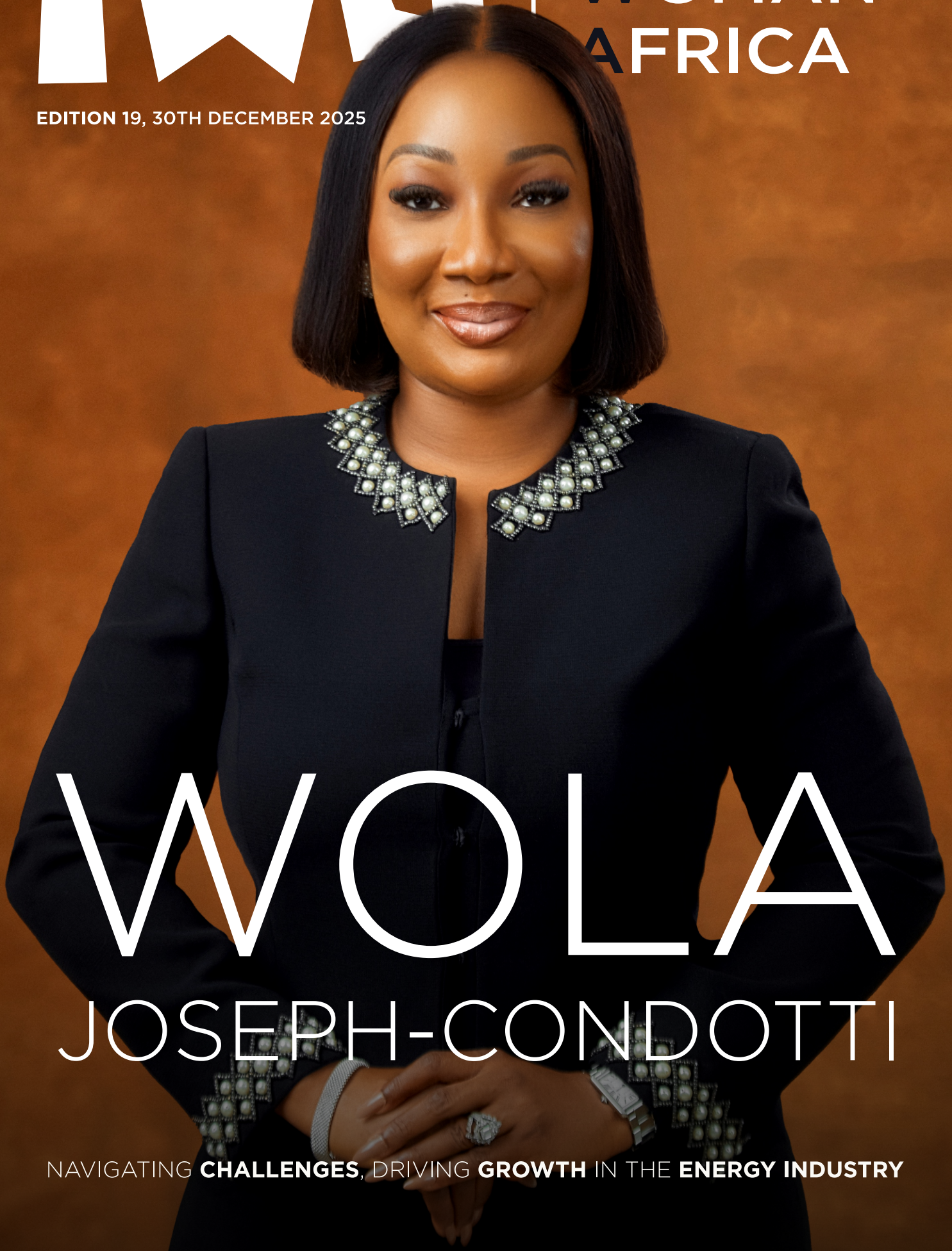




INSPIRING
WOMAN
AFRICA

EDITION 19, 30TH DECEMBER 2025



WOLA

JOSEPH-CONDOTTI

NAVIGATING **CHALLENGES**, DRIVING **GROWTH** IN THE **ENERGY INDUSTRY**

CONTENTS

COVER INTERVIEW

WOLA JOSEPH-CONDOTTI 4

HER POINT OF VIEW

The Day Burnout Almost Broke Me 14

WOMAN EXECUTIVE

Motherhood as a Masterclass in Leadership 16

FINANCIAL AdviseHER

More Money Won't Fix Poor Money Habits 18

WOMAN AT THE HELM

Dagmawit Moges Bekele 20

WE'VE GOT MEN

Yomi Ademola 22

HOLISTIC LIVING

Food as Medicine: Eating for Energy, Mood, and Longevity 24

TRIBE WITH THE VIBES

5 Communication Habits to Ditch in 2026 26



► 14

HER POINT OF VIEW
**The Day Burnout
Almost Broke Me**



► 19

FINANCIAL AdviseHER
**More Money Won't Fix
Poor Money Habits**



16



26



**Kemi
Ajumobi**

Publisher/Editor-in-Chief, IWA Magazine
Founder/Group CEO, IWA Group
www.theiwagroup.com
✉ contact@theiwagroup.com

Welcome!

Dear Readers,

Welcome to our final edition of Inspiring Woman Africa (IWA) Magazine for 2025!! We are excited about how our journey has been and we have sooooo much to be grateful for. I don't know if we can ever get over hosting the immediate past President of Ethiopia as our keynote speaker for IWA Series 14, including other distinguished speakers and the support from our fantastic sponsors. We are still basking in the euphoria of a successful 14th edition of our annual women's conference. Please feel free to visit our website www.theiwagroup.com to see previous edition that summarised all that happened at the conference. Gracing our cover as we wrap up 2025 is Wola Joseph-Condotti, a consistent contributor for our IWA Magazine who is also 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.

I am drawn to the grace of this amazing INSEAD graduate for her work execution and level of intelligence. Wola is a workaholic and once she gets on a project, she sees it through to the end. For instance, as Group MD/CEO of West Power & Gas Limited, the company secured an Electricity Trading Licence for one of their subsidiaries, a milestone that positioned them strategically within the Nigerian Electricity Supply Industry and expanded their ability to participate in regulated power-trading arrangements. In addition, they launched and operationalised a new subsidiary within the NESI distribution value chain, which rapidly emerged as a high-performing collection partner. Today, it supports approximately 5,000 active users and has facilitated transactions valued at about ₦3.5 billion, enhancing efficiency and strengthening revenue assurance across key districts. Kudos Wola, IWA wishes you well and we await your next big thing!

Here are other articles in this edition.

WOMAN EXECUTIVE: Motherhood as a Masterclass in Leadership by Wola Joseph-Condotti.

FINANCIAL ADVISER: More Money Won't Fix Poor Money Habits by Sola Adesakin.

HOLISTIC LIVING: Food as Medicine: Eating for Energy, Mood, and Longevity by Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri.

HER POINT OF VIEW: The Day Burnout Almost Broke Me by Chinyere Okorocha.

TRIBE WITH THE VIBES: 5 Communication Habits to Ditch in 2026 by Zainab Aderounmu.

On our **WE'VE GOT MEN** section this week is Yomi Ademola, Chairman, Rendeavour West Africa and our **WOMAN AT THE HELM** is Dagmawit Moges Bekele, Director, African Union Peace Fund Secretariat, AU.

See you in 2026 and make sure you are part of the world changers switching things up!

Happy New Year in advance!!!



COVER INTERVIEW

WOLA JOSEPH-CONDOTTI

NAVIGATING CHALLENGES, DRIVING GROWTH
IN THE ENERGY INDUSTRY

Kemi Ajumobi



ola Joseph-Condotti 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.

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 and a Notary Public of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Wola's achievements have earned widespread recognition. Most recently, she received the inaugural Leadership



“As Group MD/CEO of West Power and Gas Limited, I carry not only the strategic and technical competence I have gathered over the years, but the lived experience of someone intentionally shaped for 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.

In addition, she was recognised among the Ascent Top 100 Career Women in Africa (2025), honored as the "INSEADer of the Month" in April 2024 by INSEAD Business School and named one of the top 100 most inspiring women in Africa by the Enterprising Women Awards Africa, 2024 amongst several others.

Wola serves on numerous boards, providing advisory and strategic guidance on corporate and business matters. She currently chairs the Board of JagaBeauty Limited and serves on the Governing Board of the Nigeria Wind Energy Council, the Electricity Law Reports (the first-ever electricity law report in Africa), the Advocacy Committee of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce & Industry, the Exponential Foundation Nigeria, Prime-Rose Nursery & Primary School, the Jimi Tewe Foundation, and Newswire Law & Events Magazine.

She is a founding member of the Women in Energy Nigeria, 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.

► Transition from legal career to current position as Group MD/CEO

Leadership has always been the destination, but my journey toward it was shaped not by a single turning point, but by a series of intentional steps, pivotal encounters, and divinely ordered seasons. Each experience (academic, professional, and deeply personal) contributed to the leader I

have become.

After completing my LL.M at Harvard Law School, I had a quiet but certain realisation: I should have pursued an MBA. I had always possessed a natural business instinct, and it became increasingly clear that my interests extended beyond interpreting the law to understanding how organisations grow, transform, and ultimately impact society.

My older brother, a finance professional with an extraordinary grasp of strategy and governance, played an unexpected role in this awakening. Watching him approach problems with a strategic lens helped me recognise my own appetite for structure, business, and leadership. This inner prompting eventually led me to INSEAD for my MBA. I vividly remember scoring one of the highest marks in a strategy exam, a moment

that affirmed not just my capability, but my calling. Strategy, organisational architecture, and business transformation came naturally to me, and I realised these were essential tools for the kind of leadership I envisioned. Professionally, I had the privilege of working under transformational leaders like Engr. Oladele Amoda and Engr. Adeoye Fadeyibi, both former MD/CEOs of Eko Disco. They exposed me to the operational realities of running a utility company and broadened my understanding of what true executive leadership entails. A defining moment came during a conversation with Mr. Alex Okoh, then Director-General of the Bureau of Public Enterprises. After scanning my CV, he looked up and said, "This reads like a managerial profile, but it should start to read like a CEO's."



"Law trains you to listen carefully, articulate clearly, and manage divergent interests, skills that are critical when leading large, diverse teams and engaging regulators, boards, customers, and employees"



That statement was both a challenge and a validation, call to rise into the fullness of the leader I was becoming. Through every step, one truth has remained consistent: every opportunity found me prepared. I am, in many ways, a manifestation of the biblical principle, “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” The journey has not been without its valleys. I have experienced my share of “miry clay” moments. Seasons that tested my identity and resolve. But those moments refined me, deepened my faith, and strengthened my capacity to lead with clarity, empathy, and resilience.

Today, as Group MD/CEO of West Power and Gas Limited, I carry not only the strategic and technical competence I have gathered over the years, but the lived experience of someone intentionally shaped for leadership by discipline, by destiny, and ultimately, by God.

▶ **Legal background shaping your leadership style and approach to management**

My legal background has been foundational to my leadership style and overall approach to management, but not in a narrow or technical sense. It shaped the way I think, decide, and lead across complex organisations. First, my legal training instilled in me a strong discipline of structured thinking and risk awareness. From my early years at Banwo & Ighodalo, I learnt to analyse issues holistically, anticipate second and third-order consequences, and make decisions grounded in evidence and sound judgement. As a leader, this translates into being deliberate, measured, and forward-looking, particularly when navigating regulatory complexity, stakeholder interests, and long-term institutional risk.

Second, my progression from private

practice into in-house and executive roles broadened my perspective beyond legal correctness to commercial and operational practicality. At EKEDC, whilst serving as Chief Legal Officer and Company Secretary, I concurrently led Regulatory Affairs, Compliance, HR, Customer Service, Data Protection, and several Districts within the Commercial Directorate at various times. That experience taught me that effective leadership is not about enforcing rules in isolation, but about enabling the business to achieve its objectives responsibly and sustainably. Third, legal practice sharpened my governance and accountability lens. Serving as Company Secretary and Chief Legal Officer across different stages of Organisational growth embedded a deep respect for transparency, process, and ethical leadership. This has influenced my management style to be values-driven, with clear decision rights, well-defined escalation paths, and an emphasis on institutional resilience rather than personality-led leadership. Finally, my legal background strengthened my communication and people-management approach. Law trains you to listen carefully, articulate clearly, and manage divergent interests, skills that are critical when leading large, diverse teams and engaging regulators, boards, customers, and employees. Over time, especially following my executive education at INSEAD, I have complemented this with a more empathetic and human-centered leadership style. In summary, my legal foundation gave me the analytical rigour, governance mindset, and ethical compass that underpin my leadership, while my subsequent operational and strategic experiences shaped those attributes into a balanced, inclusive, and execution-oriented management approach.

▶ **Challenging experience from career that significantly impacted your professional growth**

A defining challenge in my career came in 2023, when a deliberate attempt was made to undermine my reputation and derail my professional journey. It was an intensely painful season, not merely because of the challenge itself, but because it stood against my integrity and years of diligent work. In hindsight, that period became a turning point. It became a catalyst for growth, elevation, and clarity of purpose. It strengthened my faith, deepened my resilience, and ultimately shifted my career into a new dimension. That experience taught me that adversity, when met with discipline and faith, can become a powerful instrument for transformation. Today, I stand not as a victim of that moment but as a living testimony of Romans 8:28, all things truly work together for good.

▶ **Most rewarding aspect of your role at West Power & Gas Limited**

The most rewarding aspect of my role at West Power & Gas Limited is the depth of exposure to corporate governance within a highly complex, regulated, and systemically important sector.

The power sector sits at the intersection of public policy, private capital, regulation, and social impact. Leading a group with multiple subsidiaries across this ecosystem requires constant engagement with governance structures that are both robust and adaptive. I find it deeply fulfilling to help design and steward frameworks that balance regulatory compliance, commercial sustainability, stakeholder accountability, and long-term value creation.

At the group level, this involves working closely with boards, regulators, lenders, and investors to ensure that governance is not treated as a box-ticking exercise, but as a strategic enabler. Whether it is aligning subsidiary boards with group strategy, strengthening risk oversight, or

“I find it deeply fulfilling to help design and steward frameworks that balance regulatory compliance, commercial sustainability, stakeholder accountability, and long-term value creation”



“The energy sector is too technically diverse and geographically dispersed for leadership to be overly centralised”

embedding ethical decision-making across operations, the challenge lies in translating governance principles into practical, day-to-day leadership behaviors in a fast-moving environment. What makes this especially rewarding is the opportunity to institutionalise good governance in a sector where decisions have real economic and social consequences. Sound governance directly impacts service delivery, investor confidence, regulatory trust, and organisational resilience. Being able to shape those outcomes, while building enduring institutions rather than personality-driven organisations, is both intellectually engaging and personally fulfilling.

► **Key attributes of effective leadership, particularly in the energy sector**

Effective leadership, particularly in the energy sector, requires a careful balance between empowerment and accountability, given the sector's operational complexity, regulatory intensity, and broad stakeholder impact. First, team empowerment is essential. The energy sector is too technically diverse and geographically dispersed for leadership to be overly centralised. Effective leaders must build capable teams, delegate authority with clarity, and create an environment where professionals are trusted to exercise judgment within defined parameters. Empowerment, however, is not abdication. It involves equipping teams with the right skills, data, and decision frameworks, and encouraging ownership at all levels of the organisations. When people feel trusted and supported, they are more likely to innovate, respond quickly to operational challenges, and take responsibility for outcomes rather than simply follow instructions. Equally critical is accountability. In a sector where decisions affect system reliability, safety, financial sustainability,

and regulatory compliance, clear accountability structures are non-negotiable. Effective leaders establish unambiguous roles, measurable performance expectations, and consequences that are applied consistently. Accountability creates discipline, reinforces ethical behaviour, and ensures that empowerment translates into results rather than diffusion of responsibility.

The most effective leadership approach integrates both attributes. Teams are empowered to act, but within a framework where responsibilities are clearly defined, performance is transparently measured, and outcomes, positive or negative, are owned. In my experience, this balance fosters high-performance cultures that are resilient, execution-focused, and aligned with long-term Organisational objectives.

► **The role of women evolving in leadership positions within traditionally male-dominated industries**

The role of women in leadership within traditionally male-dominated industries is evolving in a substantive and increasingly visible way, driven by competence, performance, and institutional maturity rather than symbolism.

In the power sector, this shift is already evident. Once viewed as overly technical and operationally intense, the industry is now recognising that effective leadership requires a broader mix of capabilities across regulation, governance, customer engagement, and transformation. As a result, leadership pipelines are becoming more inclusive.

This progress is reflected in women leading and governing some of the sector's most critical institutions. The appointment of Folake Soetan as Chief Executive Officer of Ikeja Electric, alongside her role as a Non-Executive Director of the Nigerian Independent System Operator, and the leadership of

Rekhia Momoh as Chief Executive Officer of Eko Electricity Distribution Company, demonstrate growing confidence in women to run large, complex utilities. In addition, Jennifer Adighije's role as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Niger Delta Power Holding Company speaks to the expanding influence of women at the highest levels of sector governance and system leadership. At the policy level, the appointment of Olu Verheijen as Special Adviser to the President on Energy further speaks to the growing presence of women shaping Nigeria's energy future, advising President Bola Tinubu on repositioning the sector for sustainability and long-term growth.

Collectively, these developments are reshaping leadership norms, strengthening governance, and normalising female representation across both operational and oversight roles. The energy sector's experience shows that when opportunities are equitable, women do not merely participate in leadership, they excel, and the institutions they lead are stronger for it.

► **Specific initiative you implemented that had a significant positive impact on your company or community**

One initiative that stands out for its depth and lasting impact is the work I led in strengthening both institutional capability within our Group and the broader policy environment across the electricity value chain. It was a multidimensional effort that combined operational execution with sector-wide reform.

At the corporate level, during my tenure as Group MD/CEO of West Power & Gas Limited, we secured an Electricity Trading Licence for one of our subsidiaries, a milestone that positioned us strategically within the Nigerian Electricity Supply Industry and expanded our ability to participate in regulated power-trading arrangements. In addition, we launched and operationalised a new subsidiary within the NESI distribution value chain, which rapidly emerged as a high-performing collection partner. Today, it supports approximately 5,000 active users and has facilitated transactions valued at

about ₦3.5 billion, enhancing efficiency and strengthening revenue assurance across key districts.

Beyond organisational initiatives, I have also been deeply involved in shaping the policy frameworks that govern Nigeria's evolving power landscape. I was nominated by the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission to serve on the Legal and Regulatory Working Group responsible for developing implementation regulations under the Electricity Act. Before that, I led the legal team of a distribution company during the Act's legislative process, advocating for strong provisions on energy transition, renewable energy, and decentralised electricity markets that are now reflected in the law.

I also contributed to subnational reform. I supported energy-transition policy discussions in Lagos State and worked with institutions in Akwa Ibom State to develop the state's emerging electricity market framework, laying the foundation for a more decentralised, sustainable, and future-ready power ecosystem.

On the community side, philanthropy is an intrinsic part of who I am. I am a philanthropist to the core, and while I support numerous initiatives that transform lives, I hold a personal principle of not publicising most of them. My main ministry, however, is education for brilliant children from poverty-stricken homes who cannot afford school fees, as well as projects that improve the learning environment in public schools. These efforts speak to my belief that education is one of the most powerful equalisers and a direct pathway to generational transformation. My passion for education is deeply personal. My mother is an educationist, and after losing my father at a very young age, it was education that became the bridge that carried my siblings and me into opportunity, stability, and purpose. I witnessed firsthand how learning can alter the trajectory of an entire family. That experience cemented my conviction that education is one of the most powerful equalisers and remains the clearest pathway to generational transformation. One initiative I can speak openly about is



“Nigeria's energy sector continues to face a set of structural challenges that cut across the entire value chain and constrain power reliability, investor confidence, and long-term sustainability.”

my work with the Justice Aderemi Annual Lecture Series (JAALS) Foundation, where I serve as Matron. Through JAALS, we mentor young lawyers, support their early career journeys, and host an annual essay competition in my name with cash prizes for the top three finalists. This initiative promotes excellence, critical thinking, and ethical leadership in the next generation. Together, these efforts (institutional, regulatory, and philanthropic) reflect a philosophy I hold deeply: real transformation happens when we build strong systems, enable good policy, and invest intentionally in people.

► **Balancing your various roles on numerous boards while leading a major organisation**

Balancing multiple board and advisory roles alongside leading a major organisation requires intentional structure, clarity of purpose, and strong discipline around time and decision-making.

First, I am highly selective about the boards and advisory roles I accept. Each role must align with my professional values, sector expertise, and the broader impact I seek to make. This alignment ensures that my contributions are meaningful rather than symbolic and that insights gained in one role often reinforce



value creation in another.

Second, I operate with a clear distinction between governance, advisory oversight, and executive management. As a Group CEO, my primary responsibility is leadership and performance delivery within the organisation. My board roles are therefore approached from a governance and strategic-oversight perspective, not an operational one. Clear boundaries, well-defined mandates, and strong secretariat support are critical to maintaining this balance.

Third, effective delegation and empowered management teams are essential. Leading a complex group structure would be impossible without capable executives who own day-to-day execution. This allows me to focus on strategic direction, governance, and stakeholder engagement, while ensuring continuity and accountability across the

organisation.

Finally, discipline and structure underpin everything. I maintain a rigorous approach to planning, prioritisation, and preparation for board engagements. I ensure that my participation is focused, value-adding, and efficient, whether in boardrooms, advisory settings, or executive forums.

► **Biggest challenges facing the energy sector today, especially in Nigeria**

Nigeria's energy sector continues to face a set of structural challenges that cut across the entire value chain and constrain power reliability, investor

confidence, and long-term sustainability. A key challenge is infrastructure fragility and insecurity, particularly across gas supply, transmission, and distribution networks. Repeated incidents of gas pipeline vandalism expose the system's vulnerability, with disruptions at the gas level quickly translating into reduced generation capacity, transmission wheeling constraints, and widespread outages. These risks are amplified by ageing transmission and distribution infrastructure, which limits the ability to evacuate and deliver power even when generation is available.

Closely linked is the heavy dependence on gas-fired generation, making the sector highly sensitive to gas supply constraints. Inconsistent gas availability creates cascading effects across generation, transmission, and end-user supply, reinforcing the cycle of unreliability. Another major constraint is the absence of fully cost-reflective tariffs. While affordability remains an important consideration, tariffs that do not reflect the true cost of supply weaken operators' ability to recover costs, reinvest in infrastructure, and attract long-term capital. This undermines investor confidence and slows the flow of financing into critical power infrastructure. A more sustainable approach requires targeted subsidies that protect vulnerable customers while preserving sector viability.

Metering gaps also remain a critical issue. As at 30 June 2025 (latest NERC quarterly report), only 6.42 million of 11.82 million active customers were metered, representing an industry-wide metering rate of about 54%. The continued reliance on estimated billing undermines transparency, weakens collection efficiency, and constrains liquidity across the value chain, making broader reforms around tariffs, investment, and service reliability more difficult to implement. That said, there has been meaningful progress through government and

“As Group MD/CEO of West Power & Gas Limited, we secured an Electricity Trading Licence for one of our subsidiaries, a milestone that positioned us strategically within the Nigerian Electricity Supply Industry”

development-partner interventions. Programmes such as the MAP Scheme, NMMP, and MAF (Tranches A and B) have accelerated meter deployment. The World Bank-funded DISReP IPF component, targeting the rollout of approximately 3.2 million smart meters, and the Presidential Metering Initiative, backed by about ₦700 billion from FAAC to deploy 1.1 million meters by end-2025 and two million meters annually thereafter, are expected to significantly reduce estimated billing. In parallel, Nigeria's participation in Mission 300 supports infrastructure upgrades and interconnected mini-grids aimed at improving supply reliability and enabling accurate metering for up to 150 million Nigerians.

► **The future of renewable energy impacting traditional energy companies**

The future of renewable energy will significantly shape traditional energy companies in Nigeria, with the transition being clearly guided by the Electricity Act 2023.

The NERC regulation on tariffs mandates that 10% of energy procurement must come from embedded generation, with at least 50% of that sourced from renewable energy. This firmly positions renewables as a core component of the power market rather than a peripheral option. For traditional energy companies, this requires a strategic shift toward portfolio diversification and greater system resilience.

Crucially, the Act empowers States to drive this transition. Lagos State is already leading implementation through the Lagos State Ministry of Energy & Mineral Resources and the Clean Lagos Electricity Market, with recent calls for bids and expressions of interest covering grid-scale solar and wind, gas-fired power hubs, and off-grid solutions for public infrastructure.

Overall, the trajectory points to convergence rather than displacement. Traditional energy companies that align with the Electricity Act 2023 and actively participate in state-led renewable and embedded generation initiatives will be

**“Effective leaders
establish unambiguous
roles, measurable
performance
expectations, and
consequences that are
applied consistently”**

better positioned for long-term relevance and sustainability in Nigeria's evolving energy landscape.

► **Most promising trends in corporate governance and compliance within the energy industry**

In October 2025, I had the opportunity to serve on a panel discussion organised by the Institute of Chartered Secretaries of Nigeria, where we examined emerging trends in corporate governance and compliance within the energy sector. One of the most significant developments we discussed was the shift toward sector-specific governance frameworks, particularly in the Nigerian electricity industry. While the Financial Reporting Council's 2018 National Code of Corporate Governance provides a strong, principles-based foundation across all sectors, the issuance of a dedicated NESI Code of Corporate Governance by Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission in May 2025 reflects a maturing understanding that the power sector has unique governance risks. Electricity is both critical national infrastructure and, in parts, a natural monopoly operating under regulated revenue frameworks rather than pure market pricing. Failures in governance here have immediate social, economic, and political consequences, far more visible and destabilizing than in many other sectors.

A second promising trend is the elevation of the regulator's role from purely technical oversight to active governance enforcement, enabled by the Electricity Act. By linking board

accountability, transparency, and disclosure directly to operational performance, the NESI Code moves governance from a theoretical ideal to a measurable performance driver. Importantly, this does not signal regulation for its own sake. Rather, it creates the foundation for a more performance-driven partnership between regulators and licensees. Strong governance is rewarded with regulatory confidence, while weak governance attracts closer scrutiny as an early intervention tool. In my view, this shift, from generic compliance to sector-tailored, outcome-focused governance, is one of the most promising trends shaping the future of corporate governance in the energy industry.

► **Prioritising sustainability and how West Power & Gas Limited is aligning**

Sustainability is no longer optional for companies in the energy sector; it is central to long-term reliability, financial viability, and social license to operate. In a sector where infrastructure decisions have multi-decade implications, sustainability directly influences cost efficiency, regulatory alignment, investor confidence, and public trust.

At West Power & Gas Limited, sustainability is embedded in our operating philosophy rather than treated as a standalone initiative. A key focus is embedded and distributed generation, which we see as critical to building a more resilient energy mix, reducing over-dependence on centralised generation, and improving supply reliability for end users.

This approach is already being demonstrated in practice through initiatives such as VI Power's collaboration with Eko Electricity Distribution Company on a 30MW embedded gas-fired power plant in Victoria Island, Lagos. Under this model, VI Power manages generation, targeted distribution network upgrades, and billing for commercial customers, while complementing EKEDC's service delivery in the area.

Projects of this nature illustrate how embedded generation can enhance

PORTRAITS BY RHEMA



reliability, improve customer experience, and support the financial and operational sustainability of distribution networks. In addition, we continue to invest in grid modernisation and smart metering, which support transparency, accurate billing, and improved customer experience while strengthening the commercial sustainability of the network. Equally important is community engagement and social inclusion. By working closely with host communities and stakeholders, we address issues such as asset protection, customer trust, and shared responsibility for infrastructure sustainability.

► **Inspiration to pursue advanced degrees in law and business, and how they contributed to your success**

My decision to pursue advanced degrees in both law and business was driven by a

deliberate desire to broaden my perspective and prepare myself for leadership beyond technical expertise. My time at Harvard Law School was an opportunity to expand my global and cultural understanding of the legal profession. The experience deepened my appreciation of how law intersects with policy, economics, and institutional leadership, and it was during this period that I became more intentional about pursuing leadership roles. I realised that to lead effectively, particularly in a sector as complex as energy, I needed more than legal training; I needed a stronger foundation in management, governance, and finance. INSEAD became the natural next step in that journey. The MBA provided the strategic and business frameworks that complemented my legal education and equipped me with the tools to think

“After losing my father at a very young age, it was education that became the bridge that carried my siblings and me into opportunity, stability, and purpose”

holistically, make informed decisions, and lead at an enterprise level.

Together, these academic experiences shaped me into a more rounded and balanced leader, combining legal rigor with strategic and commercial insight, and prepared me to operate confidently in complex, high-impact environments.

► **Mentors or role models throughout your career and lessons learnt from them**

My husband, Hakeem Condotti, has been my foremost influence. Beyond being my life partner, he embodies wisdom and calm under pressure. His ability to remain steady in the midst of storms has shaped how I lead, decide, and respond to challenges. His mentorship, spiritually, intellectually, and professionally, has strengthened my discipline and sharpened my vision, serving as a constant compass through pivotal seasons.

One of my earliest influences has been my brother, Kolapo Joseph, a finance professional with a strong strategic mindset. From him, I learnt that disciplined hard work makes anything achievable. His seamless engagement with both legal and commercial thinking sparked my interest in the business side of leadership and continues to make him a trusted sounding board.

Professionally, I owe much to Adeoye Fadeyibi, who expanded my exposure beyond legal advisory into the operational realities of managing a utility. My cousin, Eyo Ekpo, reinforced the value of hard work and principled thinking, offering clear, timely counsel at critical decision points.

I have also learnt deeply from Tein George, whose example underscores the importance of integrity, being fair and doing right by everyone, regardless of the circumstance.

Together, these mentors have reinforced a core lesson for me: success is never purely



“Leadership is not only about technical excellence; it is about building people, systems, and institutions that outlast you”

technical. It is built on integrity, hard work, calm leadership under pressure, and the relationships that challenge, guide, and sustain you.

► **Advice to young women aspiring to reach top leadership positions like you**

I would say this: do not rush the process. Be intentional about your growth, because every season of your journey matters. The roles that seem small, the work that feels unseen, and the people who stretch you are all part of your preparation for something greater.

Master your craft, but do not stop there. Learn how to lead, how to collaborate, and how to think critically. Leadership is not only about technical excellence; it is about building people, systems, and institutions that outlast you.

Stay curious and stay grounded. Anchor yourself in values that do not shift with trends or titles, because integrity and character are what sustain leadership over time. The world needs leaders who combine conviction with compassion. Finally, do not aim only for success, aim for significance. Let your life and work create impact. Let your excellence open doors not just for you, but for those coming behind you, especially other women who are watching and drawing courage from your example.

► **Recharging and maintaining a healthy work-life balance**

I am very intentional about how I recharge and maintain balance. My home is my sanctuary, and spending quality time with my husband and children grounds me deeply. I also draw strength from time spent with my close inner circle, whose support and perspective help keep me centered.

Beyond that, I prioritise rest, worship, and quiet reflection. These moments allow me to reset spiritually and mentally, ensuring that I lead from a place of clarity rather than exhaustion. I have also learnt the discipline of stopping when it is time to stop. For me, balance is not a weakness, it is wisdom, and it is essential for sustainable leadership.



“IWA14 reaffirmed why this platform remains critical. Fourteen years of consistent impact is no small achievement, and the experience underscored the importance of sustaining spaces where women are empowered, voices are amplified, and leadership is shaped with intention”

Day never to forget and why?

Profoundly for me, my wedding day to the love of my life, Hakeem Condotti and the birth of my children. Both marked pristine and remarkable moments that ushered me into entirely new beginnings, marriage and motherhood. They redefined my sense of purpose, responsibility, and love, and remain anchors in my personal journey.

Inspiring Woman Africa (IWA) Series 14 experience

This is my 3rd IWA conference and my mind is blown away each year. IWA14 was a deeply powerful and affirming experience, one of those rare moments where purpose, presence, and impact genuinely converged in the room. The 14th Annual Inspiring Woman Africa Conference was more than an event; it was a reminder of the strength of collective vision and intentional leadership. Curated with excellence by Kemi Ajumobi, the platform continues to stand out as a defining voice for women's leadership, resilience, and influence across Africa. Year after year, IWA creates space

not just for inspiration, but for meaningful dialogue that shapes industries, policy, and society. IWA14 was also a moment of affirmation. The brilliance of Nigerian women was on full display, audacity, intelligence, creativity, and excellence. The energy in the room was unmistakable and deeply moving, reinforcing a powerful truth: women are not future leaders; we are present leaders, actively shaping institutions, industries, and nations today. Above all, IWA14 reaffirmed why this platform remains critical. Fourteen years of consistent impact is no small achievement, and the experience underscored the importance of sustaining spaces where women are empowered, voices are amplified, and leadership is shaped with intention.

What are you grateful for in 2025 and what are your plans for 2026?

In 2025, I am deeply grateful for God's mercy, the growth of my family, remarkable career advancements, and the continued opportunities to serve,

both professionally and in God's vineyard. It has been a year marked by grace, alignment, and meaningful progress. Looking ahead to 2026, my focus is firmly on impact. I plan to expand mentorship, deepen sustainability initiatives, and consolidate governance reforms across the Group. Above all, I am committed to showing up fully and faithfully in every space God opens.

Concluding words

I am a product of grace, discipline, and divine alignment. If my journey offers any lesson, it is that God writes far better scripts than we could ever imagine. My prayer is that every woman who reads this finds the courage to rise, the clarity to lead, and the faith to become all she was created to be.

HER POINT OF VIEW

The Day Burnout Almost Broke Me

Chinyere Okorochoa



We often talk about burnout like it's just being tired; something a few hours of sleep or a weekend off can fix. But when it finally hit me, it didn't feel like a slow simmer. It felt like a sudden collapse and total breakdown.

It happened during what should have been one of the most triumphant moments of my professional life.

I was wrapping up my tenure as Chairperson of the Nigerian Bar Association Women Forum (NBAWF). It had been two years of strategic leadership, groundbreaking initiatives, and purposeful advocacy for female lawyers across Nigeria. My final task? Hosting our Annual General Meeting, a culmination of everything we had built.

At the same time, I had agreed to moderate a high-profile panel at the Nigerian Bar Association's Annual General Conference, the biggest legal gathering in West Africa.

It sounded manageable. After all, I was used to high stakes and tight deadlines. I told myself, You've handled more. You can do this.

But behind the scenes, the cracks were widening.

The lead-up to both events was an exhausting whirlwind... endless phone calls, last-minute changes, guest confirmations, speech writing, preparing reports, financials, printing, press, logistics... etc. I barely slept. I barely ate. And I certainly didn't pause.

On the day of the conference, I arrived at the venue, an hour early, but feeling like I had arrived late to myself. No makeup. Notes unread. Panel questions disorganised. My mind was cloudy, and my heart was racing.

Then my phone rang.

It was someone from the Women Forum team, calling with yet another urgent issue that needed my attention. And in that moment, something inside me just gave way.

I quietly slipped to the back of the hall, sat down on a lonely chair, and burst into tears.

Not a few polite tears. A full-on breakdown. Silent but soul-deep.

For five minutes, I let the weight of everything I'd been carrying these past weeks, pour out of me... overwhelm, exhaustion, frustration, pride, pressure, all at once.

That was my breaking point.

And ironically, it was also my moment of clarity.

Because in that vulnerable space, I realised I had done what so many women leaders do; we carry the world on our shoulders, forgetting that we're human too.

Here's what burnout taught me:

1. You can't pour from an empty cup.

Sleep is not optional. Rest is not indulgent. Breaks are not laziness. Your wellbeing is the engine of your impact.

2. Perfection is overrated.

The world won't fall apart if one task isn't flawless. Leadership isn't about doing it all, it's about choosing what truly matters and trusting others to help.

3. Asking for help is not failure.

Delegation is a leadership skill. I could have leaned on my team more. I didn't have to carry every detail on my back.

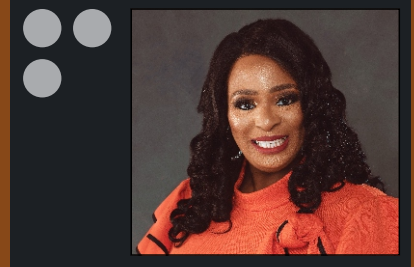
4. Saying "no" is self-preservation.

Every "yes" to something is a "no" to something else; your health, your peace, your joy. Learn to choose wisely. Yes, I eventually pulled myself together and moderated that session; brushed on some powder, reviewed my notes, and delivered like a pro. The audience never saw the tears.

Yes, the AGM was a resounding success; everything I'd hoped it would be and more...

But I left with something far more valuable than applause: a deep and personal understanding that success shouldn't cost your soul.

So, to every woman reading this... ambitious, capable, high-achieving woman; please don't wait for burnout to break you before you listen to what your body and spirit are trying to say. Your wellness is part of your success story. Have you ever hit your own breaking point? What did it teach you? I'd love to hear your journey.



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

Motherhood as a Masterclass in Leadership

By Wola Joseph-Condotti

We do not often see “motherhood” and “executive leadership” in the same sentence. One is framed as personal, emotional, even sacrificial. The other, as strategic, tough, results-driven. But in my experience (as a CEO and a mother of five) motherhood has been the most rigorous and transformational leadership training of my life. Forget the boardroom. The living room will teach you diplomacy. Forget strategy retreats. Managing a household under pressure will teach you resilience. Forget executive coaching. Raising humans will humble, stretch, and sharpen you in ways no MBA can. We need to reframe motherhood. Not as a professional liability, but as a leadership incubator.

▶ The Decision Fatigue is Real

Any mother will tell you (especially those juggling board meetings and baby bottles) that the volume of daily decisions is staggering. From big-picture issues like schooling, health care, manners, and values, to minute-by-minute questions like who eats what for lunch, who needs emotional support, or who is suddenly allergic to their uniform. This daily stream of decisions cultivates one of the most important executive muscles: discernment. When you are a mother, you learn quickly that not every fire is worth fighting. You prioritise. You triage. You delegate. You decide, constantly. In my professional life, I have seen how this translates into better crisis management, sharper strategic focus,

and a deeper sensitivity to the human dynamics in leadership. Motherhood trained my instincts, and instincts are underrated in boardrooms.

Conflict Resolution at Its Finest

There is no HR manual for resolving fights between siblings with toy missiles and emotional landmines. Yet mothers do this daily. We listen to half-truths, balance fairness with firmness, and hand out consequences that do not fracture the relationship long-term. Does that sound familiar to workplace leadership? It should. I have mediated between warring department heads with the same calm and clarity I learned from resolving a battle over who got the blue crayon first. The settings may differ, but the skills are parallel: empathy, fairness, active listening, and the ability to calm chaos without suppressing voice.

▶ Humility, Patience, and Letting Go of Perfection

Motherhood constantly reminds me: I am not in control of everything. Not every plan will be executed. Not every day will be perfect. Some days, success is simply that everyone survived and was fed. This humility (rooted in love and laced with grace) helps me lead my teams with realism, kindness, and perspective. I have learned to celebrate progress, not just perfection. To extend compassion when deadlines are missed, because I know what it feels like to run on empty.

▶ A Masterclass in Long-Term Vision

Motherhood is not about immediate ROI. It is about legacy. It is about planting values, affirming identity, and shaping destinies. You will not always

see the results right away. But over time, you see growth, maturity, alignment. And that is the mark of excellent leadership: doing today what sets others up for long-term greatness. The same applies in the workplace. As a leader, my goal is not just to deliver quarterly results. It is to develop people. To steward purpose. To create systems that will outlast my tenure.

▶ God's Gift, Not a Gap

Too many working mothers feel the need to hide, apologize for, or downplay their parenting in professional spaces as

though being a mother somehow makes us less of a leader. But I believe it makes us more. In Scripture, Deborah was both a prophetess and a judge, spiritual and national leader. But she was also described as a “mother in Israel.” Her leadership was maternal, wise, and strong. She led not with ego but with insight and conviction. And under her, Israel experienced peace for forty years (Judges 4–5). That is not a gap. That is a gift.

Final Thoughts

Motherhood has made me a better CEO. A more discerning leader. A more compassionate mentor. A more strategic visionary. It did not slow me down. It refined me. To every woman doing business deals after bedtime stories, who is drafting board memos while packing lunchboxes: you are not doing two jobs. You are doing one calling expressed in two realms. You are not torn. You are being trained. And your leadership is richer for it.



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

More Money Won't Fix Poor Money Habits

By Sola Adesakin



There is a popular belief that the solution to every financial challenge is “more money.”

As though a bigger income magically wipes away spending issues, eliminates debt, or creates wealth. But if we're being honest, more money only amplifies whatever habits already exist.

You can't out-earn poor money habits. A bigger income with bad discipline only creates a bigger mess. More money won't

fix what discipline won't face. If your habits leak, your wealth will leak too. This is one of the most important financial realities people often learn too late, especially toward the end of the year when they begin reviewing how the last 12 months have gone. The season of resolutions is typically filled with requests for more; more income, more opportunities, more investment returns, more financial breakthroughs. But here's the truth: don't just pray or work for more... prepare for more. Preparation is what ensures that when

money comes, it stays, grows, and compounds. The real question is not “How much more can I earn?” but “How ready am I to handle more when it comes?” As you review the year and prepare for a stronger 2026, here are four things you should do to strengthen your financial foundation, or as I call it, digging your financial trenches.

1. Build a spending plan, not a guessing plan

Most people don't overspend because they want to; they overspend because they don't plan. A spending plan gives your money an assignment before it arrives. When you don't tell your money where to go, it will follow your impulses instead.

As you close out the year, create a clear monthly money plan for 2026:

- What are your fixed costs?
 - What are your flexible lifestyle expenses?
 - What can you reduce, negotiate, or eliminate?
 - What percentage of your income goes to investment first, not last?
- Financial clarity is financial peace.

2. Automate your savings and investments

If you rely on willpower alone, your money will disappear before you remember your goals. Automate. Let technology help your discipline.

The trick is simple:

Set up automatic deposits into your investment or savings accounts at the beginning of the month, not the end. Treat investments like bills; mandatory, non-negotiable, and paid early.

This is how you dig trenches that protect your future.

3. Create a “no-leak” policy for debt and lifestyle pressure

Your financial progress will always be slower if you are constantly patching holes. Debt, impulsive spending, emotional shopping, and lifestyle pressure are the biggest leakages.

This season, commit to:

- Reducing debt intentionally
- Saying “no” without guilt
- Avoiding comparison spending
- Tracking your small expenses (they are the biggest thieves)

Wealth doesn't only grow by addition; it grows by protection.

4. Invest consistently — whether in bull or bear seasons

Your financial future depends far more on consistency than on perfect timing. The more you invest, the more trenches you dig around your long-term security.

Invest when the markets look exciting.

Invest when they look boring.

Invest when they look confusing.

Just keep investing.

You are not investing for today's noise; you are investing for tomorrow's stability.

Money is a multiplier.

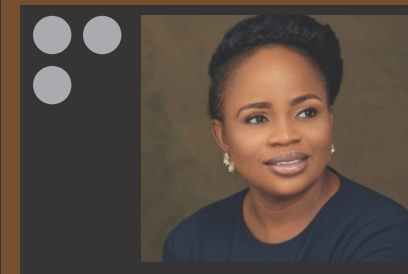
It multiplies discipline, and it multiplies disorder.

Before you ask for more, strengthen the habits that will hold more.

Before you chase bigger income, build bigger capacity.

Before you expect financial growth, develop financial roots.

As the year winds down, choose habits that help your money stay, grow, and work for you. Dig your trenches now. Your future self and your future wealth will thank you.



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 Instructor™ and a member of the Personal Finance Speakers Association.



WOMAN AT THE HELM

Dagmawit Moges Bekele

Director, African Union Peace Fund Secretariat, AU

Dagmawit Moges Bekele is an African optimist — driven by purpose, grounded in service, and deeply committed to building systems that move the continent forward and deliver lasting impact. By day — and with immense pride, she leads the Peace Fund Secretariat at the African Union Commission, a role she wakes up every morning grateful to fulfill. Alongside a dedicated team, she is working to fully operationalise one of Africa's most ambitious peace financing instruments. Their mission lies at the intersection of diplomacy, resource mobilisation, fund management, investment and institutional transformation — anchored in a powerful belief: Africa can, and must, own its peace and security agenda.

Previously, she had the honour of serving as Ethiopia's Minister of Transport and Logistics, where she led transformative initiatives to modernise a sector vital to

national development. Dagmawit also served as a cabinet member of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and as a member of Parliament, bringing citizen-centered policymaking into the heart of governance.

She believes leadership should be human, that progress is born of community, and that Africa's future belongs to those who dare to dream boldly and act practically. Across every stage of her career, she has been committed to cultivating excellence, learning continuously, and unlocking opportunity through meaningful collaboration.

As we conclude 2025, Dagmawit is pleased to reflect on a year of focused institutional strengthening at the African Union Peace Fund. Guided by the direction of AU Member States, and drawing on the Secretariat's internal expertise through sustained engagement with their stakeholders and AU policy organs, she says they have finalised three key framework

documents: the Resource Mobilisation Strategy, Communication & Advocacy Strategy, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

“As we move into the year ahead, these frameworks will guide our work across all pillars of the hashtag#PeaceFund. They will inform how we mobilise and diversify resources, deepen strategic partnerships, communicate impact more effectively, and ensure consistent, transparent, and efficient operations.” She said, adding that, most importantly, they will support the secretariat in translating commitment into tangible actions.

“We look forward to working closely with AU organs, different departments and partners under the guidance of our Member States as we operationalize these strategies and continue advancing our shared objective of a peaceful, resilient, and prosperous hashtag#Africa, in line with hashtag#Agenda2063.” Dagmawit stated.



WE'VE GOT MEN

Yomi Ademola

Chairman, Rendeavour West Africa

Yomi Ademola is Chairman, West Africa, at Rendeavour, Africa's largest new city developer, bringing over two decades of experience across corporate law, project finance, investment banking, and African urban development.

Rendeavour's development portfolio includes more than 30,000 acres (12,000 ha) of land in the urban growth trajectories of major cities in Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Zambia, and Democratic Republic of Congo.

A bridge-builder across continents and cultures, Yomi has practiced law and conducted business in the US, UK, and several African countries, equipping him with a unique skillset for navigating complex, multicultural business environments. He has led the origination and negotiation of several landmark projects for Rendeavour and manages high-level stakeholder relationships across West Africa.

As Rendeavour's founding — and current — Country Head

in Nigeria, Yomi played a central role in launching Alaro City, the company's flagship West African project, where he now serves as Managing Director. His leadership continues to shape Alaro City into a benchmark for integrated city development on the continent.

Highly passionate about his projects, during the launch of Universal One at Alaro City, which he described as one of the largest residential developments in the Lekki Free Zone, he said the milestone highlighted the growing confidence in Nigeria's real estate sector and in Alaro City Free Zone, with both local and international (including diaspora) investors recognising the opportunities Alaro City offers—“A vibrant community, unmatched infrastructure, and proven investment returns. Together, we are redefining urban living and positioning Alaro City as the gold standard for residential, mixed-use and industrial development in the region.” Yomi stated.

Yomi also brings significant financial services experience. He was part of the pioneering team that established Renaissance Capital's presence in Nigeria—laying the foundation for one of the most impactful investment banking platforms in the region. Renaissance Capital is an international investment bank focused on high opportunity emerging markets, including CIS and Sub-Saharan Africa. Renaissance Capital is a leading emerging and frontier markets investment bank providing access to 43 markets, including in Africa, Middle East, Central Europe, Turkey, Asia and Greece.

Yomi currently sits on the board of Renmoney, one of Nigeria's leading fintech companies, and on the Board of Trustees of the Nigerian Economic Zones Association.

Earlier in his career, Yomi practiced law with Weil, Gotshal & Manges and Latham & Watkins in New York and London. He is a graduate of Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, D.C.

HOLISTIC LIVING

Food as Medicine: Eating for Energy, Mood, and Longevity

By Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri

For centuries, cultures around the world have viewed food not only as sustenance but also as a form of medicine. Modern science is increasingly confirming what traditional healers and wise elders have always known: what we eat has profound effects on our energy levels, mood, and even how long and well we live. By approaching meals with the mindset that “food is medicine,” we can fuel our bodies, balance our emotions, and support long-term vitality.

Eating for Energy

Energy is the most immediate way we feel the impact of our diet. Food acts as the body's fuel, but not all fuels burn the same. Highly processed foods, refined sugars, and unhealthy fats often lead to short bursts of energy followed by crashes. In contrast, whole foods provide steady, sustainable fuel. Complex carbohydrates like whole grains, oats, sweet potatoes, and quinoa release glucose slowly into the bloodstream, preventing the highs and lows associated with sugary snacks. Pairing these with lean proteins and healthy fats, such as fish, legumes, nuts, and avocados help regulate blood sugar

and sustains energy throughout the day.

Micronutrients also play a critical role. B vitamins, found in leafy greens, eggs, and whole grains, support the body's energy production at the cellular level. Iron-rich foods like spinach, beans, and lean red meat ensure oxygen reaches cells efficiently, preventing fatigue. Even hydration is vital: water helps every metabolic process function optimally, while dehydration can sap energy and focus.

Eating for Mood

Food doesn't just affect our bodies; it

deeply influences our minds and emotions. The brain, after all, is an organ that requires nourishment just like the heart or muscles. Research has shown strong connections between diet and mental health, especially in regulating mood and reducing the risk of depression and anxiety. Omega-3 fatty acids, found in salmon, walnuts, and flaxseeds, are essential for brain health and have been linked to reduced symptoms of depression. Fermented foods like yogurt, kefir, kimchi, and sauerkraut feed the gut microbiome, an ecosystem of bacteria that communicates directly with the

brain through the gut-brain axis. A balanced gut microbiome is associated with lower stress and improved emotional resilience. Additionally, foods high in antioxidants such as berries, dark chocolate, and green tea combat oxidative stress in the brain, protecting it from premature aging and cognitive decline. Even simple habits, like replacing a sugary soda with herbal tea or choosing a fruit instead of candy, can stabilize mood swings that come with rapid blood sugar spikes and crashes.

Eating for Longevity

Longevity isn't just about living longer, it's

about maintaining quality of life, strength, and independence well into old age. Diet is one of the most powerful levers we have for slowing the aging process and preventing chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

The Mediterranean diet, rich in vegetables, fruits, olive oil, whole grains, legumes, and fish, is consistently linked to longer lifespans and reduced risk of chronic illness. Similarly, studies of “Blue Zones”, regions where people live significantly longer than average—highlight common dietary patterns: primarily plant-based meals, minimal processed foods, moderate portions, and regular consumption of beans, nuts, and seasonal vegetables.

Antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds play a central role in longevity. Turmeric, with its active ingredient curcumin, helps fight inflammation. Cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, kale, and Brussels sprouts support detoxification and cancer prevention. Even modest changes, like reducing red meat consumption or incorporating more plant-based meals, can have profound long-term effects.

Making Food Your Medicine

Adopting a food-as-medicine mindset doesn't mean giving up enjoyment or becoming rigid. It means making conscious, nourishing choices most of the time while still allowing for balance and pleasure. A plate filled with colourful vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats not only fuels the body but also sends a message of care and respect for one's health.

Practical steps include planning meals ahead, shopping the perimeter of the grocery store where whole foods are stocked, and cooking more at home to control ingredients. Listening to your body, eating when hungry, stopping when satisfied, and noticing how different foods make you feel can guide you toward a diet that energizes, uplifts, and sustains you.

Food is more than calories; it is information, medicine, and a daily opportunity to nurture ourselves. By eating for energy, mood, and longevity, we align with the body's natural design and unlock the potential for a healthier, more vibrant life. In every bite, we have the power to influence how we feel today and how well we thrive tomorrow.



**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- Psychiatriatrist 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, Praetitioner (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

5 Communication Habits to Ditch in 2026

By Zainab Aderounmu



It's the end of the year, which means it's reflection season. You're planning your retreats, get-togethers, end-of-the-year parties and most importantly, vision boarding soirées to take stock of the year and decide what needs to go. In that process, here are 5 communication habits you need to stop in 2026.

First, "why communication?", you may ask. It's the way people experience beyond your aura. Through communication, you either confirm or debunk other people's assumptions of you. Imagine you're meeting someone for the first time who already perceives you to be snobby, only for your first words to confirm their assumptions. If it's not intentional, then pay attention to the next paragraphs.

Giving back-handed compliments: Compliments are a great conversation starter and ice breaker. People naturally assume you're a kind person if you give them a compliment, but they're also supposed to be generous, not pinched. Don't give compliments that sound like insults on a second thought. The recipient shouldn't wonder whether to say thank you or be offended. For example, "you're smarter than you look" Or "you handled that better than I expected" Those aren't compliments, they're a projection of your doubts on the other person. When you give compliments, remember to be kind and abundant; they should be a generous expression of your admiration.

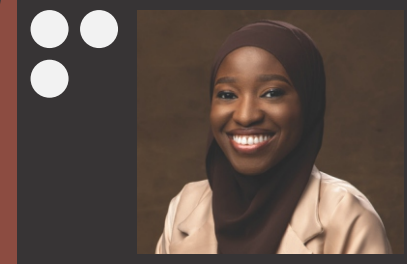
Calling people more than twice: Again, in interpersonal communication, it's unsavory to call anyone more than two times, unless it's an emergency. Multiple calls signal emergencies and could put the recipient in a state of paranoia; imagine them finding out you only wanted to ask a question that could have waited. When you call twice and they're unable to respond,

it's probably because they're actually unable to respond, which would be remedied once they can. Please don't give anyone a heart attack in the New Year.

Apologising before your speech: This absolutely compromises your authority and 'perceived' expertise. I say perceived because your unwarranted apologies now cast doubts on your capacity. Unless you arrived late, there's no need to draw attention to what the audience wouldn't ordinarily notice. Don't apologise for your 'croaky voice' or your 'puffy eyes' or your 'many papers', because they probably didn't notice. However, the moment you mentioned it, it's all they'll focus on; how your 'k' sounds like an 'f' and how your eyes are truly swollen. Not only does it cast shadows of doubt on your believability but it also distracts your audience.

Mentioning a change in body size: This ought to be a no-brainer, but I've seen it play out too many times to gloss over it. If you're seeing someone for the first time after a while and they look different, don't mention it (unless you have enough relationship grounds for that). Don't say 'you've grown fat' or 'why are you losing so much weight' or 'you look small'. It's a bit of body shaming, and offensive in interpersonal communication.

Listening only to respond: I once had a conversation with the Governor of Lagos State, Dr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu, and the first thing that struck me was how attentively he listened. He wasn't listening superficially just to respond, but truly paying attention to my words and how I was saying them. Little wonder the first thing he did was to compliment my communication skills before he went on to respond to my submission. When you listen only to respond, effective communication will be truncated, because the essence of communication is to understand, and it requires paying attention not only to



Zainab Aderounmu

Zainab Aderounmu A. W. is a First Class graduate of English Language and the Overall Best Graduating Student from the Lagos State University, Lagos Nigeria. She's a professional Master of Ceremonies, known as [The Hijabi Compere](#), a public speaking coach and Communications Professional. She is currently a Youth advisor to the European Union where she doubles as the Spokesperson and Head of Communications & PR for the Youth Sounding Board.

what is said but also to how it is said. When you listen to understand, you catch nuances in the interlocutor's speech: their pain points, what actually motivates them and their goal. They may not have said it, but you can infer because you paid attention. When people know that you're listening to them, they open up more because they know you respect them.

As a bonus, speaking at a fast pace: When you speak too fast, you're also compromising your authority because people assume you're either nervous or unsure of what you're saying. A measured pace forces people to listen and even respect the speaker; it signals that they're at ease and confident in their topic.





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.

📍 @clayfoodshoplagos

: +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.

📍 @Thehennaplace

: +2349095327273

