



INSPIRING  
WOMAN  
AFRICA

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*Pastor*

Dr. ROSE  
SHABOKA (PhD)

ON PURPOSE, CONVICTION AND EASTER MUSINGS



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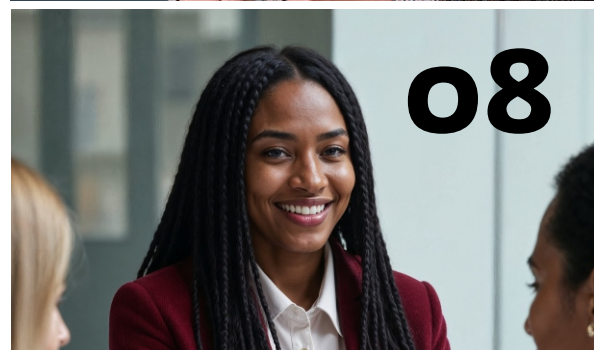
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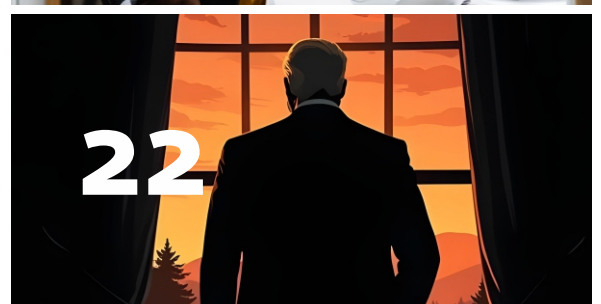
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## Kemi Ajumobi

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# Welcome!

Dear Readers,

It's Easter season and it has been a time to reflect deeply on its significance, which is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I wrote a poem to express my thoughts and I hope it blesses you.

Being a global event and IWA is about Africa, we chose to celebrate this Easter cover edition by going all the way to East Africa, Tanzania specifically, home to Africa's highest peak, Mount Kilimanjaro. Tanzania, a country blessed with rich cultural diversity and tanzanite gemstones. Brilliant, bold and beautiful woman, who wears her faith on her sleeves unapologetically. Something about her and when she speaks that draws hope and ignites your faith. She is Pastor Dr Rose Shaboka (PhD).

Armed with a Doctorate degree in Theology and Christian Leadership, Pastor Rose is also an Economist, who worked as a banker for some years before joining her husband in ministry as co-pastor of New Day Church International, Tanzania. Together, they are blessed with three wonderful children — Mike, Ivan, and Vanessa. What a wonder, what a woman, what a gem, such grace!

Enjoy our interview with her.

Here are other articles in this edition:

**EASTER POEM:** He Died...He Rose...He's Alive! By Kemi Ajumobi.

**FINANCIAL ADVISER:** What Asset Allocation Teaches Us About Building Wealth. By Sola Adesakin.

**HER POINT OF VIEW:** The Art of Negotiation: The Silent Power Behind Career Growth for Women. By Chinyere Okorocho.

**WOMAN EXECUTIVE:** The Architecture of Alliances: Moving from Networking to Sponsorship. By Wola Joseph-Condotti.

**GENDER INSIGHT:** Beyond the Headlines: The Human Cost of Protracted Conflict in Plateau State. By Asmau Benzie-Leo.

**HOLISTIC LIVING:** The Hidden Cost of Sitting Too Much. By Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri.

**TRIBE WITH THE VIBES:** A Quiet Observer. By Zainab Aderounmu

**WE'VE GOT MEN:** Babs Ogundeyi, Founder / CEO, Kuda.

**WOMAN AT THE HELM:** Ory Okolloh, Partner, Verod-Kepple Africa Ventures.

See you next week. Please stay safe, remain optimistic and let gratitude always be your attitude!

Ciao!



## HE DIED...HE ROSE...HE'S ALIVE!

Your love shown through death is not in a process of....it is a conclusion reached...You died! You rose! QED!

How do you love someone to the point of death? Scary right? But that's not all, the death covers all, including those not yet here...that's intense...that's deep!

An animal's blood it could have been, but you don't do basic stuff, you didn't choose anything or anyone, you chose and gave your best, your own, your son...fierce formation...I bow!

Your walk to the cross was the most grueling "runway" ever. If you could, you would run away. Selah!

Today we wear royal purple in style and claim affinity to royalty, but yours was a mocking symbol by the Roman soldiers who believed you "claimed" royalty. This was their highlight. For them, it was the irony of the suffering King of Kings.

Thorn as crown, scars as cloak, sores as shoes, blood stained tunic sticking to the wounds inflicted on your body and ripped off upon reaching Golgotha. Gory scenes from these horrific occurrences meanly created by the ones you created. They even offered you sour wine, so your senses might be fully alert for your suffering (Mat 27:34). It's the depth of wickedness for me. Yet, while on the cross, after all they put you through, you prayed for them when you said "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

It's 4:46am on resurrection morning, I am awake, my imagination of your experience is running amok. I have paused to cringe, squint and my body itches as I vividly visualised this occurrence that happened before I existed and it is so real to me like I was there. It's wild...the ideation is so graphic and overwhelming...you went really far for love....whaaat?? Again, I bow!

And in John 19:30, after all the injustice meted on you, on the cross, you declared "It Is Finished".

But it didn't end there, like the El Gadol that you are, you chose to rise on the 3rd day. You didn't have to die, but you did. The greatest love of all, shedding your blood for my redemption.

The tomb is empty, you are no more in the grave. Your resurrection became my redemption, and because you live, I can face tomorrow.

Today is not about the Easter eggs and bunnies, it's about reflections and recounting the ordeal. Ruminating over all and working on ourselves to ensure, through our actions we don't nail him back to the cross...again!

Resurrection morning is here...I am here because he rose!

Poem by  
Kemi Ajumobi



COVER INTERVIEW

# Pastor Dr. ROSE SHABOKA (PhD)

ON PURPOSE, CONVICTION AND EASTER MUSINGS

Kemi Ajumobi

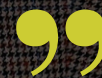


astor Dr. Rose Shaboka (PhD) is a dynamic woman of God, wholly devoted to the service of

the Lord. She carries a strong passion for young people and women, with a burning desire to see them discover and fulfill God's purpose for their lives. She is the convener of the popular Women of Fire Prayer Conference for Women, a vibrant platform where women gather to worship, intercede, and encounter God's presence.

Pastor Rose holds a Doctorate degree in Theology and Christian Leadership. Also an Economist, she worked as a banker for some years before joining her husband in ministry as co-pastor of New Day Church International, Tanzania. Together, they are blessed with three wonderful children — Mike, Ivan, and Vanessa.

Her life and ministry continue to inspire many, pointing people to a deeper walk with God and a purposeful Christian living.



**Early life experiences shaped my heart for service and strengthened my desire to uplift others**



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*Easter represents hope, victory, and new life. It reminds me of Christ's sacrifice and the power of resurrection, which strengthens my faith and purpose*



► **Growing up**

Growing up taught me resilience, faith, and compassion. Those early life experiences shaped my heart for service and strengthened my desire to uplift others.

► **Faith Journey**

My journey of faith began in my early years growing up in Tanzania, where I was raised in a Christian environment. Over time, my relationship with God became deeply personal and transformative. Although I initially struggled with doubt, I answered God's call through prayer, guidance, and obedience, stepping fully into pastoral ministry.

► **Inspiration to commence women's ministry**

I was inspired by the need to support women who were silently going through life's challenges. The mission of the ministry is to raise strong, prayerful, and purpose driven women

who can positively impact their families, communities, and generations.

► **Challenges as a woman in pastoral leadership, and overcoming overcome them**

One major challenge has been overcoming societal expectations about women in leadership. Through faith, perseverance, and confidence in God's calling, I have been able to stand firm and let my work speak for itself.

► **How your women's ministry supports and empowers women**

We provide mentorship, counseling, and spiritual guidance. We also create safe spaces for women to grow, share, and be encouraged, helping them discover and walk in their purpose.

► **Programmes or activities offered to women through your ministry**

We organise prayer conferences, Bible studies, leadership workshops, empowerment seminars, and outreach

programmes designed to strengthen women both spiritually and practically.

► **Success story from ministry**

One woman joined the ministry in 2018 completely broken. She had lost her husband, her son, and her job all in the same year. Through prayer and mentorship, she experienced transformation, discovered her purpose, and now leads others. Her journey is a powerful testimony of God's restoration, and she has since relocated abroad, she is still a member of our winning women international.

► **What Easter means to you**

Easter represents hope, victory, and new life. It reminds me of Christ's sacrifice and the power of resurrection, which strengthens my faith and purpose.

► **How you celebrated Easter with your church and community**

We celebrated through prayer, worship



services, and outreach. It was indeed a time of reflection, gratitude and rejoicing in the resurrection of Christ.

▶ **Traditions or practices in Tanzania that enriched the Easter experience**

Yes, in Tanzania, Easter is celebrated with vibrant worship, extended prayer gatherings, and strong community fellowship, making it deeply meaningful and unforgettable.

▶ **Easter message never to be forgotten**

The message is that there is always hope. No matter the situation, God's power brings new beginnings and restoration. You cannot afford to give up. If God gave up on us, we would not have been able to hope for tomorrow. If He didn't give up on us, we cannot afford to give up on ourselves.

▶ **Your recently concluded women's programme, share experience**

The Women of Fire Prayer Conference was a powerful two days global gathering that brought together over 80,000 women from all over the world in unity for prayer, worship, and transformation. We were honored to host remarkable guests from Nigeria including Lady Bishop Funke Felix-Adejumo, Pastor Eno Jerry Eze, Pastor Alice Halidu, Tonto Dikeh, and Pastor Mary Kisotu from Kenya. We also welcomed distinguished leaders such as Julia Shonza and Rose Tweve. The conference was streamed live on YouTube, allowing viewers from around the world to participate. Many experienced healing, breakthroughs, and spiritual renewal it was truly a global move of God.

▶ **A day never to be forgotten and why?**

The opening day of the conference is one I will never forget. The presence of God was so powerful, and many women experienced breakthroughs. It revealed the strength and impact of united prayer.



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**No matter what you face, God has a purpose for your life. Stay committed, and never give up because your breakthrough is near**

▶ **Concluding words**

I encourage every woman to remain strong in faith and consistent in prayer. No matter what you face, God has a purpose for your life. Stay committed, and never give up because your breakthrough is near.

WOMAN EXECUTIVE

# The Architecture of Alliances: Moving from Networking to Sponsorship

By Wola Joseph-Condotti



**W**e often tell women to “build their networks.” To show up at events, exchange cards, grab coffee, and connect. Networking is useful. But it is not enough. Because what opens doors (especially at senior levels) is not who you know. It is who is willing to vouch for you when you are not in the room. That is not networking. That is sponsorship.

### More Than Just Mentoring

Let me be honest: many women are over-mentored but under-sponsored. We have mentors who give advice. Who review our résumés. Who cheer us on from the sidelines. But few of us have sponsors who use their capital (political, social, financial) to advocate for us, stake their reputations on us, and elevate us into rooms we might never access alone. Mentorship is guidance. Sponsorship is propulsion. You do not rise to the top simply because you are talented. You rise because someone placed a bet on your potential.

### What Sponsorship Looks Like

A sponsor says your name in the promotion meeting before you walk in. They position you for stretch roles, board seats, investment opportunities, not because you asked, but because they

believe in your value and want others to see it. Sponsorship is not sentimental. It is strategic. And it is the one thing too many high-potential women do not have while watching their male counterparts rise with the benefit of informal, invisible backing. Why It is Especially Critical for Women For many women (particularly in male-dominated sectors like energy, finance, law, or tech) the path to the top is not just about competence. It is about access. The unspoken alliances. The informal introductions. The whispered “She is ready” from a trusted insider. In a system that was not designed with us in mind, sponsorship is the architecture that helps us build bridges where others found roads.

### How to Shift from Being Networked to Being Sponsored

So, how do we make the shift? Do Excellent, Visible Work Sponsorship is not a favour. It is a response to perceived value. People will not stake their reputation on your potential unless your current performance reflects excellence.

### Be Clear About Where You are Going

Sponsors can not help you advance if you are unclear about your trajectory. Say, “I am interested in X role” or “I am positioning for a board seat.” Clarity invites alignment.

### Cultivate the Right Tables

Networking is about visibility. Sponsorship is about credibility with power. Position yourself in circles where decision-makers dwell. Not just peers who admire your hustle.

### Reciprocate Sponsorship Culture

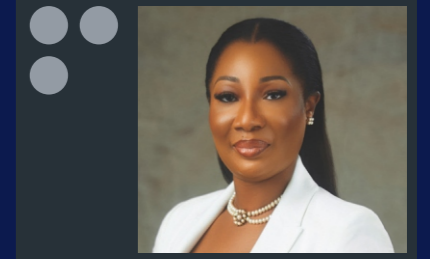
Do not just seek sponsors. Be one. Pull someone up. Drop someone's name. Make a referral. Sponsorship is not just about getting to the top. It is about building an elevator that works in both directions.

### The Biblical Blueprint

In Scripture, we see a stunning example of sponsorship between Mordecai and Esther. He did not just guide her. He positioned her. Advocated for her. Challenged her to rise. And when the moment came, Esther walked into purpose with both courage and covering. We need more Mordecais. And we need more Esthers who recognize the weight of their influence and extend it to others.

### Final Thoughts

Sponsorship is not a trend. It is not a conference theme. It is the quiet engine behind nearly every leadership rise story. To the women reading this: Who will say your name in the room when you are not there? And equally important: Whose name will you say in rooms you now have access to? Because the most powerful leaders do not just build careers. They build alliances that multiply impact for generations to come.



## 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.



Asmau Benzie Leo

GENDER INSIGHTS

# Beyond the Headlines: The Human Cost of Protracted Conflict in Plateau State

The tragedy unfolding in Plateau State, particularly in the recent attacks in a Angwan Rukuba, cannot be understood as a sudden eruption of violence. It is the latest expression of a deeply rooted, protracted crisis shaped by decades of historical grievances, political contestation, and identity tensions. Plateau, often described as Nigeria's "Home of Peace and Tourism," has paradoxically become one of the country's most fragile conflict zones.

It was Palm Sunday, one of those evenings that carried a quiet, almost sacred calm. The air in Jos was gentle, the kind that settles over a city after a long day. Families were returning from church services, still clothed in the soft glow of worship.

Children laughed in courtyards, women prepared meals, and men gathered in small clusters, exchanging stories as the sun dipped slowly behind the hills.

There was no warning.

In Angwan Rukuba, as in many other communities across Plateau, the evening felt ordinary almost hopeful. For a brief moment, it seemed as though the fragile peace the city had learned to live with might hold.

Then the silence broke.

From the edges of the community, masked men emerged swift, deliberate, and unprovoked. Their movement was not chaotic; it was calculated. What followed unfolded too quickly for anyone to make sense of. The calm was replaced by confusion, then fear. People ran, calling out to loved ones, trying to gather

children, trying to understand what was happening.

In the midst of it all were mothers, holding onto hope, then a dead child, like the one captured in the viral image. Women who had, just moments before, been tending to their homes, now found themselves holding onto what they could not protect. The weight of that moment, the disbelief, the helplessness, the rupture of everything familiar, cannot be easily described. It is the kind of pain that silences even the strongest voices.

That night did not end with the attack.

As has happened too many times in Plateau's history, the violence triggered a chain reaction. Grief turned into anger. Fear hardened into suspicion. In the absence of immediate clarity or protection, reprisals

followed. And in those reprisals, more innocent lives were lost, people who had no hand in the original violence, yet became part of its expanding circle.

By morning, the community was no longer the same. The images and videos that emerged shook the nation. Not because violence was new, but because of how deeply personal it felt, how it forced people to confront the human cost beyond statistics. Faces, names, families. A mother's grief. A community's collective trauma.

But for those within Angwan Rukuba and surrounding areas, the impact did not fade with the news cycle.

It lingered. It lived in the quiet fear that followed, in the way children clung closer to their parents, in the sleepless nights, in the sudden silence of homes that once held laughter. It settled into the minds of survivors, manifesting as anxiety, as grief that had no clear outlet, as memories that refused to loosen their grip. For many, the trauma became part of daily life. And for some of us, this was not new.

Since 2001, I have walked through these communities, the conflict flashpoints as a young peace worker, just starting an NGO; from Angwan Rogo to Congo Russia, Rikkos, Jenta Adamu, Bukuru, Gangare, Bauchi Road, Gyel, Tudunwada, Hwolshe, Kabon, Gada Biyu, Farin Gada, Zaria Road and many communities listening, mediating, sitting with women and young people caught in cycles they did not create. I have seen what happens when violence repeats itself without resolution.

There have been seasons where calm returned. But too often, it was not true peace, only a quiet that covered unresolved wounds where justice was lacking. And as I have reflected over the years in my work in Plateau State, peace has repeatedly refused to remain.

What happened on that Palm Sunday is part of a larger story, one shaped by history, identity, politics, and the persistent failure to address root causes. But beyond all analysis, it is, first and foremost, a human story. A story of loss.

A story of families who must now rebuild from fragments.

A story of a nation that must decide whether these moments will continue to repeat itself in an unending cycle of violence?

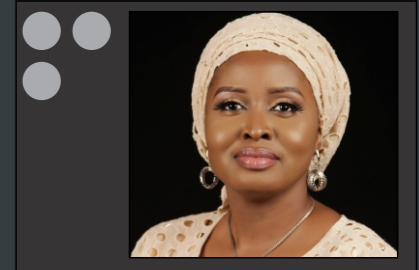
There is a responsibility that rests on all of us, but especially on those with the power to act.

Government must move beyond temporary responses and confront the structural drivers of these conflicts which are governance gaps, and the deep divisions that have been left to fester. Security agencies must not only respond, but anticipate and protect citizens by building trust with the communities they serve.

Civil society and faith-based organizations must deepen their work, not only in advocacy, but in post-conflict healing and provision of psychosocial support services. Trauma does not resolve on its own but through collective action from within and outside the Communities. The survivors and their families need spaces to grieve, to process, and to rebuild relationships that violence has broken.

And perhaps most importantly, there must be a collective refusal to normalise this cycle. Because what happened in Angwan Rukuba should not become just another story we move past, but it should remain with us as a reminder, as a warning, and as a call that violence is never the solution to any grievances but peace through dialogue and peace by peaceful means.

Enough is Enough



## 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

# What Asset Allocation Teaches Us About Building Wealth

By Sola Adesakin



I recently encountered a chart that showed how people at different wealth levels structure their assets, and it inspired me to write this article. The chart tracked asset composition across several tiers of net worth, from individuals with less than \$10,000 to those with over \$100 million.

What stood out immediately was that the differences were not random, they were strategic.

As wealth increased, the types of assets people held changed dramatically. This shift tells a powerful story about how wealth is actually built and sustained.

Let us break down the key lessons.

**At Lower Wealth Levels: Consumption Dominates**

At the lowest tier, where net worth is typically below \$10,000, most assets are concentrated in three main areas: vehicles, primary residences, and cash.

These are important things to own. A car may be necessary for transportation. A home provides shelter and stability. Cash helps with emergencies and daily transactions.

However, from a wealth-building perspective, these assets have limitations.

Vehicles usually depreciate in value over

time. A primary residence may appreciate slowly but does not always generate income. Cash sitting idle in an account loses value gradually due to inflation.

What is often missing at this level are assets that grow aggressively or produce income, such as stocks, business ownership, or investment real estate.

The key lesson here is simple. If most of what you own is declining in value or not producing returns, it becomes difficult to build wealth.

**At Middle Wealth Levels: Diversification Begins**

As people move into the \$100,000 to \$1 million range of net worth, the

composition of their assets begins to change.

This is where diversification starts to appear.

Stocks begin to occupy a larger share of the portfolio. Retirement accounts grow. Investment real estate starts to show up. Meanwhile, vehicles shrink as a percentage of total assets.

In other words, people at this stage begin shifting from owning things to owning assets that can grow and compound over time. This transition is crucial.

Instead of focusing mainly on lifestyle purchases, individuals begin allocating money toward assets that have the potential to generate returns. The portfolio becomes less about consumption and more about ownership.

The lesson at this stage is that wealth building accelerates when spending habits evolve into investment habits.

**At Higher Wealth Levels: Ownership Takes the Lead**

At the highest wealth levels, particularly from \$10 million and above, the pattern becomes even clearer.

Business interests dominate asset allocation. Stocks remain significant. Cash levels are relatively low compared to total wealth. Vehicles represent only a tiny fraction of total assets.

The very wealthy tend to own companies, equity stakes, and productive investments.

These assets are not just stores of value. They are cash-flowing machines that generate income and appreciate over time.

In other words, wealth at this level is not tied up in lifestyle. It is tied up in ownership.

The wealthy do not simply earn money. They position their money in places where it can produce more money.

**The Big Pattern**

When you step back and observe the progression across wealth levels, a clear pattern emerges.

As wealth increases, the percentage of money tied to vehicles decreases. Idle cash also decreases. At the same time, exposure to stocks increases. Business ownership becomes more significant. Investment real estate becomes more common.

This is not about eliminating lifestyle purchases altogether. It is about ensuring that those purchases do not dominate the balance sheet.

The wealthiest individuals allocate their resources differently because they understand the power of productive assets. **What This Means for Beginners**

The most important insight from this chart is that you do not need millions of naira or dollars to apply these lessons.

Anyone can begin shifting their financial habits toward ownership.

That might mean reducing unnecessary purchases that tie up money in depreciating items. It might mean starting to buy shares in companies through stocks or mutual funds. It might mean gradually investing in income-producing assets such as real estate or businesses.

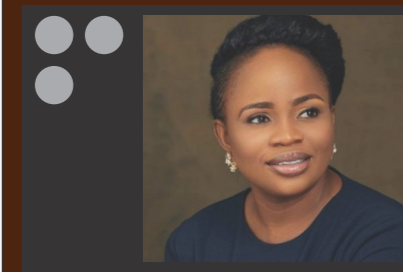
Even small investments can begin the process of building an asset base.

Over time, appreciation and compounding begin to work quietly in the background. This is the real engine of wealth.

Ultimately, the most important financial question is not simply how much you earn. Income matters, but it is only the starting point.

The deeper question is this: what percentage of what you own is actually working for you?

That shift in thinking is often the moment when wealth building truly begins.



**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<sup>SM</sup> and a member of the Personal Finance Speakers Association.

HER POINT OF VIEW

# The Art of Negotiation: The Silent Power Behind Career Growth for Women

Chinyere Okorochoa



Strong negotiation skills can:

- Drive long-term career success by helping you secure promotions, resources, and recognition.
- Strengthen your client and customer relationships through mutual respect and trust.
- Build strategic partnerships that propel both individual and organizational goals.
- Increase profit margins and improve salary outcomes.
- Resolve workplace conflicts and foster better collaboration.
- Boost visibility, credibility, and professional reputation.

In essence, negotiation helps women move from “doing the work” to “owning the value” of that work.

### The Barriers Women Face

So, why do so many women still hesitate to negotiate, especially for themselves?

The answer lies in a mix of societal conditioning, workplace dynamics, and personal beliefs.

From a young age, many women are taught to be peacemakers, to nurture, accommodate, and avoid conflict. This early programming often translates into professional environments where asking for more feels uncomfortable, even inappropriate.

There's also the likeability penalty. Research consistently shows that women who negotiate assertively are often judged more harshly than men. A man who bargains is seen as confident; a woman who does the same may be labeled pushy or difficult.

This backlash leads to what I call “the silent surrender”, women choosing not to ask at all. The result? Lower pay, slower progression, and missed opportunities.

are not born with special powers of persuasion. They are developed through practice, reflection, and self-awareness.

Research shows that effective negotiation requires three key capabilities; cognitive intelligence (the ability to process information quickly), emotional intelligence (the ability to read people and manage relationships), and self-regulation (the ability to stay calm and focused under pressure).

While some individuals may seem naturally skilled in these areas, anyone can learn to negotiate better. Like any art form, it sharpens with use. Every meeting, every discussion, and every disagreement becomes an opportunity to refine your approach.

### Why Negotiation Matters for Career Women

For women who aspire to grow, lead, and break ceilings, negotiation is indispensable. It is the difference between being valued and being taken for granted.

**W**alk into any boardroom, courtroom, or even your own kitchen, and you'll find negotiation at work. It is the invisible thread that runs through every interaction, from persuading a client to accept new terms, to convincing your boss to support your idea, or getting your teenager to tidy their room. Negotiation is not just a professional skill; it's a life skill.

At its core, negotiation is simply the process of discussing with another person whose aims, needs, and perspectives may differ from yours, in order to find a shared path forward. It is not about winning or losing, but about discovering common ground.

Yet for many women, negotiation remains one of the least mastered and most misunderstood tools for career advancement.

### Good Negotiators Are Made, Not Born

Contrary to popular belief, great negotiators

### Breaking the Cycle

It's time to rewrite that narrative. Here's how women can start reclaiming negotiation as a strength, not a stigma:

#### 1. Think Personally, Act Communally.

Women are often more successful when they negotiate on behalf of others; a team, a cause, or a client. Channel that same energy when negotiating for yourself. Frame your request as something that benefits the larger picture: “This promotion allows me to lead more effectively and strengthen our client relationships.”

#### 2. Use Data, Not Emotion.

Facts are your allies. Anchor your argument in measurable results, market rates, or performance metrics. Objective data removes the perception of emotion or entitlement and replaces it with logic and legitimacy.

#### 3. Understand the “Shadow of Negotiation.”

Sometimes the first “no” you hear isn't about your request at all. It may reflect fear, budget pressure, or institutional bias. Dig deeper. Ask questions. Seek to understand the reason behind the rejection so you can reframe your approach.

#### 4. Learn to Flex.

Negotiation isn't rigidity, it's rhythm. The best outcomes come when both parties feel heard and respected. Know your deal-breakers, but also identify areas where you can give ground. Flexibility is not weakness; it's wisdom.

#### 5. Watch Your Self-Talk.

The hardest negotiations are often internal; the ones we have with ourselves about our worth. Challenge the voice that says, “I'm not ready,” or “I don't want to seem greedy.” Replace it with, “My work has value, and it deserves fair recognition.”

### The Six Stages of Effective Negotiation

To master the art, you must respect the process:

**1. Preparation.** Research is your foundation. Gather facts, understand the other party's interests, anticipate objections, and rehearse possible scenarios.

**2. Discussion.** Build rapport. Listen actively. Identify needs and constraints on both sides.

**3. Goal Clarification.** Clearly articulate what you want and what success looks like.

**4. Bargaining.** This is the dance of give and take. Be patient, and aim for value exchange,

not concession.

**5. Agreement.** Document the terms. Clarity today prevents confusion tomorrow.

**6. Implementation.** Execute faithfully. Meet deadlines, follow through, and nurture the relationship for future opportunities.

### Strategic Tools for Every Negotiation

**Clarity:** Know what you want, what you can live without, and what you will not compromise.

**Preparation:** It's 90% of the job. The better prepared you are, the more confident you'll feel.

**BATNA:** Always know your Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement; your backup plan if talks fail.

**ZOPA:** Identify your Zone of Possible Agreement; the range where both sides can be satisfied.

**Patience:** Negotiation is a process, not an event. Don't rush the outcome.

**Active Listening:** Listen not just to words, but to intent. Sometimes what's unsaid carries the key insight.

**Composure:** Stay objective. The moment emotions take over, strategy leaves the room.

**Visibility:** Document your wins. Negotiation isn't complete until your value is seen and recognized.

**The Learning Outcome:** From Asking to Achieving

When women learn to negotiate effectively, they do more than secure raises or promotions, they redefine leadership. They show that power can be collaborative, assertive, and fair. Negotiation builds confidence, visibility, and influence, three critical currencies for career acceleration. It teaches you how to advocate for yourself without apology, how to stand your ground without losing grace, and how to create value in every conversation.

### Final Thoughts

Half the population equals half the potential. Yet for too long, women have been conditioned to ask for less, accept less, and celebrate less. The truth is simple: If you don't ask, you don't get.

Being female is not a limitation, but refusing to negotiate can be. The art of negotiation isn't about demanding more; it's about valuing yourself more.

So, the next time you walk into that boardroom, salary meeting, or partnership discussion, remember...negotiation isn't confrontation. It's collaboration. And when done well, it's not just about closing deals; it's about opening doors.



## 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 AT THE HELM

# Ory Okolloh

Partner, Verod-Kepple Africa Ventures



Kemi Ajumobi

Ory Okolloh's story is filled with lessons but most importantly, an inspiring life. She would readily tell you she didn't grow up in the slums but she knows what it means to live without money. "When things were good, we had eggs and sausages and when things were bad, we had porridge and like many African families, my parents could never save because they supported siblings and cousins, even their parents...things were always dicey." She stated.

When Ory was born, her parents knew she was a smart kid and they did not want her to go to a neighbourhood school which was free. So they decided to take her to a school they could barely afford, a private catholic elementary school, which set the foundation for what ended up being Ory's career.

While at school, she got kicked out almost every term. She kept wondering why her parents didn't take her to a cheap school, the situation they found themselves in, having to often source for funds for school embarrassed her but today, she says she understands better.

She saw her parents humiliated because of their background and she made the decision to ensure she turns her life

around. Sadly, her father died of AIDS and she found out by Google. They didn't tell her what it was that took her dad's life but Google did. Being a smart child, she saw the cause and read up about it on Google. She recounts that there wasn't enough funds handy because at that time, several years ago where she was, only one bank in Kenya had an ATM, and so he died as the ambulance was on its way to them.

Through all of that, guess who turned out gold, who also became a Harvard educated Lawyer? Of course, Ory! In her words, "Africans need to get better at telling our stories."

Ory Okolloh is currently a Partner at Verod-Kepple Africa Ventures, a pan-African focused venture capital firm that backs exceptional founders in and from Africa. Previously, Ory was the Managing Director, Omidyar Network and Luminate Group in Africa, both impact investing arms of The Omidyar Group.

She serves on the Board of Directors of several organisations including the Thomson Reuters Founders Share Company, the East African Breweries Limited, Deloitte Africa, the Board of Trustees of the Van Leer Group, the Adecco Group Foundation, the Harvard Africa Advisory Group and is the Chair of the

Stanbic Bank Kenya Foundation. She is also an Aspen Global Leadership Network (AGLN) Fellow.

Prior to this, Ory was Google's policy and strategy manager for Africa. Ory was also at the forefront of developing technology innovation as a founding member of Ushahidi. She was the organisation's Executive Director from inception until December 2010. Ory is also the co-founder of Mzalendo, a website that tracks the performance of Kenyan MPs and Asphalt & Ink, a strategic advisory firm. In 2011, she was named a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum, and one of Africa's most Powerful Women by Forbes Magazine. In 2014 she was named Time 100's most influential people in the world.

Al Kags, Ashoka Fellow, Co-Founder & Executive Director, The Open Institute, describes her as "Extremely brilliant and she cares deeply about people and systems that make people's lives just and comfortable. I have seen her in action pushing boundaries to make things better so often and so hard, that it is clear that is who she is."

As Partner at Verod-Kepple Africa Ventures, the venture's recent final close of \$60million is being celebrated.



WE'VE GOT MEN

## Babs Ogundeyi

Founder / CEO, Kuda

Kemi Ajumobi

**K**uda is a full service money app for Africans, leveraging on the power of digital and technology. Designed for your mobile phone and great at helping you budget, spend smartly, save, loans, invest, and more. Sitting as Founder/CEO is Babs Ogundeyi and their mission is to build the best money app for all Africans on the planet.

Last month, Babs was part of President Tinubu's State Visit to the UK. The UK Government named Kuda among Nigerian companies expanding in the UK, with London as their base for what they are building globally.

"Building a bank is not clean or easy." He admits and continues "There have been hard stretches, but being part of such a historic week, reminds me of the work we have done and just how far we have come." He said.

He is celebrated on our 'We've Got Men' column because of his views on the need to encourage and empower women. For instance, he said "I've learnt over and over again at Kuda and elsewhere that when we give women our support, platforms that provide visibility, access to resources,

relevant training, and mentorship that doesn't take advantage of them, incredible things happen within organisations and in the world." When he speaks from this line of thought, it is evident he supports causes that empower women and projects them in the positive light. At IWA, we are here to celebrate such men, we are here for this!

One endearing attribute of Babs is his thirst for leading innovation and creativity. This is evident in the bank as few months ago, they introduced their first-ever Kuda Olympics. Yes, you heard that right. To celebrate Nigeria's culture and deepen their bonds as Kuda tribe members, they traded their workstations for the playing field. They split into 8 teams representing their different products to compete for gold and bragging rights. They certainly had fun with the football matches, sprints, relay races, chess and video games. A beautiful understanding of knowing when to work and when to play. After all, all work and no play makes...I permit you to fill in the gap in your own creative way!

From co-founding Mototrader Nigeria, to

working as Engagement Manager at PwC, moving to Redbrick Ltd as Partner and then Special Adviser to the Governor of Oyo State on Finance where he advised the State Governor on fiscal policies. He was responsible for capital raising in the State and successfully led the largest bond raise in the State's history - a 55billion Naira bond programme. He was also responsible for setting up the Public Private Partnership (PPP) office and Debt Management Office (DMO) in Oyo State. Furthermore, he created products to boost Internally Generated Revenue, leading to a 5x increase in 4years. He set up and managed Oyo State Pension Contributory Scheme and was head of the State's Microfinance Bank turning it from a \$2m loss position into a profit making entity within 4years.

Babs moved on from there to co-found Kudimoney, Nigeria's first online only lending and savings platform and in July 2018, he founded Kuda and like the saying goes, the rest is history!

Today, Babs is celebrated globally for his feat, consistency and steady rise. Despite the obstacles, till date, he stands, Kuda stands!



HOLISTIC LIVING

# The Hidden Cost of Sitting Too Much

By Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri

**M**odern life has quietly changed the way our bodies move. Many people now spend most of their day seated at desks, in cars, during meetings, and while scrolling through screens. What once required physical movement can now be done almost entirely from a chair. While technology has made life more efficient, it has also introduced a silent health challenge: prolonged sitting. One of the first parts of the body to suffer is the spine.

In the story of Emily, a talented graphic designer. She loved her work and spent long hours creating digital designs, often deeply absorbed in projects that kept her seated at her computer for most of the day. At first, the signs were easy to ignore. A dull ache in her lower back. Tightness across her shoulders. A subtle

forward tilt of her neck as she leaned closer to the screen.

Like many professionals, Emily assumed it was simply part of the job. Weeks gradually turned into months, and the discomfort slowly grew into persistent pain. Sitting began to feel heavier. Standing up after long work sessions required effort. Even outside the office, her posture changed without her noticing. Her shoulders rolled forward and her back curved slightly inward.

One afternoon, while taking a rare break in a nearby park, Emily noticed an elderly man sitting on a bench with strikingly graceful posture. His back was upright, his shoulders relaxed, and he moved with an ease that suggested strength rather than stiffness. Curious, Emily approached him and asked how he maintained such remarkable posture.

The man smiled and said something

simple that stayed with her long after the conversation ended: "The spine remembers how you treat it every day." Poor posture is often dismissed as a cosmetic issue, but its consequences go far beyond appearance. Chronic slouching can lead to persistent back pain, reduced flexibility, headaches, and even breathing difficulties as the chest becomes compressed. The body begins to operate under constant tension.

Holistic living invites us to rethink posture not as an aesthetic concern but as a fundamental aspect of health. Fortunately, protecting the spine does not require complicated interventions. Often, it begins with simple daily habits. One of the most effective strategies is strengthening the core muscles. The abdominal and lower back muscles act as the body's natural support system for the spine. Activities such as yoga, Pilates, and strength training help stabilize these muscles, allowing the spine to remain aligned and supported.

Equally important is movement throughout the day. Sitting places continuous pressure on the spinal discs, which can lead to stiffness and discomfort. Standing, stretching, or walking for even a few minutes every hour helps relieve this pressure and restores circulation to the surrounding muscles.

Workspace design also plays a crucial role in spinal health. Many people unknowingly strain their neck and back because their workstation is poorly aligned. Ideally, a computer screen should be positioned at eye level so the neck remains neutral rather than tilted downward. A chair with proper lumbar support helps maintain the natural curve of the lower back, while feet should rest flat on the floor with knees slightly below hip level.

Awareness is another powerful tool. Many individuals do not notice when their posture begins to collapse. The shoulders creep forward, the chin drops, and the spine rounds. Taking a moment to reset

posture by lifting the chest, relaxing the shoulders, and lengthening the spine can instantly relieve tension.

Sleep also plays a surprisingly important role in spinal health. A supportive mattress and pillow help maintain the natural alignment of the spine during rest. Poor sleep posture can quietly undo the benefits of good posture maintained during the day.

Weight management is another often overlooked factor. Excess weight, particularly around the abdomen, increases pressure on the lower back and can accelerate spinal strain. Maintaining a balanced weight supports both posture and mobility.

Stretching also deserves attention. Sedentary lifestyles often create tightness in the chest, shoulders, and hips. Gentle stretching restores flexibility and counteracts the stiffness that prolonged sitting creates.

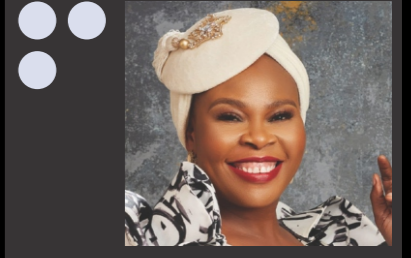
Emily eventually decided to apply the wisdom she had heard in the park. She began making small adjustments to her daily routine. Every hour, she stood up to stretch or walk briefly. She raised her computer monitor to eye level and invested in a chair that supported her lower back. In the mornings, she practiced simple yoga poses that strengthened her core and improved flexibility.

Within a few weeks, the constant ache in her back began to fade. Her shoulders felt lighter, and she noticed that breathing deeply became easier. Even more surprising was the boost in her energy and focus throughout the day.

When the spine is aligned, the body functions more efficiently. Muscles work together in balance, breathing improves, and circulation flows more freely.

Holistic living reminds us that the body is an interconnected system. Protecting the spine does more than prevent pain; it supports overall vitality. In a world that increasingly encourages stillness, choosing movement becomes an act of self-respect.

Stand up. Stretch. Walk. Realign. Because the spine you protect today will carry you through the life you are building 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-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

# A QUIET OBSERVER

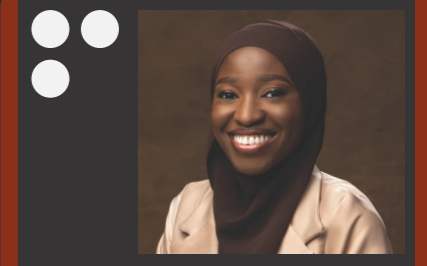
By Zainab Aderounmu

**W**e're slowly getting close to that time of year again. Yes, that time when the divisive lines among Nigerians intensely solidify. That time where we're more aware of our differences and what divides us rather than what unites us.

The time we forget our common struggles and common wins. Suddenly, we remember only what tribe we belong to and what religion we practice, and how whoever leads us must be our own 'brother', regardless of whether he can deliver.

We forget the deaths, the lack of empathy, our collective struggle and constantly rising budgets. It's almost as if we develop temporary amnesia when it's that time. We remember only how tribes and tongues actually differ.

For some of us, we sit on the fence. We're not quite sure who the best people to vote are. We sit still, watching



**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 Comperer', 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.

our friends and colleagues gear up for a toxic fight. We sit silently, hoping and wishing for a third choice, an obvious one, this time. Like a Barack Obama of our time. Someone about whom we can say, "Obviously, I'm voting for Lagbaja. She's the obvious choice."

But I really can't help but wonder, does this Lagbaja exist? We often say, "the leader is a reflection of the people." And I can't help but agree with that truth. People who habitually dump refuse in water bodies, people who stand at the edge of moving buses to pee into oncoming traffic, people who boldly declare in public spaces that they'll embezzle larger sums if given the chance to lead for even a few months. A people who normalize fraud and glorify wealth disregarding the source.

I remember the last elections. The air was perpetually tense; long-term friendships got severed because of different choices. Siblings stopped speaking to one another and neighbors? Interestingly, these same people won't do their work unless they're tipped, and would run a red light, because nobody's watching.

When will Nigeria be great, if Nigerians continue to be Nigerians?



# 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)  
: +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](https://www.instagram.com/Thehennaplace)  
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