



INSPIRING
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FOLAKE SOETAN

POWERING PROGRESS IN NIGERIA'S ENERGY SECTOR

Inspiring Woman Africa Series

14

THEME Leadership Redefined: Charting New Paths To Excellence

CONVENER



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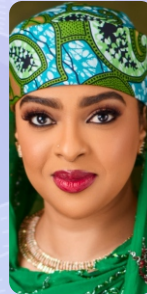
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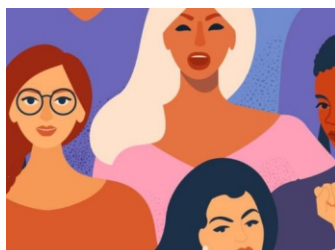
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Welcome!

Dear Readers,

Remember the "Sunday Sunday Medicine?" Nigerian colloquial term for antimalarial drug taken once a week for malaria prevention? Well, IWA is your Tuesday Tuesday medicine, and trust me when I say this edition will cure all stress you often encounter because of work.

FOLAKE SOETAN is our cover personality for this week and she is powering progress in Nigeria's energy sector. She is a visionary business leader with over two decades of exceptional impact across the aviation, oil & gas, and power sectors. She began her career in aviation, where she led revenue optimisation initiatives that significantly expanded market share. At Sahara Group, she played a pivotal role in building SO Aviation into a top-tier player across West Africa, elevating the business from 7th to 3rd position in the market within a short span.

In 2015, she joined Ikeja Electric, where her transformational leadership quickly propelled her from Deputy Chief Commercial Officer to Chief Executive Officer. Her tenure has been defined by innovation, resilience, and results. We enjoyed our interview with her and we know you will experience the same reading it. Oh, and it's her birthday tomorrow. We wish her a great one!

Here are our articles for this week:

Her Point Of View: Chinyere Okorocha speaks about the art of feedback. She says, if done well, it lifts people. Done poorly, it tears them down.

Woman Executive: Wola Joseph-Condotti believes that the boardroom can be a holy ground. Because, when God sends you there, He does not just send you with competence, He sends you with calling.

Gender Insights: Asmau Benzie Leo reminds us that this year marks a historic milestone, 25 years since the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). How does this impact Nigeria? Find out from her article.

Financial AdviseHER: In a world obsessed with appearances, Sola Adesakin says it's easy to confuse financial peace with financial display. In her books, this can never be the same. Read more about it from her.

Holistic Living: Nature therapy is like finding a safe resting place on that journey, where you can set the backpack down, breathe, and feel the weight lift. So says Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri.

Tribe With The Vibes: Zainab Aderounmu is saying that as the world leaders prepare for the 30th Conference of Parties commencing soon, it's time you rethink what sustainability truly means.

Our **We've Got Men** is Dr Taiwo Afolabi, Group Chairman of SIFAX Group.

Our **Woman At The Helm** is Tucci Ivowi, Strategic Advisor, Global Village Consortium.

Garb & Glam: The KAISOWOMAN workwear is an elite international clothing line designed for modern working-class women, and has concluded plans to unveil a dazzling collection.

Next week Tuesday is just a few nights away.

See you soon and don't forget to register for your seat at Inspiring Woman Africa (IWA) Conference Series 14.



COVER INTERVIEW

FOLAKE SOETAN

POWERING PROGRESS IN
NIGERIA'S ENERGY SECTOR

Kemi Ajumobi



olake Soetan is a visionary business leader with over two decades of exceptional impact across

the Aviation, Oil & Gas, and Power sectors. With a solid foundation in Finance from the University of Lagos, complemented by the Advanced Management Program at Harvard Business School Executive Education, she combines deep commercial acumen with strategic foresight. She began her career in Aviation, where she led revenue optimization initiatives that significantly expanded market share. At Sahara Group, she played a pivotal role in building SO Aviation into a top-tier player across West Africa, elevating the business from 7th to 3rd position in the market within a short span.

In 2015, she joined Ikeja Electric, where her transformational leadership quickly propelled her from Deputy Chief Commercial Officer to Chief Executive Officer. Her tenure has been defined by innovation, resilience, and results.

One of her hallmark achievements includes pioneering the bilateral power initiative under the willing seller-willing buyer model with her team, delivering over 20 hours of power daily to residential clusters in Lagos State. This bold move laid the groundwork for the successful launch of Nigeria's service-based tariff regime, a turning point in the country's power

"The vision that has always guided me is one of service through transformation"



sector.

Under her stewardship, Ikeja Electric has experienced unprecedented growth. She has led a landmark reduction in Aggregate Technical, Commercial, and Collection (ATC&C) loss by over 50%, while driving digital transformation and operational excellence. These efforts have earned the company industry recognition, including “Best Electricity Distribution Company” and “Most Gender Diverse Utility Company” at the 2022 Nigeria Power Sector Awards.

Folake also oversaw the company's successful attainment of globally recognized certifications including ISO 9001:2015 (Quality Management System), ISO 14001:2015

(Environmental Management System), and ISO 45001:2018 (Occupational Health & Safety Management System) affirming her commitment to quality, safety, and customer satisfaction. Beyond the boardroom, she is deeply committed to mentoring the next generation of leaders, particularly women and youth, through her active involvement in Women in Energy Network (WIEN) and Women in Management, Business, and Public Service (WIMBIZ). In 2022, she was named one of Eko 100 Women by

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu for her advocacy for equity and inclusion.

A people-centric leader known for her bold decisions, integrity, and service-driven mindset, Folake is a catalyst for sustainable growth. Outside work, she enjoys redesigning living spaces, is a devoted wife and mother to twin boys, and an avid car enthusiast with a dream to one day race on a Formula One track.

► **What vision drives you as a leader, and how has this vision evolved throughout your career in such diverse sectors?**

The vision that has always guided me is one of service through transformation. To take complex systems and help them work better, more reliably, and inclusively for people. Throughout my professional journey, whether in aviation, oil & gas, or now in the power sector, I've believed that leadership is not only about managing operations, but unleashing potential in people, technology, business models, and ultimately in communities. When I joined the workforce over two (2) decades ago, the vision was simple: to excel in whatever role I had, learn, and grow. Over time, as I moved across sectors and took on greater responsibilities, that vision matured. I began seeing the bigger ripple effects that a well-functioning power utility, for example, doesn't just switch on lights, it changes lives, enables business, education, health. Now, as CEO of Ikeja Electric, my vision is crystalising around “customer first, technology now, sustainability always.” That means the customer experience matters as much as the kilowatt-hours; that technology isn't optional but integral; and that we carry out our work with an eye to our

“In my experience at Ikeja Electric, one of the most formidable challenges we faced was tackling the high level of ATC&C loss (*that is, Aggregate Technical, Commercial and Collection loss*) in the distribution network”

“For the first time in Nigeria, customers under that initiative began receiving a minimum of about 20 hours of power supply through the national grid under the willing seller–willing buyer scheme”

environmental, social and governance legacy. In essence, the vision evolved from “doing things well” to “doing things well for others, and leaving something better than we found.” I feel that in diverse sectors you learn different lessons. In aviation, the urgency of service; in oil & gas, the discipline of risk and scale; in power distribution, the immense responsibility of public service. Combining them has sharpened my vision as a leader.

► **Specific challenges faced in your roles, particularly at Ikeja Electric, and how you turned it into an opportunity for growth?**

Certainly. In my experience at Ikeja Electric, one of the most formidable challenges we faced was tackling the high level of ATC&C loss (that is, Aggregate Technical, Commercial and Collection loss) in the distribution network. At the time I stepped into greater operational responsibility, losses were still very high, customer trust was weak, and the infrastructure was under strain. It would have been easy to feel overwhelmed. But I chose to treat the challenge as a launching pad for change rather than a barrier. We assembled cross-functional teams from commercial, technical, customer service to probe the root causes — from energy theft to estimated billing, outdated meters, system inefficiencies. We then designed a programme of work: improved metering, network upgrades, customer engagement, stronger enforcement of commercial discipline. The moment we reframed “loss” as “potential recoverable” and “customer trust deficit” as “relationship

opportunity”, the mindset shifted. Over the next few years, the company made measurable progress. We reduced losses, improved supply reliability, and began rebuilding credibility with our customers and stakeholders. The lesson I learnt is that big problems often hold the biggest opportunity. When you face them head-on, with the right team, mindset, and resources, you can turn what seems like a liability into a competitive advantage.

For young leaders I’d say, don’t shy away from the messy, difficult, and the entrenched. Those are the places where meaningful transformation happens. Be relentless, stay human-centred, and keep your eyes on the long-term improvement, not just the quick fix.

Pioneering the bilateral power initiative under the willing seller–willing buyer model, and obstacles encountered

The inspiration came from a clear insight that some of our customers were suffering from the unpredictability of supply. They were bogged down in the old paradigm of “when the grid gives, we take” rather than us actively managing, optimising, collaborating, and innovating. The willing seller–willing buyer model (the bilateral power initiative) allowed us to explore a new boundary of engaging directly with power producers, optimising grid usage, and improving supply certainty in our franchise area. We asked, “What if we could guarantee a baseline of hours of supply, rather

“Innovation doesn’t mean perfection out the gate, it means being willing to try, being transparent about the journey, and building the ecosystem around the change”





“Technology gave us visibility, but people made it work”

than merely hope for it?” When we introduced that model at Ikeja Electric, it felt bold. We had to align internal operations, negotiate with players in the value chain, manage regulatory and commercial intricacies, ensure that the grid and distribution sides were fit for the model. Some of the obstacles were regulatory uncertainty, existing infrastructure constraints, coordination between multiple stakeholders who were used to the status quo, and the risk of customer expectations rising before we could fully deliver. We overcame these by building strong partnerships, creating clear commercial frameworks, and transparently communicating with customers. Yes, we were trying something new, may face setbacks, but we were committed. On the technical side, we invested in monitoring, improved network capacity, and ensured the premise was realistic before scaling. For the first time in Nigeria, customers under that initiative began receiving a minimum of about 20 hours of power supply through the national grid under the willing seller–willing buyer scheme. The lesson I took away is, innovation doesn't mean perfection out the gate. It means being willing to try, being transparent about the journey, and building the ecosystem around the change. When you deliver something measurable, you earn trust and set a new standard for what's possible.

Strategies employed to achieve significant reduction in ATC&C losses at Ikeja Electric, and lessons learnt

There's no single magic formula for reducing ATC&C loss. It's a mix of strategy, culture, technology, and persistence. When we began this journey at Ikeja Electric, I knew we had to address the issue from all angles. So, we started by building data-driven transparency. We needed to see where and why the losses were occurring before we could meaningfully tackle them. We introduced smart metering, improved

the billing infrastructure, and deployed Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to map our network in real-time.

Technology gave us visibility, but people made it work. We re-trained our field teams to prioritise customer engagement and community trust rather than just enforcement. We also invested in energy accounting, tracking every kilowatt-hour from source to socket, which helped us reduce both technical and commercial inefficiencies.

What I found most transformative, however, was the mindset shift. We stopped seeing losses as “inevitable” and began seeing them as “unrealised efficiency.” That change empowered teams to take ownership of results. As improvements rolled in from lower theft to higher collection rates, we celebrated small wins, which built momentum for bigger ones.

The lesson I carry from that experience is simple but powerful: people don't resist change; they resist feeling powerless in the face of it. When you give people the tools, clarity, and purpose to succeed, they'll surprise you with their ingenuity and commitment.

The role of digital transformation in the power sector and technologies or practices with the most potential for future growth

Digital transformation is no longer a “nice-to-have”; it's the lifeblood of efficiency, transparency, and trust in the modern power sector. The power business is complex, involving generation, transmission, distribution, and millions of customer touch-points. To manage that effectively, you need real-time data, not just in reports, to guide every operational and customer decision.

At Ikeja Electric, we've embraced digital tools to simplify the customer's journey, from online payments and e-billing to predictive fault reporting and digital mapping of our network. The result has been greater visibility, accountability, and

speed in resolving customer issues. We're also exploring how smart grids and IoT (Internet of Things) sensors can help us predict faults before they happen and reduce downtime.

The technology with the greatest potential, in my view, is data analytics combined with automation. When data becomes predictive instead of reactive, you move from firefighting to foresight. That's where true transformation happens.

However, technology alone isn't enough. You need a culture that embraces it. People who aren't afraid to learn, fail fast, and innovate again. My approach has been to make digital transformation personal, show teams how it makes their work easier, not harder. That's when digital change sticks and starts to scale.

▶ As a mentor, particularly to young women, what advice do you offer those looking to advance in traditionally male-dominated industries?

In my experience, success in male-dominated industries starts with self-belief. The world may doubt you, but you can't afford to join that chorus. I tell young women: *don't shrink yourself to fit into the room. Grow until the room adjusts to your presence.*

When I started my career in the energy sector, there were very few women in leadership. I learnt to focus on competence, consistency, and courage, and received immense support from my Principals at Sahara Group. Be the person who shows up prepared, delivers results, and speaks with conviction. People may notice your gender at first, but soon they'll respect your impact.

I also encourage women to build alliances, not isolation. Seek both male and female mentors and sponsors who challenge you to grow. Support other women coming behind you. When one woman climbs, she should leave the ladder in place for others.

Finally, understand that leadership isn't

“Digital transformation is no longer a “nice-to-have”; it's the lifeblood of efficiency, transparency, and trust in the modern power sector”

about perfection; it involves authenticity. It's okay to be human, admit when you don't know something, and to keep learning. The future belongs to those who bring both competence and compassion to the table, and women have that blend in abundance.

Biggest challenges currently facing the Nigerian power sector, and how can leaders address these challenges effectively

The challenges in the Nigerian power sector are well known. They include infrastructure gaps, liquidity issues, regulatory uncertainties, energy theft, among others. But beyond the technical and financial problems, I believe the greatest challenge is trust between consumers, regulators, and operators. To address that, leaders must begin by owning the narrative and communicating honestly. We need to say what's possible, set realistic expectations, and then deliver on them consistently. The more transparent we are, the more confidence we build.

Another key challenge is aging infrastructure and the need for massive capital investment. This requires creative partnerships between the public and private sectors, and regulatory reforms that reward efficiency and innovation. Finally, we must prioritise capacity building. A modern power sector needs skilled professionals like engineers, data analysts, customer specialists, and problem-solvers. We're investing in training at Ikeja Electric because the future grid will be as much about people as it is about wires.

Leaders in this space must combine vision with empathy, seeing both the grid and the people connected to it. That's how we move from challenges to opportunities.

Sustainability for the future of oil & gas and power sectors, and steps organisations must take to prioritise it

Sustainability is not a buzzword anymore; it's a responsibility. The world is changing, and energy transition is not a far-off concept; it's here. For companies in oil & gas and power, sustainability

“At Ikeja Electric, we've embraced digital tools to simplify the customer's journey, from online payments and e-billing to predictive fault reporting and digital mapping of our network”

requires balancing today's needs with tomorrow's obligations.

At Ikeja Electric, we define sustainability across three pillars: environmental stewardship, social impact, and governance ethics (ESG). That means minimising losses, reducing our carbon footprint, digitising operations to save resources, and creating opportunities for women, men, and young professionals.

Organisations must start by making sustainability measurable. It's not

enough to make promises, you need data and accountability. When sustainability becomes part of performance metrics, it shifts from an ideal to a practice.

Personally, I believe sustainability begins with mindset. It's about asking, every day, “How can we deliver energy more responsibly?” Whether that means encouraging energy efficiency, investing in renewables, or building community resilience, it's all part of the same goal of ensuring our progress today doesn't compromise tomorrow's possibilities.

▶ On being recognised as a leader in gender diversity, how does this impact your approach to company culture and recruitment?

Being recognised as a leader in gender diversity is both an honour and a responsibility. For me, it's about creating



“In my experience, success in male-dominated industries starts with self-belief. The world may doubt you, but you can't afford to join that chorus”



an environment where everyone, regardless of gender, can thrive and contribute fully. I've always believed that diversity is both a moral imperative and a business advantage.

At Ikeja Electric, we've made deliberate efforts to recruit, retain, and promote competent women across functions, from engineering to finance, to operations. We're intentional about providing equal access to opportunities, but also ensuring our culture supports women when they're in those roles.

I make it a point to ensure our policies reflect inclusivity like flexible work arrangements, leadership development programmes, and mentorship initiatives for women. More importantly, I try to lead by example, showing that you can be both compassionate and decisive,

“The challenges in the Nigerian power sector are well known. They include infrastructure gaps, liquidity issues, regulatory uncertainties, energy theft, among others”

ambitious and grounded.

When people see diversity represented at the top, it sends a powerful signal of “You belong here.” That message alone can change someone's career and life.

Balancing your demanding career with family life, and practices you find most effective

In my experience, balance is more about presence than perfection. There are days when work takes more of my time, and other days when family takes precedence. The key is to be fully present wherever I am. When I'm at work, I give it my focus. When I'm at home, I give my family my attention and heart.

I've learnt to delegate and prioritise. You can't do everything, and that's okay. I have a wonderful support system both at home and at work, and that allows me to focus on what truly matters. I'm intentional about family time; we talk, laugh, share meals, and create memories. Those moments keep me grounded.

I also believe in self-care as a leadership tool. You can't pour from an empty cup. So, I make time for rest, prayer, and reflection. Sometimes, balance simply means giving yourself grace, understanding that being both a leader and a mother is not about doing it all, but doing what's meaningful and impactful. My advice to working mothers: don't chase balance as a fixed point; think of it as a rhythm that changes with each season of life. Embrace it with flexibility and gratitude.

▶ Redesigning living spaces and its influence on your creativity and decision-making in business, how do you make time for it despite your busy schedule?

Design has always been my quiet escape. A way to express creativity outside spreadsheets and boardrooms. Redesigning living spaces reminds me that every structure, no matter how chaotic, can be transformed with vision, order, and beauty. That philosophy directly influences how I lead. When I look at a challenging business problem, I approach it the same way I

“When sustainability becomes part of performance metrics, it shifts from an ideal to a practice”

would a cluttered room: step back, visualise what's possible, and then start rearranging piece by piece until everything flows. It's both artistic and strategic.

Making time for it is intentional. I carve out moments during weekends, holidays, even short breaks to refresh a space or plan a new concept. It recharges my mind and helps me return to work with new ideas and energy.

I often tell people to find a creative outlet that has nothing to do with your job. It keeps your imagination alive and your perspective fresh. These are two things every leader needs.

▶ What drives your passion for cars and Formula One? Can you share any lessons learnt from this interest that you apply to your professional life?

I've always loved cars; the engineering, precision, the speed, the teamwork that makes it all work. Formula One, in particular, fascinates me because it's not only about driving fast; it's about strategy, timing, and coordination. A brilliant driver can't win without a cohesive team, and that resonates deeply with leadership.

The biggest lesson I draw from Formula One is the power of continuous improvement. After every race, teams analyse performance down to the smallest detail — what worked, what didn't, how to shave off half a second. That's how I approach business: never complacent, always learning, and iterating.

Another lesson is resilience under pressure. Races are unpredictable; one small error, and you must recover fast. Leading a company like Ikeja Electric is similar. You make quick decisions,

adapt, and stay focused on the finish line despite turbulence.

Of course, Formula One teaches humility too. Even the best drivers have pit stops. Leaders also need moments to pause, recalibrate, and refuel.

► **Future aspirations for both yourself and Ikeja Electric, and how do you plan to achieve them?**

For Ikeja Electric, my aspiration is to be a truly customer-centric, technology-driven, and sustainable utility that sets the benchmark for electricity distribution in Africa. I envision a company where every customer has reliable access to electricity, service excellence is the norm, and innovation drives progress.

To achieve that, we'll continue investing in infrastructure, people, and technology. We'll deepen partnerships across the energy value chain and build an agile, skilled, and passionate workforce ready for the future.

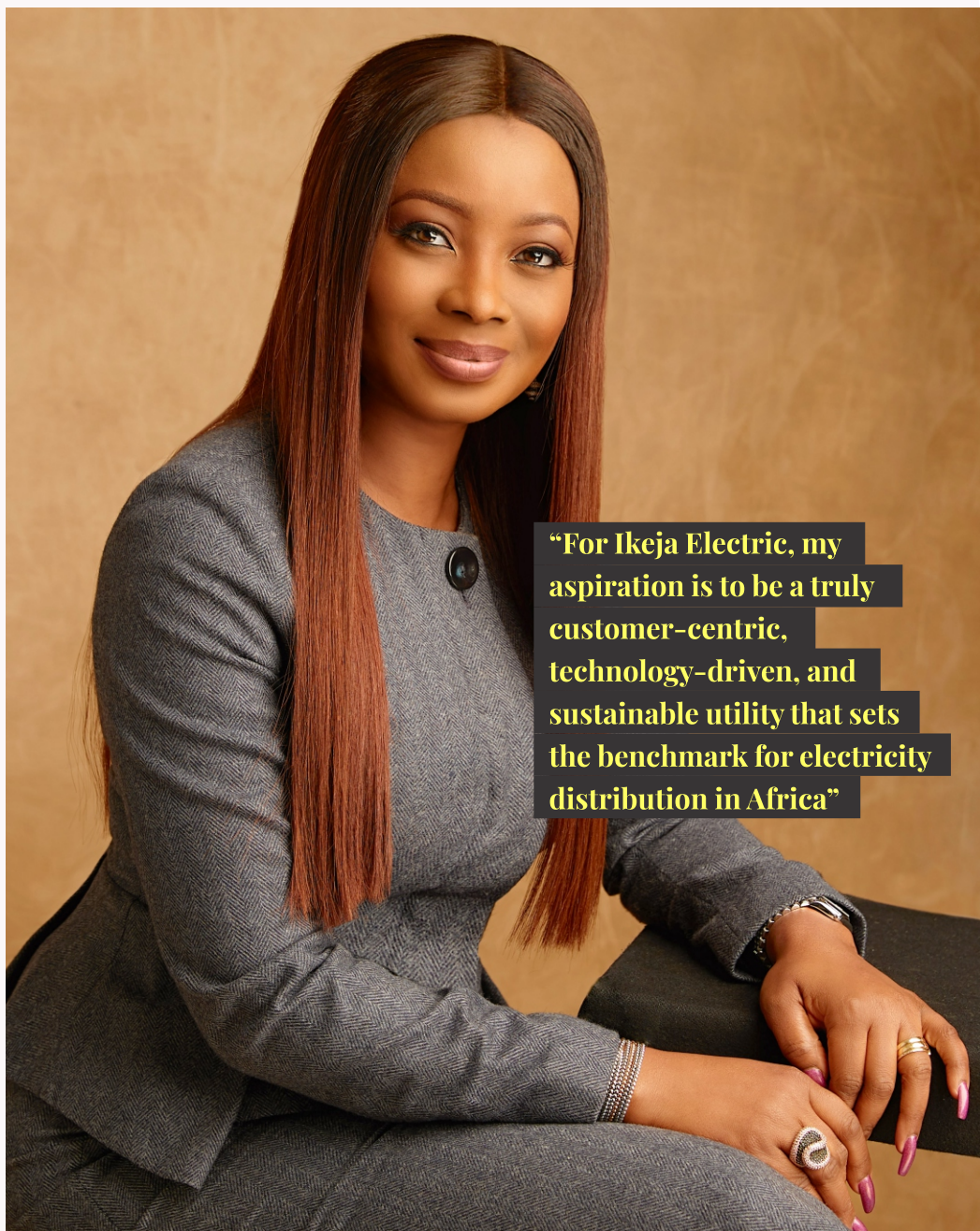
Personally, my aspiration is to keep evolving as a leader and mentor, help shape an energy industry that reflects inclusivity, accountability, and excellence. I want to inspire the next generation of women to lead boldly, take up opportunities, and redefine what's possible.

Ultimately, my goal, for both myself and Ikeja Electric, is to be remembered for impact. That we didn't just light up homes, but powered lives and possibilities.

► **Navigating your terrain as a female, what is your winning strategy?**

Navigating a male-dominated field requires confidence, competence, and consistency. In my experience, people eventually stop seeing gender when results speak. So, my winning strategy has always been to be excellent, visible, and authentic.

"Formula One, in particular, fascinates me because it's not only about driving fast; it's about strategy, timing, and coordination"



"For Ikeja Electric, my aspiration is to be a truly customer-centric, technology-driven, and sustainable utility that sets the benchmark for electricity distribution in Africa"

I don't approach leadership as a competition; I approach it as collaboration. I focus on building alliances, delivering value, and mentoring others. That's how you earn respect, not by trying to prove your worth, but by demonstrating it consistently. Another important strategy is emotional intelligence. You must know when to speak, when to listen, and how to influence without confrontation. Leadership is as much about empathy as it is about expertise. Finally, I've learnt to embrace my uniqueness. Being a woman brings a

different perspective; one that values inclusion, communication, and resilience. Those traits are strengths, not limitations.

► **How can power be readily available to Nigerians? What can be done to improve what we have now?**

That's a question at the heart of our mission. I understand the frustration; every Nigerian deserves consistent, reliable electricity. The solution lies in a combination of policy stability, infrastructure investment, and industry collaboration.

“Navigating a male-dominated field requires confidence, competence, and consistency”

First, we need sustained investment in the entire value chain, from generation to transmission to distribution. No one segment can address the problem alone; it must be a coordinated effort. Second, we must embrace technology and data-driven management to reduce losses, detect faults early, and optimise supply. At Ikeja Electric, we're already implementing innovative models like the service-based tariffs and smart metering to improve reliability and customer satisfaction. But there's still work to do, especially in regulatory reform and consumer education. Ultimately, the power sector will

transform when every player (government, operators, and customers) understands electricity is a shared responsibility, not just a service. We all have a role in building the system we desire.

► **To top female executives going through challenges they cannot share and have to show up regardless, what advice do you have for them?**

I know that space, the quiet weight of responsibility, the strength required to smile through the storm. My advice is to remember you are human before you're a leader.

It's okay to feel tired, uncertain, or vulnerable. Strength doesn't mean suppressing emotion; it means acknowledging it and still choosing to rise. Find a safe circle like mentors, friends, or family, where you can be yourself, unfiltered. You don't have to

“At Ikeja Electric, we're already implementing innovative models like the service-based tariffs and smart metering to improve reliability and customer satisfaction”

carry everything alone.

Also, protect your peace. The higher you climb, the more intentional you must be about rest, reflection, and faith. I find renewal in prayer, solitude, and gratitude, as they remind me why I started and who sustains me.

Finally, know that every challenge refines you. Diamonds are made under pressure. Keep showing up not just for others, but for yourself.

► **What is the greatest lesson life has taught you?**

The greatest lesson life has taught me is that purpose is greater than position. Titles come and go, but the impact you leave behind endures. Every role I've held has been a platform to serve, learn, and uplift others.

Life has also taught me humility; that no one achieves success alone. Behind every milestone are people, sacrifices, and grace. Recognising that keeps me grounded and grateful.

Lastly, life has taught me that challenges are disguised opportunities. Every setback I've faced has pushed me towards growth, resilience, and a deeper understanding of leadership. Therefore, I've learnt to thank life not only for the triumphs but for the trials because they shape the leader and the woman I am today.

Concluding words

If there's one message I'd leave with readers, it's this: your journey matters, every stage of it. Whether you're climbing, pausing, or reinventing yourself, keep faith in your purpose.

To women (and men) alike, leadership isn't a title; it's a mindset. It's taking responsibility, lifting others, and daring to dream beyond limitations.

As I often remind my team, transformation doesn't start with resources; it starts with resolve. Believe in what's possible, do the work, and stay rooted in integrity. The light we seek in our homes, lives, and nation begins with the one we carry within.



HER POINT OF VIEW

Mastering Feedback: How to Build Others Up Without Tearing Relationships Down

Chinyere Okorochoa

Dear Reader,

A few years ago, I watched a promising junior associate slowly lose confidence. She was smart, hardworking, and meticulous. But after one meeting, a senior colleague told her, “You always overcomplicate things. Just keep it simple.” It wasn’t the words themselves that hurt, it was how they were delivered. No context, no guidance, no balance. Just a blunt critique in front of

everyone. Instead of motivating her, it left her second-guessing herself for weeks. Now imagine if that feedback had been offered differently: “Your report was detailed, which is a real strength. In yesterday’s presentation, though, the level of detail made it harder for the client to grasp the big picture. Next time, try leading with the main insight before going deeper.” Same intention. Different delivery. And the result? Growth, not discouragement. That’s the art of feedback. Done well, it lifts people. Done poorly, it tears them down. One of the fastest ways to accelerate your career isn’t just by excelling at your own work. It’s by helping others elevate theirs.

That’s where feedback comes in. Yet, for many female professionals, feedback feels uncomfortable. Some avoid it altogether because they don’t want to offend, while others deliver it so bluntly that it leaves bruises. The result? Missed opportunities for growth, both yours and theirs. Here’s the truth: feedback is not about criticism. It’s about contribution and when delivered well, it becomes one of the most powerful leadership skills you can develop. Leaders are remembered not only for what they achieve personally but for how they make others better.

Why Feedback Fuels Career Growth
When you learn to give feedback

effectively, several things happen:

- You build trust. People know where they stand with you and respect you for your honesty.
- You raise the bar. By encouraging others to improve, you create a culture of excellence around you.
- You expand your influence. Great leaders are multipliers, their success is measured not just by what they deliver, but by how they elevate those around them.

Invisibility might stall your career, but so can silence. If you stay quiet when a colleague needs guidance, you miss the chance to lead in that moment. Feedback is

what signals to others: “This person cares enough to invest in my growth.”

A Simple Framework: SBI (Situation–Behaviour–Impact)

Instead of guessing how to approach feedback, use a structure that keeps the focus on growth, not blame.

- 1. Situation** - Set the context.
“In yesterday’s team meeting...”
- 2. Behaviour** - Point to the action, not the person.
“...you interrupted Sarah twice while she was presenting.”
- 3. Impact** - Explain the effect.
“...it made it difficult for the team to hear her ideas, and it slowed the discussion.”

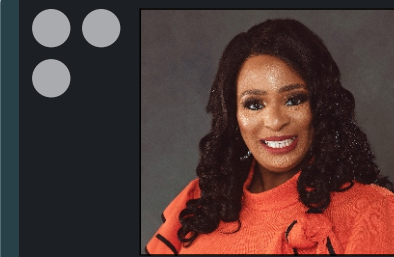
Notice what’s missing? Judgment. By describing facts and impact, you invite reflection without putting the other person on the defensive.

Pro Tips for Feedback That Stick

- **Balance it.** People receive correction better when they also feel valued. Acknowledge strengths alongside suggestions.
- **Be timely.** Feedback loses power when delayed. Address issues while the memory is fresh.
- **Invite dialogue.** Ask, “How did you see it?” Feedback is not a monologue, it’s a conversation.
- **Check your motive.** Always give feedback from a place of helping, not hurting.

Your Challenge This Week

Identify one person you can give constructive feedback to, whether it’s a colleague, a junior teammate, or even your boss. Use the SBI framework. Keep it simple, kind, and clear. Because giving feedback isn’t about pointing out flaws. It’s about unlocking potential. And the professionals who master it? They’re the ones who rise faster, build stronger teams, and leave legacies of impact.



Chinyere Okorochoa

Partner in the Law Firm of
JACKSON, ETTI & EDU

With over three decades of experience as a trailblazer in the legal profession, Chinyere Okorochoa has established herself as a leading voice in law, leadership, and career growth for women. As a partner in one of the most prestigious law firms in the country, she has not only navigated the complexities of a competitive industry but has consistently broken barriers to become a sought-after leader, mentor, and advocate for women in the workplace.

Chinyere’s career journey is a testament to her resilience, vision, and versatility. She has held numerous leadership positions, served as a director on multiple boards, and is widely admired for her strategic thinking and ability to inspire teams toward excellence. Beyond her professional accomplishments, she has also graced stages as a speaker, sharing insights on leadership, career growth, and the unique challenges women face in their professional lives.

A devoted wife and proud mother of three, Chinyere understands firsthand the challenges of balancing the demands of a thriving career with a fulfilling personal life. Through her own experiences, she has mastered the art of work-life integration, demonstrating that women can achieve extraordinary professional success without sacrificing the joys of family and personal well-being.

Her career development platform, Heels & Ladders, is dedicated to mentoring and guiding women who aspire to redefine success, achieve career mastery, and lead with purpose. Whether you’re navigating leadership challenges, striving for balance, or looking to amplify your influence, Chinyere’s expertise will help you transform ambition into achievement.

WOMAN EXECUTIVE

When God Sends You to the Boardroom

By Wola Joseph-Condotti

There is a persistent lie whispered in many leadership spaces: that faith and business must live in separate rooms. That the boardroom is secular. That strategy and spirituality rarely meet. But I believe (and have learnt and lived) that the boardroom can be holy ground. When God sends you there, He does not just send you with competence. He sends you with calling. As Ibukun Awosika often teaches, “Your business is your pulpit.” In other words: the marketplace is not a neutral zone. It is sacred. When we walk into business spaces as Christians, we carry more than proposals and Excel sheets. We carry kingdom values.



Not Just a Seat — a Divine Assignment

Some of us have prayed for influence, then hesitated when doors open because we feel unqualified. But what if that room is exactly where God needs you? Leadership in the marketplace is not a deviation, it is a divine deployment. The skills, the passion, the experiences, they were preparing you for a room like this. As Mrs. Awosika has said, “We are not Christians because we go to church on Sunday. We are Christians because we take Christ to the marketplace.” That quote reminds us: faith does not belong only to private spaces. It belongs in boardrooms, contracts, strategy sessions, and policy.

Esther: From Orphan to Advocate

Esther's story is one of divine placement. She did not choose the palace, God placed her there for “such a time as this.” When the king's edict threatened her people, she fasted, prayed, and stepped into danger. Her presence was not ornamental; it was redemptive. She teaches us that positional power is a call to intercession. To speak when silence seems safer. To build when others fear breakdown.

Joseph: A Dreamer in a Palace

Joseph's road was full of pain (betrayal, imprisonment) yet God never lost sight of him. When Pharaoh's own counselors failed to interpret the dream, Joseph stood. He did not just explain the future; he gave a structural plan: store for famine, distribute in season. His



wisdom saved Egypt and established his leadership in crisis. Joseph's legacy is a blueprint: spiritual insight + strategic execution.

Deborah: The Judge Who Led

Deborah, the prophetess and judge, sat under her palm tree dispensing judgments. But when war called, she rose. She did not wait for a man to authorise her. She obeyed the voice within. Under her leadership, Israel won victory through strategy, faith, and clarity. She reminds us: God does not need to hype your credentials. He needs your obedience.

Faith in the Marketplace, Not Apart from It

There will be days in the marketplace when your faith feels countercultural. Mrs. Awosika once said, “It is so easy to stand against God in the marketplace.” In that tension, the question is: will you compromise standards, or let them shape your boldness? We are not called to hide our spirituality behind a “professional mask.” We are called to integrate faith with excellence. Your boardroom can host strategy rooted in prayer. Your team can sense when your decisions are anchored in integrity. Your influence can reflect not just function, but character.

Final Thoughts

If you are seated now, or about to enter a room where deals are made, policies shaped, and futures decided, know this: You are not there by chance. You are not called merely to perform. You are called to represent. You can pray before decisions. You can stand on truth when others bend. You can lead with audacity and with humility. So step in. Speak up. Govern with purpose. Because when God sends you to the boardroom, He goes with you, and your leadership becomes more than deals. It becomes Kingdom impact.



Wola Joseph Condotti

Group MD/CEO of West Power & Gas Limited

Wola is the Group MD/CEO of West Power & Gas Limited, the parent company of Eko Electricity Distribution PLC (EKEDP) and six other affiliate companies with interests in both conventional and renewable energy sectors. In addition to this role, she serves as the Director of the Power and Renewable Division at the Women in Energy Network (WIEN) in a non-executive capacity.

Prior to her current role, Wola was the pioneer Chief, Legal & Company Secretariat at EKEDP. During her tenure, she also held multiple key positions simultaneously including Head of Regulatory Compliance, Chief Human Resources and Administration Officer, Supervising Chief of the Customer Service Department, and Data Protection Officer. Her previous experience includes roles as General Counsel/Company Secretariat Lagoon Home Savings and Loans, and Legal Associate at Banwo & Ighodalo.

Wola holds a law degree from the University of Ibadan, an LLM in International Finance Law from Harvard Law School, and an MBA from INSEAD Business School. She is also an International Finance Corporation (World Bank) Board Evaluation Certified Professional and Corporate Governance Trainer.

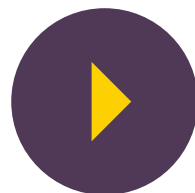
Wola's achievements have earned widespread recognition. Most recently, she received the inaugural Leadership Excellence Award of the Year at the Legal Era Africa Awards 2024, becoming the first-ever recipient of this category. The award celebrated her historic transition from General Counsel to Group MD/CEO, a milestone applauded for redefining leadership pathways in the legal profession.

She is a member of the Institute of Directors and the Society for Corporate Governance Nigeria. Additionally, she is an associate member of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators of Nigeria, and Women in Management, Business, and Public Service.

FINANCIAL AdviseHER

Financial Peace Is Louder Than Financial Display

By Sola Adesakin



In a world obsessed with appearances, it's easy to confuse financial peace with financial

display. Everywhere we look; social media, lifestyle shows, even our communities, we're surrounded by people showcasing success. The cars, the trips, the designer labels, the soft-life aesthetics. It's a loud, constant reminder that everyone seems to be doing well. But behind many of those displays lies quiet pressure, to keep up, to measure up, to prove something. The truth, however, is simple: if you have to prove it, you probably don't feel it. Real wealth whispers. It doesn't need validation, it builds foundation. Financial peace is louder than financial display. It's not about how much you show; it's about how stable you are when no one is watching.

Many people are stressed, not because they don't earn enough, but because they are trying to maintain an image they cannot afford. The pressure to impress has pushed countless individuals into debt, anxiety, and unhealthy competition. Yet the greatest freedom is not found in what we flaunt, but in what we no longer need to prove.

The Cost of Impressing Others

The "show" is expensive — not only in money but in mental bandwidth. When you're constantly comparing or curating, you lose sight of your own progress. You start to measure your journey by someone else's highlight reel, forgetting that peace of mind, not perception, is the ultimate luxury.

It's not wrong to enjoy nice things or



celebrate success. The danger is when validation becomes the goal. The real flex is financial contentment — having enough, managing it well, and sleeping at night without the fear of unpaid debts or lifestyle strain.

Seven Shifts to Move From Pressure to Peace

If you're ready to trade the pressure to impress for true financial peace, here are seven powerful shifts to make:

1. Redefine What Wealth Means to You
Wealth isn't just about possessions; it's about options. Define success by how free, fulfilled, and stable you feel — not

by how flashy your life looks.

2. Prioritise Financial Clarity Over Image

Know your numbers. Track your spending, plan your cash flow, and live within your means. It's better to be genuinely solvent than to look successful but be sinking.

3. Avoid Comparison Traps

Everyone's journey is different. Comparison breeds insecurity, and insecurity breeds poor decisions. Focus on progress, not competition.

4. Invest in Peace-Producing Assets

Emergency funds, insurance, retirement plans, and investments give peace of

mind. They might not be Instagram-worthy, but they are life-worthy.

5. Practice Contentment and Gratitude

Gratitude breaks the cycle of "never enough." When you appreciate what you have, you attract more of what you need.

6. Surround Yourself With Grounded People

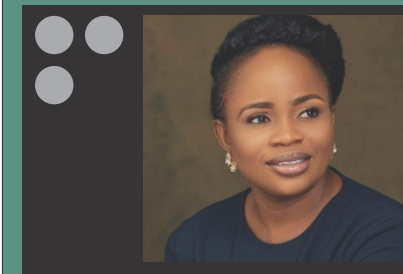
Your circle determines your standard. Choose people who value growth, not show — accountability, not appearances.

7. Seek Growth, Not Validation

Build capacity, not clout. Improve your earning power, financial knowledge, and discipline. Growth always outlasts display.

The Quiet Reward

Financial peace is a form of quiet power. It's the ability to make choices from confidence, not compulsion. It's walking into a room without the need to prove your worth because you already know it. This season, silence the noise of competition and tune into the sound of stability. Let your calm become your statement. Because in the end, financial peace will always speak louder than financial display.



By Sola Adesakin

Founder and Lead Coach,
Smart Stewards

Sola Adesakin is a highly respected wealth coach and chartered accountant with over two decades of transformative impact in the finance industry. As the visionary founder of Smart Stewards Financial Advisory Limited and Smart Stewards Advisory LLC, she has revolutionized the financial wellbeing of countless individuals and businesses across 40 countries. Her methodical approach to 'make-manage-multiply' money principles has elevated many from financial stress to prosperity, and mediocrity to exceptional achievement.

Sola is a strong supporter of SDG5 and SDG10, as she seeks to close the gender gap and reduce inequality through financial education, financial technology, and access to funding. Sola's dedication to achieving gender equality and reducing inequality is evident in her work as an alumna of the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs, an initiative of the US Embassy in Nigeria, and the Cherie Blair Foundation's Road to Growth Program. She is also an alumna of Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women program and a member of the Select Global Women in Tech (SGWIT) Mentorship Network of the United States of America. Through the FRUIT Foundation, which she serves as Founder and CEO, she has partnered with the US consulate in Nigeria to champion the economic empowerment of women, assisting them to start and scale their business ventures.

Her impressive academic credentials include a BSc and an MBA degree from Oxford Brookes University and Edinburgh Business School, respectively. She is a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants of the United Kingdom (ACCA), and a member of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada (CPA). In addition to her impressive credentials, Sola Adesakin is also a Certified Financial Education InstructorSM and a member of the Personal Finance Speakers Association.

GENDER INSIGHTS

25 Years of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security: Nigeria's Journey Towards Inclusive Peace and Security

Asmau Benzies Leo



This year marks a historic milestone 25 years since the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on

Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). Adopted in October 2000, the resolution recognised, for the first time, the unique impact of conflict on women and the critical role they play in conflict prevention, peace-building, and post-conflict reconstruction. For Nigeria, a country that has grappled with prolonged insecurity, violent extremism, and humanitarian crises, the 25 year commemoration provides a defining moment for reflection, renewal, and recommitment.

Civil-society organisations (CSOs) in Nigeria have been at the forefront of translating the spirit of UNSCR 1325 into tangible action. Since the launch of Nigeria's first National Action Plan (NAP I) in 2013 and subsequent NAP II (2017–2020), Nigerian women have made visible gains in participation and leadership within the peace and security architecture.

From the Women Peace and Security Networks operating in conflict-affected states, to the National Women's Platform on Security Sector Reform and Governance to the Gender and Security Reference Group, CSOs have played a catalytic role in awareness raising, capacity building, and policy advocacy. The adoption of State Action Plans (SAPs) in over 20 states is a direct outcome of sustained civil society pressure for localization, ensuring that UNSCR 1325 is not just a policy on paper but a lived framework that responds to local realities. Equally significant are the partnerships built between women's groups, traditional leaders,



and security institutions to promote dialogue, counter gender based violence, and improve early warning systems. In regions such as the North-East, where women once bore the brunt of insurgency, they now serve as peace mediators, humanitarian responders, and community gatekeepers. Despite these strides, the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Nigeria remains uneven and often donor-driven. Many State Action Plans lack dedicated funding and institutional anchorage within government structures. The transition from NAP II to the current NAP III (2025–2030) has exposed systemic weaknesses, particularly the absence of a clear accountability mechanism and insufficient integration of WPS priorities into national security and development plans. Monitoring and evaluation are still weak, with data collection on women's participation, sexual violence in conflict, and gender-responsive budgeting remaining sporadic. Furthermore, the shrinking civic space, persistent insecurity, and socio-cultural barriers continue to undermine women's leadership in peace processes. CSOs note that while policies exist, implementation often

falters due to limited political will, bureaucratic inertia, and inadequate collaboration between federal and state institutions. Localisation remains the most effective strategy for bridging the gap between policy and practice. The experiences from Yobe, Plateau, Borno, and Adamawa States have shown that when communities own the WPS agenda, impact deepens. Localising UNSCR 1325 through State and Local Government Action Plans have enabled tailored responses, integrating women's perspectives into local peace committees, traditional justice systems, and community based early warning networks.

As CSOs actors, we advocate that the next decade of UNSCR 1325 implementation in Nigeria must prioritise bottom up approaches, ensuring that rural women, displaced populations, and grassroots peace-builders are fully engaged as partners, not beneficiaries.

The Role of Government and Accountability

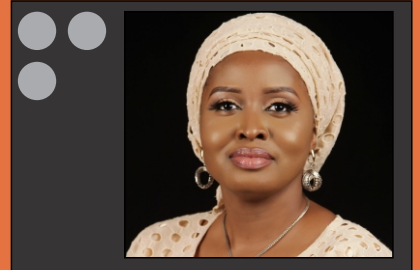
The Nigerian government must move from

rhetoric to responsibility. Institutionalising WPS within the national security and development frameworks such as the National Development Plan 2021–2025, the Agenda 2050, and the National Gender Policy, which will ensure policy coherence. Ensure dedicated budget lines at both national and state levels, gender-responsive financing, and a permanent Gender and Security Coordination Mechanism within the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) are critical to sustaining momentum. Additionally, the government must strengthen partnerships with CSOs, the private sector, and development partners to ensure that UNSCR 1325 is implemented not as a donor obligation but as a national priority. Transparent tracking of commitments, regular reporting, and inclusion of women in high-level peace negotiations are essential for credibility. CENGAIN, alongside other CSOs have advocated for dedicated budget lines for WPS implementation, stronger

monitoring systems, and periodic reporting to ensure transparency. The government's partnership with civil society must evolve into a genuine co-implementation framework, one that values community intelligence and recognizes women as co-architects of peace, not mere beneficiaries. CENGAIN's interventions have particularly emphasised the need to integrate gender perspectives into security sector reform and to build inclusive frameworks for protection, prevention, and participation. Its work has supported the localization of the WPS Agenda, enabling communities to translate global commitments into actionable local policies

Recommendations

1. Adopt and fund the 3rd National Action Plan (2025–2030) with clear targets, indicators, and accountability mechanisms.
 2. Institutionalise WPS in governance structures, including the National Assembly Committees on Defense, Interior, and Women Affairs.
 3. Support State and Local Action Plans with technical assistance and budgetary allocation.
 4. Enhance coordination among government MDAs, security institutions, and CSOs through a multi-sectoral WPS Steering Committee.
 5. Invest in data, research, and monitoring to measure women's participation and the gendered impact of insecurity.
 6. Strengthen survivor centered approaches to conflict related sexual violence and ensure access to justice.
- In conclusion, as Nigeria joins the global community to commemorate 25 years of UNSCR 1325, the message is clear, peace is sustainable only when women are included. As civil society voices, we call for a renewed national commitment, one that shifts from policy statements to measurable action, from token inclusion to shared power. The next 25 years must move beyond commemoration toward consolidation, where women's leadership is not exceptional, but essential to Nigeria's peace and security architecture.



Dr. Asmau Benzies Leo

Executive Director,
Centre for Nonviolence and
Gender Advocacy in Nigeria
(CENGAIN)

Dr. Asmau Benzies Leo is a development practitioner with extensive national and international expertise in gender equality, peace-building, governance, and humanitarian action.

She holds a PhD in Public Governance and Leadership, a Master's degree in Conflict Management and Peace Studies, and executive certifications from leading institutions including Howard University, Harvard University and Glasgow Caledonian University.

As Executive Director of the Centre for Non-violence and Gender Advocacy in Nigeria (CENGAIN), she has led ground-breaking advocacy initiatives on women's political participation, gender-based violence prevention, and security sector reform across multiple World Bank, UN and EU-supported projects.

Internationally, Dr. Leo has represented civil society at the United Nations, contributed to regional dialogues on Women, Peace and Security, and partnered with global networks advancing gender justice and inclusive governance.

She is a UN Recognised Global Ambassador on Women, Peace and Security. Her expertise bridges grassroots action with policy advocacy, making her a respected voice in advancing gender equality and sustainable peace in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.



WOMAN AT THE HELM

Tucci Ivowi

Strategic Advisor, Global Village Consortium

Tucci Ivowi is a business leader and strategist with over 25 years of international experience across the UK, Southeast Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa in both public and private sectors. As the first female and Ghanaian business executive officer for Nestlé Central & West Africa, founding DCEO and later CEO of the Ghana Commodity Exchange, and the Convener of the AfCFTA Association of Commodities Exchanges, she has led transformative initiatives across the African continent. A Chartered Marketer and Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing UK, and creator of the SMARTER Leadership framework, she is a thought leader, contributing to platforms such as the Harvard Business Review. She serves on various boards and has been widely recognised for her leadership and humanitarian impact.

Amongst her passions are growth and development; to that end, she is a mentor to several young professionals, and she shares her experience through different channels. She developed the SMARTER Leadership to share her experiences with her peers, as well as to give practical coaching to new and aspiring leaders. A thought-leader, she speaks and writes on leadership, marketing, communications and intra-Africa trade. Her Podcast, 'SMARTER Leadership in a Minute,' is available on Apple, Google, Spotify and YouTube.

She is a member of the 'Executive Women's Network' in Ghana, an organisation which works to influence and drive policy changes with the aim of increasing the representation of women in senior leadership positions in Ghana. She also currently serves on the Board of the newly created Girl Code Africa, an NGO seeking to bridge the gender divide for women in

Africa through education in STEAM, with a special emphasis on technology.

She is an advocate for support of people with mental health conditions and through her foundation, Forty Lives, she is working with other organisations to promote the implementation of good mental health practices in Ghana. She is also active in church counselling and prison ministry, as she believes in the transformational power of support.

She is a non-executive director at Unilever Ghana Plc, and her professional qualifications include a certificate in Leadership from London Business School. She holds a BA in Political Science and French from the University of Sussex and an MBA from Warwick University, both in the UK, as well as a Degree from the Institute of Political Studies, in Aix-En-Provence, France.



WE'VE GOT MEN

Taiwo Afolabi

Group Chairman of SIFAX Group

Taiwo Afolabi, the Group Chairman of SIFAX

Group, holds an LL.B degree, Masters in International Law and Diplomacy and Masters of Urban Logistics and Transportation Policy from the University of Lagos.

He is a seasoned businessman and investor with diverse interests in various sectors of the economy. With over three decades of experience as an entrepreneur, he has successfully built the SIFAX Group brand from a small freight forwarding firm to a group of companies with investments in Maritime, Aviation, Haulage & Logistics, Oil & Gas, Financial Services and Hospitality, among others.

Some of the companies under the SIFAX Group conglomerate include Port & Cargo Handling Services

Limited, Skyway Aviation Handling Company Plc, SIFAX Logistics Limited, SIFAX Off Dock Limited, SIFAX Nigeria Limited, Ocean & Cargo Services Limited, Sky Capital and Allied Financial Service Limited, SIFAX Inland Container Terminal Limited, SIFAX Oil & Gas Limited and Mac Folly Hospitality Limited (owners of the Lagos Marriott Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos), Sky Bank, Sierra Leone and Sky Bank Guinea, among others.

He is a Fellow of various professional institutes. He is also a recipient of different honorary doctorate degrees from various universities in Nigeria and abroad.

Dr. Taiwo Afolabi is the Honorary Consul of the Republic of Djibouti in Nigeria as well as the recipient of Nigeria's national honour – Commander of the Order of the Niger (CON), conferred on him in recognition of his outstanding virtues and

meritorious services to his country.

Some of the awards he won include the 2021 Vanguard Newspaper Business Man of the Year for the multi-billion naira investment undertaken by him during the COVID-19 pandemic year where he launched the Lagos Marriott Hotel as well as a private jetty, as well as the Zik Prize Award for Entrepreneurial Leadership bestowed on him in 2023.

Taiwo Afolabi is a philanthropist who has deployed his resources to bring succour to a teeming number of the less privileged in society.

Through the vehicle of Ajoke Ayisat Afolabi Foundation (AAAF), a charity organisation he established in memory of his mother, he has been able to provide full scholarships for hundreds of students across Nigeria. He has also made donations to many worthy causes, including medical

equipment and facilities to many public health institutions in Lagos, renovation of public schools as well as support for medical emergencies.

He built a 1,000-capacity auditorium at the Ladoko Akintola University, Ogbomosho and donated a new 18-seater bus to the medical students' association of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife. He has also been sponsoring, in the last 10 years, the free rural medical mission of the dental students of the University of Ibadan.

Many unemployed women and youths have received skill acquisition training and grants to launch and expand their businesses through Taiwo Afolabi's generosity.

Taiwo Afolabi is married to Folashade Afolabi, an accomplished entrepreneur and philanthropist and they are blessed with successful children.

HOLISTIC LIVING

Nature Therapy – Why spending time outdoors is the ultimate stress reliever

By Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri



If life was a long journey, stress would be the heavy backpack we all carry. Some days it feels light, almost unnoticeable. Other days it's so crushing we can barely take a step forward. Nature therapy is like finding a safe resting place on that journey, where you can set the backpack down, breathe, and feel the weight lift. In our technology-driven world, stress has become the default setting. We live in concrete jungles, move from one air-conditioned box to another, and scroll through more screens than sunsets. Yet, just beyond our front doors lies a free, powerful antidote: nature.

The Science of the Green Prescription

Nature therapy, or ecotherapy, is not just about admiring pretty landscapes. It is the intentional practice of connecting with the natural world to improve mental and physical health. Research from the University of Exeter shows that spending at least 120 minutes a week in nature significantly boosts mood, lowers anxiety, and even improves sleep quality. Nature works like a reset button for the brain reducing the stress hormone cortisol, slowing heart rate, and calming the nervous system. In my psychiatric work, I've seen patients with burnout improve simply by walking in green spaces for 20 minutes a day. Nature is not a luxury; it is a medicine we've forgotten to take.

How Nature Melts Stress

Think of stress as static noise in your brain—emails, traffic jams, bills, arguments. Nature acts like a skilled sound engineer, turning down the volume until you can hear yourself think again. **Visual Calm:** Greenery and open skies signal to the brain that you are in a safe environment, reducing the fight-or-flight response. **Auditory Peace:** Birds singing, leaves rustling, waves crashing—these natural sounds trigger relaxation in the brain. **Sensory Grounding:** The feeling of grass under your feet or sun on your skin brings you into the present moment, away from anxious thoughts.

The Nigerian Context – Nature is Closer Than You Think

Many Nigerians hear “nature therapy” and imagine expensive safaris or remote hiking trails. But nature is not far, it's in the morning walk through your neighborhood, under the shade of a mango tree, or along the quiet stretch of a local beach. In Lagos, you can stroll through LUFASI Nature Park or simply sit under a tree in Freedom Park. In Abuja, take in the trails of Millennium Park. In Enugu, walk along the Ngwo Pine Forest. Rural areas already offer nature's abundance, rolling farmlands, riverbanks, and fresh evening air. Nature therapy is not about escaping your country; it's about rediscovering it.

Practical Ways to Make Nature Your Stress-Relief Habit

You don't need hours or expensive gear—just consistent, intentional time outside.

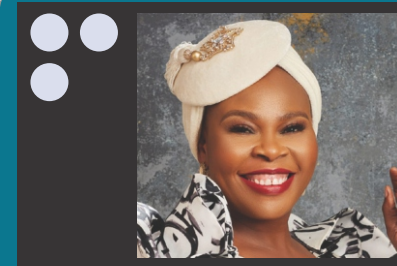
- 1. Morning Sunlight Ritual** – Spend 10 minutes outside each morning to boost mood and regulate sleep cycles.
- 2. Green Lunch Break** – Eat your lunch in a garden, park, or under a tree.
- 3. Weekend Nature Walks** – Swap one shopping trip for a beach, lake, or forest visit.
- 4. Mindful Nature Moments** – Pause to notice the colors of the sky, the patterns of leaves, or the sound of the wind.
- 5. Community Green Spaces** – Join or create local gardening or walking groups.

Nature and Longevity

Spending time outdoors doesn't just improve today's mood, it protects tomorrow's health. People who regularly engage with nature have lower rates of heart disease, depression, and premature death. In Japan, a practice called shinrin-yoku or “forest bathing” is prescribed to reduce stress and improve immunity. Nigeria can adapt this wisdom, integrating nature time into workplace wellness programmes, schools, and urban planning.

Why Nature Therapy Works When Other Things Fail

Meditation apps and spa days have their place, but nature offers something deeper: it reconnects you to the rhythms of life itself. The sun rises and sets without hurry. Trees grow without competing. Rivers flow without forcing their path. Immersing yourself in these patterns teaches your body and mind to slow down, breathe, and let go. Nature therapy is the cheapest, most accessible form of stress relief available to every Nigerian—from the busy banker in Victoria Island to the farmer in Jos. You don't need to travel far, buy special equipment, or spend money. You simply need to step outside, open your senses, and let nature do what it has been doing for millions of years—heal. The next time life feels heavy, remember sometimes the cure is not in a pill bottle or a doctor's office—it's under the open sky, waiting for you.



Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri

Psychiatrist-In-Chief at Pinnacle Medical Services

Dr. MAYMUNAH YUSUF KADIRI (aka DR. MAY) popularly referred to as “The Celebrity Shrink,” is a multiple award winning Mental Health Physician, Advocate & Coach. She is the convener of “The Mental Health Conference” and the Medical Director and Psychiatrist-In-Chief at Pinnacle Medical Services, Nigeria's leading and foremost Psychology and Mental health clinic prominent in the application of innovative clinical approaches in the management/treatment of a wide range of psychological, emotional, and behavioral related disorders.

Dr. Kadiri is a dynamic Consultant Neuro- Psychiatrist and a Fellow of the National Post Graduate Medical College of Nigeria (FMCPsych) with almost 20 years' experience as a practicing Physician. She is a trained and certified Rational Emotive and Cognitive Behavioural Therapist from Albert Ellis Institute, New York, USA. She is also a certified Trauma Counsellor and Neurofeedback Practitioner.

Dr. Kadiri has wide experience in psycho-therapeutic techniques and has perfected her skills whilst in private practice and whilst working for a variety of organizations. She is a recognized radio and television guest Psychiatrist and Psychotherapist. She also contributes to articles published in magazines and newspapers.

She is the only Nigerian with the 14Ps.....Physician, Psychiatrist, Psychologist, Psychotherapist, Practitioner (NLP, BFB, NFB), Public Speaker, Published Author, Producer (movies), Proficient Coach, Parent, Philanthropist, People oriented, Public Health Advocate and Passionate about God and life.

The founder of Pinnacle Health Radio, African's #1 online health radio and a non for profit organization, “Pinnacle Medicals SPEAKOUT Initiative” which is geared towards creating Mental Health literacy in Nigeria and beyond.

The Executive producer of award winning movies, Pepper soup (focused on drug abuse) and Little Drops of Happy (focused on depression, postpartum depression and suicide) and creator of the most innovative mental health app in Africa, HOW BODI.

TRIBE WITH THE VIBES

Seventh Generation Thinking

By Zainab Aderounmu

What if your decisions today, shaped life for people, seven generations from you?



As the world leaders prepare for the 30th Conference of Parties commencing next week, it's time you rethink what sustainability truly means. First, what is the Conference of Parties? It's an annual decision-making event where representatives of nations discuss, negotiate and

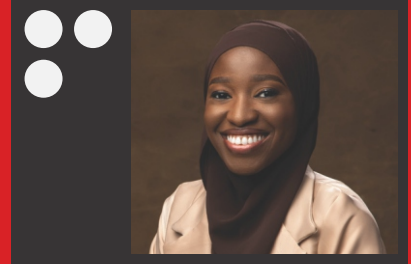
coordinate global efforts to tackle climate change. This year, the 30th session will be held in Brazil with an overarching slogan focused on global efforts.

But, how did we even get here? Climate change came about as a result of us acting as though our resources are unlimited. We keep taking, producing, consuming and discarding without any thoughts of the welfare of generations after us. To visualise the crisis, think of the typical movie scene where an aunt or uncle squanders family wealth and resources because of the illusion of infiniteness. Meanwhile, there are younger siblings, cousins and children who could benefit from judicious management and investment of those resources.

That's what sustainability really means; satisfying today's needs without jeopardising the chances of tomorrow's. One skill I've found crucial to achieving sustainability is the 7th Generation Thinking. The principle that the decisions you make and the actions you take today should mean something positive for the generations after you, up till the seventh generation.

Think of it as leaving a legacy exemplified in your every action, but in the environmental contexts. This week, before nations and global stakeholders gather in Belem Brazil, reflect on how you interact with your environment. How do you dispose of your plastic; how much of it do you consume; what are your contributions to the carbon emissions level in your country? Are you passive, ignorant, or climate-conscious?

You're probably wondering how properly reducing (and recycling) your plastic use can possibly affect



Zainab Aderounmu

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seven generations after you. According to the United Nations, plastic leaves forever. It takes about 20 to 500 years for plastic to decompose, and even after that, it doesn't completely disappear. Imagine your seventh grandkids' kids stumbling on a plastic bottle of juice you drank during your lifetime just because it won't decompose.

What's wrong with that? Everything. Take the billions of people using plastic and the amount of plastic (and other climate-unfriendly things) we generate and multiply that by 500. That's where the problem lies. Every bottle, every choice, and every action you take reaches father beyond your lifetime. So, sustainability isn't a nice-to-have, it's a necessity. As you go about transforming the world this week, think of how you can influence decisions, policies for a better future outcome, not only for you and the people around you, but also for those yet to be born. Then do it.

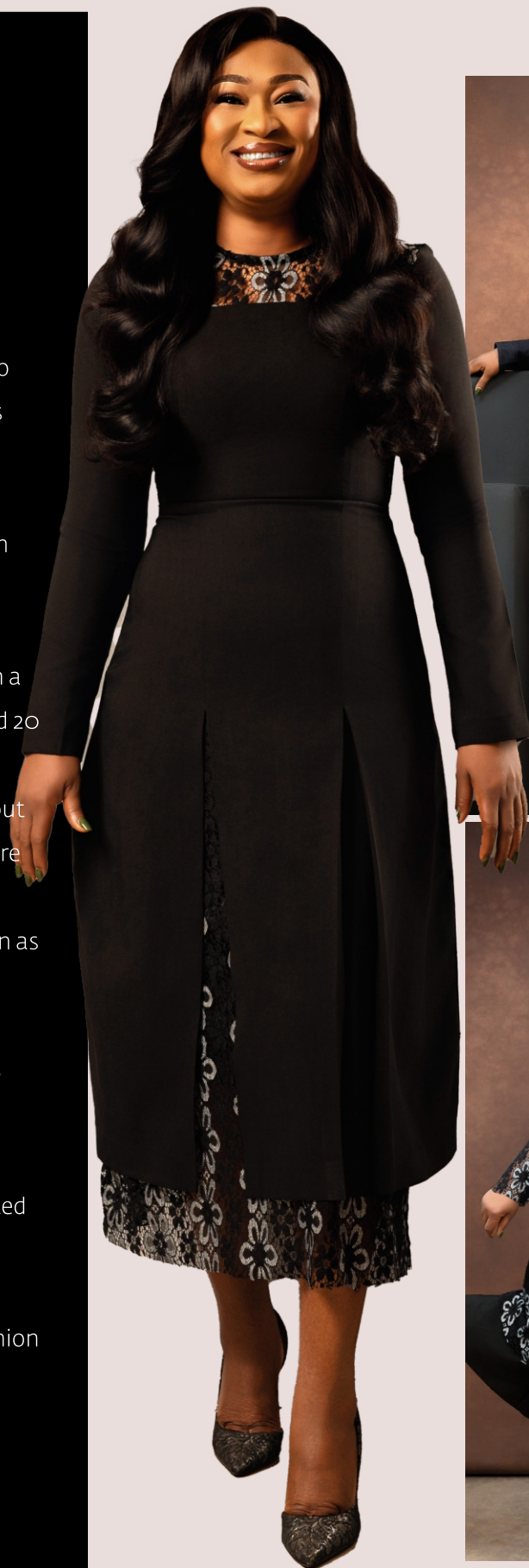
Finally, I'll leave you with some of Mahatma Gandhi's iconic words; "Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not any man's greed".

GARB & GLAM

KAISOWOMAN

The KAISOWOMAN workwear is an elite international clothing line designed for modern working-class women, and has concluded plans to unveil a dazzling collection. The line has earned its place as one of the most anticipated fashion collections by an African designer each year. Progress Okuk birthed the KAISOWOMAN woman line in her sittingroom, in August 2019, with one sewing machine that was gifted her by a group of friends for a birthday present. She has grown from a single seed to having several sewing machines and 20 persons in direct employment. Also, the lead designer, she said "We have envisioned that one, out of five women in the world, will wear KAISO. We are living that vision one woman, each day." Here are some classic pieces in their past collection as they launched the 2026 edition on the 1st of November.

Explaining the journey thus far, she said, "We have indeed come a long way; from what seemed like a very little beginning.....the KAISOWOMAN work wear collection is today, one of the most anticipated fashion line, celebrated for its unique elegance, versatility and timeless appeal. We are not afraid to say that we set corporate fashion standards for the New Year," she assured.





A Journey Through Traditional Beauty & Flavor

Inside Clay Food Shop & The Henna Place

“Together, Clay Food Shop and The Henna Place offer more than services. They offer belonging. A place where tradition is not just preserved, but honored, elevated, and shared”

Clayfoodshop

Clay Food Shop is more than just a restaurant, it's a cultural experience. Known for its traditional elegance and modern interpretations of Northern Nigerian cuisine, Clay is a destination for food lovers who seek authenticity in every bite.

From their signature ram suya to rich native sauces, tigernut juice, and wholesome masa, every meal evokes the comfort of tradition.

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: +234909 554 4990

The Henna Place

Established in 2014, The Henna Place is Nigeria's leading traditional spa, bringing centuries old Moroccan, Northern Nigeria and Arab beauty rituals into the general wellness market. Specializing in Moroccan hammam treatments, sugar waxing, herbal hair care, and intricate henna designs, the spa provides a deeply relaxing and culturally rich self care experience.

With multiple branches across Nigeria, including three branches in Lagos, The Henna Place has become a go-to destination for brides, beauty lovers, and women seeking intentional, soul-restoring care from head to toe, it's a place to cleanse, unwind, and reconnect with yourself the traditional way.

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