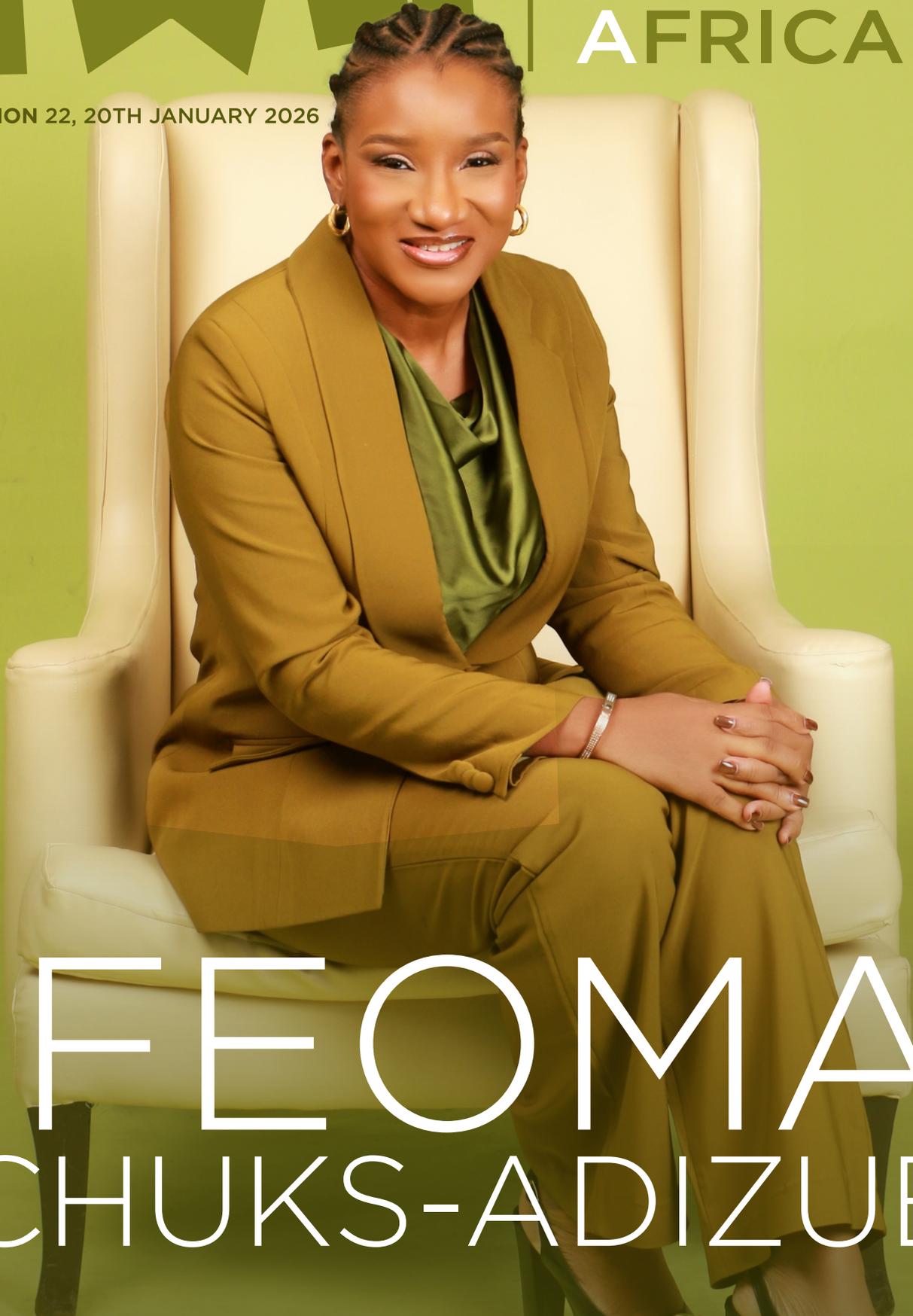




INSPIRING
WOMAN
AFRICA

EDITION 22, 20TH JANUARY 2026



IFEOMA CHUKS-ADIZUE

GLOBAL CITIZEN'S AFRICA LEAD, CHAMPIONING CHANGE ACROSS THE CONTINENT

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**Kemi
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Welcome!

Dear Readers,

It's IWA time! How did your weekend go? The matches at AFCON 2026 will not be forgotten anytime soon. All I want to say about that is this, if you are destined to win, win you will...Regardless! Never lose focus no matter the distraction. Things may not look okay at the beginning, but as long as you remain optimistic, success will knock and you will be the one to open the door with your own hands and carry your trophy because it is your time and your turn.

Our cover personality for this week is Global Citizen's Africa lead, and she is championing change across the continent. She is Ifeoma Chuks-Adizue, a purpose-driven leader with 21+ years of experience building and scaling global brands across Africa to drive profitable growth, job creation and long-term economic value.

We celebrate her for the exceptional marks of excellence she leaves at every organisation she has worked and how she is carrying same zeal to her current role at Global Citizen. She had quite a lot to share and it is an interview with details you will appreciate. We celebrate you Ifeoma, keep flying the flag high around Africa and the world.

Here are other articles in this edition:

WOMAN EXECUTIVE: What Nobody Tells You About Success. By Wola Joseph-Condotti.

FINANCIAL AdviseHER: Why Locking In Your Savings Rate Matters More Than Chasing More Money. By Sola Adesakin.

MADE FOR MORE: From Dream to Done (Part 1). By Ifeoma Chuks-Adizue.

HOLISTIC LIVING: Aging Well Is Not About Luck. By Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri.

GENDER INSIGHTS: Creating Safe Cities for Women in Nigeria through Transforming our Transportation Systems. By Asmau Benzies Leo.

TRIBE WITH THE VIBE: What to Read in Q1 2026. By Zainab Aderounmu.

WE'VE GOT MEN is Ituah Olajide Ighodalo and **WOMAN AT THE HELM** is Folake Odediran.

We are looking forward to next week when we will bring you another fantastic edition.

See you soon!

Take Care!



COVER INTERVIEW

IFEOMA CHUKS-ADIZUE

GLOBAL CITIZEN'S AFRICA LEAD, CHAMPIONING
CHANGE ACROSS THE CONTINENT

Kemi Ajumobi



Ifeoma Chuks-Adizue is a purpose-driven leader with 21+ years of experience building and scaling global brands across Africa to drive profitable growth, job

creation and long-term economic value. Everything she does is anchored in a simple purpose: to eradicate poverty by building systems, businesses and leaders that create millions of well-paying, dignified jobs.

Her passion sits at the intersection of purpose-driven leadership and commercial growth in Africa because she strongly believes that strong companies led by leaders anchored in purpose do more than generate profits. Across her career in FMCG, Services and now non-profit, she has led diverse teams to deliver growth in complex climes.

CAP PLC (makers of Dulux Nigeria) – She quadrupled revenue and tripled profits in four years while creating 300+ jobs. Historic results indicate these results would have taken the business 30years to achieve.

Cadbury NG (Mondelez International) – Reversed a three-year decline and delivered record double-digit growth in Nigeria and Ghana.

Procter & Gamble – Led Central Nigeria to become the fastest-growing region in West Africa, doubling distributor revenue in three years. Also delivered double-digit growth in Nigeria during a recession while meeting Kenya's full-year target in half the time.



“At P&G, the team had become disillusioned after years of under-performance, but together, by the grace of God, we turned the business around to double-digit growth in Nigeria within one year”



“As Commercial Director at CAP, over four years, we quadrupled revenue, tripled profit, created over 300 jobs, and supported significant career growth across the organisation”

► **Career inspiration and evolving over 21+ years in the industry**

I started my career at Procter & Gamble straight out of school. It was a great environment and I learned excellence and what it is your work in a purpose-driven organisation.

In 2017, after 12 years at P&G, I lost my job - not because of performance, but because the business had not been profitable for three years and had to downsize during the recession happening at that time. That experience marked a real turning point for me as I saw over a hundred of my colleagues lose their jobs overnight.

The next year, I moved into a new role at Mondelez (Cadbury) as a Senior Marketing Manager, where I was responsible for about 70% of the company's business - the cocoa beverages category which had been declining for three years across Nigeria and Ghana. From my own experience, I understood what prolonged lack of profitability could lead to and I was deeply driven to turn the business around because I didn't want people to have to lose their jobs.

That sense of urgency shaped how I led. The team had become disillusioned after years of underperformance, but together, by the grace of God, we turned the business around to double-digit growth in Nigeria within one year. In Ghana, it took longer, but by the following year, even during COVID, we also turned the business around to profitable growth.

Later, as Commercial Director at CAP, I asked the same question at the start of the role: What is my assignment here? The answer was clear; it was about transforming both the business and the people. Over four years, we quadrupled revenue, tripled profit, created over 300 jobs, and supported significant career growth across the organisation.

For me, purpose-driven leadership keeps me grounded. My job is more than a job...it is an assignment. That perspective gives me the strength to stay with hard problems, the resilience to keep going when things are tough

Today, Ifeoma serves as Managing Director, Africa at Global Citizen where she leads Move Afrika, a pan-African live-music touring circuit that catalyses jobs, skills, tourism, SMEs and investment in a bid to grow Africa's creative economy.

Outside her corporate role, she is an Author, Speaker and Trainer. Through Uncommon Woman Int'l, she

trains and guides career women to identify, birth and scale the God-given ideas and impact projects within them while excelling in their careers and nurturing strong homes.

Through PrimaWorks, she works with organisations and emerging leaders to build the leadership depth, execution discipline and purpose-driven culture required to scale sustainably.

and the clarity to seek both practical and divine insight. Leadership, for me, is about finishing the assignment I was sent to do well and making my Maker proud.

What are the key goals of Global Citizen, what are your core responsibilities, how are you implementing it and so far so good?

Global Citizen's core goal is to end extreme poverty by driving action, accountability and systemic change. We do this by mobilising citizens and working with governments and the private sector, using culture, especially music, to turn awareness into real commitments that improve lives.

As Managing Director for Africa, my role is to ensure Africa is central to that mission. I lead strategy for the continent, build partnerships across government, private sector and civil society, as well as oversee initiatives that deliver real economic and social impact.

Our flagship impact vehicle for the continent is called Move Afrika, where we use live music as a platform for job creation, skills development and investment in the creative economy. It's not just about concerts, it's about building a sustainable ecosystem that supports local talent, vendors and businesses.

So far, the results have been strong. We've created thousands of jobs across Kigali and Lagos, increased local crew capability development, supported African vendors and delivered world-class events largely produced by African teams.

Alongside this, as an organisation, we have driven advocacy on issues like health financing, World Bank IDA replenishment and renewable energy access, turning citizen action into meaningful policy conversations and commitments.

There is still work ahead, but the model is working. My focus is on scaling what works, deepening impact market by market and building systems that create lasting opportunity beyond any single event.

What specific systems or frameworks do you believe are essential for building successful businesses that create jobs and drive economic growth in Africa?

I don't think it's really about frameworks on their own. Sustainable businesses that create jobs and drive economic growth are built when the right mix of enablers is in place. Energy is the foundation of economic activity. When power is unavailable or too expensive, businesses struggle to operate efficiently, costs rise, and long-term sustainability becomes difficult. Infrastructure - roads, ports, venues and so on, determines how easily businesses can move goods, access customers and grow. Weak or dilapidated infrastructure increases the cost of doing business, limits growth and ultimately job creation. Technology enables scale and productivity. Sustainable businesses need the right systems and digital tools

“As Managing Director for Global Citizen, Africa, I lead strategy for the continent, build partnerships across government, private sector and civil society”

to run operations efficiently, reach more people and grow without losing control.

Affordable Capital is essential for sustaining growth. As businesses create demand and expand, access to capital ensures they can meet that demand, continue hiring and avoid supply glitches that can stall growth for years. All of these are critical enablers but one critical factor which is still often underestimated is the mindset and leadership capacity of the people running these businesses.

You can inject capital and achieve incremental growth. However, when capital is combined with strong,





transformational leadership, businesses grow more sustainably, leaders build resilient teams and job creation accelerates. I've seen this repeatedly where the same resources, in the hands of the right leaders, can deliver exponential outcomes and lasting economic impact.

From your commercial experience, what factors make a business more attractive to investors in the African market?

From my commercial experience, investors are attracted to African

“When capital is combined with strong, transformational leadership, businesses grow more sustainably, leaders build resilient teams and job creation accelerates”

businesses that combine strong fundamentals with credible leadership and a clear path to scale.

First, a solid business model matters - one that solves a real problem, serves a clear market and has a realistic route to profitability and growth.

Second, strong leadership and governance are critical. In Africa especially, investors

place a premium on integrity, structure and leaders who can execute, manage risk and adapt to complexity.

Third, deep market understanding and execution capability make a difference. Businesses that truly understand their customers and operating environment, and can also deliver consistently, stand out quickly.

Fourth, scalability and resilience are important. Investors look for businesses that can grow across markets and continue performing even through economic or policy shocks.

Fifth, capital discipline and return on investment are essential. Investors want clarity on how capital will be used, how it drives growth and when and how it will deliver returns especially because they always have other places, they can put their money.

Finally, the operating environment matters. Investors look closely at government policy stability, security and ease of doing business. A strong business in the wrong market can struggle to attract capital if policies are unpredictable or operations are frequently disrupted. That's why partnerships with government are so important. If we want to scale the private sector and create jobs sustainably, businesses need an enabling environment that allows them to operate consistently and plan for the long term.... and governments are key in providing this.

Key lessons learnt from your time at CAP PLC, Cadbury NG, and Procter & Gamble that has helped you even to your current work at Global Citizen

Every phase of my career has shaped how I work today at Global Citizen. From Procter & Gamble, I learnt discipline, excellence and the power of strong systems. I also learnt how to fail, reflect and bounce back from failure, how to take feedback, recover quickly and keep moving forward despite setbacks. Most importantly, I learnt how to truly value





people. At P&G, people are seen as the greatest asset and I saw that live out in how leaders invested in, developed and trusted their teams. This is something we need to apply much more intentionally across the continent.

From Cadbury Nigeria (Mondelez), I learnt resilience and leadership in complexity. I worked through declining businesses, tough economic conditions and disillusioned team members and I learnt how closely business performance is tied to belief, trust and engagement. That experience reinforced that turning businesses around requires growing people, not just fixing numbers.

At CAP Plc, I got to practice everything I had learnt. I applied the discipline and people-first leadership from P&G, alongside the resilience and turnaround mindset from Cadbury. In addition, my role in CAP enabled me lead at scale and drive full business transformation, growing the business while building systems and people that would last.

All of these lessons come together in my work at Global Citizen. Whether I'm building Move Afrika, working with governments and the private sector, or driving advocacy across markets, the principles remain the same: value people, lead through complexity, build strong systems and deliver results.

The context has changed obviously from commercial brands to social impact, but the leadership lessons have stayed with me and continue to guide my work.

▶ **How do you see initiatives like Move Afrika transforming the creative economy and fostering job creation in Africa?**

At its core, Move Afrika is about using the power of music to unlock Africa's creative and economic potential, not just to entertain but to transform. We are building an annual, multi-country touring circuit for world-class concerts but the real goal is much bigger than shows. Think about what happens in Lagos every Detty December - how the city comes alive, hotels are fully booked, small businesses thrive and money flows through the local economy. In 2024 alone, Detty December generated over \$71 million in economic activity. Move Afrika

is about replicating that effect multiple times a year, across multiple cities, in a structured and sustainable way.

By doing this, we are helping to build an ecosystem where Africa is ready not just for Global Citizen shows, but for international artists, African stars, local promoters and homegrown festivals ready to scale, simply because the talent, vendors and infrastructure are in place.

This is how cities like Edinburgh and Nashville built thriving creative economies, and the same is possible across Africa.

On jobs, the impact is direct and practical. Each show activates an entire value chain - from production and logistics to hospitality, tourism and creative services, creating thousands of jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities. Since launch, Move Afrika has already created over 2,500 jobs across Kigali and Lagos, with a strong focus on local crews, vendors and artisans.

Beyond the events, the long-term play is capacity building. We deliberately invest in local talent and vendors through training, exposure and repeat engagement, so jobs are not one-off, but sustainable and year-round. Over time, this raises standards, builds confidence and allows Africa's creative economy to grow at scale.

That is the Move Afrika vision - turning culture into an economic platform that creates jobs, builds businesses and drives lasting growth across the continent.

▶ **What unique challenges do women face in pursuing leadership roles in Africa, and how does Uncommon Woman Int'l address these challenges?**

Women in Africa face a layered set of challenges as they pursue leadership, and many of them show up most sharply at the mid-career stage.

Culturally, expectations around marriage, motherhood and caregiving still sit heavily on women. Ambition is often celebrated in theory, but questioned in practice especially when it requires visibility, authority and difficult trade-offs.

Structurally, while we have many

“From Cadbury Nigeria (Mondelez) I learnt how closely business performance is tied to belief, trust and engagement and that turning businesses around requires growing people, not just fixing numbers”

women at middle management levels, the path from mid-level to senior leadership is steep. What it takes to break through - long hours, high pressure, constant visibility and responsibility, often coincides with the same season many women are navigating marriage, motherhood and family demands. It can feel overwhelming.

This is also the stage where many women start asking deeper questions: Is this life really what I want? Why am I stressing myself? Work begins to feel monotonous. Fulfillment is missing. So, some women leave the workforce entirely and we lose





“CAP enabled me lead at scale and drive full business transformation, growing the business while building systems and people that would last”

incredible talent. Others stay, but get stuck at mid-level / capable but hesitant to step into senior leadership because they look at the top and think - Am I really ready for that life? Do I actually want that level of pressure and sacrifice?

Even when organisations say the right things about supporting women, many women are internally unsure. They are not resisting growth because they lack ability, they're resisting because they lack clarity, fulfillment and conviction.

This is where Uncommon Woman International comes in. It is a purpose identification and activation company that works specifically with career women, helping them identify and birth their purpose alongside their full-time careers. What has been observed is that many of these women actually love their work, it's the lack of fulfillment and clarity that causes disengagement.

By helping women reconnect with purpose, Uncommon Woman

International enables them to show up differently. Fulfillment restores energy, clarity rebuilds confidence and many rediscover the desire to grow and lead at higher levels. The result is more women living happier more-fulfilled lives, staying in the workplace, breaking through the mid-level ceiling, and senior women remaining engaged, visible and impactful.

At its core, the work is about helping women live and lead with purpose so they don't just reach leadership, but sustain it, and remain a strong voice at the table for those coming behind them.

▶ What is the greatest lesson life has taught you?

One of the greatest lessons life has taught me is that life rewards the diligent. You can become almost anything you choose to be but it requires intention, commitment and the willingness to do the work.

The future we often dream about is not a destination you stumble into; it is something you envision and prepare for.

If you don't, the future will still arrive, but you may walk into it unchanged because you didn't think ahead or prepare for what it would require.

Life doesn't reward you with what you think you deserve; it rewards you with

what you are prepared for. That is why when you see ordinary people doing extraordinary things, be sure that they made a decision, stayed consistent and did the work.

I've also learnt that diligence on its own can become exhausting if it is not anchored in purpose and belief. Life can start to feel like a treadmill when you lose sight of why you are pushing. For me, that anchor is God - my belief in Him, His word and His promises. That belief gives me the strength to keep going when I'm tired and the clarity to focus on what truly matters.

Life has taught me that you can get what you want out of it but it requires belief in yourself and in God, preparation, growth and sometimes reinvention. Then when all of that is guided by purpose, the journey becomes deeply fulfilling... because at the end of the day, you don't want to work so hard only to feel empty.

▶ What do you believe are the critical factors for scaling businesses successfully in markets like Nigeria?

Scaling businesses successfully in markets like Nigeria starts with mindset. Nigeria is a land of opportunity. When you look at the numbers, the scale is enormous. As such, leaders must be audacious, big in thinking, limitless in vision and bold in



drive. Scaling begins with the person conceiving the vision. If the mindset is small, the business will be too. Next is deep market understanding. Nigeria is complex and scaling requires a strong grasp of customers, pricing, routes to market, systems and people. This understanding must translate into speed and quality of execution. In markets like ours, how fast and how well you execute often determines who wins. Alongside speed, operational discipline is critical. Many businesses grow revenue quickly but lose money in the process. To scale sustainably, costs must be tightly managed so that growth is profitable and benefits all stakeholders: employees, investors, government and communities. Leadership and talent are also essential. Scaling businesses need more than capable employees; they need an army of leaders - people who can think on their feet, make decisions, take ownership and stay on top of things till results come through. These people must also feel seen, valued and heard. Then there is access to affordable capital. As demand grows, businesses must be ready to supply it. In a highly competitive and commoditised market like Nigeria, prolonged inability to meet demand creates space for competitors or counterfeits. Scaling must be proactively planned for and cash-backed. Finally, the operating environment matters. Supportive policies, stability and government partnership are essential for private-sector growth. In my experience, businesses that scale well in Nigeria are those that combine audacious vision with discipline, speed with structure, and ambition with strong leadership.

▶ **The role of technology in driving economic development in Africa**

Technology can drive economic development in Africa in very practical and powerful ways. First, technology improves productivity and efficiency. It helps businesses reduce costs, manage operations better and make faster, more informed decisions. I've seen small retail businesses scale to multiple



outlets simply because technology allowed them to track inventory, control costs and maintain discipline as they grew. Second, technology enables scale. Many African businesses would struggle to grow beyond their immediate geography without it. I met a young entrepreneur in his twenties who, together with two peers, built an online business that generated over £1 billion in revenue in a single year, purely by leveraging digital platforms to reach customers at scale. Third, technology accelerates job creation and entrepreneurship. Digital

access lowers barriers to entry, allowing young people to start, grow and formalise businesses faster whether in e-commerce, fintech, logistics or the creative economy. Fourth, technology improves access and inclusion. It expands access to finance, education, healthcare and markets, especially for women and underserved communities, enabling broader participation in economic activity. Even in our work at Global Citizen, technology plays a critical role in advocacy and collective action as it allows us to connect with young people across Africa and around the world, mobilising



“Since launch, Move Afrika has already created over 2,500 jobs across Kigali and Lagos, with a strong focus on local crews, vendors and artisans”

them to take action on some of the world's biggest challenges especially extreme poverty, without needing to be in the same physical space. That ability to mobilise millions, drive accountability and influence policy is a powerful lever for economic development.

Finally, technology strengthens accountability and scale at an institutional level. For large organisations, technology makes it possible to manage millions of transactions, process invoices efficiently and run complex operations at speed...something that would be impossible manually.

In short, when combined with the right leadership, capital and policies, technology becomes a powerful engine for scaling businesses, mobilising people, creating jobs and driving long-term economic growth across Africa.

Share an example of navigating a significant challenge or crisis and what lessons it taught you

One of the most significant challenges I've navigated was early in my career, when I was leading the Baby Care business at Procter & Gamble Nigeria. It was my first major crisis as a business leader and it played a big role in shaping how I lead today.

The brand had been a market leader, but performance dropped sharply. By the time I joined the team, things were already difficult. I remember my Managing Director saying to me, “The business can't tank more than this.” Unfortunately, it did. Sales declined even more, a new product launch didn't perform as expected and confidence was low. Every leader had an opinion and so tried several interventions back to back but results were slow to come. It was a demanding period that required intense focus, positivity and resilience.

That experience taught me a critical lesson - You must pace yourself. In a crisis, it's easy to run at full speed for too long but without intentional ways to pause, reflect and recharge, burnout sets in and organisations could lose incredible talent. Sustainable leadership requires knowing when to push and when to reset.

However most important lesson I learnt, was the need to fully own your business. At every level, people will have views on what should be done but as the leader, you must understand your business better than anyone else. This means a deep unparalleled understanding of your consumers, your numbers, your assumptions and the realities on the ground. As you do this, be unafraid to push for what you believe is best for the business and take responsibility for the outcomes.

I also learnt the value of resilience and adaptability. In a crisis, you need to stay steady, keep learning, listen closely to consumers, and be willing to adjust quickly. Progress often comes through iteration, not perfection.

After that role, I took time away from work to support my young son who was not speaking at that time. When I returned in a new role, I consciously applied these lessons - building volume assumptions from the ground up, spending time with consumers, and developing a deep understanding of the business. Even in a recession, that approach helped us deliver growth. That experience taught me that challenges will always arise - economic cycles change, business disruptions etc. but leaders who stay grounded, informed and people-focused are best positioned to navigate them well.

It also reinforced that leadership is never a solo effort. Teams matter. Recognising their contribution, celebrating progress and ensuring people feel seen and valued makes a real difference, especially in tough moments.

What personal or professional practices do you find most effective in building resilience, both for yourself and within teams you lead?

For me, resilience is built intentionally, both personally and professionally. Personally, clarity of purpose is foundational. Knowing why I do what I do helps me stay grounded in difficult seasons. I also prioritise pacing and renewal - understanding when to push and when to pause. Faith also plays an important role for me as it gives me



perspective and keeps me calm under pressure.

Professionally, I focus on clarity and psychological safety. In challenging moments, teams need to know what matters most and where to focus. Uncertainty drains resilience faster than hard work.

I also invest in ownership and leadership at all levels. Resilient teams are made up of people who feel trusted, empowered

to make decisions and capable of responding to change, so I make sure my team operates like this.

Finally, recognition matters. Acknowledging effort, celebrating progress and ensuring people feel seen and valued helps sustain energy and morale especially in tough seasons.

Ultimately, resilience grows when people feel anchored, supported and purposeful. Then when leaders model this, it becomes a shared strength across the team.

“When you see ordinary people doing extraordinary things, be sure that they made a decision, stayed consistent and did the work.”

How have mentors shaped your leadership style and what advice has resonated with you the most?

Truthfully, I've never really had formal mentors BUT I've learnt immensely from the people who have led and managed me over the years, by observing both what to do and what not to do.

One leader who deeply shaped my leadership style was my first Managing Director at Procter & Gamble, Standa Vesera. Watching him lead showed me

“Without intentional ways to pause, reflect and recharge, burnout sets in and organisations could lose incredible talent”

that it is absolutely possible to deliver strong business results and build people at the same time. He was deeply people-focused and as a result, teams were committed, motivated and delivering extraordinary results. That experience shaped my belief that the best results come when people genuinely enjoy what they are building and see the vision. One piece of advice that has stayed with me came from my Group Managing Director at CAP Plc - Fola Aiyesimonu. He said, “Everything falls to the level of what you, the leader tolerates.” He explained that the moment a leader

ignores something even as small as walking past a piece of paper on the floor, it sends a signal that this is acceptable. Leaders set the standard, whether intentionally or not, so if you want excellence, you cannot be tired of reinforcing it. An organisation will always drift to the level of what its leaders allow. These experiences and lessons have stayed with me, shaping how I lead today - unapologetically holding high standards, staying people-focused and taking full ownership for outcomes.

What initiatives or practices would you recommend to corporate leaders looking to better their organisation?

For corporate leaders looking to strengthen their organisations, the most important shift is moving from managing work to truly leading people. First, be a leader not just a manager. Managers maintain the status quo while leaders build the future. High-performance teams are inspired by leaders who take ownership, set direction and create belief, not by people who only supervise tasks. Second, have a compelling vision backed by a clear strategy. People want more than just a job; they want to see meaning, growth and possibility. Leaders must articulate where the organisation is going, set audacious goals, be clear on how to get there and clearly show how the team fits into that future. Third, set and track clear goals. Every team member should know what success looks like. Put simple, tracking systems in place, hold everyone accountable including yourself, and publicly recognise strong performance. Don't enjoy the glory alone; give people their flowers. Fourth, build a culture that genuinely rewards performance. Teams need to trust that effort and results are recognised fairly. Clear, transparent principles for rewards and recognition go a long way in building motivation and trust. Weed out poor performers fast. Fifth, show up as the leader your team needs. Walk the talk. Be mindful of your energy and presence, teams often respond more to a leader's mood than their words.



Speak up for your people in rooms they are not in while exercising wisdom and judgment.

Sixth, build trust and rapport. Know your people - what drives them, what they aspire to, what matters to them.

Make them feel seen, valued and appreciated. Trust is the foundation of discretionary effort.

Finally, empower your team to think and act like owners. Delegate real responsibility, remove barriers and equip them with the tools and information they need. Don't always give answers, rather coach people to think, decide and solve problems themselves. That's how leaders are built.

Lastly, a final point that often gets overlooked - have fun and stay open to growth. Enjoy the journey, create moments of connection and keep learning. High-performing teams don't just work hard, they grow together.

To any woman out there about to make strategic career decisions, what advice do you have for them?

To any woman about to make a strategic career decision, my advice is this: don't make the decision from fear, frustration, anger or exhaustion, rather, make it from clarity.

Pause and ask yourself what season you are in, what you truly want, and what the decision is preparing you for, not just what it will cost you now. A short-term sacrifice can be strategic, just as a comfortable choice can quietly limit you. Be honest with yourself about your capacity and your ambition and don't

downplay either. You are allowed to want growth, influence and impact, and you are also allowed to want peace and fulfillment. The goal is not to choose one over the other but to make choices that move you closer to the life you desire to live.

Do the work to understand the implications of your decision - who you need to become, what skills you need to build and what support systems you need in place to thrive post that decision. Lastly, don't rush. Strategic decisions deserve time, prayer and wise counsel.

Seek God's face on the matter and my prayer for you is that in no time, you'd look back and be grateful you chose well.

Concluding words

I'll close by saying this...Africa is rich in talent, creativity and opportunity but unlocking its full potential will require leadership that is intentional, audacious, people-focused and anchored in purpose. Across business, policy, culture and social impact, I've seen that when we invest in people, build the right systems and partner well, extraordinary outcomes are possible. This is how we create jobs, strengthen institutions, scale businesses and drive more inclusive growth. Progress in Africa will not be the result of isolated effort; it will come from continued collaboration, trust and long-term commitment.

One of Africa's greatest untapped advantages is its connectedness across regions, while we operate in different languages and contexts, our challenges and ambitions are deeply shared. When we collaborate across these divides, sharing markets, ideas, talent and capital, we unlock scale and impact that no single country or region can achieve on its own. I remain deeply optimistic about Africa's future. With purposeful leadership, deeper continental collaboration and a commitment to working together, we can build economies and opportunities that endure and deliver meaningful progress for our people.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my journey and perspective.

“Africa is rich in talent, creativity and opportunity but unlocking its full potential will require leadership that is intentional, audacious, people-focused and anchored in purpose”



WOMAN EXECUTIVE

What Nobody Tells You About Success

By Wola Joseph-Condotti



Success is beautiful. It is deeply fulfilling to see your hard work recognised, your voice respected, your influence growing. It is a privilege. One I do not take for granted. But there is a side to success that no one quite prepares you for. The part beyond the applause. Beyond the headlines and high-fives. Beyond the polished pictures and curated posts. There is an emotional tax that comes with being “the example.” A quiet pressure. A silent cost. A sacred burden.

The Loneliness at the Top is Real

As you rise, your circle often shrinks. Not because you want it to but because not everyone can journey with you. There are days when the room gets quieter. When the expectation is that you always have the answers. When people look to you, but few check in on you. Sometimes success is less about being seen, and more about being watched. And if you are not careful, you begin to perform instead of lead. To protect your image instead of tend to your soul.

The Fatigue of Being “Inspirational”

Being called a “role model” is an honour. But it can also be exhausting. There is an unspoken demand to never mess up. To always be composed. To always rise above, even when your humanity is cracking under pressure. You become the one people quote, but forget to cover in prayer. You become the one they emulate, but rarely empathise with. And slowly, if you are not rooted, you start to confuse your image with your identity. But your worth is not tied to your visibility. Your value does not increase

with your follower count. And success should never come at the cost of authenticity.

The Pressure to Keep Producing

The higher you rise, the more people expect. Another idea. Another win. Another proof that you deserve the seat you are in. Especially as a woman. So you keep going. Sometimes out of purpose, sometimes out of pressure. You achieve, not because you are inspired, but because you are afraid of being seen as replaceable. You say yes, not because it aligns, but

because silence feels like irrelevance. But the cost? Your joy. Your peace. Your clarity.

What Has Helped Me

Staying anchored in God, not applause. I have learned that my calling is not to impress. It is to steward. Some seasons, the rewards are visible. Other times, they are internal. But God sees both.

Protecting my identity from my performance

I am a person before I am a title. A daughter before I am a director. A soul before I am a speaker.

Creating sacred, honest spaces

Every leader needs a circle where she can lay her crown. Where she can say, “I am not okay today,” and not be judged. Mentors, therapists, friends who see beyond the shine.

Taking intentional pauses

I now understand that rest is not retreat. It is resistance against a world that equates busyness with value.

Even Jesus Withdrew

One of the most powerful images in scripture is of Jesus (at the height of His ministry, miracles flowing, crowds swelling) withdrawing to quiet places to pray (Luke 5:16). Even the Son of God did not let success override solitude. He didn't let applause drown out intimacy. He knew when to step back to stay aligned.

Final Thoughts

So yes, success is sweet. But it is also sacred. And it must be stewarded with wisdom. If you are rising, remember to also root. If you are visible, make sure you are also whole. Let us not be women who are admired and exhausted. Let us be women who are anchored and alive. Who understand that true success is not just about being celebrated, it is about being sustained.



Wola Joseph Condotti

Chief Executive Officer,
Eko Electricity Distribution Company

Wola is the CEO of Eko Electricity Distribution Company (Eko Disco).

Prior to her current role, she was 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.

Wola Joseph Condotti was also 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.

GENDER INSIGHTS

Creating Safe Cities for Women in Nigeria through Transforming our Transportation Systems

Asmau Benzie Leo

The growing insecurity surrounding transportation and daily commuting in Nigeria has become a gendered urban crisis with far reaching implications for women's safety, mobility, and participation in public life. Across major cities including Abuja, Lagos, Ibadan, Port Harcourt, and Kano, where women face heightened risks of "one-chance" criminal syndicates (these are

criminal/organised gangs who operate mostly within the city centres using car hires to rob, kidnap, abduct or torture their victims) for ransom, trafficking, or sometimes for ritual purposes. These crimes thrive where informal transport systems dominate, where urban surveillance is weak, and commuter corridors are poorly regulated. For most Nigerian women, unsafe transportation is not only a crime problem but a structural barrier to equality. Fear increasingly determines when and how women move, the jobs they accept, and their access to education, healthcare, and civic life. Many restrict their movement around and night travel, and this in turn leads to the decline in

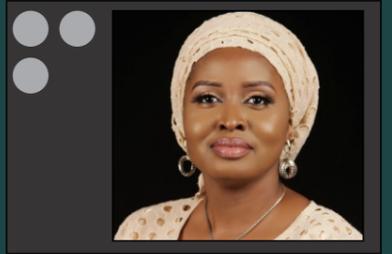
economic opportunities by spending their disproportionate income on perceived safer means of transportation. This constraint deepens gender inequality and undermines inclusive urban development. Also, the psychological toll of this crisis is equally severe especially were survivors of commuting related violence often suffer long term trauma, anxiety, and loss of trust in public institutions. From a governance standpoint, unsafe roads usually signal bad governance and a declining in state control over urban spaces. These are conditions that organised criminal networks use to exploit and expand kidnapping, trafficking, and extortion economies.

In terms of legislation, Nigeria already has legal instruments that can support safer cities if effectively enforced. For instance the Federal Road Safety Corps which was established under the FRSC (Establishment) Act, 2007 with a mandate to regulate, enforce, and coordinate road safety administration nationwide. FRSC marshals are legally empowered to enforce traffic laws, ensure vehicle roadworthiness, regulate commercial transport operations, maintain data on drivers and vehicles, and remove or ban unsafe vehicles from circulation. In the context of women's safety, FRSC marshals may play a critical preventive

role by enforcing driver identification, curbing unregistered and poorly maintained vehicles, monitoring commercial transport corridors, and collaborating with sister security agencies like the Nigerian Police Force and the National Security and Civil Defence Corps on intelligence sharing and joint operations. An effective enforcement of roadworthiness standards and driver profiling directly reduces the anonymity that enables "one-chance" crimes to escape. While complementary legal frameworks such as the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP) and relevant state transport regulations example by the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) provide grounds for prosecution of transport related violence, trafficking, and other forms of abuse. However, weak coordination and enforcement gaps continue to limit their impact.

Enforcement and Protection

Nigeria must adopt a Safe Cities and Safe Transport framework that integrates FRSC operations into broader urban security planning. This includes biometric registration of commercial drivers, vehicle traceability, regulated pick-up points, CCTV coverage, street lighting, and joint patrols involving FRSC, police, and other law enforcement agencies especially along dangerous routes. Equally important are the establishment of survivor centred response systems like emergency hotlines, rapid rescue, medical and psychosocial care, and legal aid for victims of this menace. Public awareness and sensitisation must be carried out in communities in order to empower women without shifting responsibility onto victims. Creating Safe cities are not optional but a compulsory requirement for Women's safety and security. Freedom of movement is a measure of urban security, rule of law, and national development. Protecting women on Nigeria's roads is also a fundamental part to securing the nation's growths and a future.



Dr. Asmau Benzie Leo

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

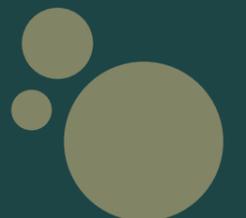
Dr. Asmau Benzie Leo is a development practitioner with extensive national and international expertise in gender equality, peace-building, governance, and humanitarian action.

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 (CENGAİN), 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.





FINANCIAL AdviseHER

Why Locking In Your Savings Rate Matters More Than Chasing More Money

By Sola Adesakin



The ability and discipline to put money away consistently for the future is one of the most underrated skills in wealth building. Many people earn well. Fewer people save well. And even fewer do it consistently. Yet, this simple habit is one of the strongest predictors of long-term financial success. Not income alone. Not luck. Not timing. Discipline.

► **Income Is an Opportunity, Not a Guarantee**
High income creates options, but only if it is handled intentionally. Without structure, higher earnings simply fund a more

expensive lifestyle. Bigger rent. Nicer car. More subscriptions. More “soft commitments” that quietly become permanent. The danger is subtle. You feel comfortable. You look successful. But nothing is actually being secured. That is why locking in your savings/investment rate early matters. Once your savings rate is fixed, your lifestyle adjusts around it; not the other way around. Instead of asking, “What can I save after spending?” you begin to ask, “How do I live well with what remains after saving?” That shift changes everything.

► **What Does a Strong Savings Rate Look Like?**
For most high-income earners, a savings

and investment rate of 20% to 40% is both reasonable and powerful. This does not mean living joylessly or depriving yourself. It means being intentional during your strongest earning years. Your savings rate is not about how much you earn. It is about how much of your income you keep and deploy wisely. A person earning less with a higher savings rate is often building more real wealth than someone earning more but saving little.

► **Why High-Income Years Matter So Much**
High-income seasons do not last forever. Careers change. Health shifts. Industries evolve. Family responsibilities increase.

Energy levels fluctuate. The biggest mistake many professionals make is assuming their earning power will always be available to them at the same level. When you fail to save aggressively during your peak years, you create future pressure. Pressure to keep earning at the same intensity. Pressure to accept work you have outgrown. Pressure to avoid risks or rest. Savings buy you optionality; the freedom to choose. Choice is one of the truest forms of wealth.

► **What Financial Optionality Really Looks Like**
When you save and invest consistently, you build flexibility into your future. You gain the option to: Take a career break without panic, pivot into a new industry, start or scale a business, reduce working

hours later in life and say no to opportunities that drain you. Without savings, every decision becomes urgent. With savings, decisions become strategic. Optionality turns money from a source of anxiety into a tool.

► **How to Lock In Your Savings Rate (Practically)**

Start with clarity.
Know your numbers.
Know your net income. What actually enters your account monthly?
Choose a savings rate. Start with 20% if possible, then work toward more.
Automate first. Savings and investments should leave your account immediately after income arrives.
Build around what's left. Let your lifestyle adjust, not your future.
Split your savings. Emergency funds, long-term investments, and opportunity capital should have clear purposes.
Automation removes emotion. When saving is automatic, discipline becomes easier.

The Silent Risk of Not Saving Enough
One of the hardest realities is reaching a point in life where you must continue earning at the same pace simply to survive. No investments. No buffer. No leverage. This is what happens when high income is consumed instead of converted into assets. Ten years pass quickly. And it is painful to look back and realize that nothing tangible was built with years of strong earnings. The goal of saving is not just accumulation. It is protection against future regret.

► **Savings Is Not Fear. It Is Foresight**
Saving aggressively is not pessimism. It is wisdom.
It is acknowledging that life changes, and preparing for it while you can. It is choosing future ease over present excess. The truth is simple: money saved and invested today works harder for you than money spent trying to impress others. Lock in your savings rate. Let time and consistency do the heavy lifting. Because wealth is not just about how much you earn, it is about how much freedom your money eventually gives 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.



MADE FOR MORE

From Dream to Done (Part 1)

By Ifeoma Chuks-Adizue

Why Structure Is the Secret Behind Purpose That Lasts. Are you a career woman who has a dream? An idea, a calling or a divine nudge that keeps circling back no matter how full life gets? Here's a truth you must know...

Dreams don't sustain themselves. Structure sustains them. Your purpose can and will ignite you...but structure is what preserves it. Without structure, even God-given assignments collapse under the weight of inconsistency, distraction and basic exhaustion. This is why so many brilliant, highly capable career women have ideas that never leave their notebooks...Not because the ideas weren't powerful but because

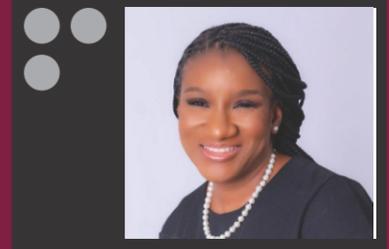
there were no systems to carry them. Structure is what turns inspiration into impact. I learned this firsthand. When I birthed my first MORE, it was built on tech structures from day one. Funnels, autoresponders, online payments, automated onboarding etc. These systems allowed me to serve women while still working a demanding 9-5 and even while I slept. These systems served me for a while until the demand grew beyond me, so I hired three people. That single move changed everything. We more

than doubled that year! I have also seen the same pattern at play in my subsequent MORE expressions. In essence, there is the structure technology provides and there is the structure a team provides. If you are a career woman seeking to birth purpose, you need both. It can be draining trying to build a divine assignment with no blueprint, no systems, no support and no sustainable structure to hold what God gave you... Doing so will lead to burn out or starting and stopping. If you sense that God is calling you to birth, relaunch or scale something, here are 5

structures every purpose project needs:

- 1. A Simple Clear Vision Blueprint.** What exactly are you building? Who is it for? What problem does it solve? What will it look like at scale? Document it. Ideas that live only in your head rarely survive pressure.
- 2. You Need Tech And Automation.** Systems that multiply your effort such as sales funnels, autoresponders, payment links, scheduling tools, delivery platforms etc. These are not luxuries. They are levers. They give your idea hands and feet.
- 3. You Need People.** A visionary without support will eventually become the barrier to her own vision. Start with one helper - an EA, an intern, a coordinator, and let the structure grow as the assignment grows. Record your processes as you go. Build lean but wisely.
- 4. You Need Delivery Structure.** How will people consistently receive the transformation you promise? This includes curriculum, frameworks, templates, onboarding, customer experience and feedback loops. Great ideas fail when the experience is inconsistent.
- 5. You Need Measurement And Refinement.** What you measure, you can multiply. Track what matters such as transformation, outcomes, engagement, retention and revenue, impact. Don't be afraid of data; it tells the truth your emotions may not show you and helps you keep building right.

In closing, your dream is not too big. Neither is your capacity or your full-time job the problem. What you need now is more structure. So, as you read this, ask yourself: Where have I been relying solely on passion but neglecting the systems that would sustain it? What structure does my idea need next? What bottleneck in my dream is waiting for me to build the next layer of support? Next week in Part 2, we will go deeper, this time into the personal structures required to carry your calling without losing yourself. Don't miss it! Until next week, keep saying YES to your MORE.



By Ifeoma Chuks-Adizue

Managing Director Africa at Global Citizen

Ifeoma Chuks-Adizue, fondly known as Iphie, is a seasoned professional with a rare mix of experience in brand management, sales, media and over 20 years' experience building global brands across Africa.

Iphie is the Managing Director Africa at Global Citizen - an international advocacy organisation focused on ending extreme poverty now.

Prior to this role, Iphie was the Executive Director Commercial at CAP PLC, makers of Dulux Paint where she led the Sales and Marketing teams to quadruple the business in 4 years.

A graduate of Economics from the University of Jos, Iphie started her career with Procter & Gamble Nigeria where she held several leadership positions, before moving to Cadbury Nigeria, then CAP PLC, and now Global Citizen.

Iphie Chuks-Adizue is the author of two books - The Uncommon Woman and Made for More, and is Founding President of the Uncommon Woman Movement.

She is a wife, mother of three children and recipient of several awards, the most recent being the Exceptional Leader of Excellence Award from the Global Women Economic Forum.

WOMAN AT THE HELM

Folake Odediran

Global Marketing Director, Global Rare Disease, Sanofi



Folake has worked in the Pharma industry for more than 20 years and brings a wealth of experience across different therapeutic areas and beyond borders in Africa and more recently United States.

She is instrumental in expanding market share and achieving significant profitability gains by establishing strategic direction and steering transformative initiatives focused on long-term success. With a track record in managing operations for global business unit, while fostering a mission-oriented and empowering culture in line with regulatory compliance.

Folake is competent in nurturing public-private partnerships for creating sustainable value, shaping the industry landscape, and elevating the organisation's image during challenging times. She excels at diversifying the regional portfolio by

successfully launching new product streams/service offerings.

Prior to joining Sanofi, she previously worked at Astra Zeneca and Pfizer Global Pharmaceuticals in various roles of increasing responsibilities and has a strong record of results, accomplishments, and leadership in diverse roles of increasing importance.

Currently, A Global marketing Director for Gaucher's Disease based in Boston MA, United states, before this role, she was the General Manager General Medicines and Country Lead for Sanofi in Nigeria.

She is the pioneer Global Leader for Culture and Origin+ Employee Resource Group at Sanofi, and the first employee to sit on Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Board at Sanofi. Furthermore, as Global Director for Gaucher Disease, she plays a key role in a \$1.1B portfolio with 17% YOY

growth and 75% market leadership. She also serves as the Launch Lead for a Pipeline asset, giving deep insights into how breakthrough treatments move from clinical promise to patient access.

With ability to pick up new things and learn on the fly, Folake brings pace, energy and candor to her work, clarity, and context to her choices. Furthermore, she is passionate about liberating untapped potential in people and markets to deliver life-changing treatments to patients who need them most.

Folake holds a Master of science (MSc) in Marketing from Edinburgh Business School; Heriot- Watt University UK, a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Lagos State University, Nigeria and graduated from the Ahmadu Bello University, (ABU) Zaria, Nigeria with a Bachelor of Pharmacy degree (B. Pharm).



WE'VE GOT MEN

Ituah Olajide Ighodalo

Deputy Chairman, SIAO

There are people who are graced to create a blend of professionalism, faith and compassion. When it comes to work, they give their best, when it comes to their faith, they profess and show whose side they are, and when it comes to being humane, they fit in too. He is Ituah Olajide Ighodalo.

Ituah is the Deputy Chairman of SIAO, an independent Nigerian professional services firm, providing audit and assurance, accounting, tax, international financial reporting standards advisory, human resource, and financial advisory services. He is Pastor-In-Charge of Trinity House Church, a non-denominational, free flow Christian worship centre powered with a vision to build leaders and destiny achievers. Olajide is also a chartered accountant and a social reformer. He obtained a B.Sc combined honours degree in Economics and Accounting in 1982 from the University of Hull, England, qualified as a Chartered Accountant in July 1986 and attended a Business Management Course at the Harvard Business School,

Boston in 2011. Ituah is big on service to humanity but is also able to navigate multifaceted financial terrains with assiduousness, combining effortlessly his devotion to inspiring lives. So, if you call him a beacon of courage and leadership, you have spoken well. His persona and unpretentious care for people endears him to numerous hearts. Olajide is graced to brighten even the murkiest moments.

There is more to him than his profession as a chartered accountant and his decision to be a faith leader. He lends his wisdom and depth as member of boards that include FAMAD Nig. Plc., Elizabeth R, Trinicorp, Tricontract, Capital Gate, Valency Agro Allied Ltd., The HUB Limited, Trinity Leadership School. He also sits on the Pastor E.A Adebayo Chair of Mathematics Board of UNILAG, and Chairs the Christopher Kolade Professorial Chair of the Lagos Business School, Celebr8 Music Festival, Vivian Fowler Memorial

Governing Council, and several charitable organisations and NGOs like the Ibidunni Ighodalo Foundation among others.

Ituah is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria and also of the Chartered Institute of Taxation; he is a member of the Nigerian Institute of Management, the American Society of Industrial Security and the American Institute of Management.

Whether on his 'As You Rise' platform, or 'Command The Day prayers', or as Publisher/Editor-in-Chief of the TIMELESS Media Group or as Chairman/Founder of Africa Leadership Group (ALG) and several other means of expression, Olajide consistently inspires hope, encourages you to embrace your capabilities and believe in the greatness of your nation, while also showing that indeed, your positive aspirations are valid and that you can strike a balance between being professional, being humane and blessing humanity.

HOLISTIC LIVING

Aging Well Is Not About Luck ...they are the daily choices that protect your health, purpose, and peace

By Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri



Aging often arrives quietly. One day you wake up and realise your body responds differently, your energy is more precious, and your priorities have shifted. Yet in a world obsessed with youth, we rarely talk honestly about what it truly means to age well, not just physically, but emotionally, mentally, socially, and spiritually.

Meet Sarah. Sarah was a retired teacher who had always been active and deeply engaged in

her community. As she grew older, she began to notice something unsettling. Many of her peers were not just aging, they were shrinking. Shrinking in movement, in connection, in joy, and in purpose. Sarah understood that aging was inevitable, but decline did not have to be. So, she made a quiet decision: she would age intentionally. She began with her body. Sarah paid closer attention to what she ate, choosing balanced meals rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and healthy proteins. She didn't chase perfection; she chased consistency. She walked

daily, added gentle strength training, and embraced yoga. These routines helped her maintain mobility, balance, and energy not to look younger, but to live better. But holistic wellbeing is never only physical.

Sarah also invested in her mental and emotional health. She joined a book club, attended community events, and stayed connected with friends and family. She created daily rituals of reflection and mindfulness, giving herself permission to pause, breathe, and process life as it unfolded. These

moments anchored her during seasons of change.

As the years passed, Sarah faced health challenges.... arthritis, hearing loss, and the natural limitations that come with aging. But instead of retreating, she adapted. She found new hobbies like gardening and creative pursuits that matched her evolving capacity. She learned that aging well is not about clinging to who you were but honoring who you are becoming.

Purpose became her medicine.

Sarah volunteered at a local hospital and remained active in her community. Giving back kept her socially connected and emotionally alive. Research continues to show that purpose and connection are powerful protectors against depression, cognitive decline, and loneliness which are conditions that quietly erode wellbeing as we age.

Her story reveals an important truth: healthy aging is not accidental. It is built through daily, intentional choices that protect the whole person.

Movement remains one of the strongest pillars of healthy aging. Regular physical activity supports balance, flexibility, heart health, and brain function. It also reduces the risk of falls and helps manage chronic conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, and hypertension. Aging bodies do not need punishment; they need movement that is kind, consistent, and sustainable.

Nutrition is another foundation. As we age, our nutritional needs change, but our need for nourishment does not diminish. A diet rich in whole, nutrient-dense foods supports immunity, bone health, cognitive function, and energy levels. What we eat becomes information for our cells, shaping how we heal, repair, and function.

Sleep, often overlooked, is essential. Many older adults struggle with sleep disruptions, yet quality rest remains one of the most powerful tools for emotional

regulation, memory consolidation, and physical recovery. Establishing regular sleep routines, limiting stimulants, and creating calm evening rituals can significantly improve sleep quality.

Social connection is not optional. Loneliness is now recognised as a serious health risk, comparable to smoking or obesity. Staying socially engaged through friendships, family, faith communities, clubs, or volunteering protects mental health and preserves cognitive vitality.

Stress management becomes increasingly important with age. Chronic stress accelerates aging at the cellular level and worsens many medical conditions. Simple practices such as deep breathing, meditation, prayer, journaling, and hobbies help regulate the nervous system and restore emotional balance.

Preventive healthcare also plays a crucial role. Regular medical check-ups, screenings, hearing and vision assessments, and vaccinations help detect issues early and preserve quality of life. Prevention is not fear-based; it is an act of self-respect.

Brain health deserves deliberate attention. Learning new skills, reading, engaging in stimulating conversations, and staying curious all support cognitive resilience. The brain, like the body, thrives on use and challenge.

The most important lesson from Sarah's journey is this: aging well is not about denying change. It is about meeting change with wisdom, flexibility, and compassion for yourself.

Holistic wellbeing as we age means honouring the body, tending to the mind, nurturing relationships, protecting emotional health, and maintaining a sense of purpose. It means choosing engagement over isolation, adaptation over resignation, and intention over neglect.

Growing older is a privilege. Growing well is a responsibility.

It begins with the choices we make today.



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

What to Read in Q1 2026

By Zainab Aderounmu

The right books to read in the first quarter of 2026 shouldn't only entertain you, but also give you clarity and tools for building mental strength.

The idea is to set the tempo for the year with books that would challenge your usual thoughts and refine how you show up in your world.

1. My first recommendation is **Becoming Bulletproof** by Evy Pompouras. As a former Secret Service Agent, who protected about three presidents of the United States, Evy teaches you how to navigate extremely stressful situations, read other people and live a life of influence.

The interesting fact about this book is that the author has walked the talk owing to her life's experiences. Imaging actively surviving the 9/11 and interviewing tons of criminals during the course of her career as an agent. If mental strength and people management are skills you want to build, this is your top pick.

2. My second pick for you is **Rejection Proof** by Jia Jang. This is an old book, and I'm often surprised when people say they haven't read it. It's that good, not just in the sense of being



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.

entertaining but instructive as well. Jang embarked on an experiment called 100 Days of Rejection, where he had to ask strangers for stuff and get at least 100 rejections. The data he collected was profound but I won't tell you about it; you'd have to read the book. However, this book would help you understand the science of rejections and how to deal with the situation when someone tells you no. Sometimes, it might just be the way you asked.

3. In addition to that, I'm definitely recommending **E for Excellence** by Temilade Salami. She's a Climate Change education and communications expert whose passion for young people has led her to mentor hundreds of young professionals. In this book, she lists 30 skills that young people need to lead boldly and successfully in their careers. Like the above authors, she lives by these values and embodies them even in her teachings.

In sum, readers are leaders; I hope we both agree on that. But, it might be hard to pick out what to read, because there are lots of options to choose from. You can begin with these three to kickstart your year on a solid note.



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](https://www.instagram.com/clayfoodshoplagos)
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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](https://www.instagram.com/Thehennaplace)
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