



INSPIRING
WOMAN
AFRICA

EDITION 53, 1ST SEPTEMBER, 2026



AHUNNA EZIAKONWA

BECOMES UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL, SPECIAL ADVISER
ON **AFRICA** TO THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

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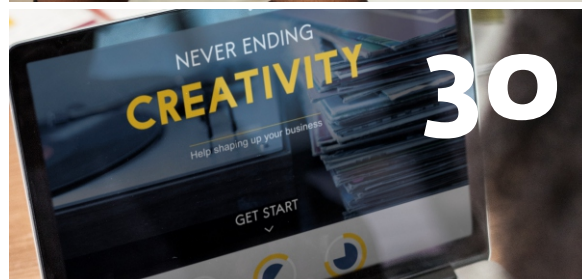
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Welcome!

Dear Readers,

September to remember is here!!! So glad we have started the 'ember months and what a beautiful way to start. I am particularly excited about sharing this beautiful news with you. Yeah...yeah...I know you know already but the information she shared exclusively with IWA is worth our subtle brag 😊. Seriously speaking, this news soothes my ears and gladdens my heart.

Our cover guest for the first edition of IWA this September, is someone whose results have been distinctly shaped by years of devoted service. Moving across the global stage, yet, graciously carrying her continent's voice with dignity and clarity. Grounded in professionalism, polished by experience, and led by an inward calm that stirs hope. From one distinguished position to another, she ticked the boxes of competence and once again, honour came knocking. She is AHUNNA EZIAKONWA, the newly sworn in Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa to the United Nations Secretary-General.

We appreciate her for granting our interview and we celebrate her for this praiseworthy achievement and recognition to Nigeria and Africa as a whole. We wish you well in your new assignment!

Here are other articles in this edition:

HER POINT OF VIEW: Behind Every Successful Career Woman Is a Small Army of Helpers. By Chinyere Okorochoa.

WOMAN EXECUTIVE: Faith in the C-Suite: When Your Compass Is Not the Market's. By Wola Joseph-Condotti.

FINANCIAL AdviseHER: Comfort or Capacity? By Sola Adesakin.

IN THE NEWS: Rethinking Violence and Restoring Human Security. By Asmau Benzie-Leo.

HOLISTIC LIVING: Pain Is Not the End of the Story. By Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri.

TRIBE WITH THE VIBES: How to Keep your Creative Juices Flowing. By Zainab Aderounmu.

WOMAN AT THE HELM: TEMWANI SIMWAKA, CEO, NBS Bank.

WE'VE GOT MEN: BENEDICTO BENA NKHOMA, Group Board Chairman, Citrine Financial Group Holdings Plc.

May this month bring you joy and may it indeed be a September to remember for you!

Stay safe and see you soon!



COVER INTERVIEW

AHUNNA EZIAKONWA

BECOMES UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL,
SPECIAL ADVISER ON AFRICA TO THE
UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

Kemi Ajumobi



hunna
Eziakonwa is the
current Under-
Secretary-
General and
Special Adviser
on Africa to the
United Nations Secretary-General.

Appointed by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres in June 2026, Eziakonwa of Nigeria began her tenure of office on 1 August 2026.

Eziakonwa brings nearly three decades of United Nations (UN) leadership to her new role. In her previous role as UN Assistant Secretary General, Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Africa, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), she oversaw the organization's support to 46 African countries in pursuing Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the African Union's Agenda 2063. Since 2018, she has helped shape UNDP's strategic approach to economic and political development across the continent.

Eziakonwa's experience spans the full breadth of UN work in Africa. She has served as UN Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in three countries - Ethiopia, Uganda and Lesotho - where she coordinated humanitarian action, development strategy and political engagement. As Chief of the Africa Section at the UN Office for the Coordination of



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Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) in New York, she managed humanitarian operations across 15 African countries and held senior posts in Liberia and Sierra Leone during critical periods in those nations.

At UN Headquarters, she contributed to peacekeeping and political analysis and strategic communications pertaining to UN engagement in Africa, working with the UN Departments of Peacekeeping Operations, Political Affairs and Public Information. Prior to joining the UN, she held positions in several African civil society organisations.

Eziakonwa holds a Master's degree in International Affairs with a focus on African economic and political development from Columbia University, New York, USA, and a Bachelor of Arts in Pedagogy, English and Literary Studies from the University of Benin, Nigeria. In addition to her native Igbo and English, she speaks fluent Yoruba and has a

working knowledge of French.

► Formative years and how you have been inspired till date

I often say that my life's first lessons did not come from a classroom. They came from living through uncertainty. I grew up in Nigeria during the Biafra conflict. My family was displaced, and for a period of my childhood, I lived as a refugee. People often focus on the hardship of that experience, but what stayed with me most was the resilience of ordinary people. I saw families supporting one another even when they had almost nothing. I saw communities sharing scarce resources. I saw people choosing hope when circumstances gave them every reason not to. Those early experiences taught me that human beings are far stronger than we sometimes realise.

My parents also taught me the transformative power of education. I know from personal experience that education can alter the trajectory of a

life. It gave me confidence, broadened my horizons, and opened doors that conflict and displacement might otherwise have closed. I would not be where I am today without parents who believed deeply in the power of learning and who encouraged me to dream beyond the circumstances of the moment.

Those experiences shaped how I view development. I do not see people as recipients of assistance. I see them as agents of change. Whether I have worked in humanitarian settings, development contexts or political environments, I have consistently

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found that solutions already exist within communities. People know their realities. They understand their challenges. More often than not, they know the answers as well.

That belief continues to guide me today. It is why I have devoted much of my career to creating opportunities for women, young people and communities whose voices are not always heard. My role has never been to speak for people. It has been to help create the conditions in which they can fully realise their own potential.

► Taking up this new role and your responsibilities

This appointment comes at a very important moment, not only for me professionally, but for Africa more broadly. We are living through a period

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My new role means helping ensure that Africa is not simply reacting to global events but actively helping shape them

of profound geopolitical, economic and technological change. Africa is no longer simply responding to global shifts; increasingly, it is helping shape them. Whether we are talking about demographics, critical minerals, clean energy, artificial intelligence, trade or innovation, the future conversations of the world will increasingly involve Africa.

The continent is home to the world's youngest population, extraordinary innovation, immense natural wealth and growing global influence. At the same time, it continues to face complex challenges ranging from insecurity and climate shocks to debt pressures and development financing constraints.

This appointment is therefore both a privilege and a responsibility. As Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa, my role is to help ensure that Africa's priorities, perspectives and solutions are reflected within the United Nations system and in broader international discussions. It means helping strengthen coordination, supporting preventive diplomacy, advancing peace and security efforts, and promoting development pathways that are rooted in African realities and aspirations.

Most importantly, it means helping ensure that Africa is not simply reacting to global events but actively helping shape them.

For me, this role comes at a time when conversations about Africa are changing. Increasingly, we are talking less about what Africa lacks and more about what Africa contributes. We are talking about innovation, entrepreneurship, energy transitions, digital transformation and regional integration. We are increasingly speaking about African solutions to African and global challenges. That is a

conversation I am excited to help advance.

► **In 46 African countries pushing Agenda 2030 with Agenda 2063 alignment, what did you learn about where implementation usually fails first: data, incentives, political will, or institutional capacity, and how will you intervene differently now as Special Adviser?**

After working with countries across Africa for many years, I have learnt that implementation rarely fails because countries lack vision. The continent is not short of strategies. It is not short of



plans. It is certainly not short of ambition. Across Africa, governments have embraced both Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030 and have integrated them into national planning frameworks. The challenge is not aspiration. The challenge is execution.

If I had to identify one area where implementation most frequently struggles, it would be institutional capacity and coordination. Too often, excellent policies are developed but implementation becomes fragmented across ministries, agencies and partners. Financing may not align with priorities. Responsibilities may not be clearly defined. Data may exist but not be used effectively in decision-making. Momentum is then lost between ambition and action.

I have also come to appreciate how much development outcomes are influenced by financing systems. Countries cannot implement what they cannot finance. The cost of capital, the availability of investment and the effectiveness of institutions all matter enormously. This is why discussions around domestic resource mobilisation, innovative financing and stronger institutions are so important.

As Special Adviser, I want to focus more on implementation ecosystems than implementation plans. Africa does not need another framework. It needs stronger institutions, more effective coordination and financing systems capable of turning ideas into impact. It also needs stronger African voices helping shape global conversations rather than simply responding to them.

progress. Coordination meetings can become ends in themselves. But people do not benefit from meetings. They benefit from outcomes.

The questions I always ask are: What decision are we making? What obstacle are we removing? What action will happen as a result?

If coordination clarifies responsibilities, strengthens accountability and improves outcomes, then it is strategic. If it merely prolongs discussions without moving things forward, then it risks becoming delay.

In today's world, many challenges are too complex for any single institution to solve alone. Coordination remains essential.

But good coordination should make implementation faster, not slower.

► **You've worked simultaneously on economic and political development. What's your most convincing example of economics creating politics, or vice versa?**

Jobs. I have seen repeatedly that economics and politics are inseparable. When young people can find meaningful

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As Special Adviser, I want to focus more on implementation ecosystems than implementation plans. Africa does not need another framework. It needs stronger institutions



► **UN leadership in Africa often gets asked to coordinate across fractured ecosystems. What is your personal rule for deciding when coordination is strategy versus when it becomes delay?**

My rule is simple. Coordination is valuable only when it improves decisions and accelerates delivery. Too often, organisations mistake process for



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opportunities, build livelihoods and believe that effort can lead to progress, institutions gain legitimacy. Trust grows. Stability improves. Politics becomes more constructive.

Conversely, when large numbers of people feel excluded from economic opportunity, frustration often manifests itself politically. Economic grievances can become social grievances. Social grievances can become political tensions. This is particularly important in Africa because of our demographics. Every year, millions of young Africans enter the labour market. The question is not whether they have ambition. Everywhere I travel, I meet talented young people ready to build, create and innovate. The real question is whether systems provide them with pathways to succeed.

That is why economic inclusion is not simply a development issue. It is a governance issue. It is a peacebuilding issue. It is a security issue.

► **In your experience across Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator, and UNDP roles, what is the single best early-warning indicator that a humanitarian situation will transition into: a longer-term governance or development crisis?**

The erosion of trust. For me, the most important indicator is not always what appears in the data first. It is what happens to trust. I have seen situations where food insecurity worsens, where

displacement increases, or where climatic shocks intensify. Those are important warning signs. But what often determines whether a humanitarian crisis becomes a prolonged governance or development crisis is whether people still trust that institutions can respond fairly and effectively.

When citizens lose confidence in public institutions, grievances begin to accumulate. Communities become more polarised. Misinformation spreads more easily. Social tensions become harder to manage. At that point, a crisis that might initially have been humanitarian can gradually become political, economic and institutional.

I learnt this repeatedly across different contexts. Whether it was conflict, drought, displacement or economic shocks, the countries that were most resilient were not necessarily those with the most resources. They were often the countries where institutions maintained



legitimacy and where communities continued to believe that solutions could be found through dialogue and collective action.

This is why I believe prevention is ultimately about trust-building. It is about ensuring that institutions remain responsive, transparent and accountable. It is about maintaining the social contract between citizens and the state. Once that trust begins to erode, recovery becomes much harder, much longer and much more expensive.

Conversely, where trust remains strong, even severe shocks can become opportunities to build back stronger and more resilient systems.

In many ways, trust is not simply a governance outcome, it is one of the most valuable forms of resilience a country can possess.

► **UNOCHA experience includes managing humanitarian operations across 15 countries. When you advise on Africa at the Secretariat level, what do you wish Member States understood?**

I wish more people understood that humanitarian assistance alone cannot solve humanitarian crises. Emergency interventions save lives and remain essential. But sustainable solutions require us to address the root causes of vulnerability.

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Economic inclusion is not simply a development issue. It is a governance issue. It is a peacebuilding issue. It is a security issue.

Whether we are discussing conflict, displacement, food insecurity or climate shocks, the answers rarely lie solely within the humanitarian space. They lie in governance, economic opportunity, social cohesion, public services and resilience. One of the most important lessons I have learnt is that humanitarian, development and peace efforts must be pursued together. We often call this the nexus approach, but ultimately it is simply common sense. Communities do not experience these challenges separately. Neither should we address them separately.

► **Peacekeeping and political analysis are often treated as separate tracks. What's your approach to making sure protection outcomes, political incentives and communication strategy reinforce each other instead of competing?**

People experience their realities as a whole. They do not separate politics from security, or security from communication. Protection outcomes improve when political incentives are understood. Political agreements become more sustainable when communities feel protected. Communication strengthens trust, legitimacy and accountability. My approach has always been to view these dimensions as interconnected rather than competing priorities.

When they reinforce one another, solutions become more sustainable. When they are pursued separately, opportunities are often missed.

Most importantly, people must remain at the centre of decision-making. Protection, politics and communication should all serve the same ultimate objective: creating conditions in which people can live in dignity, security and hope.

► **After the appointment in June 2026 and taking office in August, what is your first deliberate priority?**

My first priority is listening and building relationships. Throughout my career, I have learnt that meaningful progress is built on trust, partnerships and a shared understanding of priorities. Before setting a course of action, I want to engage with governments, regional institutions, the African Union, Regional Economic Communities, young people, women leaders, civil society and our international partners. Africa is incredibly diverse. Different countries face different realities, opportunities and challenges. Listening is therefore not simply a courtesy. It is a strategic necessity.

I also want to focus early on strengthening connections between institutions that

” ***Listening is not simply a courtesy. It is a strategic necessity***

often work towards the same objectives but do not always work closely enough together. The challenges Africa faces today, whether related to peace and security, climate change, economic transformation or demographic change, cut across traditional institutional boundaries.

No single institution can address these issues alone. Success depends on partnerships and collective action. My experience has taught me that some of the most important breakthroughs occur when people who may not traditionally work together sit around the same table with a shared purpose. Building those bridges will be one of my key priorities. Above all, I want to understand where the greatest opportunities exist to support African-led solutions. Africa has no shortage of ideas, talent or ambition. My role is not to define the continent's priorities but to help amplify them and support the conditions that allow them to succeed.

► **In managing humanitarian action, development strategy and political engagement across Ethiopia, Uganda and Lesotho, which context taught you the most about humility in UN planning and what did it change?**

Each country taught me something different, but perhaps the most enduring lesson I learnt is that people are not waiting for outsiders to solve their problems. Whether I was working in Ethiopia, Uganda, Lesotho or elsewhere, I repeatedly saw communities finding solutions long before development partners arrived. I saw local leaders mediating tensions, women supporting economic recovery, young people creating opportunities where none seemed to exist, and communities organizing themselves in remarkably resilient ways. That experience fundamentally changed



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how I think about development and international support.

Early in one's career, it is easy to believe that expertise is the most important contribution we bring. Over time, you realise that listening may be even more important. The most sustainable solutions are rarely imported. They are built by people who understand their realities, their institutions, their history and their aspirations.

Ethiopia reinforced this lesson strongly for me. It showed me the power of national ownership and the importance of ensuring that countries remain firmly in the driver's seat of their development journey. International partners can support, convene and accompany, but lasting change ultimately belongs to the people and institutions of a country. Humility in development comes from recognising that our role is often not to bring solutions, but to help create the conditions in which existing solutions can flourish. That lesson has stayed with me throughout my career and continues to shape how I approach leadership today.

► **Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 are aligned on paper. In practice, what would you treat as the highest-leverage reform to close that gap?**

If I had to choose one reform, it would be



strengthening the way development is financed. The problem today is not a shortage of strategies. Africa has strong visions, strong ambitions and increasingly strong institutions. The problem is often that implementation is underfunded or financed in ways that are not sustainable. We need much stronger domestic resource mobilisation. We need to unlock the enormous pools of African capital that exist within pension funds, insurance funds and domestic financial systems. We need financing mechanisms that support productive investment, infrastructure, innovation and job creation.

We also need to address the cost of capital facing African countries. When countries pay significantly more to access finance than their fundamentals justify, development becomes unnecessarily expensive. Schools are delayed. Infrastructure is postponed. Opportunities are lost.

Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 are not separated by vision. They are often separated by implementation capacity and financing. Closing that gap requires stronger institutions and better financing systems.



► **In crisis moments, misinformation can polarise communities quickly. If you could choose one capability the UN must strengthen across Africa, what would you pick and why?**

I would choose trust-building. Many people would expect me to say technology, early warning systems or communication platforms. Those tools are undoubtedly important. However, trust remains the foundation upon which all effective communication rests. Information travels fast. Misinformation often travels faster. The question is not simply whether information reaches people. The question is whether they believe it.

Communities that trust institutions are more resilient during crises. They are more likely to cooperate, less vulnerable to manipulation and better able to navigate uncertainty.

Trust cannot be built during a crisis. It must be built continuously through transparency, inclusion, accountability and genuine engagement. In many ways, trust is one of the most important forms of resilience a society can possess.

► **What does success look like for your office in one year: fewer crises, improved resilience, better political solutions, or measurable development delivery, and how will you prove it?**

Success will not be measured by the number of meetings we hold or the number of reports we produce. Success will be measured by whether people are better served because of the work we do. If, one year from now, countries are better able to prevent tensions from becoming crises, that would be success.

If governments feel better equipped to address complex challenges and deliver for their citizens, that would be success. If more women and young people can access opportunities, participate in decision-making and contribute to economic transformation, that would be success.

If stronger partnerships emerge between African institutions, Member States and the international community, that would be success.

And if Africa's voice carries

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The most sustainable solutions are rarely imported. They are built by people who understand their realities, their institutions, their history and their aspirations

greater weight in the decisions that affect its future, that would be success.

The reality is that progress is rarely captured by a single indicator. Success is often reflected in stronger institutions, greater resilience, deeper trust and better opportunities for people.

But if I had to summarise it in one sentence, I would say this: success is helping create conditions where African countries are better able to shape their own futures with confidence, resilience and agency.

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Every woman who reaches a position of leadership has a responsibility to create opportunities for the next generation



► **How important is it to have more women in top positions, how can we have more and what do women need to do too?**

It is absolutely critical. Women represent half of humanity. No society can achieve its full potential while excluding half of its talent, leadership and creativity. The conversation, however, should not begin with representation alone. It should begin with opportunity.

Too many women continue to face barriers in education, finance, technology, political participation and leadership. Those barriers are not only unfair; they are economically costly. When women succeed, economies grow, institutions perform better and communities become stronger. As I often say, if Africa underinvests in women, Africa underinvests in itself.

We need more women in leadership because diverse leadership produces better decisions. We also need stronger mentorship networks, greater investment in girls' education, and more deliberate pathways into leadership positions. At the same time, women must continue believing in their own capacity. They should not wait for permission to lead. They should seize opportunities, push doors open, build networks and support one another.

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Hope is not naïve optimism. Hope is a decision to believe that change is possible

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It's Africa's time on Africa's terms

One of the principles I have always believed in is simple: lift as you climb. Every woman who reaches a position of leadership has a responsibility to create opportunities for the next generation.

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

That adversity is not destiny. Life does not always unfold according to plan. There will be setbacks, disappointments and moments of uncertainty.

But if my own journey has taught me anything, it is that circumstances do not define our future. The child who experiences conflict is not destined to remain defined by conflict. The young person who lacks opportunities today is not destined to lack opportunities forever. I have seen remarkable examples of resilience throughout my life. I have seen individuals overcome extraordinary odds. I have seen communities rebuild after devastating crises. I have seen countries recover from periods of conflict and emerge stronger.

Hope is not naïve optimism. Hope is a decision to believe that change is possible. That is perhaps the greatest lesson life has taught me.

► **Concluding Words**

For many years, the dominant narrative about Africa focused on what Africa lacked. Today, I believe the more important question is what Africa can offer.

When I travel across the continent, I do not see a continent waiting to be rescued. I see innovators building solutions. I see entrepreneurs creating jobs. I see women transforming communities. I see young people challenging old assumptions and creating entirely new possibilities. Everywhere I go, I encounter talent, creativity and determination.

Yes, Africa faces significant challenges. Climate change, conflict, debt pressures, inequality and geopolitical uncertainty are real. But Africa also possesses extraordinary strengths: the world's youngest population, abundant natural



resources, growing technological capabilities, dynamic entrepreneurs and remarkable resilience.

The future will be shaped by those who can transform ideas into solutions, opportunity into prosperity and innovation into impact. Africa is increasingly demonstrating that ability every day.

I believe we are entering a new chapter. Not a chapter defined by dependency. Not a chapter defined by limitations. Not a chapter defined by what others think Africa should become. But a chapter defined by African leadership, African innovation, African institutions, African capital and African solutions.

I believe, it is Africa's time, on Africa's terms.

WOMAN EXECUTIVE

Faith in the C-Suite: When Your Compass Is Not the Market's

By Wola Joseph-Condotti

Nobody tells you that the hardest part is not knowing what is right. Usually you know. Most of the time it is obvious within about four seconds of hearing the proposal. The hard part is knowing what is right, and then quietly doing the arithmetic on what it is going to cost you this quarter.

That is the real dilemma. Not confusion. Cost.

Because the market has a compass too, and honestly, it is a very good one for what it measures. It points toward speed, margin, growth, and the deal that closes

before the window shuts. It is not evil. It is just pointing at something else. And every so often, your compass and its compass part ways.

That moment is lonely in a way that is genuinely hard to explain to anybody who has not sat in it.

The Decisions That Cost Something

I am not talking about the dramatic ones here. Fraud, theft, obvious corruption. Those are easy, actually. Anybody with a conscience turns those down without breaking a sweat. I mean the ordinary ones.

The number that could be presented one way, technically defensible, or another way, plainly honest. The vendor, where everybody in the room knows how they won that contract, and nobody wants to be the one to say it out loud. The staff decision that is legally fine and quietly unjust. The commitment you made back in January that has become expensive by August, and honestly, no one would blame you for renegotiating it.

None of these will ever make the papers. And every single one of them is a decision. The uncomfortable part is that doing the right thing in these moments does not usually give you a heroic story to tell later. It gives you a slightly worse quarter. And

nobody claps.

The Quiet Kind of Witness

There is a version of faith at work that I have never been comfortable with. The performative version. Scripture in the email signature. Prayer wheeled out as a management technique. A certain vocabulary put on for effect.

That has never sat right with me. Partly because I lead people of many faiths and none, and my convictions are not a burden I get to hand to them. But there is another version. Much quieter. It looks like being the same person in the boardroom as you are in the back office. It looks like your word still meaning something twelve months later. It looks like the junior colleague who works out, slowly, over time, that you will not humiliate anybody in a meeting, ever, and that this is not a mood you happen to be in. It is a rule.

People read that. They read it far more accurately than they read anything you say about yourself.

Excellence is the witness. Delivering well. Treating people well. Telling the truth when it costs you something. That preaches without preaching, and it holds up in rooms where words would fall flat.

What It Actually Costs

Let us be honest about the price, though, because pretending there is none is both dishonest and unhelpful. You will lose some things. A deal here and there. A relationship with someone who decided you were inflexible. Occasionally a reputation, among a certain kind of person, for being difficult.

And you will sometimes stand alone in a room where everybody else has quietly nodded along, and you will lie awake afterwards wondering whether you were being principled or just stubborn. That doubt is real. It does not fully go away, and I am not sure it is meant to.

But here is what I have found. The account balances over a much longer horizon than a single quarter. The people who could not use you eventually stop calling, which is fine. But the people who need somebody they can genuinely trust with something serious? They call. And they keep calling, for years.

That is not a promise of prosperity. It is just what I have watched happen. A Word From Scripture Three young men in Daniel 3 refused to bow to the king's statue. The threat was a furnace, and it was not a metaphor. What has always struck me is not their confidence. It is one sentence, tucked into the middle of their answer. They said God was able to deliver them. And then they said this: "But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods." But if not. They did not know how it was going to end. They made the decision anyway, without any guarantee it would work out well for them. That is the posture. Not certainty that conviction will be rewarded. Just clarity about what you will and will not do, held firmly before you have any idea how the story ends.

Final Thoughts

If your compass and the market's compass have never once disagreed, wait. They will. And when they finally do, you will not need more information. You will already know. What you will need is the willingness to accept that being right and being rewarded do not always turn up on the same day, or even in the same quarter. Make the decision anyway.

Not loudly. Not with a speech. Just quietly, consistently, in a way people tend to notice long before they ever mention it to you. Because in the end, the market will value your results.

But the people around you will remember what you refused to trade.



Wola Joseph Condotti

Chief Executive Officer,
Eko Power Limited.

Wola is the CEO of Eko Power Limited.

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.

FINANCIAL AdviseHER

Comfort or Capacity?



By Sola Adesakin

There is a question I started asking myself a few years ago that quietly changed the way I spend money. It is not complicated. It does not require a spreadsheet or a financial calculator. But it has probably saved me more money and made me more money than any single budgeting technique I have ever used.

The question is this. Am I buying comfort or creating capacity?

Once you start filtering your spending through this question, you will never look at a transaction the same way again. Let me explain what I mean, because on the surface it sounds like I am about to tell you to stop enjoying your money. I am not. Comfort is not the enemy. You are allowed to rest. You are allowed to enjoy what you have worked for. The problem is not comfort itself. The

problem is when comfort is the only thing your money is buying, month after month, year after year, and you wake up one morning realising that you have been very comfortable and very stuck at the same time.

Comfort spending is the meal that was lovely but forgettable by Thursday. The upgrade you did not need but felt you deserved. The subscription you stopped using two months ago but have not cancelled because it is only N5,000. The

new phone when the current one works perfectly well. Individually, none of these are financial disasters. But collectively, over twelve months, they form a pattern. And the pattern is this: money flowing consistently toward making today feel slightly better, with nothing flowing toward making tomorrow fundamentally different.

Capacity spending is a different animal entirely. It does not always feel good in the moment. Sometimes it feels like sacrifice. But it creates something that did not exist before. A skill. An asset. An opportunity. A connection.

The N150,000 you spend on a professional course that moves your consulting rate from N200,000 to N500,000 per engagement is capacity. It feels like an expense on the day you pay. Six months later it looks like the best investment you made all year. The N30,000 monthly contribution to an investment account does not give you the immediate satisfaction of a nice dinner out. But in five years, that account is generating returns that the dinner never could. The N80,000 you spend attending a conference where you meet the person who introduces you to your next client or business partner is not a cost. It is a door.

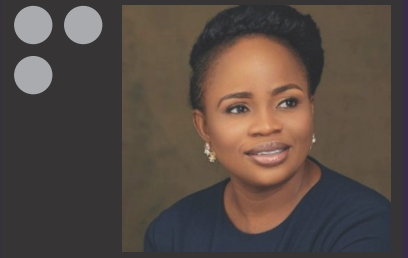
The distinction is not always clean. I know that. Some spending is both. A holiday that genuinely restores you so you can perform at a higher level when you return is comfort and capacity. A good meal with someone who becomes a meaningful business relationship is dinner and investment. Life is not a ledger with perfectly separated columns. But the general direction of your money, where most of it flows most of the time, tells a very honest story about what you are building.

Here is what I have noticed working with women across different income levels. The ones who are moving forward financially are not necessarily earning the most. They are the ones who have learned to catch themselves before a transaction and ask what this purchase is actually doing for them. Not with guilt, or rigidity, but with awareness. They still enjoy their money. They just do not let enjoyment be the only instruction their money receives.

And here is the part that surprises people. When you start directing more of your spending toward capacity, the comfort does not disappear. It increases. Because capacity generates returns, and returns eventually fund a quality of comfort that impulse spending never reaches. The woman who invested in her skills and built a consulting practice can afford a nicer holiday than the woman who spent the same money on small comforts spread across three years. She just delayed the gratification long enough to let the capacity do its work.

The next time you are about to make a purchase, any purchase, pause for three seconds and ask the question. Is this buying me comfort or creating capacity? You do not have to answer capacity every time. That is not realistic and it is not the point. The point is that you asked. Because asking consistently changes the ratio over time. And the ratio is what determines whether you are funding a lifestyle or building a life.

Comfort or capacity. The question is simple. What it builds over time is extraordinary.



By Sola Adesakin

Founder and Lead Coach,
Smart Stewards

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

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

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

HER POINT OF VIEW


Behind Every Successful Career Woman Is a Small Army of Helpers

Chinyere Okorochoa

Some are visible. Many are not. They may never appear in her photographs, receive an award or have their names mentioned when her achievements are celebrated. But take them away, and the story of her success might have been very different.

They are the supportive spouse, the mother who helped with the children, the colleague who covered for her, the boss who advocated for her, the mentor who guided her, the sponsor who mentioned her name in a room she wasn't in, the nanny who kept the home running, the driver who made impossible schedules possible, and the girlfriends who reminded her who she was when she temporarily forgot.

Yet, somehow, women have been sold the idea that strength means doing everything ourselves. It doesn't.

The Superwoman Trap

I know many highly capable women who struggle to ask for help. We tell ourselves, "It is faster if I do it myself." We delegate something and then redo it because it wasn't done exactly as we would have done it. We manage demanding careers, children, homes, ageing parents, marriages, friendships and community responsibilities, and still expect ourselves to function at 100 percent. Then we wonder why we are exhausted. One of the most important lessons I have learnt is this: you cannot build an extraordinary life with an insistence on

doing ordinary tasks that somebody else can competently do for you. Delegation is not laziness. It is strategy.

I Could Not Have Done It Alone

There were seasons in my career when work required significant travel while my children were young. I remember travelling abroad for work when one of my babies was only four months old. There was guilt. There were logistics. There was the emotional tug every working mother understands.

What made it possible was support

My husband was willing to step in and parent fully, whilst my mother came over from the village to help too, when work took me away. I therefore had domestic support and people I trusted

with my children and my home. Without that infrastructure, some of the opportunities that helped build my career would have been considerably harder, perhaps impossible, to take. That is why when people celebrate successful women, I often think we should also celebrate the ecosystem that made their success possible.

Different Helpers for Different Seasons

Early in your career, you may need a mentor to help you navigate unfamiliar terrain. As you progress, you need sponsors willing to say, "I think she is ready," when opportunities are being discussed. You need colleagues and allies who have your back, a sisterhood with whom you can be vulnerable, and sometimes a coach to help you move deliberately to your next level.

Do not underestimate practical help

The nanny who lovingly looks after your child while you attend an important meeting is part of your career infrastructure. So is the housekeeper who takes hours of domestic work off your plate and the driver who allows you to take calls or review documents in traffic. And the higher you rise, another person can become invaluable: a competent Personal or Executive Assistant. At senior levels, your scarcest resource is often not money but time and attention. An excellent PA or EA does far more than manage a diary. They protect your time, anticipate conflicts, coordinate competing priorities, follow up on commitments and create order around an increasingly complex and sometimes chaotic professional life.

Trying to personally manage every appointment, email, document, reminder and logistical detail when you are leading at a high level is not necessarily admirable. Sometimes it simply means you have failed to delegate. These people are not incidental to the story. They are part of the story.

When Help Fails

Of course, support will sometimes disappoint you. A nanny from hell takes center stage or leaves unexpectedly with your belongings. A colleague who you thought had your back, turns out to be a backstabbing obstacle to your progress and lets you down. Your assistant drops a ball and one too many opportunities or clients briefs fall through the cracks. A mentor becomes increasingly unavailable. A spouse may even begin to struggle to understand the demands of a new role. The above notwithstanding, the answer is not, "I will just do everything myself."

Build systems instead

Have backup arrangements. Communicate expectations clearly. Train people. Delegate properly. Check in without micromanaging. And when someone consistently fails, replace the support rather than abandoning the concept of support altogether. Most importantly, learn to receive help without guilt.

Build Your Village Intentionally

Ask yourself: Who is in my career village? Who supports my home? Who advises me? Who challenges me? Who advocates for me? Who protects my time? Who can I call when things fall apart? Where are the gaps? Then deliberately build the support you need. And remember, a village works both ways. Recommend another woman. Mentor someone. Cover for a colleague. Share an opportunity. Thank the people who make your life work. Strong women do not prove their strength by carrying everything. They know what to carry, what to delegate, when to ask for help and whom to trust. Because from her point of view, behind every woman who rises is rarely one pair of hands. There is usually a village helping her climb.


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.

IN THE NEWS

Rethinking Violence and Restoring Human Security

Asmau Benzies Leo



On 26 August 2026, I had the privilege of participating as a speaker at the international forum “Forgotten

Conflicts: Rethinking Violence and Peacebuilding in Nigeria,” held in Berlin, Germany. Organised by the Working Group on Peace and Development (FriEnt), and supported by the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) and German Foreign Affairs Office. The forum provided an important platform for bringing together perspectives on peace, development and Nigeria’s evolving security challenges. My participation offered an opportunity to draw international attention to a crisis that has persisted for years but remains insufficiently understood and inadequately prioritised within global peace and security conversations.

My intervention was delivered under the theme “Rethinking Violence and Restoring Human Security: A Call from Nigeria’s Middle Belt.” It was a call to rethink not only how violence in Nigeria’s Middle Belt is understood, but also how peacebuilding responses are designed, financed and implemented.

The conference theme, Forgotten Conflicts: Rethinking Violence and Peacebuilding in Nigeria’s Middle Belt, raises a fundamental question: Why is the conflict in Nigeria’s Middle Belt described as forgotten?

It is certainly not forgotten by the millions of Nigerians who live with its consequences. It is not forgotten by families who have lost loved ones, farmers who can no longer safely access their fields, communities forced from their ancestral homes, or women and children whose lives have been profoundly disrupted by violence. The conflict is “forgotten” largely because of how international policy, media and security frameworks have historically defined and prioritised crises.

For more than a decade, international



geopolitical attention and the funding that follows it has focused heavily on ideological counter-terrorism, particularly in Nigeria’s North-East. The Middle Belt crisis, however, may not fit neatly into a conventional counter-terrorism framework. Its drivers include climate stress, competition over land, weapons proliferation, criminal governance and gaps in state protection. This has contributed to a dangerous simplification of the crisis. Violence across the Middle Belt is too often reduced to “seasonal farmer-herder clashes” or described as the continuation of ancient ethnic and religious disputes. Such reductionist framing obscures the reality of an organised and widespread human security catastrophe, a slow burning crisis unfolding largely within rural and agrarian communities, far from

international cameras and global headlines.

Rethinking What Violence Means

At the heart of my intervention was a call to change how we define violence. From policy desks in Berlin, Abuja or elsewhere, violence can appear as statistics: an attack, a kidnapping figure, a death toll or a displacement map. But for a woman living in a community in especially in Benue, Plateau or Kaduna state, violence is cumulative and deeply personal.

To her, violence is losing the freedom to walk to the farm at dawn. It is the fear of sending a daughter to school. It is the collapse of local markets, the loss of family income, the destruction of



livelihoods and the psychological trauma of displacement. Violence is therefore not simply the loss of life; it is the systematic shrinking of human freedom, dignity and choice.

These consequences are particularly severe for women. When displacement occurs, women often carry disproportionate caregiving responsibilities while simultaneously losing the social and protection networks that previously supported them. This can expose them to sexual exploitation, forced marriage or human trafficking.

Yet women must not be defined only by the vulnerabilities they face. They are also among the most important actors sustaining peace and resilience in their communities. Women serve as informal mediators, caregivers, food producers and community organisers. They often possess deep knowledge of local tensions and relationships and are able to identify early signs of conflict escalation.

We must therefore move beyond viewing women merely as recipients of humanitarian assistance. Their knowledge, leadership and agency should be recognised as critical resources for conflict prevention, mediation,

recovery and peacebuilding.

The Middle Belt Is More Than a Local Conflict

The crisis must also be understood as a human security, development and regional stability challenge, because the region is central to Nigeria's agricultural production and is widely regarded as part of the nation's food basket. When insecurity destabilises communities in this region, the consequences do not remain within individual communities or states. Agricultural disruption can contribute to food insecurity, displacement and economic shocks, with implications extending beyond

Nigeria into wider West African and Sahelian dynamics.

This makes peace in the Middle Belt not simply a Nigerian domestic concern, but an issue with broader implications for regional stability, food security and human development.

Young People as Peacebuilders

Young people are equally central to the peacebuilding equation. Too often, security discussions portray young people primarily as vulnerable to recruitment into violent groups. While such risks are

real, this perspective overlooks their enormous potential as early warning actors, first responders and peacebuilders.

Across communities affected by violence, young people are uniquely positioned to mobilise peers, communicate emerging tensions, support vulnerable populations and contribute to community dialogue. Their networks, energy and familiarity with local realities can make them powerful agents of prevention and social cohesion.

Investing in youth therefore cannot be limited to employment programmes or preventing radicalisation. Young people must be deliberately included in peacebuilding structures, local decision making, early warning mechanisms and community recovery initiatives.

Sustainable peace requires giving them meaningful opportunities to exercise agency rather than treating them simply as beneficiaries or potential security threats.

From Military Containment to Human Security

If we want sustainable peace, our response must move beyond military containment towards a broader human security approach incorporating land justice, locally led peacebuilding and long term economic recovery.

Security operations remain important where communities face immediate threats, but military responses alone cannot resolve the underlying conditions that sustain conflict. Peace requires addressing insecurity alongside livelihoods, access to land, displacement, social cohesion and the ability of communities to rebuild their lives.

Most importantly, affected communities must be recognised as partners rather than passive recipients of interventions.



Dr. Asmau Benzies Leo

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

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

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

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

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

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



WOMAN AT THE HELM

Temwani Simwaka

CEO, NBS Bank

Temwani Simwaka is the CEO of NBS Bank. She is an experienced and seasoned Chief

Financial Officer with a demonstrated history of working in the banking industry. She is skilled in budgeting, business planning, internal audit, analytical skills, financial reporting and banking. A graduate from University of Malawi, she is a leader, mentor, and volunteer worker. She is passionate about the girl child, and also very involved in girl mentorship and distribution of reusable pads to keep girls in school.

NBS Bank is a fully-fledged commercial bank providing various financial services to individuals, small and medium businesses, large corporations and public institutions. In partnership with Visa, they recently launched their Visa Infinite Card. Becoming the first bank in Malawi to

introduce the Visa Infinite Card is what Temwani describes as “more than a first.” According to her, “it is another expression of our commitment to anticipate our customers’ needs and care a little more.”

Furthermore, she mentioned that what makes this moment even more significant is how the Infinite Card connects to their wider family banking proposition. “We believe that while wealth may be created by individuals, enduring wealth is preserved through families,” Simwaka said.

Temwani is big on supporting the creatives too. She expressed this saying “Malawi possesses immense talent, and with the right access to markets, financing, and business skills, this sector can meaningfully contribute to national development. At NBS Bank, we recognise creatives as

entrepreneurs and innovators. We are committed to supporting their growth and sustainability, ensuring the creative industry becomes a cornerstone of Malawi’s economic progress.”

The women are not left out. Last year, NBS Bank embarked on an important journey to strengthen their leadership pipeline through the launch of the NBS Bank Women in Leadership Programme.

She recently stated that one of the things she values about this programme is its emphasis on self-awareness and owning your future. “Leadership begins with understanding who you are, recognising your strengths, being honest about your areas for growth, seeking feedback and having the courage to continuously develop.” Temwani mentioned.



WE'VE GOT MEN

Benedicto Bena Nkhoma

Group Board Chairman, Citrine Financial Group Holdings Plc.

Benedicto Bena Nkhoma is a Malawian citizen and an Award-Winning Executive, inspirational leader, strategic investor and public speaker and veteran banker with over two decades of experience in banking, insurance, investment, and corporate governance across Africa.

He is the Group Board Chairman of Citrine Financial Group Holdings Plc, a Pan-African financial services company founded in Rwanda in 2024 by top-tier investment and commercial banking leaders. They are building an integrated financial ecosystem designed to empower Africa's under-banked and underserved communities.

As the Chairman of the Board of Directors at Citrine-Holdings Plc, Benedicto Bena Nkhoma provides visionary leadership to the board, ensuring strong governance, strategic direction, and accountability across the group. He plays a central role in

defining Citrine-Holdings' corporate values and shaping its future as a Pan-African financial powerhouse.

He acts as a guiding force for executive leadership, supporting strategic fundraising, investor engagement, and corporate ethics, while championing Citrine's broader mission of financial inclusion and innovation across Africa.

Throughout his career, Benedicto has helped build institutions, led teams, navigated complex financial markets and contributes to the development of Africa's financial sector. Previously, he held senior executive positions in banking, including Head of Treasury, Chief Treasury and Global Markets Officer and Acting Chief Executive Officer.

Benedicto is a Chartered Accountant, Chartered Banker and holder of an MBA from the University of Pretoria.

Beyond the boardroom, he is passionate about financial literacy, entrepreneurship,

leadership and sustainable wealth creation. His mission is to help Africans move beyond merely earning an income to owning productive assets, building enterprises and creating intergenerational wealth.

According to him "Africa does not have only an income problem. It has an ownership problem."

Benedicto is the author of: 'The Art of Creating Wealth', 'Ignite Success' and 'From Earning to Owning: Redefining Africa's Pathways to Wealth Beyond Salaried Pay.'

Through his writing, speaking engagements, mentorship and digital platforms, he shares practical lessons drawn from banking, investing, business, leadership and life. His approach is grounded in experience, evidence, discipline and the realities of African economies.

HOLISTIC LIVING



Pain Is Not the End of the Story

By Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri

When Sbu survived a devastating car accident, everyone celebrated that she was alive. Yet long after her wounds had healed, another battle quietly began. Chronic pain followed her into every part of life, making ordinary tasks exhausting and stealing the freedom she once took for granted. Medication and physical therapy brought some relief, but they did not restore the life she had lost. The turning point came when she realised that recovery required more than treating pain. It required healing the whole person.

This is a lesson our healthcare conversations often overlook. We tend to measure success by whether symptoms disappear, yet true wellbeing is much broader than pain scores or prescriptions. Holistic living recognises that physical health, emotional resilience, mental wellbeing, meaningful relationships, purposeful living and healthy daily habits are inseparable. When one suffers, the others are affected. Likewise, when one improves, every aspect of life has the opportunity to flourish.

Sbu's journey reflects the experience of millions living with chronic pain. Conditions affecting the joints, nerves, muscles, spine, autoimmune system or previous injuries can persist for months or years, influencing not only mobility but also sleep, mood, productivity and relationships. Pain is rarely just a physical experience. It can isolate people, increase anxiety, reduce confidence and slowly erode hope if left unaddressed.

The encouraging news is that healing does not rely on medication alone. As Sbu discovered, lasting recovery often comes from combining medical care with healthier ways of living. Mindfulness helped her respond differently to pain. Physical therapy restored strength and flexibility. Better sleep improved resilience. Nutritious food supported recovery.

Gentle movement rebuilt confidence. Supportive relationships reminded her that she was more than her diagnosis. Step by step, these small decisions transformed her quality of life.

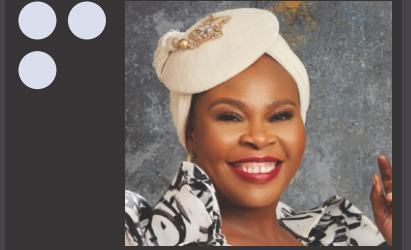
This is the power of holistic living. It moves the conversation beyond surviving illness towards living well despite life's challenges. It encourages us to care for our bodies without neglecting our minds, to manage stress before it becomes overwhelming, to protect our sleep as carefully as we protect our finances, and to build relationships that strengthen us during difficult seasons.

Healthcare professionals increasingly recognise that the best outcomes come from integrated care. Medication, rehabilitation, psychological support, lifestyle medicine, occupational therapy and social connection each play a role. None should exist in isolation because people are not collections of symptoms; they are whole human beings with families, dreams, responsibilities and purpose.

There is also an important lesson for society. We should never judge someone simply because their pain is invisible. Compassion, understanding and supportive workplaces and communities can become powerful forms of healing. Sometimes the greatest medicine is not another prescription but the reassurance that no one has to carry their burden alone.

Holistic living is ultimately about restoring life, not merely reducing pain. It asks a different question. Instead of asking, 'How do we treat disease?' it asks, 'How do we help people thrive?'

The answer begins with small, intentional choices repeated consistently: nourishing the body, strengthening the mind, cultivating meaningful relationships, seeking help when needed and embracing habits that support lifelong wellbeing. Pain may become part of a person's story, but it should never be allowed to define the ending. The greatest victory is not simply living longer; it is living fully.



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



How to Keep your Creative Juices *flowing*

By Zainab Aderounmu

I think of creativity as God's deposit in us. Literally, we have been made self-sufficient in the sense that everything we need to thrive is within us, and all we have to do is exchange our gifts for value.

Have you noticed how you feel once your mind, or hands are itching to create something? For me, I'm usually too excited to sleep. I can't focus on anything else until I've given life to my idea depending on how invested I am in the concept. But I've also noticed that when I don't execute my creative ideas consistently, they desert me and my creative juices run dry. We have a duty of stewardship towards our ideas and gifts, but how exactly do you preserve your creativity? I've got a few ideas.

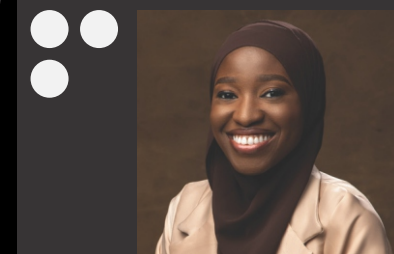
1 **Consume High Quality Content:** You are what you feed your mind, and what goes in, will become output. So if you consume garbage, only garbage will be producible. Our brains are huge sponges for learning and whatever we give it, will be absorbed and replicated. Beyond that, your creativity manifests first in your mind, which is intangible so if you've been consuming empowering content, your ideas will flow like a river.

2 **Hone the habit:** Because creativity is an art, there may be the tendency to assume it's a natural talent and not a skill to hone. Creativity requires paying attention to yourself and understanding the process of creating. It requires discipline and consistency such that one is able to create even in the absence of motivation. How do you do that? Create first without consuming. Don't look for inspiration, don't wait to be informed, just create consistently until you trust your own creative judgement.

3 **Rest:** I read Wole Soyinka's You Must Set Forth at Dawn. He spoke about the dry years where he couldn't write a single piece of literature or essay. He was neck-deep in the post-independence brouhaha that he couldn't write and that was okay. Sometimes, you might need time off from your creative endeavors. Go outside, play, do something else.

4 **Journal:** In times when creative ideas are running low, I've found that journaling turns the mundane into something special and it redirects my mind to recognize its power. What happened yesterday? Write it down somewhere; what were the emotions, the peculiar events. Write it down.

Finally, every single person is a creative genius even if you're more technical than artsy. We have strengths and strong fortes, so although all we need to thrive exists within us, we still need to exchange and collaborate to complete our not-so-strong aspects. More importantly, your gifts have been entrusted to you, and the best way to handle them, is to steward them diligently.



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.

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Lead Coach/ Founder of
Smart Stewards - Host

Dr. Ini
Abimbola

Dr. Niyi
Adesanya

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Woman Executive



Wola Joseph Condotti
Chief Executive Officer, Eko Electricity
Distribution Company

When the Sector is Bigger Than You: Leading in Systemically Broken Industries

There is a kind of leadership burden of running a company inside a sector that is, honestly broken. You inherit ambitious targets. You put together a competent team. You write a credible strategy. And then you spend most of your week fighting problems you did not create, cannot fully fix, and will still somehow be blamed for when they land on the evening news.

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Financial AdviseHER



Sola Adesakin
Founder and Lead Coach,
Smart Stewards

Live for the Right Things: A Smarter Financial Approach for 2026

Every New Year comes with pressure. New goals, expectations. New standards of "success" defined mostly by what people are showing online. But in 2026 is going to be financially different for you, not because you spent louder or tried harder to impress. It will be because you lived for the right things.

Financial progress is less about dramatic results and more about quiet alignment.

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HOLISTIC LIVING



Dr. Maymunah Yusuf Kadiri
MD/CEO Pinnacle Medical Services Ltd.

Your Greatest Investment Is the Life You Build Every Day

When Maggie looked in the mirror, she believed the extra weight she had gained was her greatest problem. It was only the visible sign of a life that had quietly drifted out of balance. Stress had replaced rest, convenience had replaced nourishment, and survival had replaced intentional living. Her transformation began not with a miracle diet but with one decision: to care for herself differently. That single decision gradually changed her body, restored her confidence, lifted her mood, strengthened her relationships and gave her a renewed sense of purpose.

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Her Point Of View



Chinyere Okorocho
Partner & Overall Head of Sectors
at Jackson, Etti & Edu

The "Support Role Cycle". Why So Many Brilliant Women Are Overlooked at Work

Recently, I had a conversation with a female executive that stayed with me long after our meeting ended. On paper, she was exceptional. Highly competent. Dependable. Intelligent. Hardworking. The kind of professional every organisation says it wants. Responsibilities that were often beyond her job description.

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Gender Insights



Asmau Benzie Leo (Ph.D)
ED of the Centre for Nonviolence and Gender
Advocacy in Nigeria (CENGAIN)

Nigeria in 2026: Why True Security Must Have a Woman's Face

As Nigerians step into 2026, one truth remains undeniable: insecurity in Nigeria is not gender neutral. From banditry affected communities in the West to displacement camps in the Northeast, women and girls are not merely collateral victims of conflict—they are deliberately targeted, systematically affected, and often left without access to justice.

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WITH BES



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Nigeria in 2026: Why True Security Must Have a Woman's Face

The New Year has begun and making a sense of what you want may feel overwhelming. You may be tempted to 'see how it goes' instead of setting concrete goals, but I don't recommend because what you don't measure, you can't multiply. On that note, here's a step-by-step process of setting your goals for the new year.

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Published in **The PUNCH** every Tuesday.



A Journey Through Traditional Beauty & Flavor

Inside Clay Food Shop & The Henna Place

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

Clayfoodshop

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

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

📍 @clayfoodshoplagos

: +234909 554 4990

The Henna Place

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

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

📍 @Thehennaplace

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