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The Mbadiwe Twins

On Legacy, Law, entertainment and Life after Big Brother



INVESTIGATION

On the streets of Lagos, African Salad (Abacha) turn deadly



WORLD

From Uganda to Tanzania: 7 nations in Africa that experience snow

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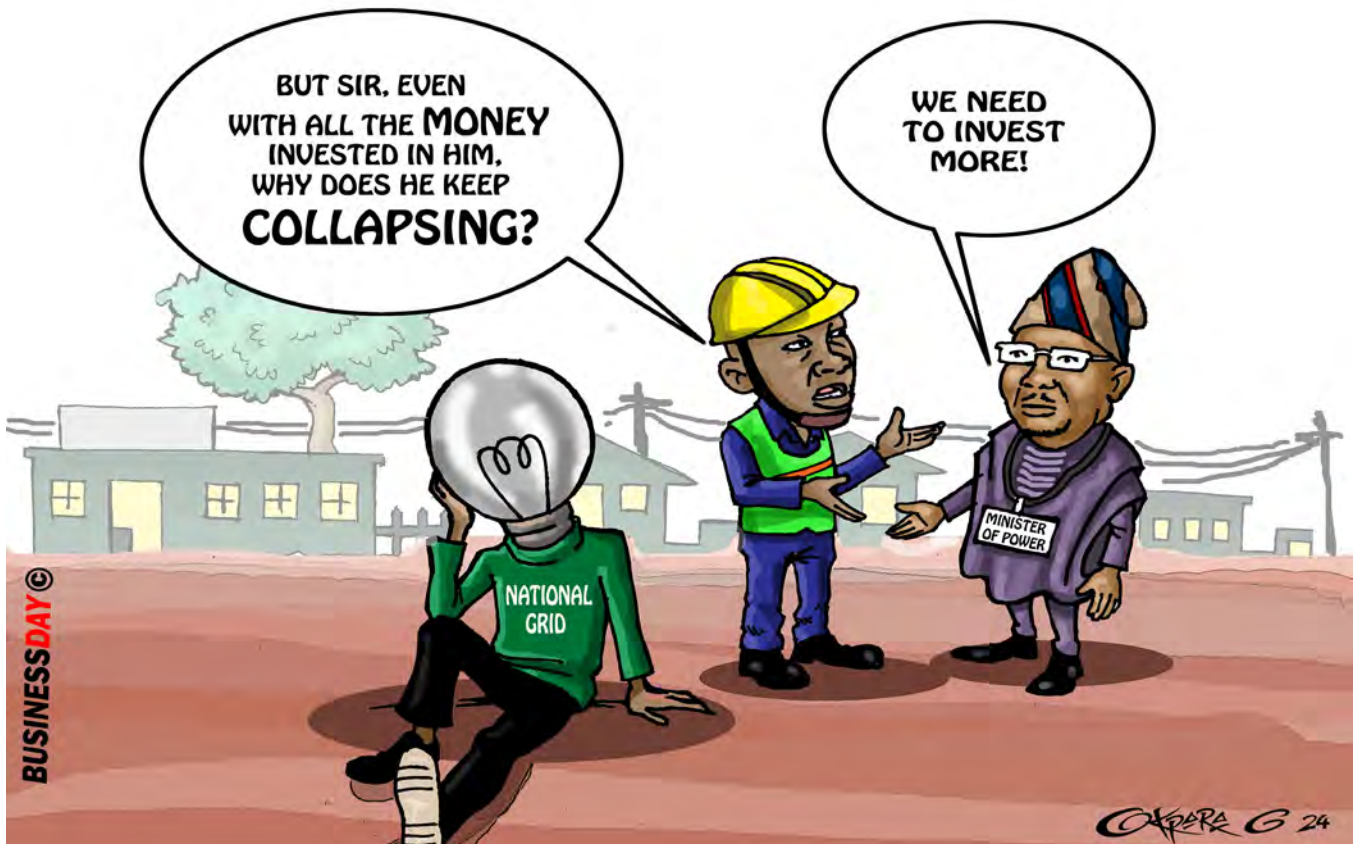
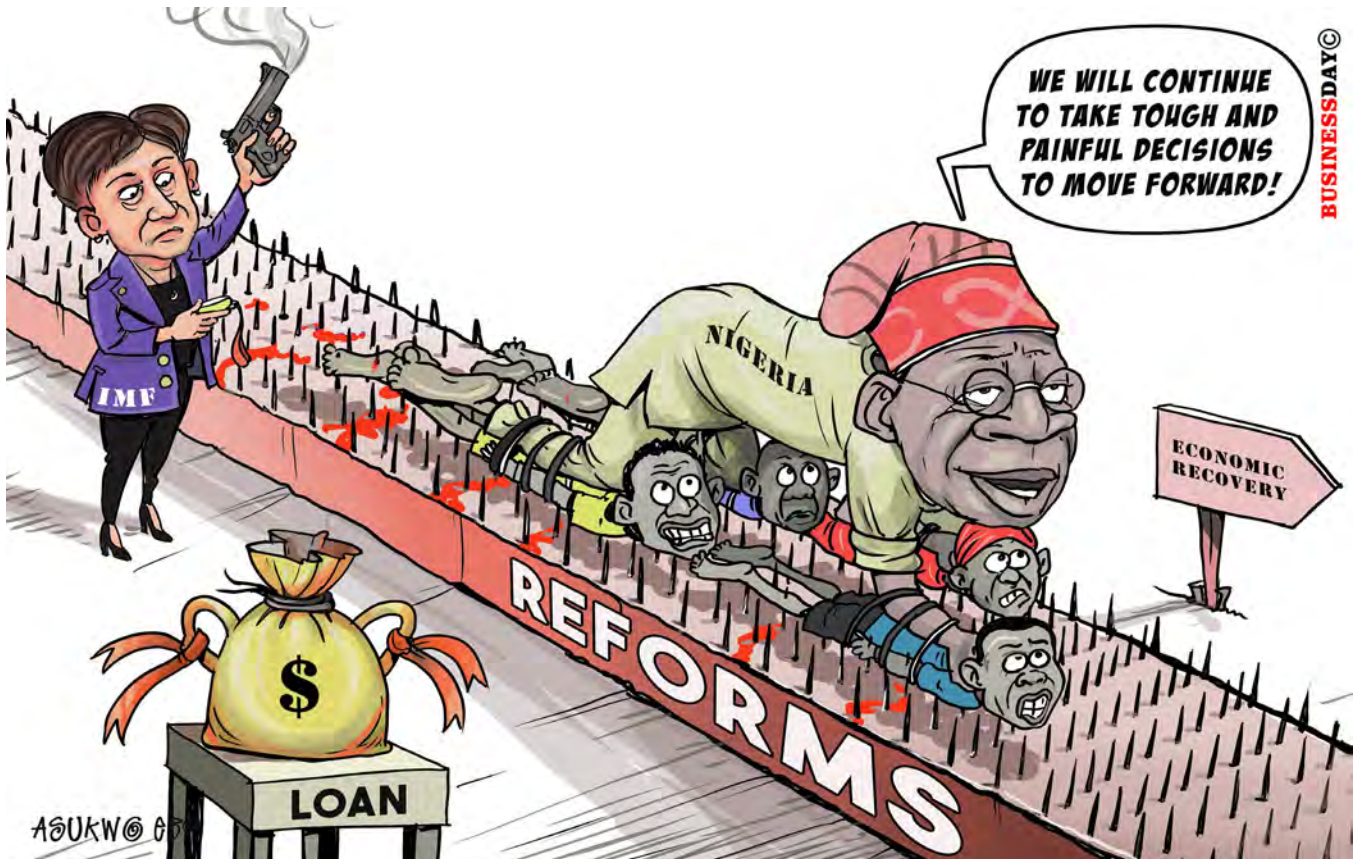
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AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE MBADIWE TWINNS: BREAKING BOUNDARIES AND EMBRACING IDENTITY





Lehlé Baldé: What motivated you to join Big Brother Naija, and how did the experience challenge or reinforce your relationship as twins?

Ozee and Ocee: We were motivated to join Big Brother to challenge ourselves and step outside our comfort zones. The platform provided a unique opportunity to showcase our personalities and talents while connecting with a diverse audience. Participating in the show deepened our bond, as we navigated the challenges together, reinforcing our communication and support for one another. This journey has enriched our individual growth and solidified our partnership both inside and outside the house.

Lehlé Baldé: There's a perception that being from a wealthy background means you shouldn't be on Big Brother Nigeria. How do you respond to that?

Ozee and Ocee: We understand the perception surrounding our financial privileges, but Big Brother represents a variety of people from different backgrounds. The mix of contestants enriches the show's dynamics and allows for diverse perspectives. It's important to remember that the show isn't solely about financial need; it's a social experiment that tests how people from various walks of life coexist in a confined space. Ultimately, it's about entertainment and showcasing our personalities.

In the vibrant world of entertainment, few personalities shine as brightly as the Mbadiwe twins, Ozee and Ocee. Having first captivated audiences in the Lagos to London documentary, they have since embarked on a transformative journey through the competitive landscape of Big Brother Naija. Lehlé Baldé, founding editor, spoke with these dynamic brothers to delve into their evolution, the impact of their experiences, and their vision for the future.

Lehlé Baldé: Since being featured in the Lagos to London documentary, how have you both evolved, both personally and professionally?

Ozee and Ocee: Our personal and professional growth has been significant since that time. Living between Lagos and London has shaped our worldview, enhancing our understanding of how our backgrounds influence our identities. We've learned to bridge different cultures in everything we do. Professionally, the documentary was a pivotal moment that redirected our career paths toward the entertainment industry, allowing us to evolve into who we are today.

Lehlé Baldé: How has your participation in Big Brother Nigeria changed your lives and opened new doors in the entertainment industry?

Ozee and Ocee: Our time on Big Brother has profoundly affected us. The exposure has been overwhelmingly positive, opening doors not just in entertainment but also in endorsements and partnerships with multinational brands. It allows us to network with key figures in various industries, providing value in those conversations.



Lehlé Baldé: Can you tell us about your business and the meaning behind the phrase “stay clean no reason”?

Ozee and Ocee: We’re both qualified lawyers who have diversified into entertainment and entrepreneurship. “Stay clean no reason” is a saying we coined. It embodies self-belief and confidence in everything we do—whether it’s our appearance, communication, or demeanor. It means you don’t need a specific reason to be the best version of yourself.

Lehlé Baldé: Your grandfather, Ozumba Mbadiwe, was a significant figure in Nigeria’s history. How has he influenced your lives, and what does his legacy mean to you both?

Ozee and Ocee: Our grandfather has profoundly influenced our lives and family. Growing up with his strong legacy of public service and leadership instilled in us a sense of responsibility to uphold his values of dedication, integrity, and community service. As a statesman who advocated for Nigeria’s independence, he taught us the importance of working tirelessly for the betterment of society. His legacy inspires us to pursue our passions boldly, whether in entertainment or social impact.

Lehlé Baldé: How has your education influenced your careers, and what role do you think it plays in your current success?

Ozee and Ocee: As fully qualified lawyers, our education played a crucial role in shaping our careers. It taught us critical thinking, discipline, and how to navigate different spaces with confidence—skills that

we continue to apply today. The social and academic skills we’ve developed are invaluable, especially now as we step into the entertainment and business worlds. Our education has equipped us to articulate ourselves clearly, think strategically, and remain composed under pressure, which has been essential in our current ventures, whether brand endorsements, hosting gigs, or acting.

Lehlé Baldé: As twins, what do you consider the best thing about being a twin, both personally and professionally?

Ozee and Ocee: One of the best personal aspects of being twins is having a built-in best friend who completely understands you. We’ve shared nearly every major life experience, creating a special bond that’s hard to break. Professionally, being twins gives us a huge advantage; we support each other’s growth and share in each other’s successes. Our unique identities and dynamics make us stand out in the entertainment industry, and that instant partnership is one of our greatest assets.

Lehlé Baldé: What key lessons did you learn from Big Brother Nigeria that you now apply to your business and creative endeavors?

Ozee and Ocee: Big Brother was an intense learning experience. We learned the importance of adaptability, as we had to stay flexible and calm in changing situations. Collaboration became crucial, as we often worked with a diverse group of people, which taught us the value of openness to different ideas. Resilience under pressure was vital, and we also learned how to cultivate our personal brands, being intentional about our presentations and authenticity. Each challenge presented an opportunity to learn, and we took those lessons into our creative endeavors.



Lehlé Baldé: What's next for you both in terms of projects or ventures, and how do you plan to build on the momentum you've gained?

Ozee and Ocee: With the momentum from Big Brother Naija, we're focused on exploring ventures that align with our passions. We plan to take on bigger acting roles and explore TV and digital content creation. Additionally, we are working on opening an event center with restaurants, lounges, and other facilities. We're also passionate about empowerment projects, particularly in education and youth initiatives. Our goal is to inspire others and create opportunities for those in need while engaging in philanthropy. We plan to leverage our platform to partner with brands that align with our values for sustainable, long-term collaborations.

Quick rapid fire
Ocee

Have you ever pretended to be one another? Yes we have, in high school we swapped classes

What are you listening to ? A lot of Afro beats, hip hop, r and b and some opera music

What are you reading? George Orwell 1984
Favorite food Eggs, steak Favorite drink Gin and Tonic

Ozee

Rapid fire Have you ever pretended to be one another ? Yes in primary school

What are you listening to ? Piece of My heart - Wizkid
What are you reading?

Choose your Enemies wisely - Patrick Bet-David
Favorite food Seafood

Favorite drink Coffee/Long Island iced tea

ON THE STREETS OF LAGOS, AFRICAN SALAD (ABACHA) TURN DEADLY

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



Patience Uzor's grief was overwhelming as she recounted her son Emmanuel's tragic demise. "The last thing he ate was Abacha. He was healthy, strong, and sound. Abacha has taken my only son from me," she lamented. Emmanuel was declared dead on arrival at a hospital near Ajao Estate, Lagos, just hours after consuming the local delicacy.

Uzor shared her heartbreaking story with BusinessDay Weekender, revealing how Emmanuel and two of his friends had bought abacha from a vendor near Cele Bus Stop. Shortly after eating, all three began suffering from severe stomach discomfort.

"My son had called me on the phone to tell me he was having a stomach upset. The first question I asked him was what he ate, and he told me the last thing he ate was abacha, which he bought from some woman on his way from work. I told him to get some medications and watch if it subsides. This was in the evening around 7pm.

"Around 9pm, when I did not hear from him, I called him again (about three times) but he did not take my calls. I became worried. My son stays alone, so there was no way I could reach anyone around him to speak to him. So I called his best friend who lives on the street before his. His friend picked and told me he was with Emmanuel at a hospital around Ajao Estate.

"Hearing this, I became afraid. Surprisingly, his friend told me he (my son's friend) and his cousin were also admitted at the same hospital. I asked him what the problem was with him and his cousin, and he said he ate the same abacha my son ate, and suspected that was the reason for the stomach upset. He told me he had driven to my son's place to take

him along to the hospital where the three of them were receiving treatment," Uzor had explained.

She said about three hours later, her son called her and sounded very well, assuring her that he had fully recovered and would be going back home first thing in the morning, since it was already too late to go home that day.

Uzor said the next day her son called her to tell her he was home and had fully recovered and even sent her (Uzor) some money for her upkeep.

She said she has enquired from her son about his friend and his friend's cousin who were also admitted in the same hospital and he said his friend and his cousin were still at the hospital because the doctor had advised them against going home yet, as he (the doctor) needed to observe them for some time.

Anxious, Uzor said she quickly enquired from her son if the doctor had approved of him leaving the hospital and he reluctantly responded by saying 'Not really'.

She said she had scolded her son for leaving the hospital without the doctor's approval and had asked him to go back to the hospital the same day.

Uzor said she had called the son later in the afternoon to know if he had visited the hospital, and he told her he would do that when he was done with what he was doing as he was very busy.

Uzor said she was surprised to receive a call from Emmanuel fiancée saying she visited Emmanuel and met him stooling and vomiting. This was about four to five hours after she spoke to her son that day.



She said she pleaded with her son's fiancée to quickly take him back to the hospital and that she would join them there immediately.

According to Uzor, Emmanuel's fiancée managed to get an Uber that took them to the hospital.

She said Emmanuel was rejected by two hospitals they initially visited and by the time they got to the third hospital, he was declared dead on arrival.

Uzor's experience is similar to many others who have lost loved ones over the consumption of abacha sold on the streets.

Chioma's Experience at Ikoyi

The experience of Chioma Eze who narrowly escaped death is similar to that of Emmanuel. Eze had bought her own abacha around George Street, Ikoyi. She narrates her experience:

"One Monday evening around 5pm after work, I bought abacha and ate it inside the bus, on my way home. Everything seemed okay until the next morning around 7am; I started stooling. Then the stooling frequency increased. The frequency increased from every 30 minutes to 20 minutes to 10 minutes. Then it got to a point that it was every two minutes. At a point, I was dehydrated.

"So, I managed to go to the hospital. I explained to the doctor what was happening to me, and he gave me medications and said I can go home. I took the medications and things got from bad to worse. I was stooling and vomiting. I went back to the hospital and then it was another doctor I met.

"I complained to him and told him I wasn't satisfied with the drugs the former doctor had recommended. He said they had to administer an Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) and before they could prepare bed for me, I was already very weak. My mum came to stay with me. She wasn't satisfied with the treatment and asked them what better medication can be given to me.

"One of the doctors called my mum aside and told her that the reason they were not attending to me well was because I was using the Health Maintenance Organisation (HMO) and if we wanted a better treatment, then we need to pay for the treatment. He said HMO cannot cover for this kind of treatment.

"So, we deposited N100,000 and treatment started in full force. They gave us various types of fluid. I spent about five days in the hospital before I was discharged. Then, the vomiting and stooling had stopped. After the initial N100,000, I was asked to pay another N400,000. I paid N500,000 in all because I got food poisoning from an abacha that I bought," Eze said.

Eze said if she hadn't visited the hospital that day, the unfortunate situation may have caused her life.

Life lost at Tradefair

Peter Aloba told Weekender that his neighbour at his shop in Aspanda, Tradefair Lagos died few hours after eating abacha he bought in Aspanda. "I lost my neighbour (name withheld) at Aspanda. He had come to work like every other person and a few hours after he bought and ate abacha, he started to feel some discomfort.

"He left for home earlier than usual and every other thing that happened afterwards was not clear to me. The next day, we heard he had died the night before after vomiting and stooling consistently," Aloba said.

Abacha is a type of food originating with the Igbos in the south eastern part of Nigeria. Abacha is a product of cassava tubers. When the processing is done from scratch, harvested cassava is obtained, peeled, washed, cooked and sliced into desired sizes or shapes. It is soaked in a bowl for a day.

It could be prepared instantly as abacha or sun-dried for future use. shredded dried cassava first needs to be softened by soaking in boiled water and covered up for a few minutes.

Optional supplementary ingredients, which are added with varying degrees of frequency and often represent regionally-derived variations, include, but are probably not limited to, ogiri; ugba/ukpaka; oporo (large dried shrimp); fried fish; dry fish; coloured peppers; seasoning cubes; ehuru/ehulu (commonly shortened to and called ehu. in normal speech); pepper (e.g., scotch-bonnet); onions; utazi; garden eggs (and/or the leaves); ukazi leaves; akidi-beans (marked variant); kpomo/kanda (cow-skin); ukwa (possibly unique to the Ikwerre); et-cetera.

Palm oil, which in theory may either be red or a combination of red and bleached, is curdled using either kaun/potash, ngu (a more traditional version of contemporarily-conventional potash) or baking soda and the abacha slices are then mixed in the curdled oil.

Potash and its health Implications

Apart from the hygiene level of people who prepare and sell abacha, health experts have raised concerns over the health effects of the potash used.

Potash is also known as Kaun (Yoruba), Akanwa (Igbo) or Kanwa (Hausa) is a lake salt (sodium bicarbonate) that is very dry and hydrated in nature.

Funmbi Olatayo, a certified nutritionist told BD Weekender that there are some implications of using potash especially when there are high quantities of potash used but there are safer practices to ensure this does not result in debilitating effects.

Olatayo said that when potash are consumed in large quantities, they can alter the natural pH of the stomach and disrupt digestion, leading to discomfort, bloating, nausea, or even gastrointestinal distress.

"High potash intake can also cause an imbalance in electrolytes (particularly potassium levels) which can affect kidney function, hereby giving rise to symptoms such as dizziness, severe stomach discomfort or, in severe cases, hospitalization.

"Some individuals are more sensitive to potash, especially if they have pre-existing kidney issues or electrolyte disorders. Consuming meals with excessive potash can worsen these conditions, possibly contributing to the recent cases of hospitalisation," she said.

Olatayo said in light of recent concerns about abacha and related health problems, it is important to understand how to safely prepare and enjoy this dish without compromising your health.

She enumerated some safe practices for preparing abacha:

Use Potash Sparingly: The first rule for safe Abacha preparation is moderation. It is best to reduce the use of potash to a minimal quantity. If possible, substitute with less alkaline ingredients like edible lime (Nchuanwu) which offers a similar texture effect with a gentler impact on the body. When using potash, use it sparingly, and rinse the cassava thoroughly after soaking to remove excess residues.

Source for fresh, clean ingredients: One often overlooked aspect of preparing Abacha is ingredient quality. It is vital to ensure that the cassava and other ingredients like garden eggs, ugba (fermented oil bean), and vegetables are fresh and well-cleaned, making sure that the soaked cassava is stored in a clean environment without being left out in the open for too long to prevent microbial growth and contamination.

Balanced Ingredients for a Healthier meal: To improve the nutritional content and quality of Abacha, all ingredients must be well balanced to provide a rich supply of essential

nutrients. This can be done by pairing it with lots of fresh vegetables like garden eggs, onions, Utazi leaves (*Gongronema latifolium*), and Uziza (*Piper guineense*) leaves to mention a few.

Additionally, adding good sources of protein, such as fish, crayfish, or beans makes the dish not only nutritionally balanced but also more wholesome. This increases the vitamin, mineral, and protein content, reducing the need to consume large quantities of cassava, which could otherwise contribute to issues like bloating or carbohydrate overload.

Food Hygiene and Storage: Like many other cassava-based dishes, Abacha can become unsafe if stored in improper conditions. While there is insufficient knowledge and awareness as regards the transmission of food - borne illness and how they are transmitted among food handlers, some studies have shown that cassava can harbor toxins when it is improperly handled or processed, especially if it has been exposed to bacteria or not stored hygienically.

After soaking the cassava slices, avoid leaving them in the open air for too long, as this could promote bacterial growth. The food should be prepared in a clean environment and eaten soon after preparation. Proper storage of leftovers is also crucial as any uneaten portions should be refrigerated immediately to avoid spoilage.

For individuals with specific health conditions, such as kidney disease, high blood pressure, or gastrointestinal disorders, it is advisable to either avoid potash entirely or consult a nutritionist, registered dietitian or a healthcare professional before consuming it.

Potash can exacerbate these conditions by putting extra strain on the kidneys or disrupting blood pressure levels due to its impact on potassium levels.



FROM UGANDA TO TANZANIA: 7 NATIONS IN AFRICA THAT EXPERIENCE SNOW

CHISOM MICHAEL



Snowfall in Africa is a surprising phenomenon, as many people associate the continent primarily with warm climates. However, certain regions experience snow due to their unique geographical features and elevations.

In these areas, the winter months bring a transformation of the landscape, with snow blanketing the surrounding environment. The occurrence of snow is often linked to high-altitude locations, where temperatures can drop significantly.

This rare weather pattern invites curiosity and exploration, as people venture into these snowy regions to witness something unexpected. The presence of snow also shows the diverse climates found across the continent, challenging common perceptions and showcasing the rich variety of natural environments that exist within Africa.

Here are 7 nations in Africa that experience snow, compiled by BusinessDay

1. South Africa

South Africa predominantly enjoys a warm and temperate climate, yet some areas experience snowfall during winter. Regions such as Gauteng, parts of Johannesburg, the Drakensberg Mountains, and certain areas in the Western Cape see snow in winter. While snow is not common across the entire country, these specific locations can transform into icy landscapes, providing a different perspective of South Africa's climate.



2. Morocco

Morocco is known for its diverse landscapes, which include regions that receive snowfall. The Atlas Mountains, especially the High Atlas and Middle Atlas ranges, are where snow falls regularly in winter. Ifrane, a town in this region, is often compared to Switzerland due to its charming architecture and winter scenery. Visitors flock to Ifrane during the snowy season, drawn by its picturesque environment.



3. Lesotho

Lesotho is a landlocked nation situated in southern Africa. It holds the distinction of being the only country worldwide where every part of its territory lies over 1,000 metres above sea level. This high-altitude landscape increases the chances of snowfall, especially during the winter months of June to August. During this time, the country may witness its occasional winter wonderland, providing a unique experience for its residents and visitors alike.



4. Tanzania

In Tanzania, snowfall is primarily found on Mt. Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa. While many areas experience cool temperatures, the summit of Kilimanjaro reaches arctic conditions, especially during the dry season from mid-June to October. The heaviest snowfall typically occurs in December, with the coldest temperatures experienced in June, July, and August. This mountain attracts climbers who wish to experience the unique climate at its peak.

5. Uganda

Uganda experiences snowfall mainly on the peaks of the Rwenzori Mountains. These summits often remain covered in snow and glaciers, creating a striking contrast to the surrounding landscapes. Adventurous travellers hike to the peaks to witness this rare sight, while others enjoy views of the snow-capped mountains from lower altitudes.



6. Algeria

In Algeria, snowfall is a rare occurrence due to its primarily arid climate. However, the Tell Atlas, which features higher altitudes, receives snow during the winter months. Snowfall is limited to certain regions, particularly in the northern mountainous areas like the Kabylie and Aurès Mountains. For residents of these areas, snow brings a momentary change from the usual dry conditions.

7. Ethiopia

Ethiopia is notable for its varied terrains, with some regions experiencing occasional snowfall. The Simien Mountains, recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, reach altitudes over 4,500 metres above sea level, making them one of the few places in Ethiopia to witness snow. This phenomenon attracts those interested in hiking and exploring the unique landscapes.





MEET FOLUSHO OGUNWALE, ENTREPRENEUR WHO GREW I-FITNESS FROM A 3 BEDROOM TO 24 BRANCHES ACROSS NIGERIA

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



Folusho Ogunwale is the CEO and Founder of i-fitness. He is a Serial Entrepreneur who has gathered seven years' experience in Sales/Marketing and HR with Skye bank Plc (from 2007 to 2013) before commencing his entrepreneurial journey.

Driven by the desire to make fitness truly common and a lot more convenient and fun to engage in, Ogunwale set up i-Fitness, Nigeria's first fitness chain and platform in 2015. At this time, the fitness culture was almost non-existent. The entrepreneur, who started the platform somewhere in Lekki Phase One on Admiralty Way with little or no funding, managed a three bedroom flat at the time.

Nine years and counting, i-Fitness has grown and expanded with 24 branches across Nigeria, with its latest branch, Gbagada branch which will be launched today. In this interview with IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA, Folusho Ogunwale takes us through the journey of how he started the challenges and success stories.

Can you take us through the journey of how you started till date?

It has been a long journey and also a short journey at the same time and the reason why I say this is that we are on a mission to make fitness truly common and make it a lot more convenient and fun. It's a culture that we are building and you don't build such lifestyle culture in such a short time. We are going to be 10 years in about six months' time and I can say for a fact that there is still a long way to go but if you look back, there are also a lot of great milestones that we have achieved. Now the culture of fitness in Lagos especially is very common. It is almost part of the urban lifestyle to have a fitness membership now. It wasn't like that 10 years ago. And this is what keeps driving us. The fact that we are building a platform that helps you make a lifestyle decision to stay healthy is a big deal and doing that consistently is rewarding because anytime we come into a new area, we are pulling a lot of people. We are helping people build friendships and helping people connect. We are not just serving people from the standpoint of being healthier; we are also serving from the standpoint of helping people connect better which is very important for healthy living. If you choose to walk out in your home by yourself or you choose to come to i-Fitness, the difference is clear because you are doing that with people of like minds and that's what keeps us going. Year on year, I don't think we are there yet, we are taking our steps but we are happy doing it.

How did you start?

Starting off was in 2015 which is nine and half years ago and at that time, fitness was nothing close to this. The fitness culture was almost non-existent. What made us start i-Fitness was my personal decision to make fitness truly common. Fitness at that time felt like luxury and very distant. Even if you had the money, you didn't have a decent place to go to. I lost a friend's brother around 2007 or 2008. He had high blood pressure and that went very bad and he had renal failure. He battled with diabetes and he was in his 30s. He passed on leaving his wife and two kids and that made my friends and I say we needed to start taking our health very seriously. What would you say is the value of that man's life to his two children or wife we left behind? And that was what made us start. We started in 2015. Because the culture of fitness was so low, we decided to create the path. Creating the path means that someone needed to show that there is another way to keep healthy and do that having fun. You can build friendship and it can be part of your life. Fitness is a lifestyle decision. You can go to a restaurant because you like the food and you go there

once in a while. That is not fitness. Fitness is a thing you do all the time. And so being on top of people's minds almost on a daily basis is a lot of work. But we enjoyed doing it and we are still here.

When you started, did you have enough funds ?

We started in Lekki Phase One on Admiralty Way with little or no funding. I just exited one of my businesses at the time. Now, that branch is 12 times its starting size. At that time, it was 12 times smaller. It was such a small place. It was about 150 square meters. It was like a three bedroom flat. We didn't even have the money to buy brand new fitness equipment so we went to a Gym at the time in VI and we bought some of their fairly used equipment and that was how we started off. It was actually very small beginnings but because of what we knew that we are building the preferred fitness chain, the vision was there and before we had our first subscriber, we were very sure that this was going to serve many thousands of people. So it didn't matter much that we didn't have money at the time. What mattered at that time was we had a vision in front of us. When we started off, it was playing out, it was impressive and that gave us the spur to continue.

Since you started, what have been your major challenges?

It has been a truck load of challenges because when we started, fitness was new, there was no track, and nobody understood what fitness was about. So, funding was tough because even the finance people did not understand it. You move from there to infrastructure issues. For you to have a decent fitness center you must have a big space, you must be able to park over 100 cars. It is very difficult to find those kinds of places where you can park 100 cars at once or even more. You have to have light, have your own transformer. It is almost as if you are building, it is like you own mini estate. So, from funding to infrastructure then you talk about people. We are the first to do this so we don't have enough skilled manpower that is readily available. If I was building a bank or hospital, I can get as many bankers and doctors I want. But building a fitness chain, we don't have that ready manpower, so it means that there is a lot that has to go into human capital development. We have to do a lot of training upon training to get our people up to a certain level that is best in class and get them ready to serve.

So, from funding to infrastructure to people, it's been one thing or the other. Also, the economy is affecting everyone. So as you are battling to make fitness common and affordable, you're faced with the real

challenge of the economy in which case things are very expensive. There is a hyperinflation going on and we are still expanding in the face of that. You mentioned earlier that i-Fitness will be celebrating its first decade six months from now. So as a leader in the fitness industry, how does i-Fitness stay ahead of the curve in terms of innovation and trends.

It's a thing that is extremely important. For you to be able to serve, there has got to be a platform. If you don't have a platform, then you can't serve. The first thing that comes to mind is that there would be spread. Nigeria is very big and Lagos is also very big. So, even if everyone would not be an i-Fitness member, we want thousands upon thousands of people to be members. So, the first thing is that there must be a good network of locations that is not just about having a good spread but has to be decent, well built, professional and also must meet up with world class and Health, Safety and Environmental (HSE) standards. That in itself is something we don't play with because if we compromise on that, then we are not providing world class services. You are talking about best in class service from professional standards which are fitness trainers. We have equipment that are sourced directly from the original equipment manufacturer. We have our partners abroad that are bringing the best equipment to the nation. That in itself also is a big deal. Because if you have the spread and you don't have the right machines, then it is a spread that is empty and we don't want that. On the back of that is people and membership management. Because we are managing a lot of accounts, we have to be on top of our IT game, making sure we have the best of softwares that is able to give us track of our members, track their accounts and track in which case we can manage and be able to serve them. In i-Fitness there is multi-location access. We have just opened this location and many people that are inside are not members from here. You have a very strong IT base to be able to attend to these people. So IT is very key for us. People sign up with their mobile apps, it means you have to integrate on your mobile app. All of those things are there and we keep improving time over time and making sure our services keep improving time over time. So, it is a work in progress.

You're opening more outlets. Are these outlets spread across Nigeria ?

We will be ending this year 2024 with 25 outlets but the interesting thing is that sometime around Q1 next year, we are opening more locations in Abuja and Port Harcourt. The spread is within those big cities first and later next year, we will go into other cities in Nigeria. By 2026, we are looking to spread into West Africa more. So it's a lot of work



Tobinages

A DECADE OF MAKING MEMORIES: MC DAMMY'S JOURNEY FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS TO HIGH-PROFILE EVENTS

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA

Adedamola Oni, better known as MC Dammy, is a renowned figure in the Nigerian events industry. With over 300 weddings and countless other events hosted, he's become synonymous with professionalism, entertainment, and unforgettable experiences.

As he celebrates his 10th anniversary, MC Dammy reflects on the journey, the lessons learned, and the importance of building relationships.

A Passion for Connecting People

"The biggest lesson I've learned is that patience, consideration, and professionalism are paramount in this industry," says MC Dammy.

"Collaboration is also key; it's not just about me; it's about the entire team working together to create a memorable event."

MC Dammy emphasises the significance of building strong relationships. "Most of my clients come through referrals," he reveals. "I make it a point to follow up, even after the event, to check on them and send wishes. Building solid relationships is what keeps me going. Money will come and go, but relationships will take you far."

A Decade of Growth and Accomplishment

MC Dammy's journey wasn't always glamorous. "When I started," he admits, "I was paid around N10,000, sometimes even for free, just to get my foot in the door. That's the biggest sacrifice I made. Even now, I do free giveaways and offer clients discounts. I want people to know that I'm not just in it for the money; I love making people smile on their special day."

His dedication has paid off. MC Dammy has crossed paths with notable figures like Akinwunmi Ambode, former Lagos State Governor, Senator Ganiyu Olanrewaju Solomon, and others.

"Politicians are part of my network because I meet them at events and follow up afterward. That's how I build relationships," he explains.





Tobimages

Giving Back and Inspiring Others

MC Dammy believes in giving back and fostering the next generation of event professionals. He advises aspiring MCs to "focus on building the craft first. Don't be all about the money – relationships and skills are key. Work with event planners; they're a great way to find gigs."

To celebrate his 10th anniversary, MC Dammy is hosting a special event on November 3rd at Terra Kulture Victoria Island, Lagos. "Owambe: Just Bring a Comedy Vibe" promises a night of laughter, music, and awards. The red carpet starts at 5 pm, followed by the main event at 6 pm.

Awards will be presented to public figures for their outstanding contributions.

With a decade of unforgettable moments behind him, MC Dammy's journey is a testament to the magic that can happen when passion, perseverance, and strong relationships come together.

MEET MARK CHIJOIKE: NIGERIA'S FIRST ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING PH.D HOLDER TURNS 95

...died June 19, 2024

CHARLES OGWO



Eleanor Roosevelt once said, “The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

That best describes Mark Chijioke, a native of Arochukwu kingdom, Isimkpu village to be precise, in Abia State.

Chijioke, born February 15, 1929, was a bundle of dreams growing up, and his belief in his dreams gave rise to his daring spirit and ambitious attitude to life.

“At the risk of being considered a modest man, I’m conscious of how much I can achieve; I have never believed that there are things impossible for me to achieve,” he told Tayo Ovosu in an interview.

Mark was such an enterprising teenager that at the age of five years he was already involved in his family

business, selling boxes of matches which his father got from the Germans then, at Ozuakoli, the regional market.

Chijioke Elekwachi, his father was one of the founders of African Churches in Southeast, haven worked with the foreign missionaries.

This gave him the opportunity to be exposed to education early, according to the renowned poet, his education started at about five years, before he proceeded to the prestigious Methodist College, Ozuakoli for his secondary education.

From there he moved on to the University College, Ibadan, Zaria College of Science and Technology, now the Ahmadu Bello University, the University of London, and Queen Mary’s College.

His academic excellence paved the way for him to become the first Nigerian to earn a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering in 1958.

Mark, though an engineer, was also a poet, and an addicted chess player. He started playing chess at about 15 years of age.

Besides, being a professor of electrical engineering, he held so many enviable academic positions and honours.

He was the first Nigerian dean of the school of engineering at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and also the first Nigerian engineering professor in the country.

He earned many academic and professional honours including founding Fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Science (FNAS), founding member of the Council of Registered Engineers of Nigeria (COREN), Fellow of the Institute of Engineering and Technology (FIET), Fellow of the Institute of Management and Technology (FIMT).



He was a founder, leader and teacher at multiple academic and technical institutions including: Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria; Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, USA; Institute of Management and Technology (IMT), Enugu.

Others are African Institute for Higher Technical Training and Research (AIHTTR), Nairobi, Kenya; University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN); Projects Development Institute (PRODA), Enugu; Centre for Adaptation of Technology, Awka; and Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu.

The renowned engineer had wished that pre-independent Nigeria was allowed to thrive and glow. "Nigeria was the most developing country among countries colonized by the British masters before the civil war," he said.

According to Tayo Ovosu, "Mark had a great impact on Nigeria and the world. He led the engineer corps for Biafra during the civil war."

Narrating his own account of the Nigerian-Biafra civil war, he said; "The war was declared by the Nigerian government, what Biafrans demanded was secession, citing an unbalanced democratic system of governance."

Mark, a distinguished innovator, said he used his skill to help the Biafra side survive the Nigerian onslaught. "I was one of the research and production unit engineers of the Biafra government. We produced technical gadgets," he said.

Speaking on his civil war experiences, Mark said, "One of the miracles I witnessed in the face of the war was when I had to escape from Zaria, I left my two sons with my loyal steward from northern Nigeria, who took these children as his, and protected them from assassins.

"He told his fellow northern brothers who came to slaughter us that we had left, meanwhile he hid the children in the house."

He held traditional honours as Ugwu Arochukwu and Ikenga and national patron of Isinkpu, Arochukwu. Chijioke is survived by his wife, Mary Ellen- Chijioke; five sons: Chioli Pascal Chijioke, Ikenga Chijioke, Akobuije Chijioke, Eric Chijioke, and Chinezi Chijioke; one daughter: Olanna Chijioke.

Others are Hannah Akwule, his sister; 10 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

HOW DUBAI'S IFC BECAME A STARTUP ECOSYSTEM, LESSONS NIGERIA CAN LEARN

CHINWE MICHAEL



Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), a financial hub in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia (MEASA) area and one of the top ten (10) worldwide financial centres fostering business and cultural growth holds lessons for Nigeria's startup ecosystem.

With over 5,000 active registered firms and about 40,000 professionals operating within a thriving business ecosystem, the centre offers a strong independent judicial system, a global financial exchange, creative architecture, and enabling support services that embody Dubai's startup community.

The DIFC based on common law, has its financial regulator and was created to become an international platform for financial institutions to assist businesses and startups in obtaining financial and regulatory frameworks in Dubai.

The institution has three different bodies, which include the Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA), which are the licensing regulators: The DIFC courts, an independent English language common law judiciary, based in the DIFC with jurisdiction governing civil and commercial disputes nationally, regionally and worldwide and the DIFC authorities, which are responsible for strategic development, business development, etc.

In 2015, when startups began shaping the finance industry and taking over the industry, the DIFC became a jurisdiction for startups. However, to fully adjust to the growing demand of these startups the DIFC came up with initiatives that fully positioned the financial regulatory as a house for startups.

Mohammad Al Blooshi, chief executive officer, DIFC Innovation Hub, during a media session with 22 selected



journalists in Dubai disclosed that one of its initiatives was the fintech hive.

He said, “We recognised that space and branded it to what it is today, our first move was how to attract these fintech companies to the IFC and connect them with financial institutions.”

“Our continuous attempt to work on initiatives and products brought us this far, however, one thing we realised early is that we can’t treat fintechs the way we treat banks not only from a regulative perspective but because they are separate entities. Fintech wants everything but they don’t want to pay for it, we thought of how to support them during their early days then we came up with incentive plans.”

“We created a working space for them for the first time and curated licensing offers, since then, we’ve always seen this growth year on year. I think, in 2018, we had about 30 companies, and then every year the numbers have significantly increased,” Blooshi disclosed.

He added that the DIFC established a venture capital fund ecosystem called the Dubai Future District Fund, through which it takes equity positions, and also attracted more VCs willing to be part of this ecosystem.

“We also take it upon ourselves when it comes to corporate innovation, how do we ensure financial service institutions are innovating and they are ready for the future. We started different programs like hackathons, corporate venture capital strategies and infrastructure building and accelerator programs to scale,” he said.

To position the DIFC as a global hub for innovation, Blooshi stressed the need for creating more specialise support for startups, recognising their critical role in advancing the ecosystem.

He added that when artificial intelligence emerged fully, the DIFC dedicated an ecosystem for artificial intelligence and

came up with the Dubai AI campus which is the dedicated ecosystem for AI companies.

“By 2028, we aim to have more than 500 AI companies and a dedicated facility for the AI campus as well,” Blooshi added.

Dubai’s commitment to AI is evident in its strategic initiatives, supportive regulatory environment, and thriving innovation ecosystem.



On his part, Justin Baldacchino, managing director, supervision at the DFSA, explained that after the innovations and strategies are been put in place by the DIFC, the DFSA, which is the regulatory body in charge of licensing and framework ensures that these startups are equipped with the right license and financial information.

“We are a fully independent regulator for all financial services conducted in or from the DIFC, the DFSA administers laws and regulations that are tailored made, and based on common laws. However, the UAE civil and commercial laws do not apply while criminal law does. So if you do something wrong, you’ll be tried the same way through the same court system,” he said.

He added that the DFSA takes a risk-based approach, they assess the risk associated with new technologies entering the market and determine whether regulation is necessary. In some cases, the technology may not require regulation, while in others, it may trigger the need for a regulatory license. The DFSA makes this determination as part of its overall regulatory process.

“Our goal is to create a regulatory framework that encourages the responsible development and adoption of AI technologies. We believe that by fostering innovation, we can drive economic growth and improve the lives of our citizens,” Baldacchino said.

OUR GOAL IS TO EQUIP ORGANISATIONS TO FACE FINANCIAL CRIME NOW AND IN FUTURE - AMUSA

FRANCIS ONYEMACHI



Foluso Amusa, host and convener of the 2024 GRC & Fincrim Prevention Summit has stated that his goal is not only to address today's challenges but to proactively equip organisations to face the future.

"In today's fast-evolving digital landscape, financial crimes have taken on new forms, and it is imperative for organizations to stay ahead of these challenges. This summit provides a unique platform for professionals across various sectors to collaborate, share knowledge, and explore innovative solutions to combat financial crime.

"The awards ceremony later in the day will also give us an opportunity to recognize those who

have made significant strides in governance and compliance," Amusa said.

In an era of rapid digital transformation, the importance of robust governance, risk management, and compliance (GRC) frameworks is more critical than ever. As businesses and governments face rising threats from cybercrime and financial fraud, staying ahead of these challenges is crucial for maintaining economic stability and public trust.

The 2024 GRC & Fincrim Prevention Summit, scheduled for November 8th at Lagos Oriental Hotel, will gather industry experts and leaders to



discuss cutting-edge strategies for navigating the evolving digital landscape in governance, risk, and compliance.

The summit will focus on the theme: “Digital Frontiers in Governance, Risk & Compliance: Addressing Financial Crime and Economic Challenges Across Global Sectors in 2025 and Beyond.” The event, hosted by Dr. Foluso Amusa, will bring together key stakeholders from both the public and private sectors to explore the growing challenges posed by financial crime in the digital age. Discussions will center on strategies to manage risks, ensure compliance, and counter financial crimes that threaten global economic stability.

The summit features a lineup of experts, including Ehi Eric Esoimeme Esq., Managing Partner at E-Fraud and AAF, Esosa Balogun, General Manager at MTN Nigeria Communications,

Florence Abraham, CEO of CFC Consulting, George Lawrence Adegbeniga, CEO and Founder of MHA Finance, Diksha Pandey, Assistant Professor at Christ University, India, Pattison Boleigha, President of Compliance Institute Nigeria, an Anna Lyzvhova, an expert in accounting and audit at Taras Shevchenko National University, among others.

In addition to the summit, the day will culminate with an awards ceremony at the same venue, recognizing individuals and organizations for their outstanding contributions to governance, compliance, and financial crime prevention.

Organized by The Morgans, this summit promises to be a pivotal event for businesses and institutions looking to stay ahead of financial crime trends while tackling the governance and compliance challenges of the digital age.

A JOURNEY INTO 2071: DUBAI'S MUSEUM OF THE FUTURE DISCOVERS 'TOMORROW' IN A SPACESHIP

CHINWE MICHAEL



Dubai developed today's future in a spaceship in its Museum of the Future.

Seeing the interiors, mirroring the beauty of the building's stunning facade, reveals that the landmark's title "most beautiful building on earth" has been well earned.

The Museum of the Future is a landmark devoted to innovative and futuristic ideologies. Located in the Financial District of Dubai, UAE. The museum, with 23 floors, is dedicated to exploring the future of science, technology, and innovation.

It is a torus-shaped building with windows in the form of a poem about the future, written by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai. It was founded by the Dubai Future Foundation, and was officially opened on February 22, 2022, by the government of the United Arab Emirates

As a first-time visitor at the museum, my journey begins at the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Port where Aya, a digital resident of the Museum of the Future, shows up on a screen to welcome us to February 22, 2071, and prepare us for take-off to the OSS Hope station.



She is shown on a CreateLED LED display and greets visitors in Arabic or English with subtitles for both languages. When Aya's presentation finishes on the ground floor after her welcome address, she then tells the lift to open the doors.

Inside the lift, we are then welcomed aboard by the spaceship, which is a replica of NASA's 1981 space shuttle. During the 4.5-minute flight, I watched Dubai in 2071 through the windows of the space shuttle in a breathtaking scene gradually rising above the earth and landing in space.

After docking at the OSS Hope, I was ushered into the station's command centre, where I had a full view of the moon and the broader galaxy, monitoring alarming phenomena and finding ways to overcome earth's pressing issues.

My tour guide introduced me to the many functions of the station, including the Sol project, a global effort to power the earth using solar energy collected from space. Solar panels circling the moon absorb energy, which is then converted to laser beams of electric energy aimed towards a network of deflectors and satellites that beam the earth with microwave energy.

OSS Hope, named after the five pillars of sustainability, innovation, creativity, humanity, and hope, aims to give visitors hope about the future of Dubai and the world and make them optimistic about the unknown.



I was then guided to six missions that are seeking recruits, and visitors are encouraged to apply. Two portals, equipped with the latest interactive technologies, introduce myself and other visitors to each mission after we swipe a bracelet that was handed to them upon arrival.

Beyond presenting an architectural miracle and impressive technologies, the museum offers a stark reminder that the future starts with us.

The immersive experiences inspire people to take a hands-on approach towards change by zooming out into their future self.

From a space station to a laboratory and an oasis for mental wellness, visitors are reminded that humans are at the centre of any beautiful future; solving the existing critical challenges is our responsibility to create a prosperous future for our children.



MR AND MISS NIGERIA INTERNATIONAL PAGEANT: FOSTERING NIGERIA'S CULTURAL HERITAGE, DIVERSITY

AMAKA ANAGOR-EWUZIE



In Nigeria, beauty pageants have advanced, and today it has become a combination of creative showcase of cultural display and knowledge sharing between men and women of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

It was in the light of fostering Nigeria's rich cultural heritage that Brendance and Crusader Limited gathered thousands of Nigerians in Uyo recently for the grand finale of the Mr. and Miss Nigeria International Pageant 2024.

Held in line with the ARISE Agenda of Umoh Eno, governor of Akwa Ibom State, the pageant demonstrates a commitment to cultural promotion and youth empowerment, and it was themed 'Traditions United'.

It went beyond a pageant to involve a celebration of Nigerian culture, beauty, and diversity, as contestants from across the country competed for the coveted titles. The epic finale showcased dazzling performances, breathtaking costumes, and an unparalleled display of grace and talent.

The pageant has become a leading platform for discovering talent, fostering cultural exchange, and promoting the rich heritage of Nigeria.

With the audience comprising dignitaries, celebrities, and pageant enthusiasts, the event was a perfect execution of glamour and elegance.

After a rigorous competition filled with intense moments of passion and hard work, the new kings and queens emerged, proudly representing their states and the nation. Ohaja Joseph Chibunna from Abia State and Giwa Steve Greatness from Ondo State were crowned Mr. Nigeria International 2024 and Miss Nigeria International 2024.

Speaking at the event, Brendan Nsikak, CEO of Brendance and Crusader Limited, said the pageant was held in Akwa Ibom due to the passion the state government showed and the state's reputation as a tourist state.

"We decided with our partner, Popcaw of MATV New York, to take this pageant to Uyo. The idea of taking the event to Akwa Ibom is to give the state world-class entertainment. We also want to explore the state's eco-tourism strength. When you talk about eco-tourism and tourism in Nigeria, we talk about Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Bayelsa, Adamawa, Ekiti, Plateau and Bauchi," he said.

He lauded the Akwa Ibom State Government for the invaluable support; unwavering commitment and hospitality that made the event a success.

"We are grateful for the partnership and for aligning with the pageant's vision of promoting Nigerian culture. We also appreciate our esteemed sponsors and partners, whose contributions were instrumental in creating a memorable event," Nsikak said.

As the new king and queen embark on their reign, they are expected to contribute to societal growth, using their platforms to inspire change, advocate for important social issues, and embody the true spirit of leadership. They will embark on a year-long journey, serving as ambassadors for various causes and platforms that promote Nigerian culture, tourism, and global representation.

They will also have the opportunity to compete in international pageants, further elevating the Nigerian presence on the global stage.

Other winners from various categories include Eric Boyi Edwin from Taraba State, who secured second position and was named Mr Nigeria International Global while Emmanuel Oku from Cross River State, who claimed third position, was named Mr Nigeria International Tourism.

In the women category, Omolara Olita from Ogun State, who secured the second position became Miss Nigeria International Global; Yunana Promise from Taraba State, who took the third position became Miss Nigeria International Tourism while Precious Chidiebube from Abia State took the fourth position and became Miss Nigeria International Culture.

AFRICA FASHION WEEK NIGERIA 2024: CELEBRATING A DECADE OF FASHION, CULTURE, AND AFRICAN EXCELLENCE



The African fashion space has continued to brim with remarkable talent and creative visions brimming with potential, with established and emerging creators and designers combining artisan skills and techniques with innovation and creativity to create clothes that help shape the identity of the continent.

In the earlier years of the 21st century, African fashion was a casualty of

increasing globalisation, and the adoption of Western fashion on the continent led to a decline in the use of traditional African fabrics and patterns, and concerns about the erosion of traditional African culture.

Now, the sector is witnessing the welcomed reversal of this trend.

Africa Fashion Week Nigeria (AFWN) 2024, a platform that celebrates fashion, culture and African excellence is set to

celebrate its 10th anniversary in grand style, with an exciting 3-day showcase of African fashion and culture.

The event, scheduled for December 6-8, 2024, will take place at the Lagos Oriental Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos. This milestone edition will honor African creativity, fashion innovation, and AFWN's impact on the global fashion stage over the past decade.

The first day of AFWN 2024, December 6, will kick off with the highly anticipated Young Designers Competition, where exceptional upcoming designers will compete for the grand prize of an all-expense-paid trip to showcase at Africa Fashion Week London 2025.

This competition is part of AFWN's ongoing mission to spotlight and nurture fresh talent, giving young African designers a global platform to showcase their work.

Day Two, December 7, will feature a catwalk show by established designers from across Africa, including a special appearance by designers who showcased at Africa Fashion Week London (AFWL) earlier this year.

For the first time, these designers will bring their collections to Lagos, offering Nigerian fashion enthusiasts a chance to experience the best of African fashion from the UK runway, right here in Lagos.

A key highlight of Day Three, December 8, is the runway show in collaboration with Elizabeth Miller PR's Luxury Hearts

Fundraiser, a high-profile charity event that aims to support local orphanages.

The runway will be graced by Olufolake Abdulrazaq, the First Lady of Kwara State, who will join a prestigious lineup of governors' wives, celebrities, and influencers. The event promises to blend fashion with philanthropy, making it a memorable conclusion to the 10th-anniversary celebrations.

L'Oréal is the official hair sponsor, ensuring that every model and participant will showcase the best in beauty and hair styling. L'Oréal's commitment to supporting African fashion and creativity is yet another reason why this year's event promises to be exceptional.

"This 10th-anniversary edition is not only a celebration of fashion but a celebration of African innovation, creativity, and impact on the global stage," said Queen Ronke Ademiluyi Ogunwusi, Founder of Africa Fashion Week Nigeria and Africa Fashion Week London.

"We are excited to bring designers from AFW London to Lagos for the first time and to collaborate with Elizabeth Miller PR Agency for the Luxury Hearts Fundraiser, which makes this edition even more meaningful."

AFWN 2024 will also feature a cultural exhibition, a fashion marketplace, and numerous opportunities for attendees to engage with African fashion on a deeper level. The event will draw fashion enthusiasts, buyers, and industry stakeholders from across the continent and beyond



MEET NIGERIAN TECH MARKETER KHADIJAT DUROSINI RANKED AMONG GLOBAL MARKETING INFLUENCERS INDEX

CHISOM MICHAEL



“It’s an honor to be recognised among such talented individuals driving innovation in marketing and tech. This wouldn’t have been possible without the support and opportunities I’ve had along the way. It’s a privilege to represent Africa, and I’m excited to continue contributing to the industry’s growth and evolution,” she said.

The Top 100 Marketing Influencers Index, released annually by TFM, highlights individuals who are driving innovation at the intersection of technology and

Khadijat Durosinmi, a Nigerian creative tech marketer, has secured the 59th position on the prestigious Top 100 Marketing Influencers Index by Technology for Marketing (TFM).

This achievement not only marks a significant milestone in her career but also highlights Nigeria and Africa’s growing influence in the global marketing landscape.

Khadijat’s inclusion in this ranking underscores her contributions to marketing and technology, where she consistently amplifies African voices and perspectives. As a key player in the tech-driven evolution of marketing, she has been instrumental in shaping campaigns and strategies that resonate with both local and global audiences.

marketing.

TFM, known as the UK’s premier event for marketing technology (martech), is a hub for marketers, innovators, and decision-makers. Each year, it serves as a platform for nurturing groundbreaking ideas and inspiring industry leaders from around the world.

Khadijat’s rank on the Top 100 Marketing Influencers Index is a testament to her relentless pursuit of excellence. Alongside her on this index are 99 other top marketing influencers who are shaping the future of marketing by using technology as a transformative tool to solve real-world challenges.



HOW DAMILOLA ADEDIRAN, NIGERIAN FEMALE TECHPRENEUR GOT ADMITTED INTO FORBESBLK

CHARLES OGWO



It was William Shakespeare who in his book, 'Twelfth Night' said; "Be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and others have greatness thrust upon them."

For Damilola Adediran, a Nigerian tech entrepreneur, and founder of CodeSchool Africa, who was recently admitted into ForbesBLK, achieved greatness through hard work, perseverance, and determination.

A graduate of Mass Communication, Damilola's passion for education technology led her into establishing a talent development company where she has helped over 5,000 Africans learn technology skills across the continent.

The multi-faceted leader is passionate about achieving a dual mission which

is empowering marginalised African youth, women and girls to become economically empowered, while building a robust tech ecosystem across the continent.

Damilola's passion for STEM was first brought to the fore when she kick-started a role as a digital marketer in a tech company. It was at this role that helped her realise the power of technology and how liberating it can be to both organisations and individuals.

"The passion to further empower individuals stemmed from the massive loss of jobs that occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic where several youth lost their jobs in Nigeria due to the lack of tech skills, led me to team up with my

co-founder to start CodeSchool Africa an EdTech company and social enterprise that has trained over 5,000 youth in tech skills since it opened shop in 2021," Damilola said.

Being consistently driven with passion to help the underserved people, Damilola was not still satisfied with her reach, as statistics revealed to her that there were several hundreds of people scattered around Africa especially women and girls who have been marginalised and abused and could not afford the cost of learning these skills to become economically independent.

"This is what led to my launching 'TechHer4Change' in August 2023, with the objective of helping marginalised and



abused women and girls learn a tech skill and connect them to job opportunities, mental health coaches as well as internship opportunity,” she explained.

The innovative tech founder alongside her team boasts of building Africa’s first user-centred e-commerce AI-Powered Learning Management System (LMS) called Wittii; a platform that helps digital creators sell their courses, and ebooks, among others, helps learners learn conveniently, while helping youth earn and become economically empowered through its free affiliate programme.

Damilola, as a female in a male-dominated Edtech industry faces the challenges of societal and cultural barriers that limit women and girls’ access to education and opportunities, a challenge which she said is enormous, especially in the area of attracting and retaining top talents within the tech industry in emerging markets such as Africa.



However, she said despite these challenges, her aspirations remain ambitious.

“With the help of my team my aim is to continue scaling CodeSchool Africa, Wittii and TechHer4Change to reach a wider audience and have a greater impact on marginalised communities.

“Besides, I’m eager to expand my work in the tech space, exploring new opportunities to leverage technology for social good,” she stressed.

Damilola's ultimate goal is to create a more inclusive and equitable tech ecosystem in Africa, where women and girls have equal opportunities to thrive and contribute to the continent's development. In addition, her expertise, passion for technology and driving positive change has earned her several awards, fellowship and recognitions such as Vital Voices, Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF), Academy For Women Entrepreneur (AWE) A US Consulate Initiative, FutureFemale Business School (A UK-Nigeria Tech Hub Initiative).

Damilola prides herself in creating opportunities for women and girls, while simultaneously building a brighter future for Africa's tech landscape.

WILAN GLOBAL'S NATIONAL HEAD GIRL CONFAB: SHAPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF FEMALE LEADERS



L-R: Damilola Kuteyi, Senior BI Analyst Retail Media, Simbo Olatoregun, Programmes Lead WILAN Global, Hadiyya Mohammad, Winner 2024 National Head Girl Competition, Margaret Ofordum, Teacher Government Science Technical College Abuja, Iroghama Ogbeifun, CEO Starz Investments Company Limited, Yemi Ezebube, Service Support Account Manager Dell Technologies and Mosunmola Aranmolate, Alumni Relations Officer Lateef Jakande Leadership Academy

In contemporary society, the significance of women leaders extends beyond mere representation. Women leaders are reshaping the future, bringing unique perspectives, innovative approaches, and transformative leadership styles to the forefront.

Their roles are instrumental in driving social change, fostering inclusive growth, and addressing global challenges.

The Women in Leadership Advancement Network (WILAN) recently successfully hosted its annual National Head Girl Conference, a

transformative event designed to equip young female leaders in secondary schools across Nigeria with the skills they need to become future leaders and decision-makers in society.

Hosted in commemoration of the International Day of the Girl Child, this year's conference welcomed over 120 young girls and boys from more than 40 secondary schools across Nigeria, accompanied by their teachers and guardians. The event proved to be an inspiring platform for young women to develop leadership skills, connect with peers, and learn from established women leaders.

“At WILAN, we believe that investing in the next generation of female leaders is crucial for building a more equitable and prosperous society,” said Abosede George-Ogan, Founder of WILAN Global.

“The National Head Girl Conference offers these young women a unique opportunity to grow, network, and gain invaluable insights from accomplished leaders.”

The conference featured a range of activities, including compelling keynote addresses, and panel sessions featuring influential women leaders discussing how to navigate their current leadership roles with resilience and the key values every effective leader should possess.

Keynote speaker Iroghama Ogbeifun, CEO of Starz Investments Company Limited, emphasized the importance of representation for inspiring young girls. She stated, “Representation

is crucial for motivating and empowering young girls. This event is vital for both the girls and the boys present, as it initiates the conversation about gender equality and the importance of male allyship.

The energy in the room was electric for the grand finale of the National Head Girl Competition. The competition which called for Head Girls to apply and present innovative solutions to pressing social issues in their communities had 70+ applications from all six geopolitical zones in the country.

The top five finalists presented their projects, competing for the grand prize of N1,000,000, and Haddiyah Onono Mohammad, current Head Girl of Government Science Technical College Abuja, emerged as the winner at the end of the event. Runner-ups also received cash prizes and exciting gifts to support the implementation of their innovative ideas.

Under the theme “Girls' Vision for the Future: Young Voices, Big Impact,” the 2024 edition emphasised the importance of amplifying the voices of young girls, encouraging their vision for the future as they tow their leadership journeys.

Women in Leadership Advancement Network (WILAN) Global is a nonprofit organization that focuses on supporting women in leadership by providing them with valuable resources, essential tools, and a supportive network. WILAN's vision is to inspire a shift to gender-balanced leadership across all levels of political, economic, and public life.



MEET 10 TALENTED AFRICAN WOMEN WRITING CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN THE DIASPORA

CHISOM MICHAEL



A group of African women writers in the diaspora is significantly contributing to children's literature. These authors draw upon their diverse experiences and backgrounds to create stories that resonate with young readers. Each writer brings a unique perspective shaped by their journeys across continents, addressing themes of identity, culture, and belonging.

Their works not only entertain but also educate, providing children with insights into the richness of African heritage and the complexities of life in a globalised world. Through their narratives, they foster a sense of connection and understanding among children from various backgrounds, encouraging empathy and curiosity about different cultures.

Here are 10 talented African women writing children's books in the diaspora, compiled by BusinessDay.

1. Vese Aghoghovbia

Vese is a Nigerian writer focused on empowering young people to love and believe in themselves. She founded Philly & Friends, a children's brand supporting

underprivileged children globally. Recognised as a Top 100 Female Entrepreneur by Natwest & The Telegraph, Vese also won the 2021 Consumer & Luxury Rising Star award from the Black British Business Awards.

A Chartered Engineer with over ten years in strategy and operations, she has worked in FTSE-100 firms and the Baby & Child industry. Vese has spoken on platforms like the BBC and contributed to HuffPost Parent and Mother Mag. She lives in England with her family.



2. Olamidotun Votu-Obada

Olamidotun is the founder and lead author of Inspire HQ. She is a senior executive, social entrepreneur, children's book author, speaker, and podcast host. Olamidotun created the Be Inspired Book Series, which includes titles such as Be Inspired By MKO, Be Inspired By Fela, and Be Inspired By Me Picture Book. In 2024, Be Inspired By MKO was presented to the Canadian Prime Minister, her books promote diversity and inclusion. Her books have received several awards, including two acknowledgements from the Ontario Government in 2024, and Olamidotun was listed as one of the "50 Most Inspiring Women" in 2019.

With a background in Business Economics and International Financial Economics from the University of Warwick and the University of Reading, Olamidotun has worked in management consultancy and business advisory, collaborating with NGOs and serving on boards in Africa. Olamidotun is a Canadian Nigerian and lives in Ontario with her husband and three daughters.



3. Ariyike Lawal-Akinbobola

Ariyike is a Nigerian author, television presenter, talk show host, model, blogger, and lawyer based in Canada. She is also known for her occasional acting roles. Her children's book, *The Beautifully Coloured*, has become a bestseller on Amazon. The book promotes kindness, diversity, inclusion, and positive affirmations for children.

Ariyike has worked as an associate producer and TV presenter for Spice TV, a fashion and lifestyle channel on DSTV. She hosted Spice TV's flagship programme *On the Couch* and has been involved in producing and presenting fashion news. In addition, she has presented several other shows, including *Sugar and Spice*, *Urban Spice*, *Instant Beauty Queen*, and *Project Swan*. Ariyike also hosted Spice TV's gadget show, *Spice Toys*.



4. Louisa Kiwana Olafuyi

Louisa is the co-founder of Kunda Kids, a black-owned publishing and media production company focused on teaching children about African history and culture. She and her husband, Oladele, launched Kunda Kids in 2020 after struggling to find books that could teach their son about ancient African history. Today, Kunda Kids works with over 20 writers, illustrators, and animators.

Louisa has authored over 50 children's books and created the 3D animation *Kunda & Friends*. Through Kunda Kids, she seeks to address the underrepresentation of African culture in children's media and promote global citizenship. The company's mission is to inspire and educate children, helping them embrace their identities and dream big. Louisa is from Uganda, she lives in the United Kingdom with her family.



5. Dora Owusu

Dora is from Ghana and now lives in the United States with her family.

With a degree in Social Work, she has a deep interest in African and African-American history, which inspired her to write stories for children. Her books include *Princess Nana Afia: The Majestic African Hair Show* and *I'm Wrapped in Pride with My Kente!*.

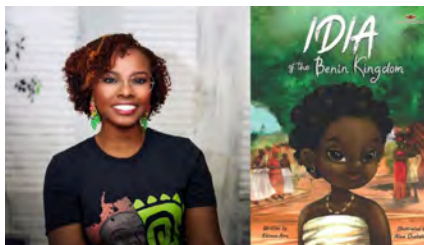


Her work focuses on connecting people of African descent to the African continent. She encourages children to embrace their natural hair and see characters that reflect their identity. Dora's stories aim to create a sense of belonging and pride in African heritage.

6. Ekiuwa Aire

Ekiuwa was born and raised in Benin City, Edo, Nigeria, and moved to Canada in 2007. As a mother, she noticed a lack of resources to introduce African history to her children, which motivated her to write. Her first picture book, *Idia of the Benin Kingdom*, was inspired by this need.

Initially driven by the desire to teach her children, Ekiuwa's mission now extends to preserving African heritage through her books. She also speaks at seminars, libraries, and classrooms, sharing her knowledge with others. Ekiuwa lives with her husband and two daughters in Ontario, Canada, and remains committed to making African history accessible to all children.



7. Lara Oseghale

Lara was born and raised in Nigeria. From a young age, Lara's commitment to her family led her to seek wholesome and durable resources for her children. However, she struggled to find books and toys that aligned with her values.

This inspired her to create her line of faith-based resources. Her venture, Curious Berries, aims to provide high-quality, engaging materials for families like hers, focusing on promoting virtues that are often overlooked.



Lara's passion for numbers led her to study accounting at the University of Reading, where she graduated with a first-class degree. She later earned a Master's in finance from Imperial College, London, and became a chartered accountant. Beyond her career, she enjoys travel, cooking, and dancing. Through her venture, Curious Berries, she continues to inspire children to be confident, kind, and connected to their

faith. Lara lives in the UK with her family, focusing on her faith and devotion to them.

8. Tolulope Adejumo

Tolulope also known as Tolulope Solutions, is committed to intentional parenting and stewardship. She shares her faith through her book, Memory Verses with Soteria, a 30-day journey for children that combines scripture memorisation with affirmations and fun. In this devotional, children follow



Soteria, a young adventurer, as she explores the Bible, making learning Scripture engaging.

Tolulope's work goes beyond her own family. Through mentorship, she guides the younger generation towards faith and purpose, helping them anchor their lives in Christ. She believes that by sharing her devotion to God, others will be inspired to live a life aligned with their calling. Tolulope is a Nigerian living in Canada with her family.

9. Oge Mora

Mora is a Nigerian-American children's book illustrator and author.



Her work has garnered significant recognition, with her picture book, Thank You, Omu!, earning a Caldecott Honor, the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Award, the Ezra Jack Keats Book Award, and being named a New York Times Notable Book and Editors' Choice.

Oge is also the author of Saturday and has illustrated several other works. Her illustrations have been featured in major publications, including The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and The Boston Globe. She was also listed in Forbes 30 Under 30 - Art & Style (2021). Her story continues to inspire readers and fellow creators in the world of children's book publishing. She lives in America with her family

10. Evelyn Olutola Logan

Evelyn Olutola Logan is a Nigerian-American author who



writes about the simplicity and experiences of life. Her debut book, On the Streets of Ondo, draws on African folktales and traditions, introducing readers to the stories passed down through generations in Nigeria. She shares her childhood memories of growing up with a diverse group of family members and community friends, capturing the essence of Nigerian-American life.

Evelyn introduces children to Nigerian culture, storytelling, and traditions, sparking curiosity and a love for learning about Africa through her writing. Evelyn enjoys connecting with young readers and hearing their interpretations of her stories. She lives in America with her husband and their children.

WE NEED TO STOP SEEKING PERMISSION TO TELL OUR STORIES - IREN

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



Laju Iren, the Executive Producer of Laju Iren Films has said that Nigeria cannot continue to wait for permission to tell its stories as regards pioneering the innovative virtual cinema system that is beginning to revolutionize Nollywood's distribution system.

The film maker said, "We cannot continue to wait for permission to tell our stories. Nollywood makes hundreds of films every

month, many of which are quality films despite Nigerians' tough economic terrain.

"The major streaming platforms only take a handful of films per year, only a small percentage of these movies get the opportunities to show physical cinemas, and the numbers for satellite television are not all that impressive.

"Quite a number of film makers have found success via free to air platforms like Youtube, but when you do the math, it is quite difficult for many filmmakers to make thriving figures from youtube especially when a film has a relatively high budget.

"The industry has developed greatly in the area of storytelling, but in the business of distribution, we need more platforms that put more power in the hands of independent filmmakers, and enable us to continue to tell even more stories. I believe the virtual cinema platform is one of such, as it enables us to reach the consumer directly."

Laju Iren Films released its debut feature film, *Loving Amanda* two years ago, through a unique first of its kind virtual cinema, making over 11 million in sales, making it the biggest virtual premiere of the year.



Two years later, the company went on to beat its own record, with the Biodun Stephen-directed-romantic-comedy, *Mistakenly Yours*, making over 26 million in sales.

This Christmas, Laju Iren films are going three times harder. “We are releasing three of our best movies in one virtual cinema this Christmas,” said Laju Iren, the Executive Producer, in a statement to newsmen recently.

“This is a first for us in more ways than one,” said Iren, “it is the first time Danfo

and *The Rose*, our young adult film will be released to our expectant audience.

We cannot wait for the world to see the magic put together by our crew, and our star-studded cast, featuring Adunni Ade, Sam Dede, Sunshine Rosman, Michael Dappa, Seun Ajayi, Akah Nnani as well as Adebowale “Debo” Adedayo, aka Mr. Macaroni.

It is also the first time we are doing a worldwide release during the Christmas season, a feat our audience is incredibly excited about. Our partners at Unilever, Malta Guinness and Crust Africa also share greatly in this excitement as evidenced by their support for us from the very beginning of the project.”

In addition, Iren added that this would also be the first time the independent company is releasing three movies at once, adding that “it is three times the stories, three times the inspiration, and three times the drama that our viewers have come to know and love us for, all for the price of one.”

In addition to *Danfo* and *the Rose*, two other movies, *Loving Amanda*, starring Blossom Chukwujekwu and Teniola Aladese, and *Mistakenly Yours*, starring Stan Nze and Chinonso Arubayi among others. Viewers can watch from anywhere in the world from December 24th-31st, and can purchase tickets for the three movies from October 28th.

6 MOVIES ADAPTED FROM VIDEO GAMES

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



The transition from video games to movies has produced a mixed bag of results over the years. While some adaptations have struggled to capture the essence of their source material, others have successfully brought beloved characters and stories to the big screen.

Here are six movies based on video games that have made a significant impact in the film industry.

Super Mario Bros. (1993)

Super Mario Bros. was one of the first movies based on a video game. While it has a huge following, the film faced criticism for its confusing story and lack of the game's fun spirit. Still, it opened the door for more video game adaptations in the future.

Mortal Kombat (1995)

Based on the hugely popular fighting game series, Mortal Kombat became a cultural phenomenon upon its release. With its memorable theme song and iconic characters like Liu Kang and Scorpion, the

film successfully captured the martial arts and fantasy elements of the game. It has since garnered a loyal fanbase and was followed by several sequels and a reboot in 2021.

Lara Croft: Tomb Raider (2001)

Starring Angelina Jolie, Lara Croft: Tomb Raider brought the iconic video game character to life. The film follows Lara as she embarks on an adventure to find an ancient artifact before it falls into the wrong hands. With its thrilling action sequences and exotic locations, the movie was a commercial success and contributed to Jolie's status as a Hollywood action star.

Resident Evil (2002)

Resident Evil is a film franchise inspired by the survival horror video game series of the same name. The first installment introduced audiences to a world overrun by zombies and bioweapons. The franchise has expanded to include multiple sequels, each exploring different aspects of the Resident Evil universe while maintaining a focus on action and horror.

Assassin's Creed (2016)

Starring Michael Fassbender, Assassin's Creed attempts to blend the franchise's intricate storyline with a high-concept cinematic experience. The film follows a man who is transported back in time to relive the memories of his ancestor, an Assassin during the Spanish Inquisition.

Rampage (2018)

Inspired by the classic arcade game, Rampage stars Dwayne Johnson as a primatologist who teams up with a giant gorilla to stop mutated creatures from wreaking havoc on Chicago. The film is packed with action, humor, and destruction, providing a fun ride for viewers. While it deviates significantly from the game's plot, its entertaining spectacle made it a box office success.

CHRISTOPHER OMOIJIADÉ'S 5 BOOKS AND THEIR LESSONS ON LEADERSHIP, FINANCE AND RELATIONSHIPS

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



For people looking to manage their finances, grow their leadership skills and build better relationships in homes and among people, Christopher Omoijade's five new books gives a step by step guide.

Popular known as 'The CEO,' his five new books are a must-read for corporate leaders, business owners, entrepreneurs, kingdom stewards, and anyone on a journey of transformation.

They expertly intersect leadership, finance, and relationships, offering insights and practical guidance for personal and professional growth.

These books are designed to empower the readers with knowledge and strategies to excel in their personal and professional life.

The book 'So You Want to Lead Too' equips leaders to discover essential principles and strategies to enhance leadership skills and navigate the challenges of leadership effectively.

'The Irrefutable Role of Gatekeepers,' helps readers explore how to gain access to the personnel's that guide and assist personnel's of influence in order to gain access to the doors they've been knocking on.

'You Too Can Be Debt Free' enable readers learn firsthand proven practical steps and financial wisdom to achieve financial independence and eliminate debt through this book.

Through his book, 'Leadership Gems in the Bible - Old Testament,' People can gain timeless insights and lessons from the old testament that inspire effective leadership and character development.

Lastly, his fifth book, 'Leadership Gems in the Bible - New Testament,' helps readers uncover powerful leadership principles from the New Testament that resonate with contemporary challenges and opportunities.

Speaking during the launch of the book in Lagos, Christopher Omoijade, the author of the book said the different books intercept between finance, relationships and leadership which is much needed in our time.

Omoijade spoke passionately on the need to restore the reading culture and get back into the place of being able to invest in knowledge, no matter what it is.

"It doesn't matter how advanced the world goes, knowledge will never lose its place. It is important that the young ones go back to reading and understand that principles are timeless. It doesn't matter whether you are in Canada, United States or Nigeria, or wherever you are, the principles that will get you ahead in life remain immortal," he said.



Omoijiade mentioned that reading may not be appreciated this time but it is significantly improving. "We are getting to a point where we are seeing a wider acceptance," he said.

"One of the things we launched today is the Chris Omoijiade's Leadership Institute and that institute is helping primary, secondary and universities to be able to introduce leadership clubs.

"I'm also trying to speak with the ministry of education to ensure that we can get it into the curriculum. It is important that leadership becomes part of learning curriculum in this country," he added.

He hinted that the target audience for the book is everyone that is a lover of knowledge, leadership and those that want to get ahead in life and invest in their future.

Speaking on the culture of reading, he said: "One of things we should do is take it back to the basics. We all grew up at a time when reading was highly encouraged in schools. We had parents who would buy us books rather than video games and toys.

"I have two amazing kids and I see them more interested in toys than books.



"So it is a collective effort. But for the government, the educational curriculum needs to be overhauled as most of the subjects that are taught in schools are outdated and irrelevant to the modern times we live in.

"It is time for us to revisit what we are teaching these kids for the future. That's the only way we can get ahead in this country," Omoijiade said.

10 STEPS TO BOOST YOUR IELTS WRITING SCORE

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



Preparing for the IELTS writing test can feel challenging, but with the right approach, you can significantly improve your chances of achieving a high band score. Whether you are taking the General Training or Academic IELTS exam, these steps will help you manage your time, improve your writing skills, and ultimately perform better on test day.

Familiarise yourself with scoring criteria
Understanding how your writing will be assessed can give you a significant

advantage. The IELTS writing test is evaluated based on four key criteria: task achievement, coherence and fluency, lexical resource, and grammatical range and accuracy. By familiarising yourself with these scoring elements, you can tailor your writing to meet the examiners' expectations.

Practice with sample questions

Engage with a variety of practice prompts to become comfortable with different types of writing tasks. Use official IELTS practice materials or reputable online resources.

Simulate exam conditions by timing yourself and limiting your drafts to the allocated time for each task, helping you build your writing stamina.

Build a personal lexicon

Create a list of useful phrases, idioms, and vocabulary related to common IELTS topics such as education, health, and environment. Having a repertoire of phrases at your disposal can help you express ideas more eloquently and precisely, boosting your lexical resource score.

Develop a strong thesis statement

For Task 2, a clear and compelling thesis statement sets the tone for your essay. It should encapsulate your main argument in one or two sentences. A strong thesis not only helps you stay focused but also guides the reader through your essay, making it easier to follow your line of reasoning.

Use transitional words and phrases

Effective transitions enhance the flow of your writing. Incorporate transitional phrases like "furthermore," "on the other hand," or "in conclusion" to connect your ideas smoothly. This not only improves coherence but also demonstrates your ability to construct logical arguments.

Experiment with different writing styles

Incorporating a mix of formal and semi-formal styles can make your writing more engaging. While Task 1 usually requires a straightforward reporting style, Task 2 allows for a more conversational tone. Practising various writing styles can help you adapt

to the requirements of each task while maintaining clarity.

Create mind maps for planning

Before you start writing, consider using a mind map to organise your thoughts. This visual representation can help you structure your ideas and see connections between different points. A clear plan can reduce the chances of straying off-topic during the writing process.

Avoid overgeneralisation

When writing, it is crucial to support your arguments with specific examples and evidence. Avoid vague statements that lack detail. Instead, provide real-world examples or statistics to bolster your claims, making your writing more convincing and relevant to the topic.

Read widely

Expand your reading material to include articles, essays, and reports on various subjects. Reading diverse content can expose you to different writing styles, vocabulary, and argument structures. This exposure will enrich your writing and enhance your ability to articulate complex ideas.

Join a writing group

Participating in a writing group or workshop can provide invaluable feedback on your writing. Sharing your work with peers allows you to gain different perspectives and learn from others' strengths and weaknesses. Constructive criticism can help you identify areas for improvement that you might not notice on your own.



10 CAREER OPPORTUNITIES WITH AN ENGINEERING

CHISOM MICHAEL



Engineering Jobs



An engineering degree opens the door to a wide range of career opportunities across various sectors. Graduates can find roles that involve designing, developing, and managing projects that have a significant impact on society.

Many positions require a blend of technical skills and practical knowledge, allowing individuals to contribute to advancements in technology, infrastructure, and sustainability. The potential for career progression is notable, with many starting in entry-level roles and moving into senior positions that involve leadership and strategic decision-making.

Financially, these careers can be rewarding, with starting salaries often reflecting the high demand for engineers in the job market. As professionals gain experience and take on more responsibilities, their earning potential typically increases, providing a stable and prosperous career path.

The diverse nature of engineering also means that graduates can choose to specialise in areas that align with their interests, whether in technology, construction, manufacturing, or environmental solutions.

According to indeed, here are the top 10 career opportunities with an engineering degree and national average salaries

1. Marine Engineer
— Average salary: £66,000 per year

Marine engineers focus on designing and maintaining vessels used on or in water, such as submarines, tankers, and sailboats. Their work primarily involves the internal systems of these vessels, including propulsion, electrical systems, and refrigeration. While marine engineers concentrate on these systems, naval architects handle the external structure of the ships.

2. Industrial Engineer

— Average salary: £64,000 per year

Industrial engineers analyse and enhance production processes to improve efficiency and reduce waste. Their responsibilities involve evaluating production schedules, process flows, and management systems. By collaborating with vendors and staff, they identify areas for improvement and implement strategies that streamline operations.

3. Mechanical Engineer

— Average salary: £66,000 per year

Mechanical engineers apply principles of force, energy, and motion to design and test mechanical devices. Their duties include creating blueprints, constructing prototypes, and testing products to ensure functionality. Depending on project requirements, mechanical engineers may modify existing equipment or develop new designs.

4. Computer Engineer

— Average salary: £62,000 per year

Computer engineers work with both hardware and software components to develop and test technology. Their focus may range from computer games to security systems. They also maintain and troubleshoot existing systems, ensuring that they operate effectively and efficiently.

5. Chemical Engineer

— Average salary: £71,000 per year

Chemical engineers are involved in the development of processes for manufacturing pharmaceuticals, industrial chemicals, and food products. Their work includes establishing safety protocols, assessing equipment, and ensuring compliance with environmental regulations. They also troubleshoot existing processes to enhance efficiency.

6. Biomedical Engineer — Average salary: £65,000 per year

Biomedical engineers operate at the intersection of engineering and healthcare. They design

and maintain medical equipment and software, ensuring functionality and safety. Their role includes training medical professionals on equipment use and preparing research reports on their findings.

7. Petroleum Engineer

— Average salary: £73,000 per year

Petroleum engineers focus on extracting oil and gas from beneath the earth's surface. They collaborate with geologists to plan drilling operations and experiment with new techniques for accessing oil reserves. Their primary goal is to optimise extraction methods while ensuring safety.

8. Civil Engineer

— Average salary: £70,000 per year

Civil engineers design and develop infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges, and buildings. They assess community needs and create plans to facilitate safe and efficient transport. Responsibilities also include conducting soil tests, estimating costs, and ensuring compliance with regulations.

9. Environmental Engineer

— Average salary: £69,000 per year

Environmental engineers work to improve and protect the environment. Their focus areas may include air and water quality, pollution control, and sustainable practices. They design large-scale projects aimed at environmental protection, ensuring that these projects adhere to relevant regulations.

10. Electrical Engineer

— Average salary: £75,000 per year

Electrical engineers specialise in power generation and supply systems. Their work involves developing and maintaining electrical infrastructure, including wiring and lighting. They also assess existing systems for efficiency improvements and implement solutions to enhance performance.

AFRICAN STAKEHOLDERS ADVOCATE VOCATIONAL SKILLS SHIFT TO ENHANCE YOUTH POTENTIAL

CHARLES OGWO

Stakeholders in the African education space have advocated that policymakers and implementers should embrace vocational skill acquisition to enhance the potential of youngsters in the continent.

Delegates at the first-ever Africa Skills Week (ASW) conference hosted by the government of Ghana recently encouraged education policymakers to champion technical and vocational education (TVET) to enable the continent realise its immense potential, and address the anticipated doubling of its youth workforce to 1.6 billion people by 2050.

Sarjoh Aziz-Kamara, the Sierra Leonean deputy minister of Technical and Higher Education, in a keynote address, told the audience that Africa has the youngest population in the world, and that over 60 percent of the continent's current population is younger than 25 years of age.

"We have to brace for the imagined challenges, as well as the opportunities for growth and social transformation, that the imminent doubling of the continent's young working-age population will bring," Aziz-Kamara said.

Sharing his experience in Sierra Leone, and other countries in Africa, he disclosed that tertiary education has previously focused too heavily on producing graduates for white-collar occupations instead of on the vital, skills-based training that TVET education provides.

"This mindset has to change, explaining how his country had created its Ministry of Technical and Higher Education precisely to address this issue, as well as TVET colleges and centres of excellence.

These interventions are set to address the skills needed for seven economic priority areas identified by a labour market survey, with the aim of creating 500 000 jobs for young Sierra Leoneans," he said.

Fred Kyei Asamoah, the head of Ghana's CTNET, in echo to Aziz-Kamara's words around the necessity for planning for the continent's skills future, asked, "The Fourth Industrial Revolution is almost ending, and what is Africa doing if our working population is doubling in the next 26 years?"

He applauded the maiden edition of the ASW, the first of such an event on the continent, describing it as an important step in addressing this question.

"This week is not for Ghana; this week is for Africa," he said, applauding the AU's initiative in driving ASW.

Asimawu Tahiru, a Ghanaian youth leader with the Global

Partnership for Education, the only partnership worldwide dedicated to funding education in lower-income countries echoed her youthful voice in support of ASW.

"TVET functional literacy has made huge impacts in my life. I am an example of its worth," Tahiru told the audience. She said this is why she is determined to promote TVET widely, especially for young women.

"I believe there should be an investment in TVET sectors," Tahiru said, calling for greater TVET funding.

Nana Akufo-Addo, the President of the Republic of Ghana, declared the event official opened in Accra, with a keynote address.

The theme for the five-day conference is "Skills and jobs for the 21st century: quality skills development for sustainable employability in Africa".

ASW was hosted by the government of Ghana in partnership with the African Union (AU); supported by Germany through the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ); International Labour Organization (ILO); UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; World Bank; Ghana's Commission for TVET (CTNET); and Ghana's Ministry of Education and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration.

The five days event was aimed at strengthening TVET systems across Africa by fostering collaboration between key stakeholders, and to promote private sector engagement in the development of sustainable and industry-relevant skills.

Others include to highlight green skills, sustainability and innovation in the training of the future workforce, showcase best practices and success stories from TVET institutions across the continent, and facilitate policy dialogues on shaping the future of Africa's workforce, preparing it to meet the challenges of a rapidly evolving global economy.

Africa Skills Week (ASW) aims to catalyse action towards improving systems, processes and policies to drive the transformation of skills development across the continent, so that Africans can be future-fit to adapt to the demands of the 21st-century workplace.

The AU aims to institutionalise ASW as part of a broader effort to implement its Agenda 2063 blueprint and build resilient, transformative education and skills ecosystems across Africa.

10 DEGREES GRADUATES WITH JOB MARKET CHALLENGES

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



Choosing a degree is a significant decision that can shape your future career. However, many graduates later wish they had chosen differently. Based on a recent report by the Federal Reserve Board, here is a list of the most regrettable degrees, along with their corresponding regret rates.

Social and Behavioral Sciences – 44%
Majors like sociology, psychology, and anthropology lead the pack in regret. Many graduates feel their degree did not provide the expected career opportunities.

Humanities and Art – 43%
Fields such as English, history, and fine arts leave many graduates wishing they had opted for a more lucrative degree.

Life Sciences – 43%
Similar to the humanities, those in biology and related fields express dissatisfaction, often citing job market challenges.

Law – 41%
While a law degree can open doors, many graduates find the profession is not what they envisioned.

Education – 38%
Despite the passion for teaching, graduates often encounter obstacles in job placement and salary.

Undeclared/Other – 37%
Students who enter the university undecided often end up feeling lost, regretting the lack of direction in their choice of a degree.

Physical Sciences/Math – 35%
Graduates in these fields may feel that their studies were too theoretical, leading to a disconnect with practical applications.

Business/Management – 34%
While business degrees are often seen as safe, graduates find the competition daunting and the reality less fulfilling.

Vocational/Technical Training – 34%
Though these programs are practical, some graduates wish they had pursued a degree with broader career prospects.

Health – 32%
Healthcare degrees are valuable, yet many graduates feel the pressures of the industry outweigh their initial passion.

In contrast, only 27% of engineering graduates and 31% of computer/information sciences graduates expressed regret about their major. These fields tend to offer clearer job pathways and higher salaries, making them more favorable choices.

6 PLACES WEALTHY PEOPLE STORE THEIR MONEY

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



Real estate

Many rich individuals invest in real estate, purchasing properties that appreciate in value and can generate rental income. This tangible asset not only diversifies their portfolio but also serves as a hedge against inflation.

Private equity and Venture capital

Wealthy individuals may allocate a portion of their funds to private

We often wonder how wealthy individuals manage their fortunes. Beyond traditional bank accounts, the rich have various strategies and locations for managing and protecting their wealth.

Here are six common places where rich people store their money.

High-interest savings accounts

Wealthy individuals frequently utilise high-interest savings accounts to earn interest while maintaining easy access to their funds. These accounts typically offer better rates than standard savings accounts, allowing them to grow their wealth steadily.

Stocks and bonds

Investing in the stock market and bonds is a popular choice for the affluent. They often work with financial advisors to build a diversified portfolio, taking advantage of the potential for significant returns over time.

equity or venture capital. By investing in startups or private companies, they seek higher returns than those typically found in public markets, albeit with increased risk.

Offshore accounts

To manage taxes and protect their assets, some affluent individuals open offshore accounts. These accounts are often held in jurisdictions with favourable banking regulations, providing financial privacy and security.

Art and collectibles

High-net-worth individuals often invest in art, antiques, and collectibles, viewing them as both passion projects and investment opportunities. Rare items can appreciate significantly over time, making them a valuable addition to their financial portfolio.

TOP 10 OLDEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES

CHISOM MICHAEL



The history of the African continent is marked by the emergence of numerous ancient civilisations that laid the foundations for modern societies. These countries have rich narratives that span thousands of years, reflecting the resilience and adaptability of their peoples.

Many of these countries have experienced continuous existence, navigating through periods of prosperity and challenge while maintaining unique cultural identities. The legacies of these early societies are evident in their contributions to governance, architecture, and trade, which have influenced not only the continent but also the world.

Independence movements have shaped their modern identities, as communities sought to reclaim their autonomy and heritage from colonial powers. The stories of these countries are intertwined with themes of endurance and transformation, illustrating the profound impact of their historical journeys on contemporary life.

According to Oldest, here are the top 10 oldest African countries

1. Liberia

Liberia the oldest country in Africa, gained independence on July 26, 1847, after being established as a British colony in 1822. Its capital is Monrovia. During this period, the economy relied on trade and rubber exports, with a significant portion of the population made up of slaves and freedmen who worked as farmers and labourers. In 1904, Liberia became the first independent black republic in Africa, but it wasn't until 1944 that a government was formally established, with Joseph Jenkins Roberts being elected as the president.



2. South Africa

South Africa gained independence on May 31, 1910, and its capital cities are Pretoria, Cape Town, and Bloemfontein. With a land area of 1.22 million km², the country has a population of approximately 59.31 million (2020). Previously known as South-West Africa and the Boer Republics, the name was changed to South Africa in 1910. Most South Africans reside in urban areas, with Cape Town being the largest city, housing nearly 2 million people. The country is divided into nine provinces, which are further segmented into 31 districts, each with its local government.



3. Egypt

Egypt gained independence from Great Britain on February 28, 1922, and its capital is Cairo. The country has a land area of 1.002 million km² and a population of approximately 106.6 million. Although Egypt became independent in 1922, it did not become a republic until 1956. Before this, it was governed by a monarchy, limiting its autonomy. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the United States supported President Gamal Abdel Nasser, who aimed to strengthen Egypt's role in the Arab world and engaged in conflicts with Israel.



4. Ethiopia

Ethiopia gained independence on May 5, 1941, and its capital is Addis Ababa. The country covers a land area of 1.112 million km² and has a population

of approximately 115 million (2020). Although Ethiopia gained independence from British control in 1955, it has been ruled by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front since 1991. The population is predominantly Christian (80%), with around 15% being Muslim. Ethiopia's economy is largely agricultural, accounting for over 50% of GDP and 80% of exports, with coffee, tea, and spices as major products.



5. Libya

Libya gained independence on December 24, 1951, and its capital is Tripoli. The country has a land area of 1.76 million km² and a population of approximately 6.871 million (2020). Libya became independent from the United Kingdom in 1951, and its government structure is based on a constitution approved by the Libyan People's Congress in December 1973. The current president, Mohammed Magarief, took office in March 2012 after being elected by popular vote, which is rare in Libya.



6. Sudan

Sudan gained independence on January 1, 1956, with its capital in Khartoum. The country spans a land area of 1.861 million km² and has a population of approximately 43.85 million (2020). Since independence, Sudan has experienced significant political changes, with the National Congress Party (NCP) in power since 1956. Sudan is one of the largest countries in the world, and it comprises two regions:

the north, home to about 10 million people, and the resource-rich south, which includes oil reserves.



7. Morocco

Morocco gained independence on March 2, 1956, and its capital is Rabat. Covering a land area of 710,850 km², the country has a population of roughly 37 million. Located in northwest Africa, Morocco is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea, Algeria, Western Sahara, and Mauritania. The country's independence was achieved after a decade of resistance led by nationalist leader Mohammed V, transitioning to a constitutional monarchy under King Hassan II, who ruled from 1961 until 1999.



10. Guinea

Guinea gained independence on October 2, 1958, with its capital in Conakry. The country covers a land area of 245,857 km² and had a population of approximately 1.66 million in 2014. Located in West Africa, Guinea is bordered by Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Senegal, and Guinea-Bissau. The official language is French, but local languages such as Mendé and Dioula are also spoken. Guinea is known for its rich culture and history, with various tourist attractions including historic buildings, beautiful beaches, and national parks.

8. Tunisia

Tunisia gained independence on March 20, 1956, with its capital in Tunis. The country has a land area of 163,610 km² and a population of approximately 11.56 million (2020). The independence marked a significant victory for the people of Africa, enabling them to establish a government that prioritised equal rights and opportunities. The new government implemented nationalisation policies, allowing many Tunisians access to land and the chance to become self-sufficient farmers.



9. Ghana

Ghana gained independence from the UK on March 6, 1957, and its capital is Accra. The country spans a land area of 238,533 km² and has a population of approximately 31.07 million (2020). Ghana's independence resulted from peaceful negotiations with its colonial rulers, and the country has since developed into one of Africa's most stable democracies and economically successful nations, known for its cocoa production and education system.



7 ITEMS YOU SHOULD CONSIDER AVOIDING WHEN BUYING FOR CHILDREN

CHISOM MICHAEL



When shopping for children, it is important to be mindful of certain items that may not be suitable or safe. First, consider the potential hazards associated with small parts that could pose a choking risk.

It is also wise to avoid products that contain harmful chemicals, as children's health and safety should always come first. Additionally, items that are poorly constructed may break easily, leading to injuries or accidents.

It is essential to think about the age recommendations provided by manufacturers, as some products may not be appropriate for younger children. Furthermore, be cautious of toys that encourage aggressive behaviour, as these can influence how children interact with others.

Another factor to consider is whether the item encourages creativity and learning rather than passive consumption.

Here are 7 items you should consider avoiding when buying for children, according to Indiatimes.

1. Inexpensive plastic toys

While they may seem like a good deal, cheap plastic toys often come with hidden dangers. Many of these toys contain harmful chemicals such as phthalates, lead, or BPA. These substances can pose serious health risks if ingested or absorbed through the skin.



2. Trendy gadgets and electronics

Children are often drawn to gadgets like tablets, smartphones, and smartwatches. However, excessive screen time can lead to various issues, including poor sleep, eye strain, and reduced physical activity.

It may be worth limiting exposure to these devices to encourage healthier habits.



3. Costume jewellery

Dress-up play is enjoyable for children, but costume jewellery can introduce significant health risks. Inexpensive pieces may contain dangerous materials such as lead and cadmium, which can be harmful if swallowed. Additionally, some jewellery might have sharp components that can lead to injuries.



4. Sugary snacks and drinks

While children may enjoy sweets, regular consumption can result in long-term health concerns. High sugar intake from candies, sugary drinks, and breakfast cereals can contribute to childhood obesity, dental issues, and an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes at a young age.



5. Toys with small parts or sharp edges

Many toys that appear safe may contain small parts that can pose choking hazards, especially for younger children. Toys with sharp edges can also cause cuts or bruises. Parents should always check the recommended age range on the packaging before making a purchase.



6. Video games with violent themes

Video games can be entertaining, but those that feature violence or inappropriate language are often unsuitable for young audiences. Exposure to such content can influence behaviour, desensitise children to aggression, and hinder the development of social skills.



7. Uncomfortable clothing

Choosing clothing for children may seem straightforward, but many stylish outfits prioritise appearance over comfort. Garments with scratchy materials, tight fits, or uncomfortable textures can irritate the skin and limit movement, leading to discomfort throughout the day.



FROM AFANG TO FISHER MAN SOUP: NIGERIANS PATRONISE AMEEN'S KITCHEN AT ONTARIO, CANADA



Traditional Nigerian dishes, such as jollof rice, egusi soup, Efo Riro, Afang, Fisher Man Soup, small chops, suya, etc alongside a range of intercontinental options designed to satisfy diverse palates have become popular at Ontario, Canada, cutesy Ameen's Kitchen.

Ameen's Kitchen (Restaurant & Banquet Hall), a family-owned business of Nigerian descent, is making waves in Ontario's hospitality scene by offering a unique blend of authentic Nigeria and international cuisine paired with high-end dining and elegant event hosting services.

Owned by the Ameen family, the restaurant is setting new standards in both fine dining and event management, attracting high-profile clientele and becoming a destination of choice for luxury gatherings.

With two strategically located venues in Mississauga, Ameen's caters to both casual and high-end customers. Their flagship location on 2555 Dixie Road, Mississauga serves as a luxurious dining space and banquet hall, perfect for upscale events, while their more casual restaurant on 3085 Hurontario Street, Mississauga offers a warm and inviting atmosphere for everyday dining.



Known for serving halal-compliant meals, both venues feature a menu that boasts traditional Nigerian dishes, such as jollof rice, egusi soup, Efo Riro, Afang, Fisher Man Soup, small chops, suya, etc. alongside a range of intercontinental options designed to satisfy diverse palates.

Ameen's Kitchen (Restaurant & Banquet Hall) has quickly garnered a reputation for hosting elite events. Nigerian dignitaries, including governors and senators, Traditional Kings, have attended gatherings at the Restaurant and Banquet hall, alongside celebrities and prominent figures from the Nigerian-Canadian community.

Most recently, the venue provided the stage for a prestigious fireside chat with top Nigerian government officials, underscoring its status as a preferred location for both social and diplomatic engagements.

Speaking about their journey, the Ameen family emphasized their commitment to creating a space where culinary excellence meets cultural sophistication. "Our goal has always been to bring

people together over exceptional food in an elegant setting," said a family spokesperson.

"We're proud to offer a venue where people from different walks of life can experience not only the rich flavors of Nigeria but also the best of global cuisine."

With services ranging from fine dining to bespoke event planning, Ameen's is poised to continue its rise in Ontario's competitive hospitality industry. The restaurant's emphasis on impeccable service, coupled with its ability to accommodate high-profile events, makes it a top choice for those looking to host weddings, corporate functions, and cultural celebrations.

As the Ameen family continues to expand their brand, they remain dedicated to offering a seamless blend of tradition and innovation. Whether you're a food lover seeking the comfort of Nigerian flavors or a business professional planning a grand event, Ameen's Kitchen (Restaurant & Banquet Hall) is the place to be.

10 GREAT FOOTBALLERS WHO NEVER WON THE BALLON D'OR

ANTHONY NLEBEM

The Ballon d'Or, widely regarded as the most prestigious individual award in football, is an annual accolade given to the best player over the previous year. First awarded in 1956, the Ballon d'Or honours a standout player based on votes from journalists, players, and coaches worldwide. The most recent recipient, Argentine star Lionel Messi, claimed the 2023 award—his record-breaking eighth Ballon d'Or. Cristiano Ronaldo, another icon of the game, has won the award five times. However, both Messi and Ronaldo were notably absent from the 2024 nominee list, marking the first time neither has been nominated since 2003.

Originally limited to European players, the award expanded in 1995 to include players from all over the world, allowing footballing legends like Pele and Diego Maradona, previously ineligible, to finally be considered. Yet, despite the Ballon d'Or's global reach, several of football's finest players have been overlooked over the years. Here, BusinessDay looks at ten football legends who, despite their brilliance, never claimed the Ballon d'Or.

Thierry Henry

Thierry Henry, widely regarded as one of the greatest strikers in Premier League history, left an indelible mark during his time at Arsenal. A key figure in Arsenal's "Invincibles" squad in 2004, he also led the club to their first-ever Champions League final in 2006 and won both the World Cup and European Championship with France. Despite his accolades, Henry was often overshadowed by Zinedine Zidane in the Ballon d'Or race. Although he won the FWA Player of the Year three times and the European Golden Boot twice, he only managed a second-place finish in 2003 and third in 2006.



Andres Iniesta

Andres Iniesta was a linchpin of Barcelona's golden era and Spain's World Cup-winning squad. His graceful playmaking and precise passing made him one of the most admired midfielders of his generation. Iniesta was crucial in Barcelona's multiple Champions League triumphs and Spain's World Cup and European Championship wins. Despite his immense talent, he often found himself overshadowed by teammate Lionel Messi, who dominated Ballon d'Or wins. Iniesta's iconic goal in the 2010 World Cup final earned Spain their first-ever World Cup title and secured him a second-place finish in that year's Ballon d'Or voting.



Luis Suarez

Luis Suarez, renowned for his lethal finishing, was another victim of the Messi-Ronaldo era. A prolific scorer for clubs like Ajax, Liverpool, and Barcelona, Suarez never broke into the Ballon d'Or's top three. He won Golden Boots in the Netherlands, England, and Spain, proving his excellence across leagues. In the 2013/14 season, he narrowly missed out on a Premier League title with Liverpool. At Barcelona, Suarez formed a legendary attacking trio with Messi and Neymar, winning the treble in his first season. He also led Uruguay to a Copa America victory in 2011.



Kylian Mbappe

Kylian Mbappe, an electrifying talent known for his speed and goal-scoring, could be a future Ballon d'Or winner. His move to Real Madrid was partly driven by a desire to secure the coveted award. Mbappe's performance at the 2018 World Cup—where he became the second teenager after Pele to score in a World Cup final—cemented his status as one of the world's best. Despite his hat-trick in the 2022 World Cup final, he was again overshadowed by Messi's triumph.



Neymar

Neymar, a once-in-a-generation talent, carried high expectations to lead Brazil back to glory. Despite his immense skill and success, including domestic titles and a Champions League trophy, inconsistencies and missed opportunities have clouded his legacy. While he remains one of the world's best, Neymar has yet to lead Brazil to a World Cup title or claim the Ballon d'Or.



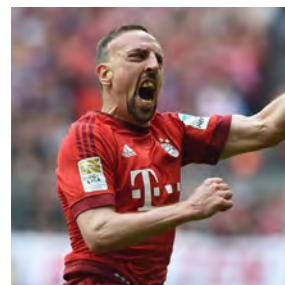
Steven Gerrard

Steven Gerrard, a central figure for Liverpool, became a European champion in 2005 and finished just behind Frank Lampard and Ronaldinho on the 2005 Ballon d'Or podium. In 2008, despite scoring 24 goals, he was overshadowed by the dominance of Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, and Spain's Euro Cup victory.



Franck Ribery

Franck Ribery was a dynamic presence for Bayern Munich and France but often fell short due to the dominance of Ronaldo and Messi. Ribery's standout season in 2013, when Bayern achieved the treble, led many to believe he deserved the Ballon d'Or. However, the award went to Cristiano Ronaldo that year, a controversial decision that left Ribery without the coveted trophy.



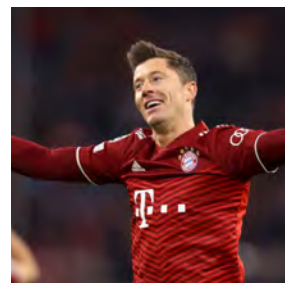
Xavi Hernandez

Xavi, regarded by many as the greatest Spanish midfielder, was the heartbeat of Barcelona's legendary team. A World Cup winner and three-time Ballon d'Or bronze awardee (2009, 2010, and 2011), Xavi's vision and passing made him indispensable for both club and country. Despite his pivotal role in Barcelona's golden era and Spain's 2010 World Cup-winning squad, Xavi never won the Ballon d'Or.



Robert Lewandowski

One of the most prolific strikers of his generation, Robert Lewandowski was widely considered the Ballon d'Or favourite in 2020 after a record-breaking season. Unfortunately, the award ceremony was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and Lewandowski had to settle for the FIFA Best award. In 2021, after scoring 69 goals, he was again overlooked, with the Ballon d'Or going to Messi.



Gianluigi Buffon

Buffon, a legendary goalkeeper, won the Lev Yashin Trophy five times, recognizing him as the world's best goalkeeper. He also finished second in the 2006 Ballon d'Or, a rare feat for a goalkeeper, behind teammate Fabio Cannavaro. Due to the challenge of goalkeepers winning the Ballon d'Or, the Lev Yashin Trophy was introduced to honour outstanding goalkeepers.



SUPER FALCONS POISE FOR BATTLES AGAINST ALGERIA'S FENNECS

CHARLES OGWO

The Super Falcons, Nigeria's national women's football team will this Saturday, begin its rebuilding project under Justin Madugu as the interim head coach with a match against the Fennecs of Algeria inside the Mobolaji Johnson Arena in Lagos.

The two-legged international friendly matches against Algeria's senior women's national team scheduled for October 26 and October 29, is arranged by the NFF as a rebuilding process to get the team in shape for upcoming competitions.

This will be the Super Falcons first home friendlies since an invitational tournament three years ago.

However, many Nigerian football fans have expressed dismay that the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) could not organise a grade A friendly match for the nine-time African champions even as the team gears up for a rebuilding.

Philip Adefioye, a sport commentator said he thinks that Nigeria should have gone for a grade match with countries such as Ghana, South Africa, Cameroun or Morocco.

"I would have preferred if they cannot go to Europe, they should have engaged top rated African teams when it comes to female football such as South Africa, Cameroun and/or Ghana.

"Anyway, I think because it's just a friendly, they chose to play a less female football African country, it's okay, but it would have been better to give our girls a good test," he said.

Similarly, Chima Nwosu, a football enthusiast said the Super Falcons are not a match for the Algerian women.

"Female football in Nigeria is way up there within the African football space. So, the Algerian women are no match to the Super Falcons. Nigeria will beat them home and away," he said.

Christopher Nmeribe, another football fan said the Super Falcons have lost their place of honour even in Africa, the Algerian team will not be an easy nut to crack by the Nigerian side.

"I expect it would a tough match as far as friendlies go, because like all other facets of our national life, the team has lost its grip on female football in Africa," he said.

Ikechi Isinguzo believes there is no more pushovers even in female football, hence, he said the Nigerian side would not find it easy with the Fennecs of Algeria.

"African women football has improved over the years, gone are the days when such a match would have been a walk in the park for the Super Falcons," he said.

Meanwhile, interim coach has invited 25 players for the two header friendly. The invited players are; Goalkeepers: Chiamaka Nnadozie (Paris FC, France); Monle Oyono (Edo Queens); Rachael Unachukwu (Nasarawa Amazons)

Defenders: Chidinma Okeke (Club America, Mexico); Oluwatosin Demehin (Galatasaray Sportive FC, Turkey); Miracle Usani (Edo Queens); Florence Alexander (Bayelsa Queens); Blessing Ilivieda (Edo Queens); Sikiratu Isa (Nasarawa Amazons); Comfort Folorunsho (Edo Queens); Tessy Ojiyovwi (Nasarawa Amazons); Chidinma Ogbuchi (FC Robo Queens)

Midfielders: Rasheedat Ajibade (Atletico Madrid, Spain); Esther Onyenezide (Hapoel Katamon, Israel); Shukurat Oladipo (FC Robo Queens); Chioma Olise (Edo Queens); Josephine Matthias (Nasarawa Amazons); Amarachi Odoma (Edo Queens).

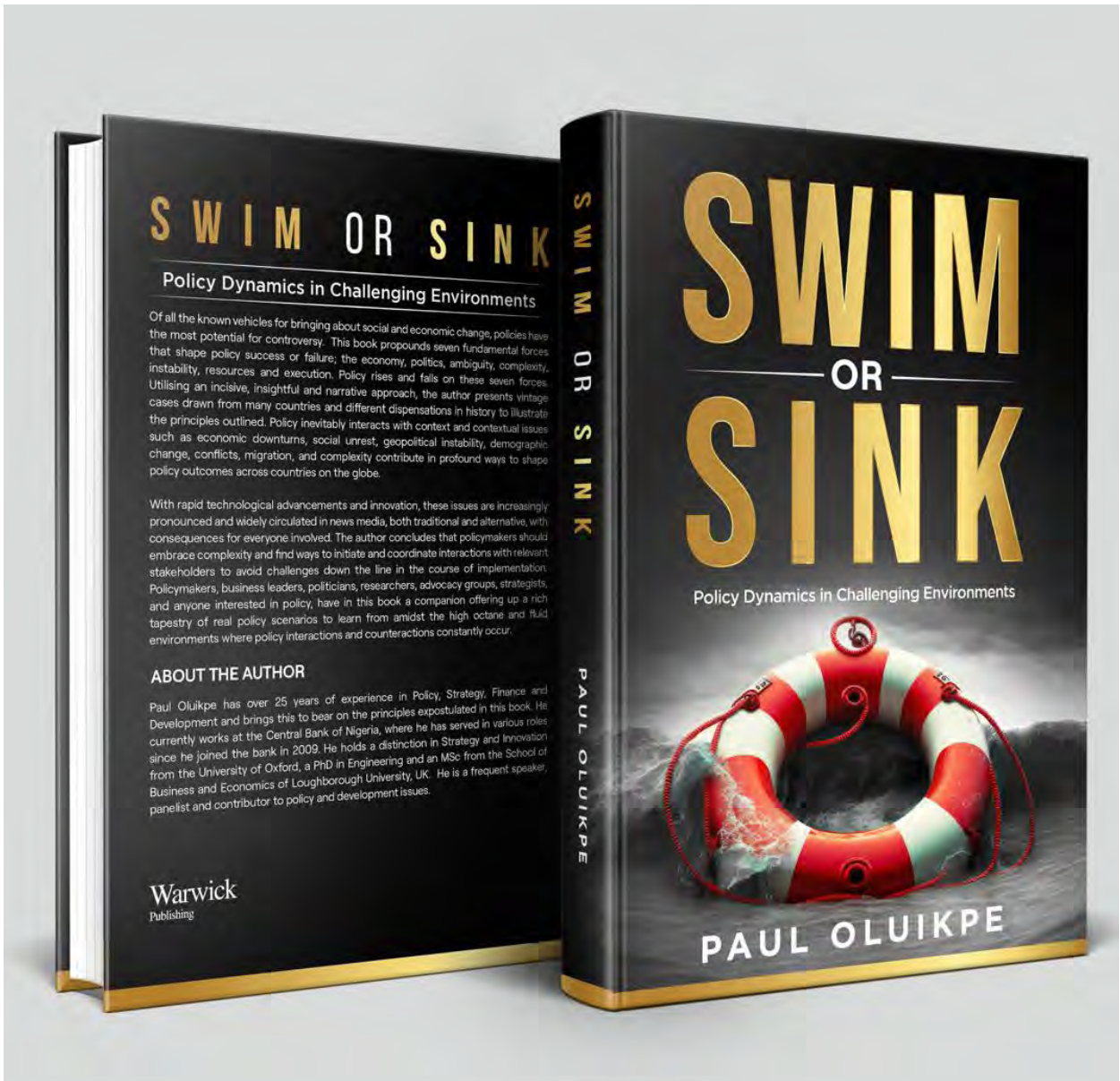
Forwards: Gift Monday (UDG Tenerife, Spain); Goodness Osigwe (Edo Queens); Janet Akekoromwei (Nasarawa Amazons); Delight Nwosu (Bayelsa Queens); Folashade Ijamilusi (Edo Queens); Mercy Omokwo (Bayelsa Queens); Olamide Bolaji (Remo Stars Ladies).

In a statement issued by Ademola Olajire, the director of communication at the NFF, Madugu expressed delight that all the invited players arrived in camp on time, giving the coach ample time to prepare.

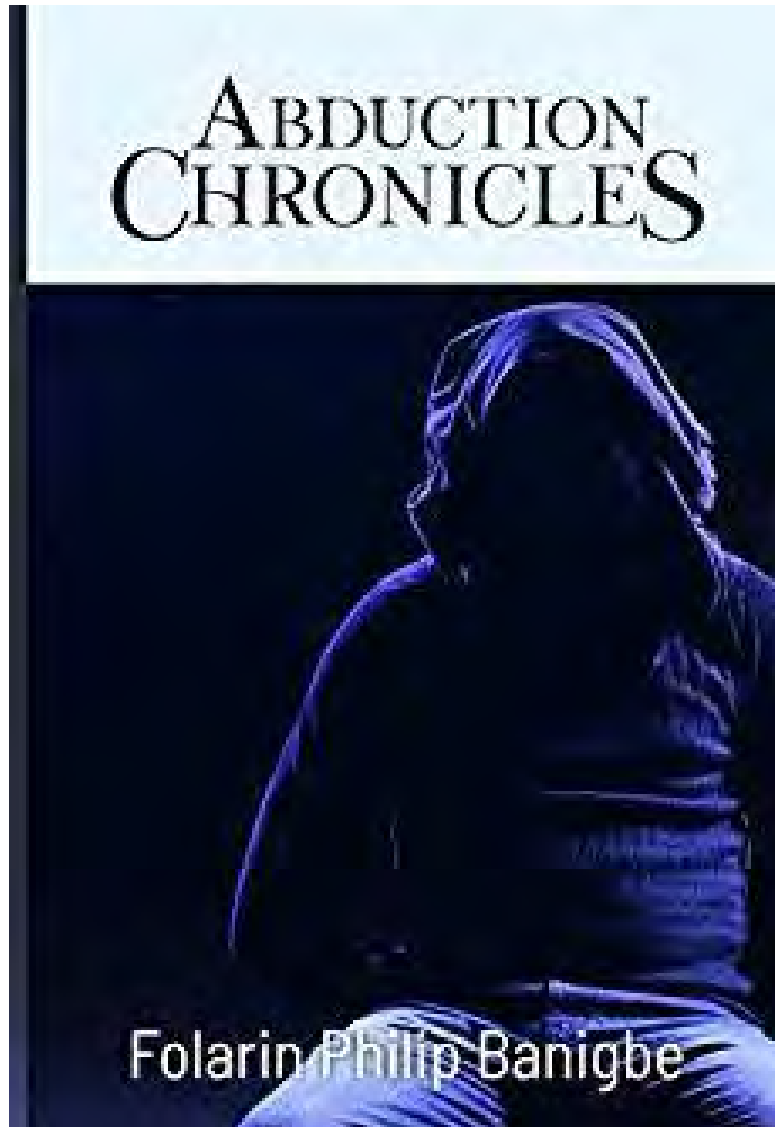
"I'm thrilled that all the invited players are here. We appreciate the Nigeria Football Federation for arranging these matches," Madugu said.

The NFF parted ways with Randy Waldrum as the head coach of the Super Falcons, after heading the coaching crew for almost three years.

Waldrum's best record with the Super Falcons is the knockout stage at the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup.



Public opinion is unrelentingly transactional, confounding policy-makers and organisational leaders who understand well that long-term curatives could have short-term side effects. The public does not necessarily understand this, and where it does, is not bound to be sympathetic. What therefore can leaders do? In this book, I posit that seven forces - the economy, politics, ambiguity, complexity, instability, resources, and execution - are pivotal to policy outcomes, requiring that policy-makers, leaders and strategists understand and interact with the cognitive and psychological frames of reference that fuel public response to policy propositions. Policies function in a complex nexus of forces, such that unintended outcomes could flow from well-intended propositions. The knowledge of this is the beginning of wisdom. Get Paperback here <https://amzn.eu/d/iNX9u4S> Get Kindle copies here <https://amzn.eu/d/2kRAoKR>



Every Happenstance Counts-A Review of Folarin Phillip
Banigbe's Abduction Chronicles

Title: Abduction Chronicles
Author: Folarin Phillip Banigbe
Year of Publication: 2018
Number of Pages: 258
Category: Memoir

Abduction Chronicles

TITILADE OYEMADE

The title *Abduction Chronicles* instantly sets a dramatic tone, promising a gripping, real-life tale of captivity. Folarin Phillip Banigbe wastes no time making one thing clear—this is no fictional story. And with that simple, yet powerful disclaimer, the tension skyrockets. Readers know they're about to plunge into a world where every word holds the weight of reality, drawing them deep into a harrowing experience that's bound to leave a lasting impact.

From the start, Banigbe grabs your attention, and from there, he doesn't let go. Despite the terrifying ordeal he recounts, he masterfully weaves humor into the fabric of his narrative. It's a surprising, yet welcome contrast—finding lightness in the darkest of moments. His wit keeps you unsettled but oddly engaged, making you chuckle even as you're left holding your breath.

This balance between humor and horror humanizes the story, reminding readers that resilience often comes from unexpected places. Banigbe's approach allows you to grasp the full weight of his ordeal without sinking into despair. Instead, you find yourself both on edge and captivated, eager to see where his unpredictable storytelling will take you next.

As you turn the pages, the questions come flooding in: What happens next? How does this end? This constant sense of anticipation keeps you glued, but just when you think you've got a handle on the tone, Banigbe shifts gears. His light-heartedness fades, replaced by raw anger and frustration toward his captors. The kidnappers' disregard for human life turns the narrative darker, and his emotions become even more intense. You can feel the simmering rage through his words—his transformation from a man joking with kidnappers to one grappling with deep outrage is palpable.

Banigbe's boldness throughout is striking—who tells a kidnapper to “cool down” or engages them in casual conversation like old friends? It's a mix of bravery and absurdity that makes you question how anyone could maintain such composure in such dire circumstances. At moments, it might feel too bold to believe. Yet, as the story unfolds, you start to understand the inner strength and resolve that might have fueled his daring actions.

What truly sets *Abduction Chronicles* apart, though, is the layered storytelling. Banigbe brings in the perspectives of his wife, brother, and friends, offering a well-rounded view of his abduction. These contributions don't just support his account—they enhance it, lending the story a deeper sense of authenticity. Their reflections align with his, creating a cohesive narrative that reassures readers this unbelievable story is very real.

In fact, the voices of these secondary characters—especially his wife—often shine brighter than the main narrative. Her reflections on their marriage, their love, and the pain of not knowing if her husband would return are deeply moving. You get the sense that if given the chance, she could have written an entire book of her own, adding yet another layer to the story.

Banigbe's faith plays a key role throughout the book. His belief in a higher power is a steady presence, offering him strength in the darkest moments and guiding him through the trauma. His gratitude is evident, and this spiritual thread adds yet another dimension to the narrative.

One of the more charming aspects of the book is Banigbe's whimsical mind. Despite the heavy subject matter, his imagination makes you smile. His reflections on life—even in the midst of an abduction—are both entertaining and deeply human, adding charm to an otherwise grim tale.

As you read deeper, you might find yourself fascinated by how kidnappers think and operate. Banigbe's recounting offers unexpected insights into human behavior under extreme pressure, making the story both engaging and thought-provoking.

But make no mistake—this book may unsettle you. It has the power to make readers, particularly those unfamiliar with Nigeria, rethink their perception of safety, leaving some wary of even visiting certain places. For Banigbe and his wife, May 1st will always be bittersweet—a day of both celebration and sorrow, as it marks both their wedding anniversary and the date of his abduction. This dual significance adds an emotional layer to their relationship, making their story all the more poignant.

By the end of *Abduction Chronicles*, you might find yourself reflecting on the author's intentions—was it to inform, entertain, or terrify? As the final chapter closes, his purpose becomes clear, adding depth and meaning to the narrative, leaving you with a story that's as thought-provoking as it is captivating.

In all, Banigbe's tale is a rollercoaster of emotions—one that pulls you in with its intensity, surprises you with its humor, and leaves you contemplating long after you've turned the last page.

Titilade Oyemade

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.

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WEEKENDER

MOVIE REVIEWS

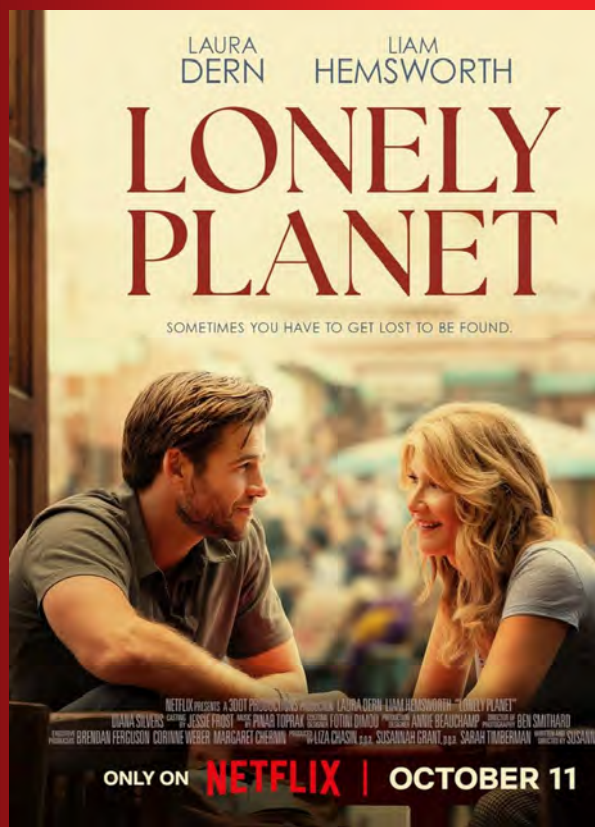
AMBULANCE (2022)

If you haven't had the time to catch this amazing movie on Netflix, I really don't know what you are waiting for, I knew from the very beginning it was going to be an exciting one, although it felt like what I had seen before I was happy to watch it again. Will Sharp was a very hard-working young man who had left the army to start up a family. He was married and had a very beautiful daughter who was only a few months old, but had a very serious terminal illness that required immediate surgery that will cost thousands of dollars, which his medical plan couldn't cover he tried all he could and had one last person to go to, his brother who he clearly never agreed with his life style. His brother had agreed that they should meet and on that faithful morning, his brother pleaded with him to join them on their last mission which will be to rob a bank and cart away will millions of dollars, this will make them rich forever and help him pay his daughters bill seamlessly. Well Will was stranded and helpless he really had no choice here if he was to save his daughter immediately and this was when the movie started, you will need to watch the entire movie to see how the cops chased these guys round the entire city and how it all ended, fantastic movie I must say, do check it out. The 136mins action, thriller movie was directed by Michael Bay they featured actors like Eisa Gonzalez, Jake Gyllenhaal, Garret Dillahunt, Olivia Stambouliah, A Martinez, Jackson White, Jamie McBride, Wale, Yahya Abdul- Mateen II, Devan Chandler Long and many more.



LONELY PLANET (2024)

Searching a simple romantic movie to jump on this weekend, then you might want to try this brand-new movie out. Katherine Loewe was a matured renowned writer, she who was working on a new book and got stuck. She decided to go on a book written retreat to Morocco, hoping it will help her complete the book, on getting there she didn't want to be disturbed at all as she wanted her time alone to concentrate and focus on her new book. Along the line there was this young handsome charming man who came on the retreat with his girlfriend, but for some weird reason, they just couldn't get along anymore and he will find himself spending more and more time with Katherine at her quiet spots, we'll you will need to watch the entire movie to see how they both found love in the most unexpected place and way, find out if she also completed her book or got distracted. The 96m Romantic drama movie was directed by Susannah Grant, they featured actors like Laura Dern, Liam Hemsworth, Diana Silvers, Heeba Shah, Rachida Brakni, Ben Youcef, Adriano Giannini e.t.c



BOXER (2024)

I have started this movie twice and still couldn't complete it, but I guess I have to tell the story to the point I understand, Eryk Kulm is a young, vibrant, determined young man, who had exceptionally boxing skills, but really needed a fresh start. He had an amazing wife who was very supportive in helping him chase his dreams, they fled communist Poland to purchase his dreams; in becoming the greatest boxer in history, this changed his life and that of his family in a positive way forever. The 150m drama movie was directed by Mitha Okorn, they featured actors like Adam Worknowicz, Eryk Kulm, Eryk Lubos, Arianna Chlebicka, Wakering Gorobets, Marcus Jakus, Jack Poniedziałek etc.



Linda Ochugbua

WEEKEND QUOTES



1

Giving back to yourself can be committing to stay away from angerWhispersbyTEN

2

Turn your hurt to progress and you will hug yourself for it ...WhispersbyTEN

3

The best way to destroy deprivation is to go ahead and achieve more than they had said no or you won't be able to do WhispersbyTEN

4

Run in pursuit; walking doesn't demonstrate pursuit WhispersbyTEN