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CITY OF CITIES: WHERE TASTE RULES AT HEINEKEN LAGOS FASHION WEEK 2026



INTERVIEW

"Movement Is a Universal Language" — Boladapo Abdul on Globalizing African Pilates



LIFESTYLE

Taste of Reims in Lagos: 260yrs Champagne Lanson enters Nigeria, Mastering Art of Pairings

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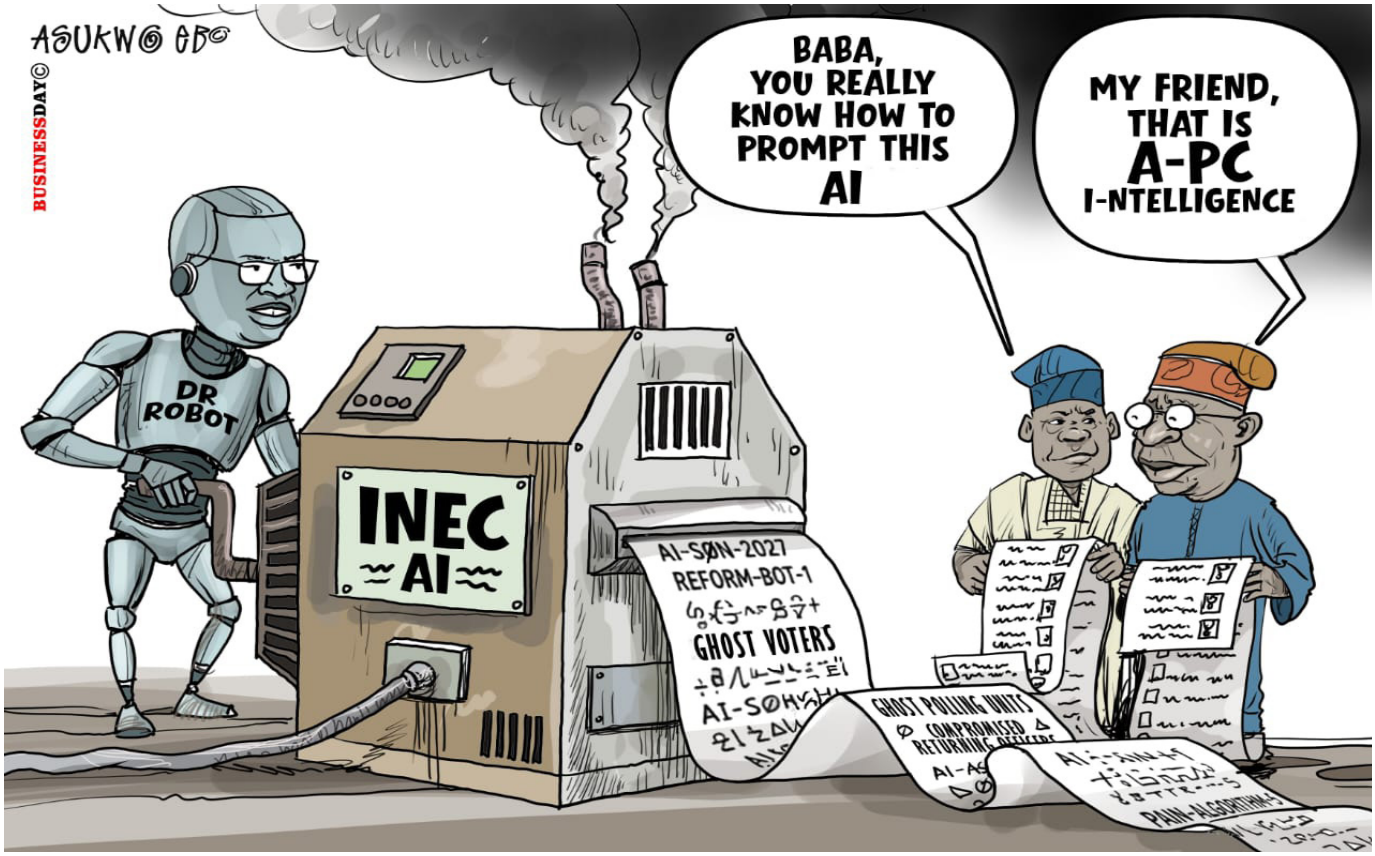
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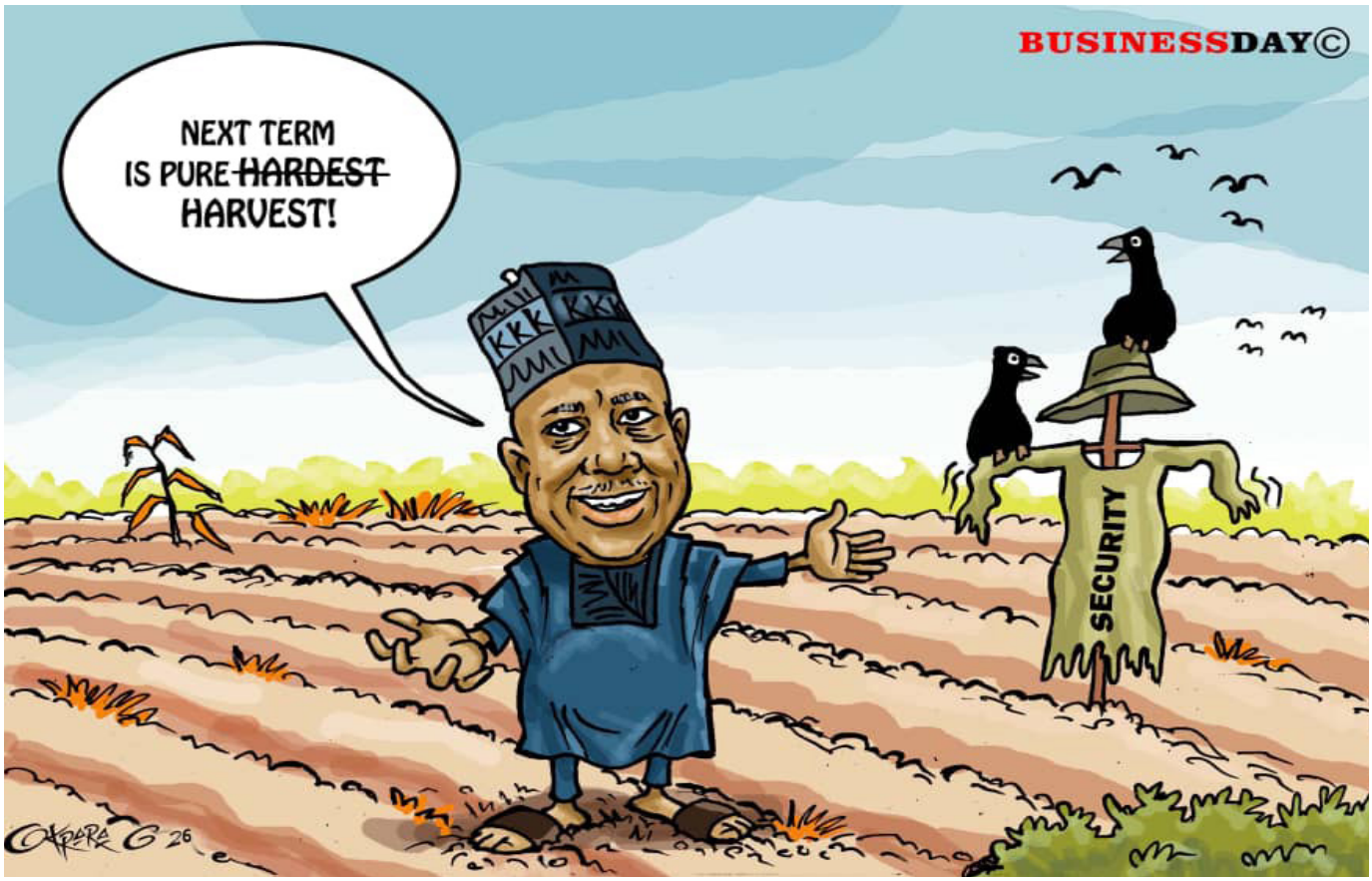


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SECURITY

CITY OF CITIES: WHERE TASTE RULES AT HEINEKEN LAGOS FASHION WEEK 2026





Heineken Lagos Fashion Week unfolded over three days, from Thursday, October 29, to Saturday, October 31, 2026, bringing together fashion, culture and creative expression, with Saturday marking the culmination of the experience. The iconic Federal Palace Hotel in Victoria Island came alive with youthful energy, colourful apparels and sounds that got people dancing late into the night.

Against the serene, dark backdrop of the Lagos Lagoon, the atmosphere was electric with clinking glasses, pulsating basslines, colourful fashion and vibrant conversations bringing the venue to life.

Lagos has long refused to be defined by a single narrative. It is a metropolis of hyper-contrasts: an energetic grid where heritage adire techniques seamlessly meet avant-garde tailoring, and where street-level hustle transforms overnight into global luxury. It is, in every sense, a “City of Cities”, a melting pot of subcultures, neighbourhoods, and artistic expressions.

It was against this backdrop that Heineken Lagos Fashion Week 2026 (HLFW26) came to a memorable close, bringing two motif’s, Heineken’s City of Cities: Where Taste Rules and Lagos Fashion Week’s CRAFTED.

Over A Decade of Distilling Style: The Eleven-Year Partnership

To understand the magnitude of what unfolded at the Federal Palace Hotel, one must look back over the past eleven years. A decade ago, fashion weeks across the continent often struggled for structural permanence. Enter Heineken.

Over the years, Heineken’s involvement has extended from brand visibility to supporting creative expression, collaborations and experiences that have contributed to the evolution of Lagos Fashion Week.

The eleven-year partnership between Heineken and Lagos Fashion Week represents one of the most sustained, culturally resonant corporate investments in African creative infrastructure.

Through a decade of shifting economic tides, Heineken’s steady presence has provided local designers with a stable, world-class platform to project their voices to international buyers, editors, and global connoisseurs.







What began as an ambitious local showcase has grown into an important platform on the international fashion calendar. “When you look at how Nigerian designers have moved from local boutiques to global luxury stockists, you cannot separate that trajectory from the stability provided by over a decade-long anchor partnership,” observed one senior fashion editor on the sidelines of the Heineken x This Is Us show. “Heineken believed in the commercial and artistic viability of Nigerian taste long before the rest of the world caught on.”

The Ethos of CRAFTED: Intentionality Meets Heritage

This year’s overarching curatorial theme, CRAFTED, served as a timely manifesto for an industry reflecting on its future. In an era dominated by fast fashion and ephemeral digital trends, CRAFTED called for a return to intentionality, sustainability, and deep-rooted Nigerian artistry.

On the runway, this philosophy was front and centre. Designers showcased collections where time-honored artisanal techniques were repurposed for modern, global living.

Handwoven aso-oke was transformed into structured blazers, intricate beadwork was reimagined in contemporary eveningwear, and plant-based dyes and upcycled fabrics featured in resort-inspired designs .

Intricate beadwork from southwestern guilds re-imagined as liquid-like evening wear. Plant-based dyes and upcycled fabrics crafted into architectural resort wear.

The garments presented during the Heineken x This Is Us runway were not merely clothing; they were physical narratives of patience and pride. Every stitch celebrated the human hand, directly aligning with Heineken’s own brand ethos, where patience, precise brewing techniques, and natural ingredients come together to yield a world-class experience.In Lagos, taste is not an abstract concept. It is deliberate and fiercely individualistic.

The HLFW26 Runway and Lounge Experience

The fashion elite arrived in full force. The red carpet at the Federal Palace Hotel was a masterclass in personal style, illustrating why Lagos is a city where taste rules.

The Heineken x This Is Us runway brought fluid, resort-inspired silhouettes designed for the global traveller. Flowing silk kaftans, sharp linen suits, and modern footwear effortlessly captured the breezy sophistication of coastal Lagos living.

Between runway shows, the social epicenter of the night was undeniably the Heineken Lounge.

Designed as a lush, elevated sanctuary, the lounge offered an exclusive space where designers, models, cultural archivists, and international guests converged. Here, amidst ambient lighting and signature green accents, guests enjoyed chilled Heineken while connecting with designers, creatives and fellow fashion enthusiasts. .

As the final runway model exited to thunderous applause, the energy shifted seamlessly into the legendary Heineken Studio After Party. If the runway is where Lagos showcases its sophistication, the after-party is where the city unleashes its raw, unfiltered joy. Afro-house beats, live DJ sets, and celebratory toasts carried the crowd deep into the night, cementing HLFW26 as the premier social event of the year.



Heineken Studio: A Playground of Innovation

While the runway celebrated fashion and craftsmanship, Heineken Studio introduced a different experience altogether. Making its Nigerian debut, the brand's Playground of Innovation invited guests to explore new ways of serving and experiencing lager.
Stepping into Heineken Studio, guests were introduced to an experience that brought experimentation, taste and personal creativity together. Making its Nigerian debut, Heineken's Playground of Innovation offered a fresh perspective on how lager could be served and enjoyed, inviting guests to discover something different from the familiar Heineken experience.

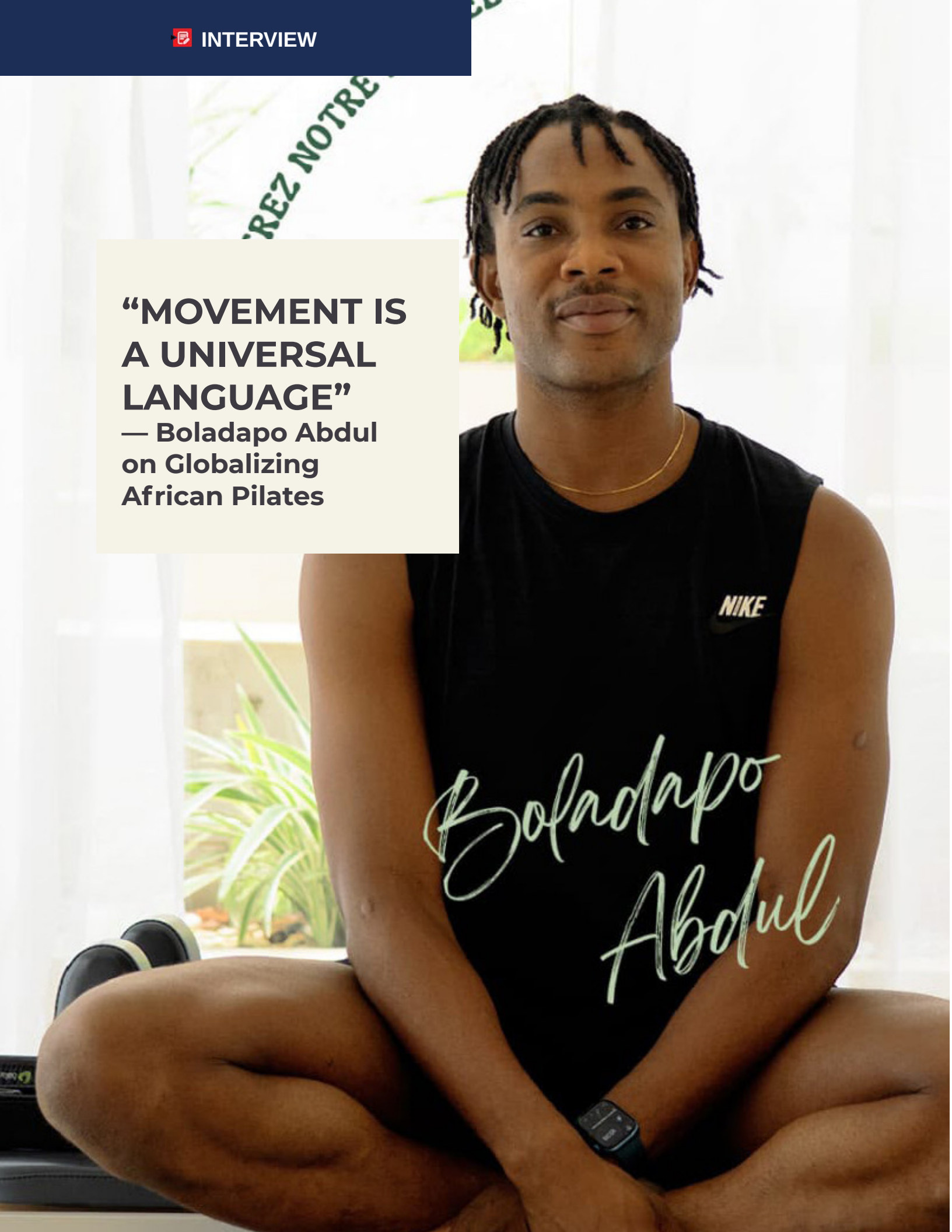
One of the highlights was Foam Infusions, which introduced two distinctive flavour options: Aperol and Espresso.
Guests had the opportunity to explore these unexpected combinations, discovering how different flavour profiles could introduce a new dimension to their favourite lager. It was an interesting expression of the Studio's philosophy of experimentation, where even the most familiar experiences could be reimagined.

The exploration extended to a personalised can-painting experience, where guests transformed Heineken cans into individual works of art, reflecting their creativity and personal style. The Studio also featured an interactive photo area, providing a space for attendees to capture their moments and share in the experience.
Together, these elements brought Heineken Studio's Playground of Innovation to life, giving guests the freedom to explore new tastes, express their individuality and experience the brand in unexpected ways.

The Legacy of City of Cities

As the lights dimmed over this years Heineken Lagos Fashion Week and the final guests dispersed into the Lagos night, one truth remained undeniable: Lagos does not follow global trends; it sets them.

With over a decade of unwavering support, Heineken has done more than sponsor a fashion week, it has provided a canvas for a continent's creative renaissance.
Through its celebration of Nigerian craftsmanship and the introduction of Heineken Studio, the brand continues to prove why it remains at the heart of lifestyle culture.
Lagos remains a tapestry of infinite voices, bold expressions, and unapologetic style. It is a city of hustle, a city of dreams, and a city of art. Above all, as Heineken Lagos Fashion Week 2026 clearly demonstrated, it is a City of Cities: Where Taste Rules.



“MOVEMENT IS A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE”

— Boladapo Abdul on Globalizing African Pilates



In a fitness culture increasingly obsessed with rapid trends and high-intensity sweat sessions, Boladapo Abdul stands out as a voice of intentionality, precision, and deep-rooted discipline. A former contemporary dancer turned internationally sought-after Pilates instructor and movement educator, Abdul has spent nearly a decade refining the delicate balance between classical technique and modern functional movement.

Having trained under the prestigious Pilates Academy and currently advancing his studies with BASI Pilates in Cape Town, Abdul's expertise spans the Reformer, Mat, Barre, Cadillac, and MOTR. But his true mastery lies in his ability to translate movement into a universal dialect. From his primary base in Lagos to studios in Libreville, Dakar, Abidjan, and Cape Town, Abdul has built a reputation for delivering intelligent, challenging, and deeply transformative classes that honor the individual body above all else.

In this interview with Lehlé Baldé, Abdul opens up about his serendipitous transition from contemporary dance to the Pilates studio, the misconceptions holding people back from the discipline, navigating cross-cultural teaching environments across Africa, and his ambitious vision to help establish an interconnected network of African movement educators.

What first drew you to Pilates, and what made you decide to pursue it professionally in 2018?

I didn't find Pilates, Pilates found me through one of my amazing mentors. I had just finished my NYSC service year after university. Even while I was in school, I always knew I wasn't going to fit into the corporate world. I'm not particularly a fan of too many rules, or all the playing dress up that comes with corporate life.

A friend contacted me and asked if I would be interested in becoming a yoga instructor. At that point, I had only ever practised yoga from YouTube, but because of my contemporary ballet background, I thought, "Sure, I can do this." I watched a few more YouTube videos and went for an interview at a studio in Lagos.

About three minutes into showing them what I had scribbled down from YouTube, they stopped me. They told me they could tell I wasn't a yoga instructor and, interestingly, they didn't want me to teach yoga.

They wanted me to teach Pilates. Before that meeting, I had never even heard of Pilates.
I started my first Pilates training, which lasted almost six months from January to May 2018. During the training, I felt like I was back in my dancing days. I remember thinking, if I could pursue dance as a career, then this is close enough to that for me to do for the rest of my life. I remember teaching my first class in May 2018 and thinking, "They're about to be sick of me." laughs. And here we are, more than eight years later.

How has your training with Pilates Academy, and now BASI, shaped the way you teach?

My first formal training with Pilates Academy was in 2020, during the post COVID period. It was such a beautiful and knowledge filled experience that I told myself I would never stop learning in this profession.

I'm working with the human body, so I believe I have a responsibility to constantly update my knowledge and understand more.

That training was mostly online, during what I like to call the Zoom era, but while I was doing it, I knew I needed more. Pilates is very hands on, and there are certain things you simply cannot fully learn through online tutoring.

Fast forward to this year, I enrolled with BASI Pilates in Cape Town because I wanted that physical, hands on experience with some of the most respected teachers in the industry.

The BASI training was challenging because I had to be open to questioning and, in some cases, unlearning things I had believed for years as an instructor. There were many similarities with what I had previously learnt, but there were also significant differences.

Ultimately, it made me even more interested in clinical Pilates and much more intentional about how I teach. It reinforced something I have always believed: you have to work with the individual body in front of you rather than trying to force every body into the same movement.

You blend a classical foundation with contemporary movement. How do you strike that balance?

We are moving into an era where people sometimes move away from the original Pilates exercises, create reformer workouts and simply call them Pilates.
For me, continuing my education and constantly going back to my books helps me stay rooted in the original Pilates work. My goal is to create contemporary movement while maintaining a classical foundation.

With every movement I create and share on Instagram, other instructors can usually recognise the classical movement that inspired it. That is important to me because I want my work to evolve without losing its foundation.

I don't think contemporary Pilates has to mean abandoning the principles and vocabulary that came before us. For me, it is about understanding the foundation deeply enough to be able to create from it.

You've taught in Lagos, Libreville, Dakar, Abidjan and Cape Town. What did those experiences teach you?

The beautiful thing about these experiences is that I realised I can teach almost anywhere in the world, irrespective of the language people speak.

Movement is a universal language.

The space and environment might be different, but I never felt like I was teaching a completely different demographic. Of course, it might take a couple of classes for clients to get used to my teaching style, but the transition between countries has been surprisingly fluid.

The only time I really noticed I wasn't in Lagos was when I stepped outside the classroom, or when I had to teach completely in French. laughs

How do you adapt your teaching to different cultures and client expectations?

Like I said in the previous question, movement is a universal language.

From my first year of teaching, I understood something important: people might love Pilates for its physical, clinical and strengthening benefits, but they also want to have a good workout and enjoy themselves while doing it.

In Lagos, I can be very witty with my clients. There is a lot of banter, and that is very much part of who I am as an instructor.

Teaching in French speaking countries taught me to be a little more conscious of how I communicate. Something that might come across as playful banter with an English speaking client could potentially be interpreted differently across another culture or language. So I still keep my wit, because there is no me without my wit and banter, but I have learnt to adapt it in a way that remains respectful and doesn't cross into being offensive.

Regardless of culture, though, I have found that clients everywhere have one major expectation: they want a good workout.

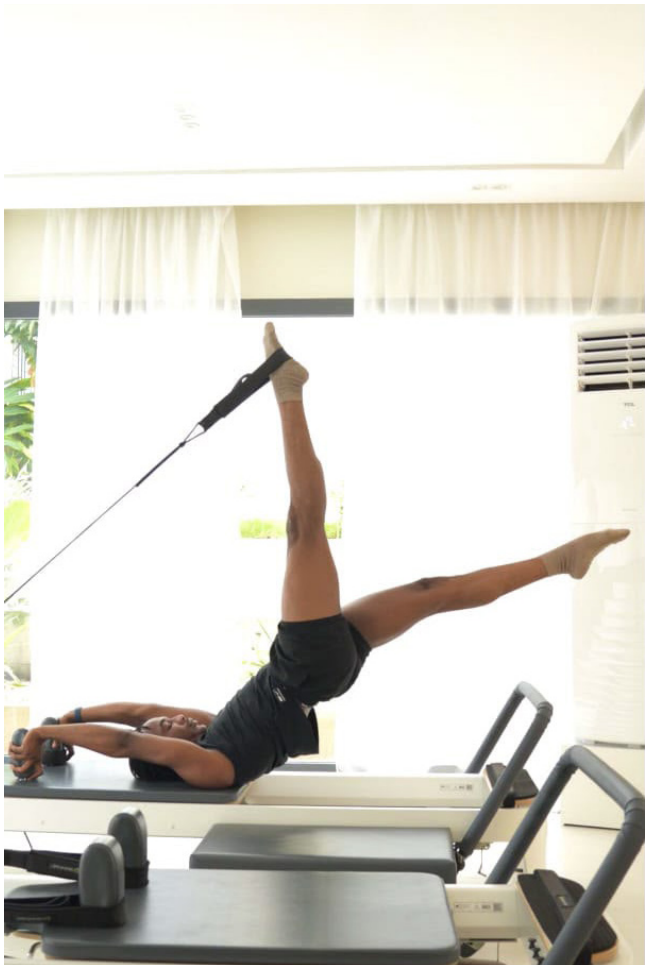
Those 50 minutes where they can disconnect from everything happening outside the studio make people genuinely happy. So I want my classes to be more than just exercise. I want them to be a fun space that people look forward to.

Life be lifing sometimes, and we all need somewhere to breathe. smiles

You describe Pilates as more than a workout. What does it offer people beyond physical fitness?

A lot of my clients don't come to Pilates simply for the workout.

Beyond the health and rehabilitation benefits, one of the most rewarding parts of teaching is hearing clients tell me that they no longer feel the back pain they had been living with, or that they can move their shoulders or other parts of their body in ways they couldn't before.



Sometimes clients come in with old injuries or areas of their bodies that have bothered them for years, and gradually they begin to feel better without even realising how much progress they are making.

Those moments make me feel like I'm performing little miracles sometimes. laughs

But beyond the physical benefits, I think Pilates gives people an opportunity to put some of the weight they are carrying down for a moment.

When my clients come into my class, they know they are going to work, but they are also going to breathe, laugh, move and disconnect from everything happening outside that room.

Sometimes that is just as important as the workout itself.

What misconceptions about Pilates do you encounter most often?

There are so many misconceptions, but two bother me the most.

The first is that Pilates is only for women. People sometimes forget that Pilates was created by Joseph Pilates, a man, and that his early work was heavily associated with rehabilitation and physical conditioning.

The second is the idea that Pilates isn't a "real workout" because someone only does it once a week or on their rest days.

I always tell anyone who cares to listen that Pilates should be treated like any other form of training. You can combine it with other workouts, but if you want to experience its full benefits, consistency matters.

Personally, I recommend incorporating Pilates into your routine at least three times a week, depending on your overall training programme.

Doing Pilates once a week and expecting to experience everything it has to offer? You dey do yourself, no be me. laughs

Alongside padel, Pilates has become one of the fastest growing fitness movements in Nigeria. What do you believe is driving that growth, and is it a passing trend or here to stay?

I have actually only played padel once or twice, despite working in a space where we have a padel court. laughs

But from my observation, I think padel is here to stay. I have seen how obsessed and competitive people become with the game. People take their padel sessions seriously, and I think that is part of what makes it different.

I also see an interesting relationship between the two. Someone might play padel for cardio and then come to Pilates to strengthen, improve mobility and build strength from the deeper stabilising muscles outward.

That combination is valuable because fitness shouldn't only be about developing the muscles we can see. We also need to develop the muscles responsible for stability, control and efficient movement.

I have watched Pilates grow globally over the years. There was a time when people would ask me what I did for a living and I would have to explain Pilates to them over and over again.

Now, when you tell someone you are a Pilates instructor, they immediately understand what you mean, and sometimes they even associate it with celebrities and lifestyle.

If Pilates ever stops being a trend, instructors like me who were here before this current wave will still be here. We started teaching Pilates because we genuinely have a passion for it, not because it was trendy.



What role do you see yourself playing in the growth of Pilates in Nigeria and across Africa?

smiles I think I'm already playing that role, to be honest, not just in Nigeria or Africa but around the world.

It is becoming increasingly rare to see instructors whose work remains authentic without becoming overly modernised. As instructors, we recognise those differences, and we know the people who are genuinely committed to the work.

A few years ago, a studio owner in Ghana and I tried to bring together some instructors we knew across Africa to create a networking platform, something that could eventually become a professional body for Pilates instructors on the continent.

It wasn't successful at the time because there simply weren't as many instructors as there are today.

Now that the Pilates community is growing so rapidly, I think it is something we could revisit.

I actually need to pitch the idea to her again. We need a Pilates convention or instructors' retreat in Africa. laughs

I would love to contribute to creating a stronger community of instructors, sharing knowledge and creating opportunities for education across the continent.

Where would you like to see your work in the next five years?

To begin with, I'm grateful to God because I honestly didn't see myself here a few years ago.

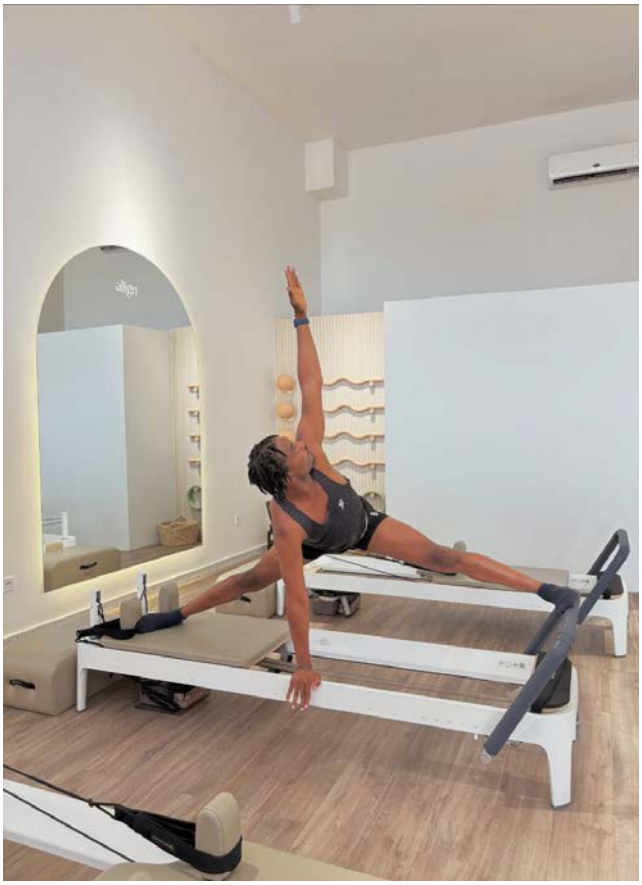
The firm decision to travel the world and leave my footprints on the Pilates sands of time only really came to me in January 2025. I'm the kind of person who, once an idea drops into my mind, prays about it, and starts noticing everything around me nudging me in that direction, I go for it.

In the next five years, I see myself being a serious part owner of a Pilates studio and becoming faculty at a prestigious Pilates academy somewhere in the world.

I have always wanted to teach beyond the studio floor, to contribute to education and help shape the next generation of instructors.

At the same time, I still want to travel the world as a guest instructor, teach workshops, train instructors and continue leaving my footprints in different Pilates communities around the world.

Ultimately, I don't just want to teach Pilates. I want to contribute to the industry that gave me a career, a community and a life I never imagined for myself.





TASTE OF REIMS IN LAGOS: 260YRS CHAMPAGNE LANSON ENTERS NIGERIA, MASTERING ART OF PAIRINGS



There is a quiet art to savoring life's finest moments, one that requires no fanfare, only an appreciation for true craft. Bringing over 260 years of French heritage, time-honored craftsmanship, and refined elegance to Nigeria's luxury landscape, Champagne Lanson has officially established its presence in the country.

For cultivated hosts and connoisseurs who naturally value character over display, the arrival of Maison Lanson is a toast to enduring distinction, a reminder that true prestige is simply carried, never announced.

Founded in 1760 in the historic heart of Reims, France, Champagne Lanson stands as one of the world's most revered Champagne Houses.

For over two and a half centuries, the Maison has artfully cultivated its distinctive signature style, celebrated globally for its vital energy, vibrant fruitiness, and inimitable freshness.

This timeless allure is built upon three unwavering pillars:

The meticulous selection of grapes from renowned Grand Cru and Premier Cru vineyards.

A traditional vinification philosophy that preserves the original principles of Champagne-making.

An extended, peaceful maturation process deep within its historic cellars.

Resting fifteen meters underground in Reims, these cool, quiet cellars house a breathtaking collection of vintage Champagnes dating back to 1904.

More than a simple repository of rare liquids, the historic vaults preserve centuries of human passion, a living sanctuary dedicated to the legacy of generations who have mastered the delicate art of Champagne.



An Unforgettable Evening of Taste and Distinction

To celebrate its official entry into the market, the House recently hosted an exclusive wine tasting during the Champagne Lanson Brand Partners' Experience on November 3, 2026.

The atmospheric gathering brought together a select crowd of top restaurant managers, industry stakeholders, and high-society tastemakers.
Throughout the relaxed evening, guests sank into the experience, completely captivated by the pours. Conversations flowed effortlessly, with attendees unable to stop talking about the exquisite freshness, remarkable balance, and vibrant, appealing mouthfeel of each expression.

The tasting was thoughtfully curated to showcase how beautifully each bottle harmonizes with fine food:

Le Black Création (Brut): As the House's flagship cuvée, Le Black Création embodies over 260 years of mastery, with each edition numbered to reflect the exact count of harvests since 1760. Its vibrant, fresh character was paired alongside rich Smoked Salmon & Cream Cheese and bite-sized Mini Cheeseburgers.







Le Rosé Création: Crafted under the watchful eye of Cellar Master Hervé Dantan, this expression enchants with its delicate salmon-pink hue and a rich bouquet of red fruits and bright citrus. Its elegant, fruity notes were delightfully complemented by local and international flavors: Chicken Suya and Sweet Chili Prawns.

Le Blanc de Blancs: Introduced by Hervé Dantan following his appointment in 2013, this pure expression of carefully selected Crus from Côte des Blancs and Montagne de Reims offers pure finesse, precision, and a crisp mineral finish. It found its perfect match in light, crisp dishes: Shrimp Cocktail and a refreshing Chicken Quinoa Salad.

Le White Label Sec: Smooth, harmonious, and invitingly soft, this cuvée offers a creamy texture balanced by a gentle sweetness. Designed for a more relaxed, rounded palate, it was served alongside savory Blue Cheese and delicate Petit Cakes and Tarts.

A New Chapter in Nigerian Hospitality
As Champagne Lanson steps into this exciting new chapter in Nigeria, it brings a long-term commitment to building meaningful connections through strategic partnerships, immersive brand experiences, and thoughtful engagement.

Whether enriching intimate gatherings, elevating luxury gifting, or setting the standard across fine dining and premium hospitality, Champagne Lanson aims to become a seamless part of the moments that matter most. Rooted firmly in the values that have guided it since 1760, heritage, craftsmanship, crisp freshness, and understated elegance, the Maison invites Nigeria's discerning palates to slow down, pour a glass, and taste the legacy.

TOP 10 COUNTRIES WITH THE SMARTEST STUDENTS IN 2026

CHISOM MICHAEL



Students in East Asia dominate the global education rankings, with China, Singapore, Chinese Taipei and Macao occupying the first four positions in a ranking of countries and economies with the highest-performing students in 2026.

The ranking is based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2025 results, released on September 8, 2026.

The assessment examined the academic performance of 15-year-old students in mathematics, science and reading across 91 countries and economies. More than 760,000 students participated in the assessment, representing approximately 33 million young people worldwide.

The ranking uses the average scores across the three subjects, with each subject carrying equal weight. Visual Capitalist calculated the overall averages rather than using an official OECD country ranking.

The ranking also shows the performance gap between education systems across the three subjects. East Asian countries and economies occupy six of the first eight positions, while Estonia, the United Kingdom and New Zealand represent Europe and Oceania in the top 10.

However, the results do not establish that students in one country are inherently more intelligent than those in another. They measure performance within participating education systems and reflect factors such as access to education, teaching, learning conditions and socioeconomic circumstances.

For governments, the findings offer an opportunity to examine what works in education and where investment is needed to improve learning outcomes.

Although often described as a measure of student intelligence, PISA assesses how well students apply their knowledge and skills to real-life situations. Its findings offer insight into how education systems prepare young people for further education, employment and everyday challenges.

Here are the 10 countries and economies that lead the 2026 ranking.

1. B-S-J-Z (China) – 578.7 points

China's participating regions, Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang, occupy the first position with an average score of 578.7 points across the three subjects.

The regions recorded 612 points in mathematics, 597 in science and 527 in reading.

Their mathematics and science results placed them ahead of every other education system in the ranking. The figures, however, represent four regions and should not be interpreted as the performance of students across the whole of China.

2. Singapore – 552.7 points

Singapore ranks second with an average of 552.7 points. Its students scored 563 in mathematics, 560 in science and 535 in reading.

The country recorded the highest reading score among the 10 entries and ranked behind only China's participating regions in the overall assessment.

Its performance across all three subjects places it among the leading education systems in the 2025 PISA assessment.

3. Chinese Taipei – 531.3 points

Chinese Taipei takes third place with an average score of 531.3 points. Its students recorded 546 points in mathematics, 540 in science and 508 in reading.

The results show that the education system performed above the 500-point mark in all three subjects, securing a position among the top three entries in the overall ranking.

4. Macao (China) – 530.3 points

Macao ranks fourth with an average of 530.3 points, narrowly behind Chinese Taipei. Students in the region scored 549 in mathematics, 541 in science and 501 in reading.

Mathematics was its strongest subject, while its reading score placed it just above the 500-point mark.

5. Japan – 522 points

Japan occupies fifth place with an average score of 522 points. Its students recorded 538 in science, 525 in mathematics and 503 in reading.

The results place Japan among the five education systems with the highest combined scores. Science was its strongest subject, with reading recording the lowest score across the three assessment areas.

6. Korea – 516.3 points

Korea ranks sixth with an average of 516.3 points. Its students scored 526 in science, 522 in mathematics and 501 in reading.

The country recorded scores above 500 in all three subjects, maintaining its position among the leading education systems in the assessment.

7. Estonia – 511.3 points

Estonia is the first European country in the ranking, taking seventh place with an average of 511.3 points.

Its students scored 527 in science, 508 in mathematics and 499 in reading. Science accounted for its highest result, while reading fell one point short of the 500-point mark.

8. Hong Kong (China) – 499.3 points

Hong Kong ranks eighth with an average of 499.3 points. Its mathematics score of 522 was its highest result, followed by science at 496 and reading at 480.

The figures show a difference between its mathematics performance and its results in reading and science.

9. United Kingdom – 497.7 points

The United Kingdom takes ninth place with an average score of 497.7 points. Students recorded 511 in science, 494 in reading and 488 in mathematics.

Science was the country's strongest subject, while mathematics recorded its lowest score. The United Kingdom remains among the 10 education systems leading the overall ranking.

10. New Zealand – 495.3 points

New Zealand completes the top 10 with an average of 495.3 points. Its students scored 509 in science, 497 in reading and 480 in mathematics.

Science recorded the country's highest result, while mathematics accounted for its lowest. The country secured the final position among the top 10.

AFRIFF 2026: INSIDE THE PREMIERE OF OLIVE NWOSU'S 'LADY'



The 15th edition of the Africa International Film Festival (AFRIFF 2026) kicked off in Lagos with the opening night premiere of Olive Nwosu's feature directorial debut, Lady.

The premiere brought together an array of international stars, Nollywood royalty, cultural icons, and creative executives. Hollywood star Djimon Hounsou joined festival founder Chioma Ude on the carpet as a special guest of honor, alongside acclaimed actor Hakeem Kae-Kazim, director Olive Nwosu, cast members, and a host of filmmakers, actors, and industry heavyweights.

The venue buzzed with excitement as guests gathered to inaugurate the festival under this edition's overarching theme, "Frames of the Future: Africa's Creative Intelligence." High-fashion glamour met artistic anticipation as industry stakeholders, diplomats, and cinema enthusiasts filled the screening hall.

Following international acclaim at the 2026 Sundance Film Festival, where it earned a Special Jury Award and subsequent stops at the Berlinale and London, Lady made its homecoming debut to a receptive home audience.

About the Movie
Set in the restless streets of Lagos, Lady follows a fiercely independent female taxi driver (played by Jessica Gabriel's Ujah) who navigates the city's night economy while transporting a circle of sex workers.





Themes: Economic survival, female autonomy, sisterhood, and resilience.

Nwosu eschews typical polished aerial gloss, capturing Lagos from a grounded, intimate perspective.

Casts include Jessica Gabriel's Ujah, Amanda Oruh, Tinuade Jemiseye, Seun Kuti, and Bucci Franklin.

As the credits rolled, the audience rewarded the film with warm applause. Attendees commended Nwosu's authentic direction and standout performances—particularly Tinuade Jemiseye's portrayal of Sugar.

The premiere established a strong tone for AFRIFF 2026, setting off a week-long slate of over 130 film screenings, industry masterclasses, and the AFRIFF Film & Content Market.

CAN NIGERIAN FASHION SURVIVE LAGOS WEATHER ?

DESTINY CHIEDU



Getting dressed in Lagos is becoming a negotiation between looking good and staying comfortable. An outfit that looks perfect in front of a mirror can become uncomfortable after a few minutes outdoors, particularly when the heat, humidity and long commute begin to take their toll.

For many Nigerians, dressing for the day is no longer just about the occasion, personal style or the latest fashion trends. The weather is becoming an increasingly important consideration, from the fabrics chosen for everyday outfits to the dresses that make spending hours outside more bearable.

The Lagos State Government recently warned residents about possible extreme heat associated with the El Niño climate pattern and the transition into the dry season, advising them to wear lightweight, breathable clothing and avoid prolonged exposure to direct sunlight. The warning has brought renewed attention to a question that goes beyond personal comfort: how well does Nigerian fashion accommodate the climate in which it operates?

Nigeria's fashion industry has built a strong identity around its use of colour, textiles, embellishments and elaborate designs. From Ankara and Adire to lace, Aso-oke and contemporary ready-to-wear collections, clothing often carries cultural and social significance. However, the demands of dressing for weddings, celebrations, workplaces and other occasions can sometimes leave comfort competing with appearance.

The challenge becomes more noticeable in Lagos, where heat and humidity meet long commutes, crowded public transport and outdoor activities. Heavy outfits, multiple layers and tightly fitted garments can make an already uncomfortable day more difficult, particularly for people who spend much of their time outside.

When fabric becomes a fashion decision

Fabric plays a significant role in how clothing feels in hot weather, but its appearance alone does not determine its suitability.

Linen, for instance, is valued for its breathability and ability to allow air to circulate. Lightweight cotton also offers practical options for everyday dressing, although its performance depends on its weight and construction. Heavier cotton garments can retain moisture, while tightly woven or heavily lined synthetic clothing may restrict ventilation.

Polyester, despite its reputation in hot-weather dressing, is not automatically unsuitable. Its performance varies according to how it is manufactured and used. Some technical polyester fabrics are designed to manage moisture and dry quickly, while heavier synthetic garments can become uncomfortable in humid conditions.

This distinction matters for Nigerian fashion, where fabric selection is often as important as the finished design. Ankara and Adire, for example, can work for warm-weather dressing when produced in lighter constructions and designed with enough room for movement and ventilation. The problem is not necessarily the textile itself but how it is used.

Designing for the weather

The question also extends to the designers creating clothes for Nigerian consumers. Fashion collections are influenced by aesthetics, cultural expression, international trends and the demands of particular occasions. Yet the local climate deserves similar consideration.

There are already examples of Nigerian designers exploring lighter materials and more considered production approaches. Vogue's reporting on Lagos designers, including Abiola Olusola, Lisa Folawiyo and Adeju Thompson, documented approaches involving breathable fabrics, local materials and traditional techniques.

Such approaches demonstrate that climate considerations do not necessarily require abandoning the identity of Nigerian fashion. Indigenous textiles, relaxed silhouettes and contemporary design can exist together without sacrificing visual appeal.

However, the wider challenge is making such choices more accessible beyond premium fashion collections. A consumer should not have to choose between an affordable outfit and one that is comfortable enough to wear throughout the day.

The business of dressing comfortably

As consumers become more conscious of what they wear in hot weather, the demand for practical clothing presents an opportunity for fashion businesses.

Brands that pay attention to fabric quality, garment construction and everyday functionality could find room to serve consumers who want clothing that works for both their lifestyles and the climate. This also places greater importance on sourcing suitable textiles and developing collections that are not designed solely around special occasions.

For retailers, the opportunity may lie in offering more lightweight everyday pieces. For designers, it could mean reconsidering fabric combinations, linings and silhouettes. For consumers, it means looking beyond how an outfit appears on a hanger and paying attention to how it feels when worn.

Fashion has always responded to changes in culture, lifestyle and personal expression. As temperatures rise, the Nigerian fashion industry may also have to pay closer attention to the environment in which its clothes are worn.

Looking good should not have to come at the expense of staying comfortable. And perhaps the next important consideration for Nigerian fashion is not just what people want to wear, but what they can comfortably live in.





RECIPE OF THE WEEK: ONUNU

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



Yam and plantain are familiar ingredients in Nigerian kitchens, but in Rivers State, they come together in a dish with a character of its own. Onunu is made by boiling yam and ripe plantain, then pounding them together with palm oil. It is enjoyed in Rivers State and among communities such as the Ijaw and Kalabari.

The ripe plantain gives Onunu a gentle sweetness, while the yam provides its body. Palm oil brings the ingredients together and gives the dish its distinctive colour. Onunu is commonly served with fresh fish stew or catfish pepper soup, which complements its mild sweetness.

INGREDIENTS

1 medium tuber (peeled and cut into chunks or cubes)
2 -3 ripe plantains
1–2 tablespoons red palm oil
Salt to taste

Method

Peel the yam, cut it into chunks and rinse thoroughly. Place the pieces in a pot, cover with water and bring to a boil.

When the yam is partly cooked, add the ripe plantains. Some cooks boil the plantain with its skin on and peel it after cooking. Continue cooking until both the yam and plantain are soft.

Remove the pot from the heat and drain the water. Peel the cooked plantain if it was boiled with the skin on.

Transfer the yam to a clean mortar and pound until it begins to form a smooth, stretchy mass.

Add the cooked plantain and continue pounding until it is evenly incorporated into the yam.

Add the palm oil and salt a little at a time. Continue pounding until the mixture is smooth and the oil is fully combined.

Shape the Onunu and serve warm with fresh fish stew or catfish pepper soup.

2 NEW CAFÉS TO TRY ON LAGOS ISLAND

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



Lagos Island has no shortage of places to get coffee, pastries or a good breakfast, but there is always room for a new café worth knowing about. The city's dining scene continues to welcome new spots, and two of the latest are Roll and Roast in Ikoyi and Cusp Patisserie in Victoria Island.

Both cafés have opened their doors in recent months, bringing their own selection of pastries, breakfast options and drinks to the city's dining scene. If you are looking for somewhere new to have breakfast, catch up with a friend or simply enjoy a cup of coffee, these are two addresses to keep in mind.



Roll and Roast

At 14a, 2nd Avenue, Osborne, Ikoyi, Roll and Roast is one of the newer additions to the neighbourhood, having opened its doors on 20 September 2026. The café brings together coffee, patisserie and freshly made sandwiches, with a drinks menu that stretches beyond the usual coffee options. There is matcha, milkshake, iced tea, fresh juices, tea and smoothies, so whether you are in the mood for something hot, cold or somewhere in between, there is a fair bit to choose from. The patisserie and sandwich selection also makes it worth considering when coffee alone will not do. A budget of N15,000 to N20,000 should give you a starting point for a visit, depending on what you order. Roll and Roast opens daily, from 8 am to 8 pm, including weekends. And if you are someone who likes taking pictures of your coffee or food before getting started, you are welcome to do so. The café allows photography, with the understanding that other guests should not be disturbed in the process.



Cusp Patisserie

Cusp Patisserie has been welcoming diners at 3a Danmole Street, Victoria Island, since 28 July 2026. Beyond its pastries and coffee, the patisserie has an à la carte menu that makes room for a proper breakfast, including Nigerian favourites such as akara and akamu. The menu also features breakfast plates, burgers, wings, fries, sandwiches, toast and salads. For drinks, there is coffee, matcha, juices, tea and wine. This means you can stop in for a pastry and a cup of coffee or make a meal of it with one of the breakfast or lunch options. Takeaway is available, too, for those who would rather not dine in. There are a few things to know before making a reservation. Both dine-in and à la carte dining require reservations, and tables are held for only 15 minutes after the scheduled booking time. Dining slots are allocated two hours, so arriving on time is important. Cusp also has a dress code. Guests are expected to dress in smart, polished casual attire, while overly revealing clothing, bathroom slippers and outfits considered unsuitable for a family-friendly dining environment are not permitted. Photography is allowed, provided it is done discreetly and does not disturb other diners. The patisserie opens from Tuesday to Sunday, between 8 am and 9 pm. There is no fixed budget for a visit, as the final bill depends on what you order from the menu.

POLICE, JUDGES RANK AMONG EIGHT MOST TRUSTED PROFESSIONS IN 2026

CHISOM MICHAEL



Doctors, scientists and teachers rank as the three most trusted professions in 2026, according to the Ipsos Global Trustworthiness Index 2026. The groups recorded net trust scores of 43, 42 and 37 percentage points, respectively, reflecting the confidence people place in those whose work affects their health, knowledge and daily lives.

The findings show that public trust varies across professions, with healthcare and education workers receiving higher scores than several groups in business, finance and public institutions.

The report, which examined attitudes towards 20 professions, was based on a survey of 23,537 online adults across 31 countries. It measured how much confidence people have in different professional groups and highlighted differences in how the public views people working in similar fields.

The results also raise questions about the relationship between professional responsibility and public confidence, particularly for groups whose decisions affect people's safety, finances and access to public services.

Here are the eight most trusted professions in 2026, according to the index.

1. Doctors – 43 percentage points

Doctors rank first among the 20 professions assessed, with a net trust score of 43 percentage points.

Their position reflects the role they play in people's lives, from diagnosing illnesses and providing treatment to advising patients on their health. For many people, doctors are among the first professionals they turn to when facing a health concern.

The trust placed in doctors also comes with responsibility, as patients depend on their knowledge, judgement and medical advice when making decisions about their wellbeing.

2. Scientists – 42 percentage points

Scientists occupy the second position, recording a net trust score of 42 percentage points, just one point behind doctors.

Their ranking highlights the confidence people place in research, evidence and scientific knowledge. Scientists contribute to developments in medicine, technology, agriculture and other areas that influence everyday life.

From vaccine development to climate research, their work helps governments, businesses and individuals understand problems and make decisions based on evidence.

The result places scientists close to doctors, showing the level of confidence associated with professions built around knowledge and research.

3. Teachers – 37 percentage points

Teachers rank third, with a net trust score of 37 percentage points.

Their position reflects the influence of education on individuals and society. Teachers help children and adults acquire knowledge, develop skills and prepare for employment and other responsibilities.

Beyond classroom instruction, they often serve as mentors and guides, influencing how students approach learning and make decisions.

Their ranking also places education professionals among the three groups that lead the global trust index.

4. Armed forces – 16 percentage points

The armed forces rank fourth, recording a net trust score of 16 percentage points.

Their position makes them the highest-ranked group among the public institutions included in the top eight.

Military personnel are responsible for national defence, protecting territorial integrity and responding to security threats. In some countries, they also support emergency operations and humanitarian activities.

However, the score shows a considerable difference between public confidence in the armed forces and the three professions at the top of the ranking.

5. Personal trainers – 10 percentage points

Personal trainers occupy the fifth position, with a net trust score of 10 percentage points.

Their inclusion among the eight most trusted professions highlights the role of fitness and physical wellbeing in people's lives.

Personal trainers help clients develop exercise routines, set fitness goals and maintain physical activity. They also provide guidance on exercise techniques and training programmes.

Although their work differs from that of doctors and scientists, their position places another health-related profession among the leading groups in the index.

6. Tech entrepreneurs – 6 percentage points

Tech entrepreneurs rank sixth, recording a net trust score of six percentage points.
They play a role in developing technology businesses, introducing digital products and creating services that influence how people work, communicate and conduct business.

Their position reflects the public's views of professionals operating in the technology and business sectors.

As technology becomes part of everyday activities, entrepreneurs in the sector continue to influence areas such as financial services, education, healthcare and commerce.

However, their score remains below those recorded by doctors, scientists, teachers and personal trainers.

7. Judges – 5 percentage points

Judges rank seventh, with a net trust score of five percentage points.

Their role in interpreting laws, hearing cases and delivering judgements makes public confidence an important part of the justice system.

People depend on the courts to resolve disputes, protect rights and ensure that legal processes are followed. Confidence in judges therefore matters to the public's perception of fairness and accountability.

Their position in the index shows that trust in the judiciary remains behind confidence in several other professional groups.

8. Police – 5 percentage points

The police complete the list, recording a net trust score of five percentage points, the same score as judges.

Police officers are responsible for maintaining public order, preventing crime, investigating offences and protecting lives and property.

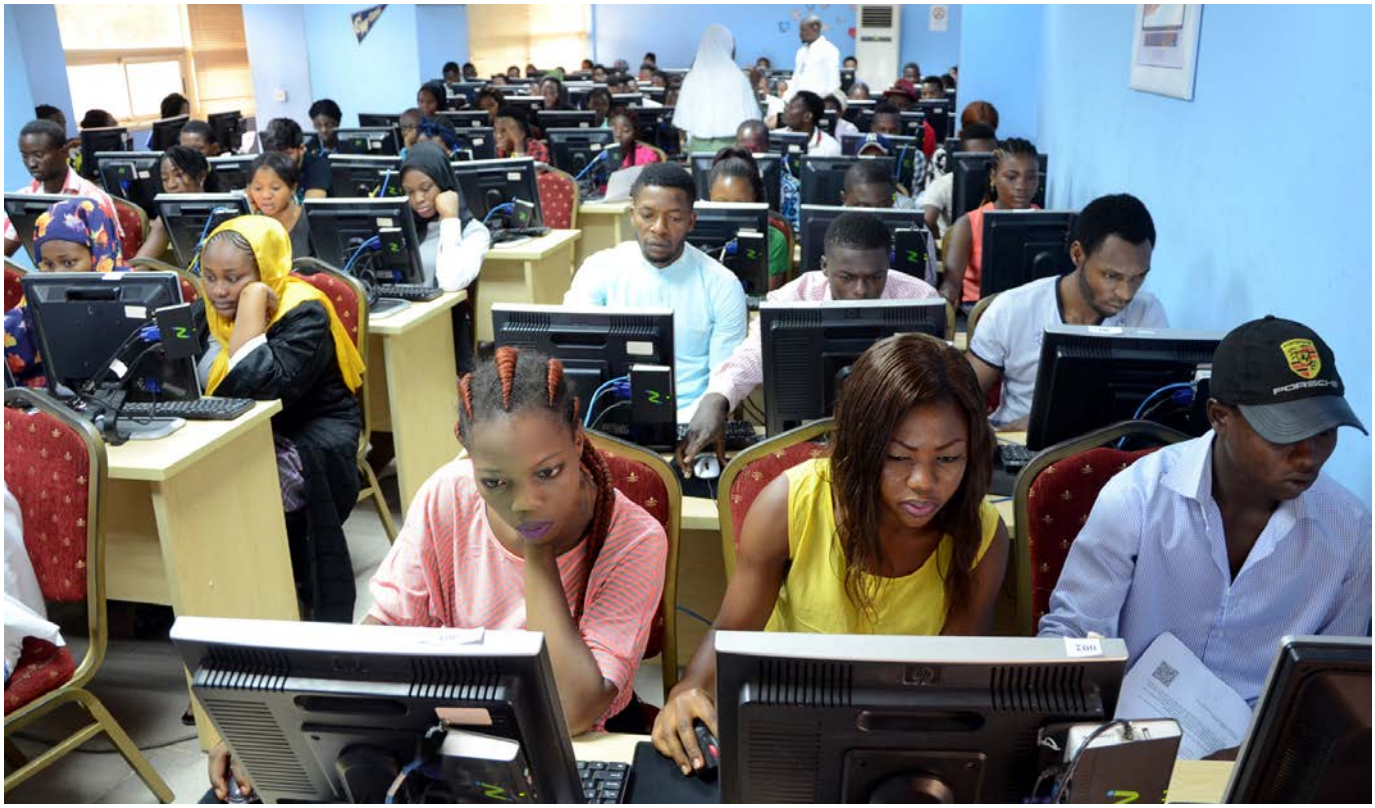
Their work brings them into direct contact with communities, often during situations involving security concerns and disputes.

The shared score with judges places both groups at the bottom of the eight professions assessed in this ranking.

SCHOOLS UNDER PRESSURE: FG'S TOUGH EXAM ACCREDITATION RULES SPARK FEARS

... as FG mandates 75 percent TRCN teacher threshold by Dec.11

DESTINY CHIEDU



Nigeria's private schools are facing a fresh regulatory test as the federal government tightens the screws on examination accreditation and raises the bar for teacher professionalism.

With concerns mounting over the cost, capacity and implications of the new requirements, school proprietors fear that what government presents as a drive to restore standards could become an existential challenge for many institutions.

The pressure has intensified with the directive requiring schools to meet a 75 percent Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN)-certified teacher threshold by December 11.

As stakeholders weigh the implications, questions are emerging over the readiness of private schools, the fate of teachers yet to secure professional certification and the wider impact on access to quality education.

Is this the regulatory push the sector needs, or could the pursuit of higher standards leave many schools struggling to survive?

Orji Kanu, president of the Association for Formidable Educational Development (AFED), emphasised the need for the government to be fair with its policies.

"You don't regulate institutions into debt; rather, you regulate them into thriving and advancement. The teaching profession must be regulated, but not by a necktie policy that will regulate the private sector out of business, bearing in mind that we have over 180 million out-of-school children," he said.



Kanu urged the federal government to learn from Kenya and other countries, where governments augment the cost of schooling, including that of private schools.

“Based on free and compulsory education, which Nigeria claims to run, irrespective of whichever school a child attends, the government pays.

“By so doing, they’re empowering the school to meet whatever demand they are placing on the schools,” he noted.

Besides, he maintained that as far as the Nigerian government’s policy says that there is free and compulsory education for children, at least at the basic level, it means that the government has already planned how to implement that.

“The government must learn to balance its policy; for instance, it can say, let’s start from 25 percent, because this is the first time of implementing it; next year, it can move to 50 percent.

“The government should not jeopardise the school business and push more children out of school because the more they are looking for qualified and certified teachers, the more the school fees become,” he said.

However, Akintoye Hassan, Lagos State NUT chairman, described the policy as a welcome development if what the government means is to ensure the system is dominated by professionals.

“TRCN is to set standards, ensure the profession is dynamic like every other profession, where professionals within the system have guidance.

“We urge the TRCN and the government to come out with programmes and training to equip teachers who are subscribing for licensing; to balance it,” he said.

Gloria Akinsola, a teacher, applauded the policy intention, but decried the 75 percent benchmark, which she said may create hardship for many private and rural schools.

“A phased implementation, such as 50 percent by 2026 and 75 percent by 2027, would be more realistic.

“I support professionalism in teaching, but government should support teachers with subsidised certification and give schools more time to comply,” she emphasised.

Elizabeth Ohaka, proprietress of Redwood Academy, Lagos, said, “It’s the right thing to do even though we’re seeing a lot of scarcity of teachers these days, and with time this move will further escalate.

“I will advise that more time be allotted for the implementation of the policy.”

Christopher Nmeribe, a school owner, emphasised that the policy will force schools that do not have the 75 percent TRCN-certified teachers to look for ways to maneuver accreditation.

“They will register through other schools where supposedly this 75 percent is met; and this will lead to registering more students than the school will carry on the exam day.

“This will cause rowdiness and the whole place will be crowded, which might not allow exams to start at the scheduled time,” he noted.

Recall that the federal government had announced that private and public schools seeking accreditation to present candidates for national examinations will be required to meet a minimum threshold of 75 percent of teachers registered and licensed by TRCN before the end of 2026.

Bukola Dosunmu, coordinator at the Federal Ministry of Education-Government Private Sector Working Group, said, “At the meeting held on September 30, 2026, the following resolutions were reached on the harmonisation of examination timetables and teacher qualification requirements for examination centres.

“Starting in 2027, NECO examinations will be conducted before WAEC, and NECO results will also be released ahead of WAEC results to enable students to pursue their university admissions without unnecessary delays,” Dosunmu said in a statement.

In addition, the statement stated, “Schools accredited as examination centres are required to ensure that at least 75 percent of their teachers are TRCN-licensed by December 11, 2026.

“Compliance will be verified, and the details of schools that meet the requirement will be uploaded to the designated registration portal.

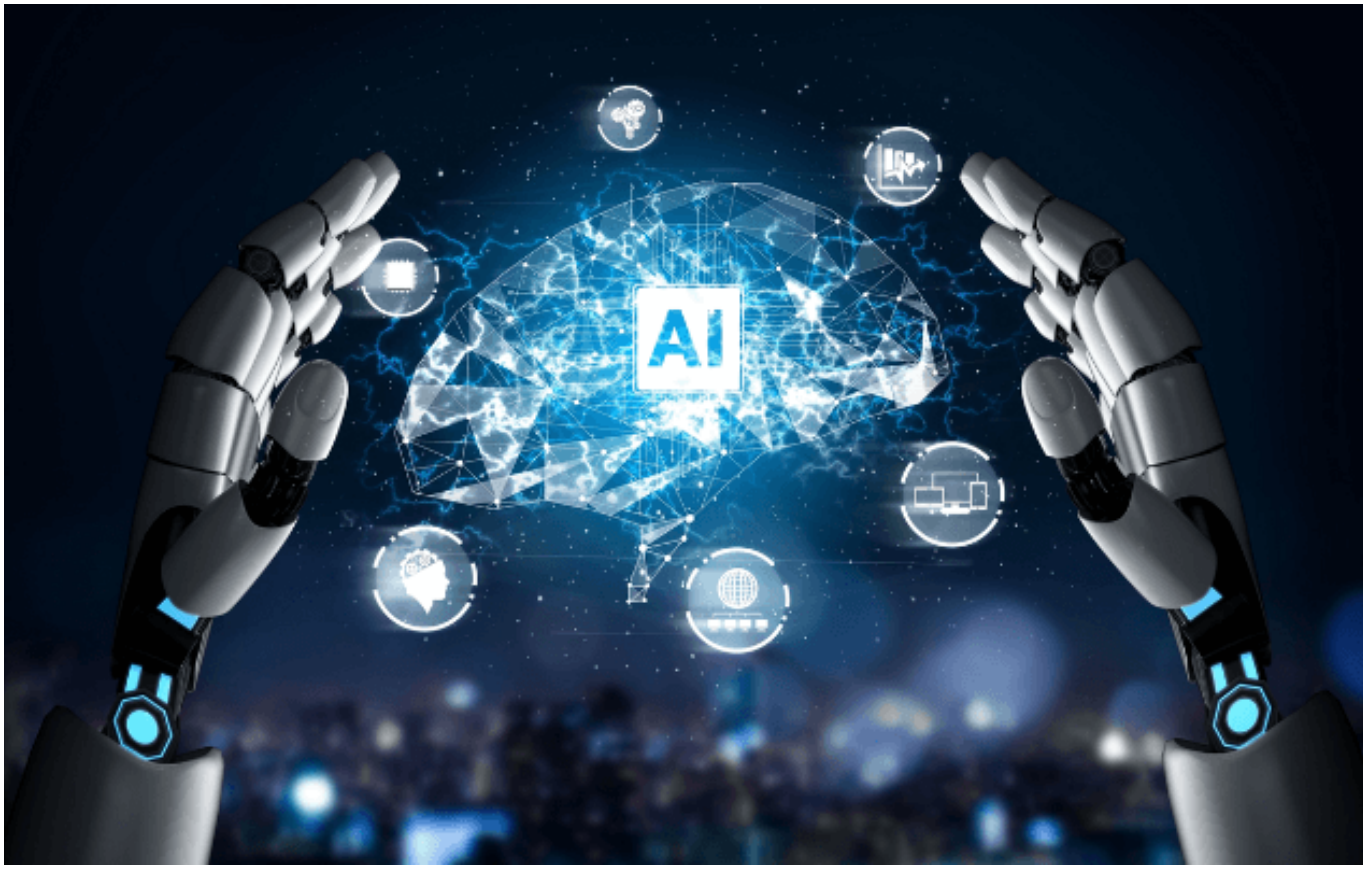
Schools that fail to meet this requirement will not be approved to serve as examination centres for any of the examinations.”

The 75 percent TRCN requirement for schools to be accredited for national examinations is believed to push schools, especially private schools, to employ trained professional teachers, not just anyone.



AI REVOLUTION: WHY NIGERIA MUST RESKILL TEACHERS, NOT REPLACE

CHARLES OGWO



As artificial intelligence (AI) rapidly reshapes the global education landscape, Nigeria faces a defining moment in the future of its classrooms: embrace the technology and prepare teachers for a new era of learning, or risk being left behind.

While concerns persist over the possibility of AI replacing human teachers, education experts argue that the real opportunity lies not in eliminating teachers but in equipping them with the digital skills, knowledge and tools to harness the technology.

As AI-powered learning platforms, automated assessment systems and digital teaching assistants gain ground, the question is no longer whether AI will change education, but how prepared Nigeria's teachers are to lead that transformation.

Isaiah Ogundele, an educationist, noted that if any teacher wants to be relevant in his or her field in the face of AI evolution, he needs upskilling because contemporary students are not analog but versed in Information Technology.

Ogundele said that the government should assist teachers to update themselves by providing them with the opportunity and financial support to run through the training.

"AI should be part of the curriculum from primary to tertiary institutions. Once it is incorporated into the curriculum and scheme, it will definitely bridge the gap before a child graduates.

"We don't need to make it a stand-alone subject because it is still part of IT. AI cannot replace human roles in the teaching industry because when you are using some apps such as ChatGPT, Nino Banana, Gemini, and so on, it's what you input as your prompt that AI will bring as your result," he said.

Speaking about teacher training, Tunji Alausa, the minister of education, on a Channels TV live programme revealed that the federal government has upskilled about 50,000 teachers to ensure their professional development digitally. In its efforts to modernise teaching and ensure professional



standards, the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), promised to develop an AI-powered lesson system to generate classroom resources for teachers.

Ronke Soyombo, the registrar of TRCN, earlier in September, explained that the standardised lesson plans would support teachers and provide the foundation for an AI-powered system capable of generating classroom materials.

Jessica Osuere, the chief executive officer at RubiesHub Educational Services, noted that Nigerian teachers need AI literacy, digital competence, critical thinking, creativity and the ability to use AI tools to personalise learning, develop instructional materials and assess students' progress.

"Teachers need to have the skills to distinguish reliable AI-generated information from misinformation; and must retain the human skills of empathy, mentorship, communication and emotional intelligence, which technology cannot adequately replace," she said.

However, across the country, many prospective teachers are still being trained for conventional classrooms rather than the realities of emerging technology-driven learning environments. Hence, the need for the urgent review of teacher education curriculum to bridge this gap. AI literacy should become an essential component of the Nigerian education curriculum. Osuere reiterated that teachers' digital skills should go beyond merely teaching students how to use AI tools.

"It should include responsible use, ethical considerations, fact-checking, data privacy and critical evaluation of AI-generated content. Students must learn to use AI to enhance their thinking, not outsource their thinking to machines.

"There's a need for curriculum reform, continuous professional development, equipping schools with reliable internet connectivity, digital devices and accessible AI learning platforms and very serious and consistent public-private partnerships," she noted.

In the face of AI evolution, Nigeria and other developing countries of the world face a contradiction: as advanced countries are embracing AI-powered education, millions of Nigerian children have never stepped inside a functioning digital classroom.

Many schools lack consistent electricity, internet connectivity, or even functional furniture, prerequisites for any AI deployment, and in public classrooms, a single teacher may manage 55 or more students, making personalised instruction nearly impossible.

Worst still, many of the teachers lack the needed skills to drive AI literacy across schools. Consequently, many teachers worry that AI will take over their jobs, a concern many believe is rooted in a lack of adequate training for contemporary classroom work.

The teachers who stand before the students are expected to know more than their learners, especially in this digital era.

UNESCO-supported initiatives such as the Naija Teacher AI programme aim to train 1.5 million educators to use AI as an assistant, not a replacement.

The evidence is clear: AI succeeds when teachers are part of the design phase, not just the deployment phase.

Blessing Ema, an educator, emphasised that Nigerian teachers need digital skills in order to be able to stay abreast of new things and new trends.

"I'm doing an AI mastery course for teachers; it's an online programme. "For any teacher to be relevant, he or she should have what I call lifelong desire for learning," she said.

ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE LAGOS POSITIONS MEMBERSHIP AS GATEWAY TO GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES



In an era where professional advancement hinges heavily on strategic relationships, Alliance Française Lagos has called on Nigerian professionals, corporate executives, and creative entrepreneurs to join its membership network, positioning the institution as a dynamic springboard for career growth, cross-border trade, and cultural influence.

The call was made at the institution's Membership Networking Experience, themed 'Beyond Networking', hosted at the landmark Mike Adenuga Centre in Ikoyi, Lagos.

The evening brought together a diverse mix of language scholars, corporate leaders, art patrons, and creative practitioners for speed networking, guided facility tours, live musical performances, and an immersive art exhibition.

Delivering the keynote opening address, Laurent Favier, the Consul General of France in Lagos, highlighted the transformative power of authentic professional connections, noting that networking extends far beyond passive contact collection.

"Building a network is a fundamental key to success in one's career or in growing a business. It's not simply about collecting business cards or online profiles, but about building genuine, trustworthy relationships based on common values," Favier remarked. "Networking is the strategic and dynamic process of building, developing, and maintaining a network of personal and professional relationships."

The Strategic Value of the French Connection

Underlining the geopolitical and economic relevance of learning French and joining the Alliance Française network, Favier revealed compelling data on the rapid expansion of the Francophone world, emphasizing that Africa sits at its epicenter.

"Africa is the real epicentre of Francophonie, 65 percent of Francophones live on the African continent today. By 2050, there will be 600 million French speakers globally, and 90 percent of them will live right here in Africa," Favier disclosed.

"Considering that Nigeria is surrounded by Francophone neighbors, French is not only a language of education, but also a language of culture, communication, and exchange. It provides new opportunities whether you are interested in diplomacy, international relations, development, or creative industries like cinema and music. Furthermore, French remains a preferred language across multinational corporations, particularly in energy, oil, telecommunications, technology, and IT."



Favier emphasized that the global Fondation Alliance Française framework encompasses 813 local chapters across 138 countries, teaching approximately 450,000 students annually. Nigeria's network of 10 Alliance Française centers ranks as the second-largest on the African continent, underscoring the country's strategic importance in regional diplomacy and commerce.

Directing actionable insights to the audience, the Consul General outlined key advantages of joining such a network:

Access to the Hidden Job Market: A vast portion of high-value assignments, executive roles, and promotions are never advertised publicly but passed through trusted word-of-mouth referrals.

Knowledge Sharing & Innovation: Direct interaction with peers keeps professionals updated on market trends, disruptive ideas, and technical advancements.

Visibility & Project Acceleration: For freelancers and entrepreneurs, a strong network yields clients, strategic partners, and investors while dramatically cutting down time spent validating new ideas.

Mentorship & Support: Surrounding oneself with fellow professionals combats isolation while offering crucial advice and emotional backing during business scaling.

Democratic Governance & Exclusive Member Perks

Highlighting the structural benefits of membership, the President of Alliance Française Lagos, Abiola Williams-Otufale, urged members to utilize the upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM), scheduled for December 2, to directly shape governance and operational policies.

Williams-Otufale explained that the December AGM offers a platform for members to make recommendations directly to the board, ensuring that the center's evolution is driven by its community. She added that membership tiers remain highly accessible and extend coverage to the center's branch in Ikeja.

Reiterating this community-first approach, the Director of Alliance Française Lagos, Emmanuel Labrande, noted that membership signifies active participation in a living cultural hub rather than simple possession of an access card. Labrande acknowledged Consul General Favier's sustained support in deepening cultural and economic ties between France and Nigeria.

Providing details on upcoming incentives, Head of Marketing, Precious Naador, revealed that members enjoy exclusive discounts across a curated network of partner businesses. Looking ahead to next year, the center plans to roll out exclusive cultural experiences and masterclasses reserved strictly for registered members. While guests at the event enjoyed complimentary wellness perks such as head massages, Naador noted that future lifestyle benefits would be curated specifically as member privileges.

Bridging Communities Through Culture, Tech, and Art

To foster deeper integration across its diverse demographic, Communications Team Lead, Dhung Tsok-Nwok, explained that the event was designed to unite the center's three primary user groups: language students sitting for DELF/DALF examinations, professionals utilizing the workspace and library, and patrons attending cultural showcases.

A guided tour of the facility led by Head Librarian Odufa Onaulogho showcased the center's semi-automated Q2 Tech library system, which bridges physical and digital literary resources in both English and French. Having hosted over 45 book readings and West Africa's first World Book Day exhibition this year, the library features dedicated children's corners and technology hubs, operating Monday through Saturday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

Adding artistic depth to the evening, visual artist Osaji George unveiled his exhibition exploring ancestral memory, heritage, and afterlives through charcoal, pastel, video, and ambient soundscapes. Inspired by the environmental and cultural significance of the Niger Delta, George identified water as a central thematic element running through his works.

The evening closed with a soulful performance by vocalist Ola Egbowon, introduced as this year's membership networking personality, underscoring Alliance Française Lagos' reputation as the premier nexus where international diplomacy, corporate strategy, and creative arts converge.

AFTER EARNING ITS REPUTATION, WHAT'S NEXT FOR A BRAND?

FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA

An established firm may possess a recognisable identity, a carefully cultivated reputation, and a visual language that has served it well for decades. What it lacks is not necessarily distinction, but an effective way to make that distinction visible to the people encountering it today. That tension is at the heart of brand evolution. And, this creates a paradox.

The stronger a brand's history, the greater the temptation to preserve every aspect of its expression. Yet continuity and stasis are not the same.

Organisations evolve. Their capabilities deepen, their leadership changes, and their audiences develop new ways of researching and evaluating expertise. The communications that once expressed confidence can eventually obscure the very accomplishments that earned it.

Brand evolution is therefore not a contest between tradition and modernity. It is an exercise in discernment: understanding what has earned the right to remain, what no longer serves its purpose, and how design can bring the two into productive alignment.

The difference between reputation and representation

A reputation is accumulated over time. It is shaped by performance, relationships, decisions, and the consistency with which an organisation fulfils its promises.

In professional services, where expertise is often difficult to evaluate before an engagement begins, reputation carries extraordinary weight.

A brand's visual expression operates differently. It translates that accumulated experience into something recognisable and accessible. Ideally, the two remain aligned. But they can drift apart.

Brand evolution and the value of familiarity
A recognisable wordmark, a distinctive colour, or an established visual convention can carry years of accumulated associations. These elements function as signals of continuity, reminding audiences of previous experiences and reinforcing expectations about the organisation. Replacing them simply because they appear dated may sacrifice something more valuable than novelty can restore.

The more useful question is not whether an identity looks contemporary, but whether it continues to communicate the qualities that make the organisation distinctive.

Some of the most successful brand evolutions are remarkably restrained. The core identity remains recognisable while the surrounding visual system becomes more sophisticated. Typography acquires greater clarity.

Photography becomes more purposeful. A richer graphic vocabulary makes room for the organisation to express its personality across different contexts. The brand gains flexibility without losing its recognisable character.

The architecture of credibility

Much of the discussion around branding still concentrates on what an organisation looks like. Increasingly, what matters is how its expertise is organised, communicated, and encountered. This is especially true in professional services, where the underlying product is knowledge, judgment, and experience.

The way content is organised conveys a point of view about what matters. The prominence given to accomplishments, the relationships established between people and their work, and the ease with which visitors can move from a broad capability to specific evidence all influence the perception of expertise.

The internal life of a brand

There is another dimension of brand evolution that receives less attention: the people responsible for maintaining it.

A beautifully designed identity can lose its integrity surprisingly quickly when the systems supporting it are difficult to use. Presentations become inconsistent. New communications depart from established standards.

Websites accumulate pages and features that no longer belong to a coherent whole.

Over time, the brand becomes a collection of individual decisions rather than a unified expression of the organisation.

The effectiveness of a brand depends not only on its creative quality, but on its capacity to endure ordinary use.

Well-designed systems anticipate change. They establish principles rather than merely prescribing appearances. They give internal teams the flexibility to communicate new ideas while preserving a recognisable identity.

They reduce unnecessary decisions and make consistency easier to achieve. In this sense, a brand's longevity depends as much on its usability as on its beauty.

The courage to change selectively

There is a tendency to think of branding initiatives in binary terms: either preserve the existing identity or pursue a comprehensive reinvention. But established organisations rarely fit so neatly into either category.

Their histories contain both enduring strengths and inherited conventions. Some elements have become valuable precisely because they have remained consistent. Others persist simply because no one has questioned them.

A firm's leadership may not perceive its identity in the same way as its clients, employees, or prospective recruits. What feels familiar and reassuring internally may appear difficult to navigate or insufficiently differentiated externally.

This is why consequential brand decisions should emerge from evidence rather than aesthetic preference alone. Stakeholder interviews, competitive analysis, audience research, and a careful examination of existing communications can reveal where perception and ambition have diverged.

Making the invisible visible

A brand's value is not confined to its visual identity. It resides in the associations people carry, the expectations they form, and the confidence they develop through repeated experience.

Branding cannot manufacture the expertise, integrity, or judgment upon which a great professional or product reputation depends. But it can influence whether people recognise, understand, and remember those qualities. That distinction matters.

An established organisation does not necessarily need to appear new. It needs to appear fully realised: confident in its history, clear about its capabilities, and capable of communicating its relevance to the audiences it seeks to engage.

LAST LINE

The objective of brand evolution is not to erase the past in pursuit of the contemporary. It is to make the value accumulated over time more accessible today. Sometimes the most effective way to preserve a reputation is to change how the world sees it.



FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA

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

ADAM AND EVE

UDY OSARO-EDOBOR

Evelyn had spent years working with Hajia Maimuna in a privately owned company that handled several government contracts. She joined the company at the front desk and gradually worked her way up to become Hajia's personal assistant. She was hardworking, dependable and exceptionally good at her job. Her efficiency was so remarkable that some people thought she was the general manager.

Hajia trusted her completely. Over time, that trust became so strong that she could travel on vacation and leave Evelyn and her son, Adamu, to run the company. Adamu was still in school but had always shown a keen interest in the family business. He spent a lot of time in the office, learning the ropes and working closely with Evelyn.

Adamu enjoyed working with her. Even when he had the option of working from home, he preferred going to the office. Evelyn was one of the reasons he looked forward to being there. They worked together, had lunch several times and shared a comfortable working relationship.

But while Evelyn saw him as a younger brother, Adamu had always wanted something more.

He was attracted to her intelligence, her competence and the way she carried herself. She was everything he wanted in a woman, but he knew there were reasons she would never consider him. She was eight years older than him, and he was a Muslim.

He kept his feelings to himself.

After graduating from the university, Adamu travelled abroad to pursue two master's degrees. While he was away, Evelyn got married and had two beautiful boys. Adamu visited from time to time and remained involved in running the company from his base abroad.

When Hajia informed him about Evelyn's wedding, he was happy for her. He genuinely wished her well, but deep down, he wished he had been the lucky man. He consoled himself with the thought that Evelyn would never have wanted him anyway. She was older, and he was a Muslim. He believed those were enough reasons for her to see him only as a younger brother.

Still, the news hurt.

He had hoped that one day he might have the courage to tell her how he felt, but life had moved on, and Evelyn had chosen someone else.

When Adamu finally returned home, Hajia decided it was time to retire. She had spent years building the company and was ready to hand over its affairs. Everyone was surprised when Evelyn also submitted her resignation.

Hajia was shocked. She had trusted Evelyn so much and considered her family. She could not understand why she would want to leave, especially when Adamu was returning to take over the business.

But Evelyn had her reasons.

She had always liked Adamu. Although she had never allowed herself to think seriously about those feelings, she had become increasingly aware of them over the years. She enjoyed his company and appreciated the way he treated her. His presence at the office had always been something she looked forward to, even though she had never considered what it meant.

When she learnt that he was returning to become the boss, she became worried about how she would handle herself around him.

She knew she could no longer pretend that he was just a younger brother. The thought of working closely with him again, while trying to suppress feelings she had never acknowledged, made her uncomfortable.

That was why she resigned.

Hajia, however, told her that she was always welcome in the office. Evelyn had become family, and no resignation could change that.

Unfortunately, Evelyn's marriage had not been the happy union everyone thought it was. Her husband was a popular person, and when he died, the media had a field day discussing his death. The circumstances surrounding it made the story even more sensational. He had collapsed while making out with a young college student in a hotel.

The news was humiliating, but Evelyn did not mourn his death. Instead, she felt relieved.

It was only after his death that people began to understand that she had been living in a toxic marriage. Behind the beautiful family picture and the public image of her husband was a woman who had endured years of unhappiness.

His death brought an end to a relationship that had caused her so much pain.

When bloggers continued to flood her place of business, Evelyn decided to close shop for some time. She needed to rest, reflect and consider what to do with her life.

It was during this period that Hajia called her and asked her to assist Adamu with a special project. It was something Evelyn was very familiar with, and she agreed.

The project brought them together again.

Evelyn and Adamu had gone for a meeting with the Honourable Minister to discuss the project. During the meeting, the minister casually teased them by referring to them as Adam and Eve.

It was meant to be a harmless joke, but Adamu could not stop thinking about it.

The name stayed with him because, in his heart, he had always imagined Evelyn as the woman he wanted to spend his life with.

Working together again brought back the feelings they had both tried to bury. Adamu was happy to have her around, and he made the most of every opportunity to spend time with her. He knew she had been through a lot, and he wanted to be there for her.

He did not care about the circumstances surrounding her husband's death. He did not judge her or make her feel uncomfortable. He simply wanted her to know that she could count on him.

As they worked together, Adamu realised that his feelings had not changed. If anything, they had become stronger.

He was no longer a young man who could hide behind the excuse that she was older or that she would never consider him. He knew what he wanted, and he was ready to take the risk.

Evelyn, too, was beginning to understand that the feelings she had tried to suppress were real.

One night, after working late, Adamu offered to drop her at home because it was late. Evelyn could not drive at night, and her driver had already gone home for the day.

They bantered throughout the journey until they arrived at her house. As she thanked him, she placed her hand on his.

Adamu could almost swear that her touch felt like an electric shock.

Evelyn felt it too.

For a moment, she was caught off guard by the intensity of what she felt. She quickly withdrew her hand, but the moment had already changed something between them.

They both returned home, but neither could stop thinking about each other.

The following days became awkward. They were conscious of their feelings and found it difficult to behave as they had before.

Eventually, Adamu gathered the courage to express his feelings.

To his surprise, Evelyn admitted that she had also been feeling something for him.

She had always liked him, but she had never imagined that their feelings would lead them to where they were. She had tried to dismiss them because of their age difference, his religion and the fact that he was Hajia's son.

But she could no longer deny what she felt.

For Adamu, it was a moment he had waited years for.

He had loved Evelyn long before she became available, and now that she was finally willing to consider him, he was determined not to let her go.

However, their happiness came with a price.

When Hajia found out about their relationship, she strongly opposed it. She could not understand how her son could want to marry a woman who was eight years older than him, had been married before and had two children.

She was also deeply troubled by the religious differences between them.

Hajia had always imagined a different future for her son. She had plans for him, and Evelyn was not the woman she had envisioned.

She warned Adamu against the relationship and made it clear that she would never support their marriage.

But Adamu was determined.

He knew what he wanted, and he was not willing to give up Evelyn simply because his mother disapproved.

He defied her warnings and eventually changed his religion to Christianity because of his love for Evelyn.

It was a decision that further strained his relationship with Hajia. She could not understand why he would abandon the religion he had been raised in for a woman.

The opposition from both families made their relationship even more difficult.

Adamu and Evelyn had to deal with the pressure, the disapproval and the constant arguments surrounding their decision to be together.

Eventually, Adamu relinquished his position in the company.

He joined Evelyn to run and build her company, choosing to be with the woman he loved rather than remain in the position his mother had prepared for him.

But the pressure continued.

The opposition from their families became too much, and the couple eventually packed up and relocated abroad.

It was a difficult decision, but they wanted a life where they could be together without the constant interference and disapproval.

Hajia never forgave them.

She remained hurt by Adamu's decision to marry Evelyn, his change of religion and his choice to relinquish his position in the company.

Evelyn's family, however, eventually came around and accepted their marriage.

What had once seemed like an impossible relationship gradually became their reality.

Several years have passed since they relocated, and both Evelyn and Adamu have come to realise that being together was one of the best decisions they ever made.

Their marriage has endured the challenges that once threatened to separate them. They have built a life together, away from the pressure that surrounded their relationship in the early years.

And just days ago, they celebrated twenty years of marriage.

For Evelyn, Adamu was no longer the young man she had once tried to see as a younger brother. He had become her husband, her partner and the man who stood by her when she needed him most.

For Adamu, the woman he had loved for years had finally become his wife.

Their journey had not been easy. They had lost the approval of people they loved, endured family opposition and made decisions that changed the course of their lives.

But twenty years later, they were still together.

And being together had been worth it.



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CRISTIANO RONALDO: SEVEN DEFINING CAREER MOMENTS

ANTHONY NLEBEM





Cristiano Ronaldo has announced his retirement from international football, bringing the curtain down on a record-breaking 23-year career with Portugal, during which he scored 146 goals in 234 appearances.

The 41-year-old five-time Ballon d'Or winner confirmed his decision in a social media statement on Thursday, saying he would hand back Portugal's iconic number seven shirt after the November international break.

"Today I finish my walk on the pitch with the national team. I leave with my head held high, with pride in the path I took, and with the awareness that I gave everything I had for Portugal," Ronaldo said.

The Al-Nassr forward described representing Portugal as the greatest achievement of his career, reflecting on the records, trophies and memories he accumulated over more than two decades with the national team.

"The goals pass, the cups are in museums, and the records end up being beaten. But there is something that time can never erase: the place we occupy in people's hearts.
"I spent my life working to be the best player in the world. Today I realise that the greatest victory was to have deserved to represent the best country in the world,"
he added.

Ronaldo retires as the leading goalscorer in men's international football and the most-capped male international player. He also captained Portugal to their first major international trophy at Euro 2016 and led the country to two UEFA Nations League titles, in 2019 and 2025.
From his emergence at Manchester United to his record-breaking exploits with Real Madrid and Portugal, Ronaldo's career has been defined by remarkable goals, individual honours and major trophies.

Here are seven landmark moments that shaped the career of one of football's greatest players.

First Premier League title with Manchester United in 2007
Ronaldo's breakthrough at Manchester United came during the 2006-07 season, when he scored 17 Premier League goals to help the club win its first league title in four years. After arriving from Sporting CP in 2003, the Portuguese winger had steadily developed into one of the most exciting young players in English football.

His performances earned him both the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) Players' Player of the Year and Young Player of the Year awards in 2007, underlining his emergence as a leading figure in the Premier League. He had also won the FA Cup in his first season at Old Trafford, scoring in the 3-0 final victory over Millwall in 2004.

El Clásico winner seals Copa del Rey for Real Madrid in 2011 Ronaldo delivered a defining moment in his early Real Madrid career when he scored the winning goal against Barcelona in the 2011 Copa del Rey final.

With the match level after 90 minutes, Ronaldo rose at the far post to power home a header from Ángel Di María's cross in extra time, giving Real Madrid a 1-0 victory at the Mestalla Stadium.

The goal secured his first major trophy with the Spanish club and was particularly significant because it came against their fierce rivals in a high-profile final.

Leads Portugal to historic Euro 2016 title

One of the defining achievements of Ronaldo's international career came at Euro 2016, when Portugal won their first major international title.



Portugal defeated hosts France 1-0 after extra time in the final in Paris, with Eder scoring the decisive goal.
Ronaldo was forced off injured in the first half, leaving the pitch in tears, but remained involved from the touchline, encouraging his teammates and taking on an unofficial coaching role.

He finished the tournament with three goals and three assists and was named in the team of the tournament.
Ronaldo also became the all-time leading goalscorer in European Championship history, with 14 goals across the finals.

Wins fifth Ballon d'Or in 2017

Ronaldo collected his fifth Ballon d'Or in 2017, drawing level with Lionel Messi's record at the time.
The award followed a remarkable 2016-17 season in which he helped Real Madrid win both the UEFA Champions League and La Liga.

He scored twice in the Champions League final against Juventus in Cardiff, helping Real Madrid secure a 4-1 victory and become the first club to retain the trophy in the competition's modern era.

The individual honour further cemented his status among the defining players of his generation.

First player to score 100 Champions League goals in 2017
Ronaldo made more history in April 2017 when he became the first player to score 100 goals in the UEFA Champions League.

He reached the milestone with a hat-trick in Real Madrid's 4-2 extra-time victory over Bayern Munich in the quarter-final second leg.

His record-breaking achievement reflected his extraordinary consistency in Europe's premier club competition, where he went on to establish himself as its all-time leading goalscorer.

First player to win five Champions League titles in 2018
Ronaldo became the first player to win the Champions League five times in the modern era when Real Madrid defeated Liverpool 3-1 in the 2018 final in Kyiv.

He had won his first title with Manchester United in 2008 before lifting the trophy with Real Madrid in 2014, 2016, 2017 and 2018.

The three consecutive triumphs with Real Madrid from 2016 to 2018 represented one of the most remarkable periods of dominance in the competition's history.

Record 985 career goals for club and country
Ronaldo's remarkable scoring record is perhaps the most enduring feature of his career.

According to the figures supplied, he has scored 985 goals in 1,343 senior appearances for club and country, leaving him 15 goals short of the historic 1,000-goal milestone.

His 146 goals in 234 appearances for Portugal also make him the leading scorer in men's international football and the most-capped male international player.

Beyond the numbers, his career has been defined by longevity, consistency and success across England, Spain, Italy, Saudi Arabia and international football.

As he brings his Portugal career to an end, Ronaldo leaves behind a legacy shaped by individual records, major trophies and moments that have influenced football for more than two decades.





WEEKENDER

MOVIE REVIEW

COLLISION COURSE (2026)

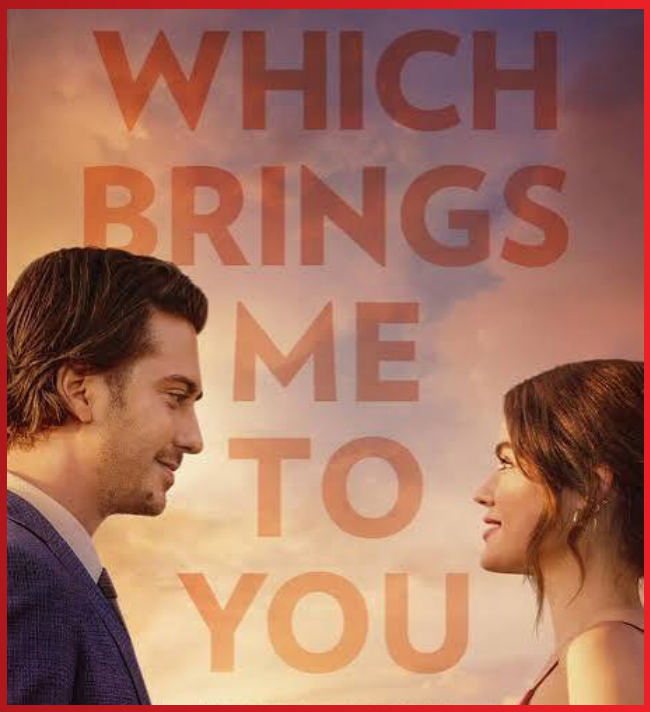
If you enjoy action, drama movies then this brand-new movie is one you should jump on, you know those kinds of movies where you have four different versions and scenarios of the same incident, you have to pay serious attention to understand the entirety of the movie, you have to watch to the entire end to know which one really happened. In this movie there was a four-man gang team, they decided to quickly walk-in early and rob the bank, but what started that day as a simple day, with a quick in and out strategy, turned out to be a total disaster, as the entire city began to look for them and there was nowhere to hide. The 106m Spanish, crime, drama, action movie was directed by Daniel Sanchez Arevalo, they featured actors like Lala Casta, Karra Elejaide, Luis Zahera, Tamar Novas, Alvaro Cervantes, Luis Homar etc.



SURVIVING HURRICANE OTIS (2026)

If you enjoy movies about natural disasters, then you might want to jump on this brand-new movie, that talked about how hurricane destroyed their city. In this movie Wirpul lived his mother, his step mother and step brother in the same premises, but for some weird reasons, they never got along or lived in peace. Wirpul got a job as a captain and he needed an assistant, but couldn't find any, so his mother begged his stepbrother Candi to accompany him, knowing fully well going to face a bad category 5 hurricane. Wirpul knew the weather would be bad but didn't know how bad it will get, they would need to choose between saving their lives or the boat that was already insured, Wirpul wanted desperately to be a hero and this costed them their lives. The 96m Mexican, drama, social issues movie was directed by Jorge Michael, Gray, the featured actors like Benny Emmanuel, Kristian Ferrer, Monica Del Carmen, Andrew Leland Roger's, Monica Jimenez , Gonzaga Vega Jr, Octavia's Michel Grau etc.





WHICH BRINGS ME TO YOU (2026)

If you are a sucker for romantic movies, then this will make your day, as these two complicated people, try to see what they can work out in terms of entering a brand-new relationship. Jane and Will met at a wedding and immediately got attracted to each other from the set go, but Will wanted to take things slowly and wanted them to talk, discuss and know each other better before jumping into anything, but Jane didn't want to talk as she was sick and tired of talking. They both agreed to exchange true, deep, candid confessions about their pasts as this felt like a healing process for them, considering their terrible, complicated past and bad relationships choices their confessions were truly alarming and they both knew they needed to heal, before going into anything. Go watch the movie to see how it ended for both of them. The 98m romantic comedy film, drama, comedies, romance film based on books was directed by Peter Hutchins, they featured actors like Lucy Hale, Nat Woff, John Gallagher Jr. Genevieve Angelson, Britine Oldford, Ward Horton Alexander Hodge.



Linda Ochugbua