionate about film and visual storytelling, offering them access to practical knowledge, mentorship, and a supportive learning environment.

Through this partnership, Filmhouse Group reinforces its commitment to gender inclusion, youth empowerment, and long term industry development.

Speaking on the collaboration, Kene Okwuosa, Group CEO of Filmhouse Group, said:

“Our collaboration with Care4Her Initiative on Project Empower 2.0 marks an important milestone in our commitment to gender inclusivity and youth empowerment.

Beyond training, this programme creates meaningful opportunities for women to advance their skills and build sustainable careers within the entertainment industry.” Also commenting, Mojisola Oladapo, Chief Marketing Officer, Filmhouse Group, added:

“This partnership aligns strongly with our purpose at Filmhouse Group to create access, representation, and real career pathways for women in film. Project Empower 2.0 reflects our dedication to driving impact beyond the screen.”

Oyinkansola Gbolagunte, Executive Director, Care4Her Initiative, said:

“We believe every woman deserves equal opportunity to thrive in technical roles. Through this collaboration with Filmhouse Group, we are creating an inclusive space where women can gain relevant skills, confidence, and exposure needed to succeed.”

Filmhouse Group and Care4Her Initiative remain committed to delivering a meaningful and impactful programme, providing participants with practical tools and industry exposure that support long term growth within Nigeria's creative ecosystem.

# THE MISSING VOICE: HOW SILENCED PERSPECTIVES SHAPE LEADERSHIP

EKEMINI AKPAKPAN

I remember sitting with some men during what was meant to be a casual hangout. The conversation was something everyone there was familiar with—nothing technical or specialized. Just an everyday subject where everyone had opinions to share. So I contributed. Or at least, I tried to.

Each time I offered a perspective, it floated into the air and disappeared as if it had never been said. Someone would speak over it. Someone else would redirect the conversation.

At one point, one of the men said outright that I was “inexperienced” and perhaps didn’t sufficiently understand. It was a strange comment, because the conversation itself wasn’t based on expertise. Everyone else was speaking from their lived experiences, their upbringing, and their socialization around the issue. Exactly the same place I was speaking from. Yet somehow, my perspective did not count. What made the moment striking was not the disagreement; it was the dismissal. The assumption that my contribution did not matter.

This dynamic is often described as mansplaining—when a man dismisses or explains over a woman’s perspective, as if it doesn’t count, even when that perspective comes from a unique lived experience. Beyond the awkwardness, experiences like this reveal something deeper—we can trace how women’s voices became invisible.

## The Roots of the Missing Voice

Before boardrooms and decision-making spaces, the silencing of women’s voices begins in everyday settings similar to the one I just described—in homes, classrooms, and ordinary interactions where women and girls are interrupted, dismissed, or told directly and indirectly that their opinions carry less value.

A girl is told she is “talking too much.”  
A young woman challenges an idea and is told she is “being emotional.”  
A daughter asks questions and is reminded that “it is not her place.”

Over time, these small moments accumulate. They form a pattern where women learn that their voices do not matter and that their perspectives may not be valued—meaning their contributions may never count in shaping outcomes. What may appear to be harmless everyday comments are, in fact, powerful acts of social conditioning.

When voices are repeatedly invalidated, the message becomes internalized: your perspective does not matter.

The result is not just silence. It is the gradual erosion of confidence. Over time, it becomes deeply undermining—rendering a person’s voice irrelevant and their perspective inconsequential in the broader scheme of things.

## A Narrow Definition of Leadership

Over time, the silencing of voices produces a deeper consequence: absence. The perspectives that were once dismissed in everyday interactions often become the missing voices in leadership and decision-making spaces. This is what a narrow definition of leadership looks like:

### Groupthink

People tend to validate views that resemble their own experiences. When leadership environments are dominated by similar social backgrounds, similar gender socialization, and similar perspectives, the same ideas continue to reproduce themselves.

It becomes a feedback loop. What sounds familiar gets validated. What reflects dominant experiences gets repeated. What mirrors existing perspectives gets accepted. Everything else feels “unusual,” “irrelevant,” or “inexperienced.” This creates a powerful social dynamic I often think of as perspective mirroring.

Over time, this dynamic begins to resemble what organizational psychologists describe as groupthink—a situation where the desire for consensus or familiarity overrides critical thinking and alternative viewpoints. When everyone in the room shares similar perspectives, ideas begin to reinforce each other rather than challenge each other.

Voices that sound familiar are amplified. Voices that sound different are questioned or ignored.

And slowly, leadership begins to look less like a space for diverse thinking and more like an echo chamber—where decisions are shaped not by the breadth of perspectives available, but by the narrow range of perspectives considered acceptable.

**The Absence of Lived Experience in Decision-Making**  
One of the most significant consequences of this narrow leadership environment is the absence of lived experiences in shaping decisions.

Women, for example, influence a large share of everyday consumer choices—from household spending and health decisions to education and family welfare. Yet in many organizations and policy spaces, the perspectives of those who navigate these realities daily are missing from the rooms where decisions are made.

When lived experiences are excluded, leadership risks designing solutions that do not reflect the realities of the people they intend to serve. Policies may overlook practical constraints. Products may fail to address real needs. Strategies may ignore the dynamics that shape everyday life for half the population.

In essence, the absence of lived experience produces decisions that are technically sound but socially incomplete.

Reinforcing Inequality Through Leadership Culture  
Groupthink does not only affect ideas—it also shapes culture.

In many environments where leadership has historically been dominated by men, informal norms develop that unconsciously reinforce exclusion.

This is sometimes described as “bro culture,” where certain behaviours, expectations, and social dynamics reflect predominantly male patterns of interaction.

Meetings scheduled late in the evening may seem harmless, yet they can disadvantage those who carry disproportionate caregiving responsibilities.

Workplace structures that ignore reproductive health needs or fail to provide adequate support during pregnancy and maternity further widen the gap.

Even subtle behaviours, such as valuing assertiveness in ways that penalize collaborative approaches, can reinforce inequalities in how leadership is perceived and rewarded.

Over time, these patterns create environments where participation is uneven, opportunities are unequal, and leadership remains shaped by the same narrow set of norms that produced the imbalance in the first place.

Expanding Leadership Through Diverse Leadership Styles  
The inclusion of women in leadership is not only about representation; it is also about expanding the range of leadership styles and perspectives that shape decision-making.

Research and lived experience increasingly show that women often bring leadership approaches that emphasize collaboration, empathy, consensus-building, and long-term thinking.

These styles can strengthen institutions by encouraging broader participation, improving communication, and fostering more inclusive decision-making processes.

Where traditional leadership models may prioritize hierarchy and authority, more inclusive leadership styles often focus on relationships, shared responsibility, and collective outcomes.

The result is not a replacement of one style with another, but an expansion of leadership itself; making it more responsive, more adaptive, and better equipped to navigate complex realities.

## Reclaiming the Missing Voice

Reclaiming the missing voice begins with a simple but powerful recognition: the perspectives that are often dismissed are not marginal; they are essential.

The voices that are overlooked in casual conversations are often the same ones missing from leadership tables.

When this happens, leadership loses access to a wide range of lived realities that shape how policies work, how organizations function, and how societies evolve.

Reclaiming those voices requires more than simply inviting women into the room. It requires creating environments where their perspectives are recognized as legitimate sources of insight and experience. It

requires listening without immediately filtering contributions through familiarity or hierarchy. And it requires questioning long-standing assumptions about whose voice naturally carries authority.

It also requires women to reclaim their own voices, to resist the conditioning that has historically taught them that their perspectives are secondary or inconsequential.

Speaking up, challenging ideas, and asserting lived experience are not acts of disruption; they are acts of leadership.

Leadership is not strengthened by uniformity. It is strengthened by perspective. When different lived experiences shape conversations, decisions become more grounded, more inclusive, and more reflective of the realities they aim to address.

The moment I described at the beginning of this article may have been a casual conversation among friends, but it reflects a much larger pattern.

When voices are dismissed early and often, the consequences extend far beyond the room where it happened.

# NIGERIA TRADE REGULATORY UPDATE: NATIONAL SINGLE WINDOW PLATFORM LAUNCH AND IMPORT RESTRICTIONS

SEUN TIMI-KOLEOLU

## Introduction

Nigeria's trade regulatory landscape has recently seen developments aimed at improving trade administration and strengthening import controls. In particular, the Federal Government has announced the launch of the National Single Window Platform (the "Platform"), a digital system designed to streamline import and export processes, while also announcing a ban on items prohibited from importation into Nigeria in 2026. These developments form part of broader government efforts to modernise Nigeria's trade infrastructure, enhance border control mechanisms, and promote local production.

### 1. National Single Window Platform

The Federal Government is set to launch the Platform on 27 March 2026 as a centralised electronic portal for the processing of trade-related documentation. The Platform is intended to allow importers and exporters to submit trade information through a single interface, which will then be automatically shared with the relevant government agencies for processing. Nigeria has previously explored the introduction of a national single window system as part of broader trade facilitation reforms, with earlier initiatives dating back to the late 2000s. However, those efforts did not result in a fully integrated system. While aspects of Nigeria's trade administration have been digitised through platforms such as the Nigeria Trade Portal, which provides information on import and export procedures and serves as an access point to certain trade related processes, regulatory approvals and trade documentation have historically been administered across multiple agency systems. For example, importers typically process a Form M (a mandatory import declaration form) through an authorised dealer bank, submit cargo documentation to the Nigeria Customs Service ("NCS"), and obtain product specific approvals or certifications from regulators such as the Standards Organisation of Nigeria ("SON") and the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control ("NAFDAC").

The Platform is intended to address this fragmentation by enabling traders to submit trade data through a single electronic interface which can then be shared automatically among participating government agencies. It is expected to integrate several regulatory bodies within Nigeria's trade ecosystem, including the NCS, SON, and NAFDAC. Through the Platform, traders will be able to submit documentation once, rather than interacting separately with multiple agencies. This approach is expected to reduce duplication of documentation requirements and facilitate greater coordination among regulatory authorities responsible for customs clearance, permits, and trade approvals. Implementation of the Platform is expected to occur in phases. The initial rollout will focus on the online processing of import permits, electronic submission of cargo manifests, and a centralised risk management system. Subsequent phases are expected to incorporate additional trade processes, including export documentation and full system integration.

### 2. Federal Government Import Prohibition List

The Federal Government has also recently released a list of

goods prohibited from being imported into Nigeria. The 2026 import prohibition list (the "Prohibition List") covers a range of items across agricultural products, household goods, and manufactured items. By restricting the importation of certain products, the government aims to support domestic manufacturing capacity and reduce Nigeria's reliance on imported consumer goods in specific sectors.

It is important to distinguish the Prohibition List from the foreign exchange restrictions previously imposed on certain imported goods which was lifted by the Central Bank of Nigeria ("CBN") in October 2023. The Prohibition List imposes a ban on certain items into Nigeria while the former foreign exchange restrictions barred access to official foreign exchange for the importation of specified items.

Examples of items included in the Prohibition List include:

- i. Frozen poultry products
  - ii. Used motor vehicles older than twelve years from the year of manufacture
  - iii. Spaghetti and noodles
  - iv. Fruit juice in retail packs
  - v. Bagged cement
  - vi. Certain pharmaceutical products such as paracetamol, chloroquine, and metronidazole
- Importation of goods that fall within the prohibited categories is not permitted and can result in enforcement actions by customs authorities, including the immediate seizure and destruction of goods, legal action, and the imposition of applicable penalties.

## Conclusion

Nigeria's ongoing trade policy reforms reflect an effort to balance trade facilitation with regulatory oversight. The upcoming launch of the National Single Window Platform represents an important step toward modernising Nigeria's trade administration through the digital integration of regulatory agencies.

For importers, exporters, and logistics operators, the Platform may improve the efficiency of documentation processes and potentially reduce administrative delays associated with multi-agency approvals. Over time, the system could contribute to more streamlined customs clearance procedures and improved transparency in trade administration.

At the same time, the updated import prohibition list serves as a mechanism for regulating imports and supporting domestic economic policy objectives. Businesses involved in international trade and distribution activities should ensure that internal compliance processes include verification of import eligibility under Nigerian customs regulations.

"Seun Timi-Koleolu is a Founding Partner at Pavestones, a female-led modern full-service law practice, situated in Lagos, Nigeria."

# THE POLITICS OF BEAUTY IN AFRICAN PORTRAITURE

Beauty in portraiture is never innocent.

Beauty has never been a neutral property. In portraiture — one of the oldest and most politically charged forms of image-making — it is always a negotiation: between the sitter and the painter, the subject and the institution, the gaze and the thing being gazed at. Nowhere is this negotiation more contested, or more weighted with unresolved history, than in the portraiture emerging from and about Africa.



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Good drinks. Great art. Better company.

For centuries, the question of who gets painted, photographed, or sculpted — and under what conditions — has been inseparable from questions of power. Colonial regimes did not only extract land and labour; they also controlled the visual record, deciding which bodies were worthy of careful artistic attention and which were fit only for documentation.

That history has left deep marks on how African faces have been framed, lit, cropped, and captioned. But it has also produced a fierce and generative counter-tradition — one in which African artists have turned portraiture into a space for reclamation, invention, and insistence.

In this digest, we examine four interlocking dimensions of that story: how colonial histories distorted beauty standards and what pre-colonial African visual traditions actually looked like.

## Beauty as a Construct, Not a Truth

When colonial-era photographers set up in Lagos markets, Congolese villages, or Cape Town studios, they were not simply documenting; they were classifying. The ethnographic photographs that filled the archives of the British Museum and the Musée du quai Branly treated African faces as specimens to be catalogued, never individuals to be reckoned with.

Yet long before that lens arrived, African visual traditions operated with their own sophisticated grammar. The terracotta heads of the Ife kingdom, dated to the 12th–15th centuries, depicted human faces not in service of Western realism but as expressions of spiritual authority and royal legitimacy. The Benin bronzes — whose looted portions still sit in institutions across Europe — were made to assert dynastic power. Beauty, here, was not ornament. It was an argument.

## Reclaiming the Gaze

Zanele Muholi, who works under the self-designated title of “visual activist”, turns the camera on themselves in the ongoing series *Somnyama Ngonyama* (Hail the Dark Lioness), manipulating exposure to render their skin as deep and absolute as possible — a direct counter to the flattened images of Black people that dominate mainstream photography. Amoako Boafo works differently but with comparable insistence: his finger-painted portraits place Black figures in colour-saturated compositions where subjects meet the viewer’s gaze without apology. And Omar Victor Diop, in his *Diaspora* series, restages historical European paintings that featured Black subjects in marginal roles — placing himself at the centre to insist that African presence in the Western record was always there, only ever framed wrongly.

## Gender, Power, and Who Gets to Be Seen

South African photographer Lebohang Kganye layers her own image over archival family photographs, creating works about grief, lineage, and the complexity of Black womanhood

— shown at the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, among other venues. Muholi’s *Faces and Phases* series, documenting Black lesbian and transgender women in South Africa since 2006, creates an archive that is at once aesthetic and activist. To include these faces in a gallery is to insist on their right to portraiture — and to the seriousness that portraiture implies.

## Portraiture as Assertion

The most compelling African portraiture being made today is not looking backwards to repair; it is looking forward to invent. When Kenyan-British painter Wangari Mathenge places her large-format figures in quiet domestic interiors, she proposes a visual language where Black interiority is ordinary and worthy. What these artists share, across medium and generation, is a refusal to accept the frame as given.

The question their work leaves open is not whether African faces are beautiful. It is whether the institutions that display these images have yet developed the vocabulary to understand what is actually being said.



## Keturah Ovio

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

## O'DA ART GALLERY'S SHOW, 'HAPPY,' STIRS DEEP EMOTIONS, MEANING OF HAPPINESS



**S**tirring deep emotions in viewers and questioning what being happy truly means, O'DA Art Gallery presents the group show titled 'Happy'.

The show which opened April 4, 2026 and running till the 25th of April 2026 at the gallery's grounds in Victoria Island, Lagos; brings together the works of eight bright artists who try to define what the state of happiness is and how it presents differently to different people.

Happy is not approached as a fixed emotion, but as a condition. It is fleeting, constructed, pursued and at times, performed. The works in

this exhibition resist the simplicity of happiness as lightness or ease. Instead, they examine it as something layered, a surface that can shimmer while holding weight beneath. What appears effortless is often held up by something unseen.

"Happy proposes that joy is not the absence of complexity, but its companion. It is something we arrive at, return to, lose, and remake, again and again," says Obida Obioha, the curator at O'DA Art Gallery.

Across the presentation, happiness appears in fragments through colour, gesture, memory, and form.

Ayanfe Olarinde explores happiness as it is shaped by the tension of transition, by what is withheld and what has been endured. Alfa Abdulkadir flattens time, presenting a futuristic vision of happiness while interrogating our inseparability from technology and Abba Makama's pieces are informed by the knowledge that joy is often temporary and therefore precious - in this way, happiness becomes inseparable from time, something that is felt most acutely in its passing.

There is no singular register of joy here. Moyosore Jolaolu and Lawrence Meju lean into brightness and expansion, where colour and form open outward, almost insistently.

Musa Ganiyy and Osione Iteboje find it in moments of release, in quiet intimacies, in pleasure, and in play, while Williams Chechet sits in ambiguity, where happiness is less visible but deeply present as pride, as resilience, as survival, and an insistence on being.

These works ask the viewer to look more closely, to recognise that joy does not always announce itself. It can be subtle, internal, even contradictory.

The artists do not ask what happiness looks like, but rather how it is felt, remembered, and negotiated. How it lingers after a moment has passed.

How it is reconstructed through memory. How it coexists with longing, with uncertainty, with the realities of contemporary life.

Happiness, in this sense, is not an endpoint, but a process, something continuously made and remade.

Within the context of O'DA Art Gallery where beauty is understood as a form of elevation and healing, Happy extends this inquiry. It suggests that joy is not superficial, nor is it detached from complexity. It is something that can hold weight, something that can carry us, even briefly, beyond the immediate conditions of our lives.

Taken together, Happy proposes that joy is not the absence of complexity, but its companion. It is something we arrive at, return to, lose, and remake, again and again.

Based in Lagos, O'DA Art gallery is dedicated to amplifying African and diasporic voices within the global cultural landscape.

From its inception, O'DA Art gallery has distinguished itself with a clear focus on abstract figuration, and the evolving visual languages of originality and intuition.

In just a few years, O'DA Art gallery has participated in international art fairs, hosted nomadic artist residencies, and mounted ambitious exhibitions that have resonated with collectors, curators, and institutions alike.

Recent highlights include Black Figuration Is Alive and Well (2025), a landmark group exhibition gathering sixteen artists redefining portraiture and figuration.

# IN 'THE RACE', WAR IS CARRIED ON CHILDREN'S BACKS, NOT FOUGHT

ROYAL IBEH



**T**he Race: Childhood Memoirs of the Biafran War, authored by Justina Nnenna Opara, is a poignant account of childhood amid the turmoil of the Nigerian Civil War.

Rather than focusing on military strategies or political events, Opara offers a ground-level view of life under siege, capturing the daily struggles, small joys, and moral choices that defined civilian survival.

The memoir is written from the retrospective perspective of an adult reflecting on her girlhood in Owerri and surrounding villages. Her prose is calm and measured, avoiding melodrama while conveying the heavy weight of lived experience.

In one vivid moment, Opara recalls carrying a large metal trunk filled with food during

the chaotic “Last Race” of January 1970 and feeling no weight at all, a single sentence that encapsulates the extraordinary psychological realities of war.

Opara’s narrative often shifts from the individual to the communal. The “I” frequently dissolves into “we,” situating her within family networks, village life, and the wider Biafran experience. This collective viewpoint underscores a central theme of the memoir: survival during war is not a solitary act, but a shared struggle.

Three core themes shape ‘The Race’. The first is resilience through routine. Despite bombings, scarcity, and fear, children played moonlight games, women traded small valuables in local markets, and communities organized informal competitions for basic



prizes. These everyday acts of life are presented as a subtle form of resistance, asserting the human need for joy and normalcy even in extreme conditions.

The second theme is the moral economy of scarcity. War reshaped social hierarchies and ethical codes. Hunger became a defining factor in social status, and acts like theft were rendered morally complex. In one scene, Opara's mother discovers thieves on the family farm and allows them to keep what they have taken. Scenes like this quietly reveal how social norms adapted under extraordinary pressure.

The third and perhaps most compelling theme is gendered vulnerability. Opara revisits the dangers faced by women and girls repeatedly: threats of forced labour or sexual exploitation, nightly retreats into the bush, and strategies of disguise at refugee camps. These passages offer an important contribution to the understanding of civilian experiences during the Biafran War, highlighting a dimension often overlooked in historical accounts.

Structurally, the fourteen chapters follow the rhythms of displacement and waiting. Time in the memoir is uneven, stretching and contracting with the experience of survival. The historical introduction contextualises the conflict's origins in the 1966 coups and the Aburi Accord, but the book's power lies in its preservation of everyday life.

Opara enriches the narrative with cultural fragments: war songs, folktales, chants, and even the Biafran national anthem. These elements give the memoir an archival quality, capturing sounds and rhythms that formal histories often omit.

The memoir is not without minor imperfections. Some chapters, like "Birth of Ure's Baby" and "The Package and the Traditional Wedding," are brief and read as snapshots rather than fully developed scenes. Certain emotional experiences are stated rather than fully rendered. Yet these qualities reflect a survivor's economy, an effort to record events clearly and honestly, rather than polish them into literary artifice.

'The Race' fills a notable gap in literature on the Biafran War. While much scholarship focuses on politics, military strategy, and humanitarian images, Opara documents the civilian experience, especially of women and children. Her account also notes the role of international aid organisations, acknowledging both their contributions and limitations in addressing inequalities.

The memoir closes with a simple but resonant plea: that there should be no war again in Nigeria. It is a modest statement, yet it carries the weight of lived experience and moral witness. 'The Race' is a quiet but powerful testament to resilience, communal life, and the human cost of conflict.

It deserves a broad readership, from historians and students of African literature to anyone seeking to understand the civilian realities behind headlines and historical summaries.

# BUILDING A CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE THAT LASTS

FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA

One are the days when companies could easily differentiate from competitors through unique products and services. Most products and services are similar. The difference is primarily good branding, clever marketing, and competitive pricing.

But there's one differentiator that stands above most others. In nearly every industry, the most successful businesses provide exceptional customer experience. A great customer experience helps a business gain loyal patrons and increases referrals and brand equity.

Customers are surrounded by choices, and brands are constantly competing for their attention. To stand out, it takes more than a great product or service. It takes an experience that feels personal, seamless, and genuinely helpful. When people feel supported throughout their journey, they remember it. That kind of connection builds loyalty, drives repeat business, and keeps your brand top of mind.

In a market where expectations are high and attention is short, a strong customer experience is one of your most valuable advantages.

## What is customer experience?

Customer experience (CX) is the sum of every interaction a customer has with your brand, from the first advert they see, to the support they receive long after purchase. It's not just about transactions; it's about how those moments make customers feel and what they remember.

So, we can say customer experience is how your customers perceive your company throughout all touchpoints with your brand. Whether they're browsing your website, talking to a service rep, or engaging on social media, every interaction shapes perception. And in a world of rising expectations, customers expect every moment to match the previous great experiences they've had.

Exceptional CX is built through:

- Consistency across every touchpoint
  - Empathy that makes people feel understood
  - Relevance that reflects your customers' real needs
- When done right, CX builds trust, loyalty, and long-term advocacy.

## How do you build a customer experience that sticks?

Great CX doesn't happen by accident. It's intentional, strategic, and designed with the customer at the center. To build a customer experience that lasts, you need to focus on six key components:

### **1. Creating a clear CX vision and strategy**

Rooted in your brand's values and tied to measurable outcomes, your strategy should guide decisions and align teams around a shared mission.

### **2. Listening at key moments**

Capture feedback across the customer journey, from initial awareness to post-purchase, and use those insights to improve what matters most.

### **3. Priorities customers ahead of products and services**

If you focus on your customer first, you'll create a culture that differentiates you from competitors. This is how Amazon came to dominate e-commerce. Customers want to be heard and know that someone is listening to them. Many brands ask questions on social networks and in surveys, but few listen, respond, and make changes in response to customer feedback.

The best way to show customers that you hear them is by improving products or services in response to their feedback. Fix bugs on your website, switch to sustainable packaging materials, make your products and services accessible, etc.

For example, Apple places great emphasis on customer experience. The company constantly updates its products and services according to customer needs, relevance, and practicality.

Some people say that Apple doesn't listen to what customers want. While that's partially true, Apple is more focused on customer problems than the solutions their customers desire. In solving those problems, Apple can innovate in ways that constantly move its products forward.

#### **4. Turning insights into action**

Close the loop with customers by acting on what they tell you. Use tools like dashboards and follow-up systems to prioritise and implement changes.

#### **5. Empowering employees to deliver**

Your team members are the face of your brand. Equip them with the training, tools, and support they need to create consistent, empathetic interactions.

#### **6. Integrating data and systems**

Break down silos to create a unified view of your customer. Seamless tech and data integration lead to more personalised and effective experiences.

#### **7. Optimising continuously**

Customer expectations evolve, your CX strategy should too. Monitor key metrics, test improvements, and stay agile in response to real-time feedback.

Why customer experience matters more than ever CX directly impacts every area of your business, from satisfaction and retention to referrals and revenue. In fact, many customers are willing to pay more for a great experience and are more likely to forgive the occasional misstep when they feel a strong connection to your brand.

When CX, employee experience (EX), and your broader brand strategy align, you achieve powerful results:

- Stronger customer relationships
  - Increased loyalty and lifetime value
  - Greater brand differentiation in crowded markets
- But more than anything, a well-designed customer experience builds trust. In today's economy, that's everything.

**Creating loyalty through meaningful moments**  
A standout customer experience isn't built on a single campaign. It's built on consistency, empathy, and intentional design. From first impressions to support calls, from digital touchpoints to in-store interactions, every moment is an opportunity to earn trust and build loyalty.

When your CX strategy is grounded in real insights, aligned with business goals, and brought to life by your team, you serve your customers and connect with them.

#### **Last line**

There's no perfect way to deliver the best customer experience, and no precise guide fits all businesses. What works for one company might not work for another. But if you put customers first, you'll always create a good customer experience.



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

# FINDING THE LOVE OF HER LIFE

UDY OSARO-EDOBOR

She was not betrothed to Kennedy but their lives were tied together long before she understood what it meant. Their fathers were childhood friends and their mothers were inseparable. When they started their own families, they made a quiet promise to continue that bond by joining their children in marriage. That was how Sarah and Kennedy became an expectation.

As a child, Sarah had a soft spot for Kennedy. She admired him from a distance, too shy to get close. He, on the other hand, made his feelings clear. He did not like her. Not even a little. She was also almost three years older than him which did nothing to help her case.

Kennedy grew into a man who carried himself with pride and distance. He was always aloof, always aware of his looks, and deeply convinced of his own charm. He called himself a fine boy and lived like one. Parties, attention and the soft life were the things that mattered to him. He enjoyed being seen, admired and talked about. He enjoyed being in the news. He could even pay bloggers to write about him.

Sarah was the complete opposite. Every time they met at family gatherings, he spoke down to her. His words were sharp, his tone dismissive. He treated her like she was beneath him, someone unworthy of his time. Sometimes, he ignored her completely. Other times, he made sure she felt small. He did not like her because she was everything he avoided. She was naive. She dressed simply, sometimes even poorly. She lacked confidence and carried herself in a way that made her easy to overlook. She was nothing like the women he surrounded himself with.

Still, she stayed.

Partly because of their parents and the expectations they had built over the years but mostly because of how she felt about him. She believed, quietly and stubbornly, that something could change.

Everything changed when his father fell ill. On his deathbed, his father made him promise to marry Sarah and learn to love her. Kennedy could not refuse a dying man. He agreed, not out of love, but out of obligation.

When Sarah heard about the decision, she was overwhelmed with joy. At her traditional wedding ceremony, she carried the wine with a heart full of hope. She believed she was stepping into the life she had always imagined.

She made a promise to herself to be a good wife and to do everything she could to make him love her. She was wrong.

Kennedy had agreed to the marriage for reasons she did not understand at the time. The union came with benefits... houses, cars, gold and shares in thriving companies. Once the marriage was done, he considered his duty fulfilled.

From the very beginning, he treated her without respect. He brought other women into their home without shame. He spent money carelessly and refused to work. He decorated the house with pictures of himself and refused to hang a single photo of her. To his friends, she was not his wife. She was introduced as his housekeeper and they treated her exactly how he described her. She cooked for them, served them and cleaned up after them. They gave her instructions and she obeyed. Kennedy reduced her to someone who addressed him as "Sir." She became invisible in her own home.

She stayed because she was afraid.

Afraid of what people would say. Afraid of admitting that everyone who warned her had been right. Her friends and siblings had begged her not to agree to the arrangement but she believed love would make things better.

Kennedy would disappear for weeks without explanation. In three years, he sold everything his father had left to him. When that was gone, he began to pressure her to sell hers, including the properties in her name and the ones they jointly owned. For the first time, she refused.

That was when she started asking herself hard questions. She could no longer recognize the man she once admired. He was rude, careless and unkind. She felt trapped in a marriage that had no love and no future.

She escaped into small comforts. Television filled her days and food became her distraction. But even that could not hide the truth forever.

Her wake-up call came unexpectedly when one of Kennedy's friends described her as overweight. That word stayed with her.

One day, she stood in front of a mirror and truly looked at herself. For the first time, she saw what she had become. She was not unattractive. She was not empty. She was simply a woman who had lost herself. And she decided to find her again.

While Kennedy continued his reckless life, she began to rebuild hers. She replaced idle hours with online international certifications. She changed her eating habits and committed to a healthier lifestyle. She exercised, learned and grew.

During one of her classes, she met Debola. Debola became more than a friend. She became the voice she needed. For the first time, Sarah spoke openly about her marriage. Debola listened without judgment and pushed her to see her worth. She reminded her that her father-in-law's name still carried weight and she could use it to create opportunities for herself. She did.

Her confidence grew steadily. She hired a housekeeper to manage the home and Kennedy's constant visitors while she focused on building a new life. She became less present and eventually, completely absent. He did not notice. As long as his needs were met, he did not care.

Months turned into over a year. Then one day, Sarah returned home briefly to pick up a bag before leaving for a weekend getaway with Debola to celebrate a major achievement. Kennedy was sitting outside when she drove in. He did not recognize her.

He had to ask twice who she was. It was only her voice and her gap teeth that made him realize the truth. The shock on his face was unmistakable. For the first time, he was truly looking at her.

She had changed. He watched her walk into the house and come out again with her suitcase. His confusion was clear. He was seeing a version of her he had never cared to imagine. Only then did it occur to him that he had not seen her in over a year. Only then did he realize he did not even have her phone number.

That weekend, he stayed home, unable to shake the thoughts in his mind. He asked the housekeeper for her number and kept thinking about how different she looked. He noticed, perhaps for the first time, that she no longer looked at him with admiration. When he finally called, she ended the call the moment she realized it was him.

He spent the entire weekend restless. His curiosity pushed him to make inquiries and what he discovered unsettled him even more. The woman he used to ignore had built a life of her own. She had created multiple streams of income and was doing well for herself without touching what his father left for her.

Meanwhile, he had nothing left. By the time she returned home two weeks later, he was still there. He called her name. It was the first time she had ever heard him say it. She barely recognized the sound. He insisted that they needed to talk, but she warned him to stay away from her. He did not stop.

When she had had enough of his pestering, she arranged for a moving van to pack her things and leave. He was not prepared for that.

From that moment, the calls began. Apologies followed. Requests for another chance came one after the other. He spoke of change, of regret and of wanting to fix what he had broken. But she was no longer the woman who waited.

Walking away from that marriage was not the end of her story. It was the beginning of it. Because somewhere between the pain, the silence and the rebuilding, she found something she had been searching for all along. She found herself. And she became the love of her life. She was the love of her life.



### Udy Osaro-Edobor

Udy Osaro-Edobor is the Content Creator for SoTv (Supernatural Online TV) Nigeria. She is a movie/ scriptwriter, editor, and proofreader.

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Where Wisdom Wears Wrappers-A Review of Lola Odeyale Ayo-Fashida's Bisola Visits Her Grandma

Title: Bisola Visits Her Grandma  
Author: Lola Odeyale Ayo-Fashida  
Year of Publication: 2024  
Number of Pages: 31  
Category: Children's Book

# BISOLA VISITS HER GRANDMA

TITILADE OYEMADE

There is something truly special about the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren. It is warm, gentle, and filled with a quiet kind of love that stays with you for life. If you were lucky enough to grow up with that bond, like Bisola did, then you already understand the magic this book carries.

At first sight of the cover, the story already comes alive. The bright, cheerful illustration shows an excited little girl clearly on her way to visit her grandma. You can almost feel the anticipation. Any young girl would easily see herself in Bisola. Dressed up, happy, and ready for a warm embrace. The cover is inviting and instantly engaging.

The story takes us on a journey from Lagos to Ondo State and gently introduces a local delicacy along the way. Some children will smile in recognition if they have tasted it before, while others may feel curious and eager to try something new. That cultural touch adds warmth and makes the book even more relatable.

One beautiful detail is how Bisola is described in words exactly the way she is illustrated. Lively, bright, and expressive. Her mum is also beautifully presented, but Grandma stands out in a special way. She is drawn as a graceful, well-dressed elderly woman, dignified and elegant. It is refreshing to see an older character illustrated with such beauty and pride.

Bisola herself is not just pretty; she is smart, curious, and a little restless, just like many children her age. She asks questions. She looks around. She learns. And while Grandma is patient and loving, she is not the type to spoil her grandchild. Instead, she teaches valuable lessons including simple but powerful money habits. The story gently introduces children to managing money wisely so they do not waste or lose it. It does this in a natural way, without sounding like a lecture.

New words appear throughout the book, encouraging young readers to stretch their vocabulary. You can almost imagine a child sitting up, eager to remember and repeat those words later.

One interesting detail is that Bisola and Grandma seem to wear the same outfits throughout the two-week visit. It may feel noticeable to some readers, though it does not distract from the heart of the story. It could even be a deliberate artistic choice to maintain visual consistency for younger readers.

At the center of it all, this book celebrates simple joys. Family visits, shared meals, gentle lessons, and the steady love only grandparents can give. It is warm and educational without being complicated.

Bisola Visits Her Grandma is definitely a must-read for children. It is also a lovely reminder to parents about the importance of teaching values early especially financial responsibility in ways that feel loving and natural.

Most importantly, it reminds us that some of life's greatest lessons are learned not in classrooms, but in Grandma's living room.



Titilade Oyemade is a business executive in a leading organisation and holds a degree in Russian Language. She's the convener of the Hangoutwithtee Ladies Event and the publisher of Hangoutwithtee magazine. 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. Email: [titi.oyemade@gmail.com](mailto:titi.oyemade@gmail.com) Social: @tiipreeofficial

# WEEKENDER

## MOVIE REVIEW

### HUMINT (2026)

If you enjoy espionage action packed movies focused around North and South Korean secret agents, then you might want to check this movie out, it will keep you entertained from start to finish, pay attention. Manager Jo was an upright agent who wanted to fight for Justice, he was assigned to go and rescue some ladies who had been trapped. On arrival he meets an old lover and tries to pick up their romance from where they stopped. Manager Jo was meant to investigate some cases in a new city with Park Hae-joon, but he quickly finds out that Park is very corrupt. Park and his team tried to take him out before he exposes their evil activities. The 119-minute Korean crime action spy film was directed by Ryoo Seung-wan, they featured actors like Zo In-sung, Park Jeong-min, Park Hae-joon, Shin Se-kyung and many more.



## BEHIND THE SCENES (2025)

After seeing the trailer and ads for this new Nollywood movie. I was super excited to check it out immediately it dropped, so that I could bring you the review. If you enjoy movies directed by Funke Akindele featuring Nigeria based actors, then you might want to check this out, it was a bit slow at the beginning but the end made a lot of sense. Aderonke Fanira was a mother of two, she had lost her husband but had a very successful real estate business, she was loved for her kindness and generosity, she gave and poured into all around her, family, friends, employees until she had nothing to give, she totally lost herself. Ronke was diagnosed with lupus and died, that was when the true colours of her family members, friends and employees came to light. You will need to go check this movie out to see how her kids suffered after her passing, that which could have been avoided. The 143 minutes Nollywood drama African movie was directed by Funke Akindele and Tunde Olaeye, they had actors like Funke Akindele, Scarlet Gomez, Tobi Bakare, Destiny Etiko, Debo Adebayo, Victoria Adeyele, Uche Montana, Uzor Arukwe and Ejiro Onojaife.



## HALF OF IT (2020)

If you enjoy Teens Romantic drama, then you might want to try this movie out. Ellie Chu was a very smart and intelligent young lady who relocated to another city with her father after her mom passed on. Her father was not buoyant so in order for her to survive she helped her classmates do their assignment and was paid for it. Although she wasn't loved, and was always mocked, she was needed for her knowledge. One day Ellie Chu, meets a new customer called Paul, who needed someone to help him write a love letter, one that will make him smart, she did and the lady responded, this was when they became good friends as he needed more responses and more letters, so they had to work together. You need to go check out this movie to find out if he won the heart of the love of his life and how things panned out. The 105 minutes romantic/comedy drama film was directed by Alice Wu, they featured actors like Leah Lewis, Daniel Diemer, Alexis Lemire, Wolfgang Novogratz, Colin Chou, Becky Ann Baker, Enrique Murciano, MacIntyre Dixon, Catherine Curtin, etc.



# WEEKEND QUOTES



1

There is a huge difference  
between what is right and  
what is expedient  
.....WhispersbyTEN

2

“See your mate” is now an old  
skool phrase because na only  
you waka come like me  
.....WhispersbyTEN

3

If you don't change your mind,  
that difficult situation will  
change it's mind.  
Stay on course!  
.....WhispersbyTEN

4

When you are Spirit-led,  
He stops those who wants  
to stop you  
.....WhispersbyTEN