

# BUSINESS DAY WEEKENDER

EDITION 277 | 24, JANUARY 2026



## 5 LANDMARK EVENTS THAT SHAPED NIGERIAN FASHION INDUSTRY In 2025



### FEATURE

Why Billionaires are tilting portfolios towards private equity in 2026



### RESTAURANT

7 things that attract people to an ideal restaurant in Nigeria

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**PUBLISHED BY**

BusinessDay Media Limited  
6A George Street, off  
Mobolaji Johnson Street, Ikoyi  
01-2799100  
[www.businessday.ng](http://www.businessday.ng)

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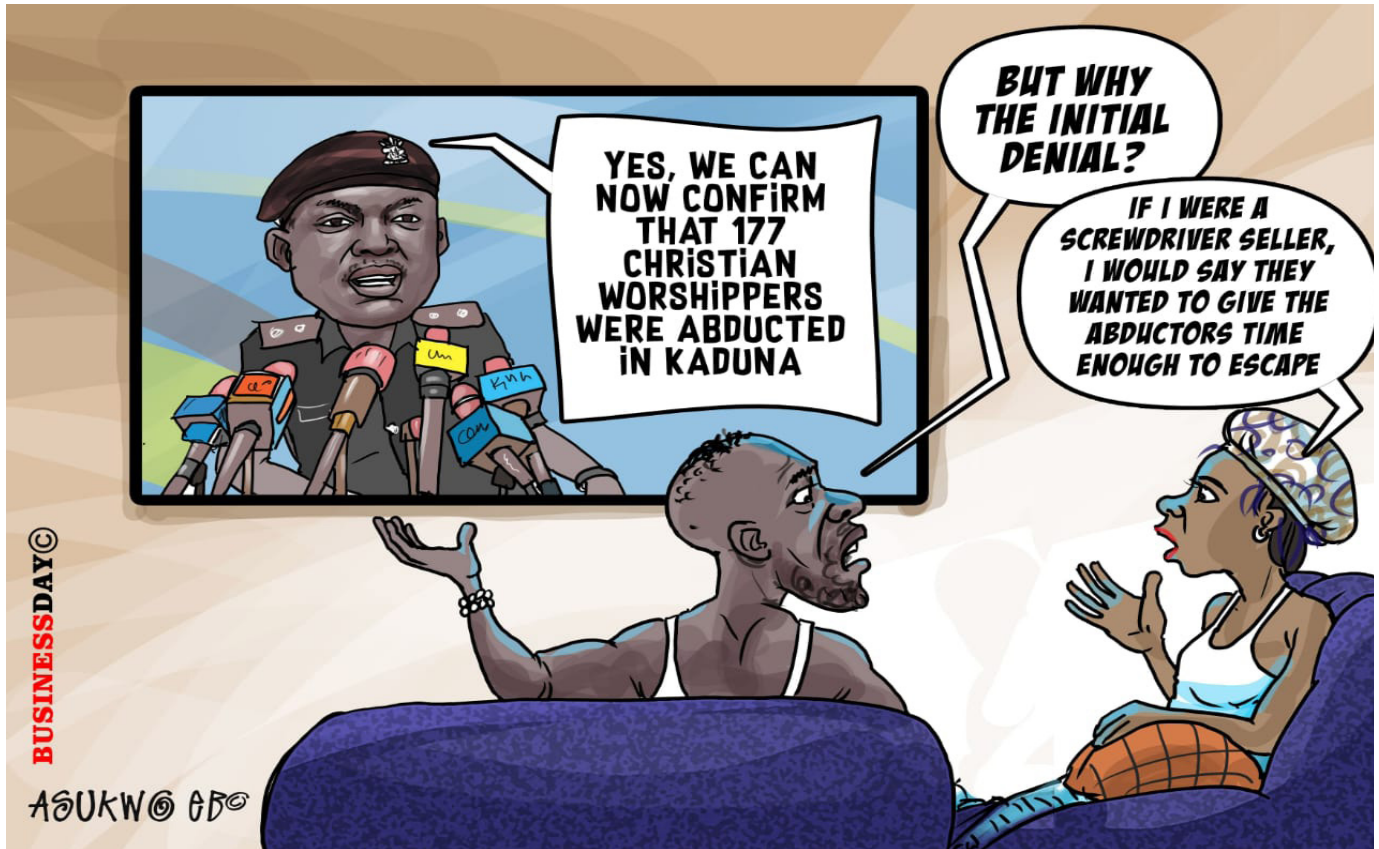




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# 5 LANDMARK EVENTS THAT SHAPED NIGERIAN FASHION INDUSTRY IN 2025

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA



In 2025, the Nigerian fashion scene was shaped by a mix of landmark anniversaries, high-profile cultural moments, and a push toward wearable, sustainable, and culturally rich designs.

Key events included the 15th anniversary of Lagos Fashion Week and GTCO Fashion Weekend 2025, amongst others which set a new standard for functionality, and the massive, culturally driven Veekee James 30th birthday celebration.

## Here are 5 events that shaped Nigeria's fashion scene in 2025:

### 1. Lagos Fashion Week 2025 (LagosFW)

Marking its 15th anniversary, this edition was a defining moment that prioritized wearability, culture, and comfort, moving away from purely avant-garde, impractical runway looks. It reinforced Lagos as a major global fashion capital, featuring designers who blended modern, minimalist silhouettes with traditional elements, highlighting the industry's growth in both creativity and commerce.

LagosFW is a fashion platform that drives the Nigerian and ultimately, the African fashion industry; by bringing

together buyers, consumers and the media to view the current collections of designers at a four (4) day event in the fashion capital of Lagos, Nigeria.

As one of the leading fashion events on the African fashion calendar, LagosFW leads the way with initiatives that support, strengthens and develop the fashion industry. Beyond the runway, the annual event provides a physical platform that's gradually repositioning fashion as a useful tool for commerce and creativity in Nigeria.

The activities include runway Shows and presentations, fashion focus Africa, fashion business series, green access, visual makers fellowship and LagosFW showrooms.

### 2. GTCO Fashion Weekend 2025

As a major event in the Nigerian fashion calendar, the 8th edition of the GTCO Fashion Weekend held in November 2025, continued to bridge the gap between local designers and the global market.

The event highlighted top designers, such as Ninie and May Africa, promoting "shoppertainment" and connecting consumers with designers through runway shows and exhibitions.



Lagos took its rightful place on the global fashion map as the 8th edition of the GTCO Fashion Weekend.

The two-day event was held from November 8 till November 9, 2025 and featured fashionistas, models and industry experts from around the world.

This year's edition also featured a spectacular mix of runway shows, retail exhibitions, masterclasses and a vibrant streetwear hub.

Since its debut in 2016, the Guaranty Trust Fashion Weekend, an initiative of GTCO, has evolved from a stylish experiment into a powerhouse platform that spotlights the brilliance of African designers and connects small businesses to the global marketplace.

The event is held annually pulling a crowd of 250,000 attendees from fashion enthusiasts and aficionados, fashion business owners and retailers and those simply interested in all African fashion has to offer.

### 3. Africa Fashion Week Nigeria (AFWN) x MBN Fest 2025

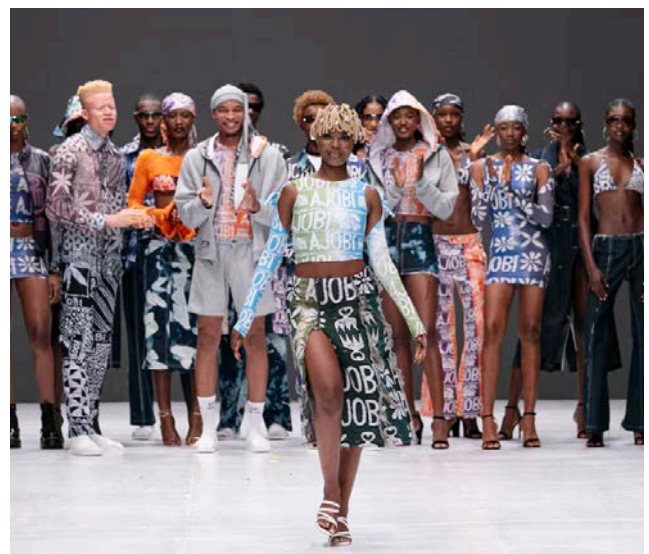
This event, supported by Sterling Bank, merged fashion with the "Made By Nigerians" festival, highlighting the connection between the creative economy and industrial growth. It reinforced a push toward supporting local garment manufacturing, entrepreneurship, and sustainable, ethical production methods.

The two-day event brought together some of Africa's leading designers alongside more than 250 emerging fashion and trade entrepreneurs, creating a high-impact platform for Nigerian brands to showcase their creations, engage local and international audiences, and expand their commercial reach.

The AFWN x MBN Fest 2025 took place at a critical moment for Nigeria's creative economy, a sector estimated to be worth about \$4.7 billion, with fashion ranked among its fastest-growing segments.

The fair spotlighted emerging designers with three to seven years of industry experience, boosting their visibility and strengthening pathways to global market entry. This year's edition also doubled as a Made by Nigerians-powered retail fair, enabling entrepreneurs to sell directly to thousands of visitors while building long-term brand recognition.

For Made by Nigerians, the collaboration advances its mission to equip Nigerian creators with access to markets, tools, and visibility needed to achieve sustainable growth. As a platform dedicated to local production and expanding commercial pathways for homegrown brands, MBN continues to serve as a springboard for designers and small businesses ready to scale.



#### 4. Veekee James' 30th Birthday Celebration

Described as a "10-Day Fashion Thesis," this event series significantly influenced the fashion landscape, with the celebrity designer's meticulously styled outfits driving intense social media engagement, debates, and trends. It showcased the power of influencer-driven fashion and couture-level, occasion-wear, shaping popular styles for wedding and party guests.

In the days leading up to the Nigerian designer's birthday, she wowed fans with a fashionable countdown, wearing delectable outfits by various designers. On the big night, her guests, comprising actors, fashion designers, content creators, as well as friends and well-wishers, arrived in full evening wear splendour. Black and gold dominated the colour palette, and their styling choices were nothing short of sartorial perfection. Let's take a look at the wonderful style on display at Veekee James' 30th



birthday!

#### 5. The 2025 AMVCA (Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards) Fashion

The AMVCA 2025, particularly the Cultural Day, served as a major, high-profile event for showcasing traditional, and re-imagined Nigerian fashion. It acted as a "Met Gala" for the Nigerian industry, driving, massive social media traffic and setting the tone for red-carpet, and occasion, wear for the year.

##### Key Trends Shaping These

**Events Include:** Cultural Revival: A major comeback of classic Nigerian fabrics and styles, including Aso Oke, Adire, and lace, reimagined with Gen Z, modern, and, , , , , twists. Sustainability & Ethics: A shift away from fast fashion, with a stronger, focus, on eco-friendly materials and, , ethical production.

**Wearability:** A, move toward, , functional, yet, sophisticated, designs, that can be worn beyond the runway.

**Global Recognition:** Increased, attention, from the international, fashion, industry, validating, Nigerian, designs, as globally competitive.



# WHY BILLIONAIRES ARE TILTING PORTFOLIOS TOWARDS PRIVATE EQUITY IN 2026

CHISOM MICHAEL



**B**illionaires are preparing for 2026 with intent rather than caution. While conflict between states, price pressures in some economies, and uneven growth continue to shape markets, the world's wealth holders are not stepping back. Instead, they are shifting capital with a clear focus on control, access, and returns.

This picture emerges from the UBS Billionaire Survey 2025, which tracks how billionaires expect to change portfolio exposure in the year ahead. The findings show where capital is moving, where it is staying, and where it is slowly leaving.

At the centre of these plans is private equity. According to the survey, 49 percent of respondents plan to increase exposure to private equity through direct investments. A further 37 percent expect to raise allocations through private equity funds or funds of funds. Fewer than one in five plan to reduce direct exposure.

For many billionaires, private equity offers influence over assets, access to companies before public listing, and routes to value creation outside stock exchanges. This explains why private markets continue to attract capital even as uncertainty remains across regions.

Private debt is also gaining attention. One-third of billionaires plan to increase exposure, while 45% expect to keep allocations unchanged. Only 22% plan to reduce exposure. With bank lending conditions tighter in many countries, private credit is filling gaps in funding while offering income streams to investors.

Equities remain central to billionaire portfolios. In developed markets, 43 percent plan to increase exposure, 50 percent expect no change, and only seven percent plan a reduction.

In emerging markets, 42 percent plan to increase exposure, while 56 percent plan to maintain current levels. Just two percent expect to reduce exposure.

The figures suggest confidence in company earnings and market participation, even as volatility persists. The low share of investors planning to cut emerging market equity exposure points to belief in population growth, urban expansion, and consumption trends across Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Hedge funds also feature strongly in 2026 plans. The survey shows that 43 percent of billionaires intend to increase exposure, while 39 percent will keep allocations the same. Hedge funds offer strategies that can respond to price movements, rate changes, and currency shifts. For many investors, they serve as tools for balance rather than speculation.

Other asset classes show stability rather than change. Infrastructure stands out, with 60 percent planning to maintain exposure and 35 percent planning an increase.

Only five percent expect to reduce exposure. This reflects steady interest in assets linked to transport, energy, and utilities, which often generate cash flows over time.

Real estate shows a similar pattern. One-third of respondents plan to increase exposure, while 45 percent expect no change. Gold and precious metals also see limited movement, with 64 percent planning to keep allocations unchanged and 32 percent planning an increase.

Fixed income attracts a cautious approach. In developed markets, 26 percent plan to increase exposure, while 52 percent expect to maintain levels. In emerging markets, just 19 percent plan an increase, with two-thirds planning no change. These figures suggest income remains relevant, but not dominant.

Cash positions are also set to remain steady. Only 19 percent of billionaires plan to increase cash or cash equivalent holdings, while 64 percent expect no change. This points to a preference for deployment over waiting.

At the lower end of interest are commodities, art, and antiques. Commodities see just 10 percent planning an increase, while art and antiques attract 27 percent. For most billionaires, these assets play a limited role in portfolio planning for 2026.

Taken together, the survey shows a clear message. Billionaires are not withdrawing. They are allocating capital with purpose, favouring assets that offer access, structure, and participation in growth. As 2026 approaches, the flow of money suggests engagement rather than retreat.

# 7 THINGS THAT ATTRACT PEOPLE TO AN IDEAL RESTAURANT IN NIGERIA

ESTHER EMOEKPERE



**R**unning a successful restaurant in Nigeria goes beyond good food. Diners are increasingly informed, selective, and willing to spend where they feel value is clear.

As competition grows across major cities and emerging food hubs, restaurants are under more scrutiny than ever. Customers compare experiences, read reviews, and rely on personal recommendations before deciding where to eat. What attracts diners today is often a combination of practical considerations and how well a restaurant understands its audience. These seven factors consistently shape what people consider an ideal restaurant in Nigeria.

## Consistent food quality

Food quality remains the strongest reason people return to a restaurant. Diners expect meals to taste the same every time they visit, regardless of the day or how busy the restaurant is. This consistency builds trust and signals that the kitchen operates with clear standards rather than improvisation. In Nigeria, where customers often recommend restaurants through word of mouth and social media, one disappointing meal can quickly affect perception. Portion size also matters. Customers want to feel the price paid reflects both the quantity and quality of food served, especially when they plan repeat visits.

## Cleanliness and hygiene standards

Cleanliness is non-negotiable for most Nigerian diners. This includes the dining area, restrooms, kitchen visibility, and staff appearance. A clean environment reassures customers that food is prepared safely and professionally. With greater awareness of foodborne illnesses, diners pay attention to details such as table hygiene, waste management, and how staff handle food. Restaurants that maintain visible hygiene standards tend to attract families, professionals, and group diners who prioritise safety alongside comfort.

## Fair and transparent pricing

Pricing plays a major role in dining decisions. Customers want prices that align with food quality, service delivery, and the overall experience. Hidden charges or unclear menu pricing often discourage repeat visits and create mistrust. In Nigeria's current economic climate, diners are more sensitive to value and appreciate restaurants that communicate costs clearly. Menus with visible prices, consistent billing, and reasonable mark-ups help customers feel confident about their spending.

## Good customer service

Customer service significantly shapes how people perceive a restaurant. Polite, attentive, and well-trained staff can improve even an average dining experience. Diners notice how quickly they are acknowledged, how accurately orders are taken, and how issues are handled when something goes wrong. In Nigeria, where eating out is often a social activity, staff attitude can influence whether guests relax or feel rushed. Restaurants that invest in staff training and maintain professional conduct often enjoy stronger customer loyalty.

## Comfortable and accessible location

Location affects both convenience and visibility. An ideal restaurant is easy to find, safe to access, and reasonably close to where people live or work. In busy Nigerian cities, traffic patterns, security, and parking availability play a major role in dining choices. Restaurants located in well-known commercial areas or lifestyle hubs often benefit from foot traffic. Accessibility also includes thoughtful layouts for older customers and people with mobility challenges.

## Menu variety and local relevance

A well-planned menu attracts a broader range of customers. Nigerian diners often look for familiar dishes alongside alternatives that offer variety. Including regional Nigerian meals, seasonal options, or carefully selected continental dishes allows restaurants to appeal to different tastes without losing focus. Clear menu descriptions help customers make informed choices, while occasional updates signal that the restaurant is responsive to changing preferences.

## Ambience and overall experience

Beyond food, diners are influenced by how a restaurant feels. Lighting, seating, noise levels, and music all shape the experience. In Nigeria, restaurants often double as spaces for meetings, celebrations, or informal gatherings. A space that matches its target audience encourages customers to stay longer and return. Reliable power supply, functional facilities, and a comfortable layout also contribute to a positive impression.

Together, these factors determine whether a restaurant simply attracts attention or earns long-term patronage. In a competitive dining landscape, restaurants that consistently deliver across these areas are more likely to stand out and remain relevant.

# FROM SPREADSHEETS TO COCKTAILS: ADETILEWA OWODUNNI'S HOSPITALITY REVOLUTION

ESTHER EMOEKPERE





Speaking with Esther Emoekpere, the Nostalgia Lagos Duty Manager reflects on how two decades in finance across four continents shaped his push for structure in an industry long driven by spontaneity.

When Adetilewa Owodunni moved from finance into hospitality, he brought something the sector does not always prioritise: systems. After years working in marketing and business development across London, Lagos, Dubai and the United States of America, moving between financial institutions and building strategic frameworks, he made what he calls “an evolution rather than a departure” into nightlife operations.

Running a fashion and lifestyle brand for over a decade taught him how to balance creativity with commercial discipline. A leadership programme at SAHA Africa provided technical hospitality grounding, but his conviction came from the belief that Nigeria’s hospitality sector could scale significantly if it developed the right infrastructure. Now, as Duty Manager at Nostalgia Lagos, he’s testing that thesis nightly, overseeing operations, leading teams, and ensuring service excellence across every touchpoint.

His background in life coaching has also shaped his management approach. He says it has strengthened his ability to listen, communicate clearly, and respond with empathy. In an industry built on people and guest experience, this allows him to manage staff with an understanding of individual motivations, not just roles.

### Culture as strategy

What Owodunni calls “culture-led hospitality” is more than branding. At Nostalgia Lagos, it means designing every operational touchpoint, from music programming and art curation to menu development and staff training, around local identity while maintaining internationally acceptable service standards.

“It’s about creating a space that feels distinctly Lagos; celebrating our energy, creativity, and heritage, whilst maintaining world-class service standards,” he explains. “It’s where operational excellence meets cultural expression.”

The model responds to a consumer shift he’s observed. “Nigerian guests, especially younger demographics, have moved from valuing just a night out to seeking experiences. They want spaces that reflect culture, creativity, and identity, not just food and drinks. They also expect seamless service, attention to detail, and a social-media-worthy atmosphere.”

Meeting those expectations is where his finance background becomes relevant. “Nigeria’s nightlife thrives on energy, but without structure, that energy can be chaotic. I bring structure through clear processes, team accountability, and operational discipline, whilst creativity comes through programming, ambiance, and culturally resonant experiences.”

His approach to managing peak periods reflects this dual focus. “I rely on clarity, accountability, and presence. Clear communication ensures every team member knows their role and expectations, whilst accountability keeps performance consistent. Being present on the floor allows me to lead by example, resolve challenges in real time, and maintain energy.”

## The structural gaps

For someone barely a year into hospitality, Owodunni is remarkably direct about the sector’s weaknesses. “One of the main challenges is the lack of standardised systems and structured operations. Many businesses rely heavily on ad hoc processes, which makes scaling difficult and affects service consistency.”

His time across four continents informs this view. The UK emphasised structure and process, “the kind of systems that ensure consistency and accountability.” Dubai exposed him to “a premium, detail oriented service culture, where excellence is expected and experience is central to value.” The United States ingrained in him the importance of customer-centric thinking, operational efficiency, and service as a differentiator rather than an afterthought. Lagos highlighted “the power of energy, relationships, and cultural connection in shaping consumer loyalty.”

The challenge is integrating these perspectives without diluting what makes Nigerian hospitality distinctive. “Even though my hospitality career began in Nigeria, it has been informed by global business environments where service, precision, and experience are critical to success.”

The talent gap is particularly urgent. “We need hospitality academies to introduce more training programmes, especially for skilled staff, to raise service standards across the industry.” His solution pairs formal education with in house mentorship, “practical, on the floor experience that ensures teams are skilled, culturally aware, and ready to deliver consistently high quality service.”

If he could influence sector wide reforms, his agenda is specific: standardised operational guidelines, structured talent development, clearer regulatory frameworks around safety and licensing, and infrastructure improvements. “These measures would professionalise the sector, improve service quality, and make hospitality more sustainable and economically impactful.”

## Data over gut feeling

What is unusual about Owodunni, at least in Nigerian nightlife, is his insistence on data. “Information on customer behaviour, digital engagement, and spending patterns is critical. It informs everything from menu design and promotions to event programming and guest experience strategies. In today’s market, intuition alone is not enough.”

This is not about replacing creativity with analytics. It is about making better decisions. “For nightlife businesses in Nigeria to be commercially viable and sustainable, they need operational discipline, strong brand identity, and guest focused experiences. Revenue must be managed strategically through pricing, promotions, and partnerships, whilst costs are tightly controlled.”

Running a fashion brand taught him some of this. “Through fashion, I had already been engaging with consumer behaviour, branding, and community building. Moving into hospitality allowed me to evolve these skills into shaping experiences, leading teams, and building sustainable lifestyle brands.”

At Nostalgia Lagos, that thinking shapes everything. “Every experience we design, whether it’s a theme night, a menu, or an event, is rooted in authenticity, storytelling, and how people connect with the city’s lifestyle. We also draw on global trends, guest feedback, and operational insights to ensure that creativity does not compromise service quality.”

## Where this goes

Owodunni’s prediction for Nigerian nightlife involves “experience driven concepts, technology integration, and culture led programming.” Guests want immersive events that combine music, art, cuisine, and lifestyle in ways that feel both unique and shareable. Digital engagement, ticketing, social media amplification, will matter more, not less.

But he keeps returning to the same concern. “What excites me most is the opportunities to create experiences that resonate globally whilst staying authentically Nigerian. What concerns me most is the need for structured systems, trained talent, and reliable infrastructure. Without these, even the most creative concepts can struggle to scale or deliver consistently.”

It is the central tension in his work: how do you professionalise an industry without homogenising it? How do you build systems that enable spontaneity rather than suffocate it? Can Nigerian hospitality compete globally on something other than novelty value?

“In a city like Lagos, where nightlife is both an economic driver and a cultural force, I saw an opportunity to contribute beyond spreadsheets and campaigns, to help shape experiences, lead teams, and build sustainable lifestyle brands.”

Whether the rest of the sector is ready for that conversation is another question entirely. But based on what is happening at venues like Nostalgia Lagos, some operators have already started answering it.

# MCEVA TEMOFE: CHAMPIONING AFRICA'S GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT THROUGH STRATEGIC ECONOMIC INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS

IFEOMA OKEKE-KORIEOCHA





McEva Temofe is a renowned leader in Africa's economic development landscape. As the founder and convener of the African Economic Global Convergence (AEGC), he has been instrumental in shaping the continent's

economic future through innovative solutions and strategic partnerships. With a career marked by dedication and expertise, Temofe's work continues to inspire and drive progress across Africa.

In a continent teeming with untapped potential, one leader is harnessing the power of collaboration and innovation to drive Africa's growth and development. McEva Temofe is the mastermind behind the African Economic Global Convergence (AEGC), a pioneering organisation that is redefining the future of Africa.

With a career spanning over 18 years, Temofe has established himself as a champion of African development, leveraging his expertise in public administration, international diplomacy, and investment facilitation to create a brighter future for the continent.

As the founder and convener of the AEGC, Temofe has built a reputation for bringing together African governments, international organizations, private investors, and the African diaspora to shape economic, social, and security outcomes.

The organisation's annual summit has become a hallmark event, hosting global leaders, including sitting and former presidents, ambassadors, UN agencies, development banks, and top-tier business executives.

"The AEGC is more than just a forum; it's a platform for Africa's growth, a catalyst for change, and a beacon of hope for a better tomorrow. We bring together the best minds, the brightest ideas, and the most influential leaders to shape the future of Africa and create a more prosperous and peaceful continent", Temofe explained.

Temofe's work with the AEGC has been instrumental in promoting investment, advancing sustainable peace, expanding economic opportunities, and accelerating progress in Africa. His organization's upcoming summit in the Republic of Malta in 2026 promises to be a landmark event, bringing together Africa's brightest minds and global partners to envision bold new pathways for the continent's progress.

"We are excited about the upcoming summit in Malta, and we believe it will be a game-changer for Africa's development. We will be discussing innovative ideas, sharing best practices, and forging partnerships that will drive Africa's growth and development. We invite everyone who shares our vision for a prosperous Africa to join us and be part of this journey", he added.

As a serial entrepreneur, Temofe has also made significant contributions to various industries, including real estate, technology, investments, hospitality, and humanitarian services. Through his company, Purple Hundred Group, he has created multiple jobs and empowered thousands of youths and SMEs across Nigeria and neighboring countries through business development and grant facilitation.

"Entrepreneurship is not just about making money; it's about creating value, solving problems, and making a difference in people's lives," Temofe noted, adding, "I am proud of what we have achieved so far, and I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead. We will continue to innovate, to invest, and to empower others to create a better future for Africa."

His commitment to Africa's development is evident in his work as a policy consultant and adviser to the governments of Nigeria and Kenya. He has advised on diaspora engagement, education, youth development policy, public-private partnerships, and socio-economic impact initiatives, contributing to national development strategies and promoting sustainable economic growth.

"Africa's development is not just a moral imperative; it's an economic necessity. We need to invest in our people, in our infrastructure, and in our institutions. We need to create opportunities for our youth, support our entrepreneurs, and promote sustainable economic growth. That's the only way we can create a brighter future for Africa", he stressed.

As the AEGC continues to grow and make a bigger impact, Temofe remains at the forefront, driving the organisation's mission to shape Africa's economic, social, and security outcomes. His vision for a prosperous Africa is inspiring, and his work is a testament to the power of dedication and leadership.

"The future of Africa is bright, and I am confident that together, we can create a more prosperous, peaceful, and sustainable future for all Africans. We have the talent, the resources, and the determination. Let's work together to unlock Africa's potential and create a better tomorrow for all", he noted further.

# BEYOND THE BOOKS: OMOLADE SHITTU'S STRATEGIC ROADMAP TO A FIRST-CLASS DEGREE

CHARLES OGWO





**D**riven by an unwavering commitment to excellence, Omolade Shittu has unveiled the discipline, strategies, and mindset that earned her a coveted first-class degree at the just concluded University of Lagos 56th convocation.

According to Omolade, who is passionate about personal finance and effective communication, graduating with first-class honours was not by accident, she had strategically positioned herself to excel right from her 100-level.

"I started with a 5.0 GPA and I never dropped from first-class since my first year.

"I didn't just want to be a first-class honours holder but a first-class individual. I wanted to be excellence personified, an all-rounder," she said.

To achieve her set goal, Omolade adopted several techniques amongst which are Feynman Technique, and Ali Abdal, a YouTuber to optimise her learning outcomes.

"I used the Feynman Technique or Active Recall. It involves testing yourself on the material by actively recalling it, rather than just passively re-reading notes. I would also say that I try to understand my course as a whole before the mid-semester.

"Besides, I was, and still am, an ardent follower of Ali Abdal, a YouTuber who shares study techniques," she emphasised.

Her typical day on campus was early Morning Prayer and Bible study which held from 4:00 to 5:00 am, Covenant Hour of Prayer (CHOP) at SUB frontage from 6:00 to 7:00 am, fellowship meetings, 7:00 to 7:30 am, and then, classes or library time.

Her post-lecture activities include fellowship, library, or hostel chill time

"I read daily, if it's not my school book, it's my Bible or a self-help book or a faith-based book," she noted.

Omolade's success trajectory also includes mentorship, resilience and grit gotten from many Godly personalities around her. She was always in contact with her role models and leaders, especially when she felt she needed guidance.

"I talked to my role models and leaders and got counselled. They also referred me back to God. I got my answers from the Word and that settled it.

One of them was that He called me to be a light of the Word not just the light of the fellowship I served in and that made me extend my influence beyond my fellowship. Matt. 5:14-

16.

"When I thought I was chasing first class He reminded me that He instructed me to be the head and not the tail. Deut. 28:13. When I started having Bs and had a C, God reminded me to boast in my weakness so that His strength would be seen through me. 2 Cor. 12:9. I have quite a few scriptures I anchored my faith on. The main one is Ex. 23:25.

Her success story, however, did not come without some challenges as it is common to mankind. Omolade revealed that her greatest challenge while on campus was how to balance her extracurricular activities and her academics.

"I didn't want any expression of myself to suffer because of another. Spiritually, intellectually, academically, financially, and in my role as a leader. I thank God He helped me achieve that," she said with a smile.

As an excellent individual, Omolade would like to walk the talk. Moreover, she said because God told her that she should prosper in whatever I do; she aspired for a first-class degree because she believes in pushing herself to excellence.

According to Omolade, who graduated from the faculty of Communication and Media Studies, with access to AI tools, online resources, and mentorship from seniors, students can optimise their learning. Besides, the increasing competition for international opportunities means students are pushing themselves harder to stand out.

Hence, in her views, many students are getting their first-class feats on merit, and not that lecturers' are giving away marks. She shared how her lectures incredible supported her, which really drove her first-class aspiration.

"Sam Ejiwunmi sparked a competitive fire in us, challenging us to break the department's record, and backed it up with monetary incentives for top students.

"Vincent Obia was more than a lecturer, he mentored me, led by example, and stayed invested in my progress, and Sunday Oloruntola, the dean of faculty of Communication and Media Studies, gave me confidence that excellence would always be valued, regardless of numbers. Their encouragement and belief in me made a huge difference," she narrated.

Moreover, Omolade disclosed that because there are a lot of people who were looking up to her, she wanted to show them that God is interested in His children being excellent at all that they do.

Going spiritual, she said, "That we pursue academic excellence and career breakthroughs doesn't make us worldly, it rather shows the world the beauty of the God we serve."

She looks forward to pursuing her master's in finance abroad, any moment after her NYSC.

# 10 OLDEST LIBRARIES IN THE WORLD

ONUH NJIDEKA

Since the advent of writing, literate societies have created institutions dedicated to collecting and safeguarding knowledge. Early record rooms housed extensive materials on trade, governance and foreign relations. Long before the internet, libraries served as vital centres of learning, profoundly influencing the course of civilisation. Many of the earliest records were inscribed on clay tablets, which have survived in far greater numbers than texts written on papyrus or leather. For historians, these tablets are invaluable, offering rare and detailed insights into the ancient world.

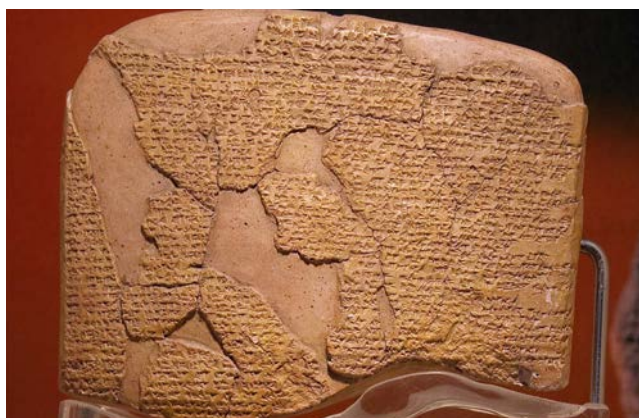
Many of the world's earliest archives and libraries were destroyed thousands of years ago, leaving behind only fragments of the knowledge they once contained. Others survive today as ruins, silent reminders of their former grandeur, while a rare few have endured the centuries largely intact.

## Here are ten oldest libraries in the world

### Bogazköy Archive – Hittite Empire

The Boğazköy Archive, also known as the Hattusa Archive, is one of the most significant surviving records of the Hittite Empire (c. 1600–1200 BCE). Discovered at Hattusa in modern-day Turkey, the Hittite capital, the archive consists of over 30,000 clay tablets and fragments written in cuneiform.

The tablets cover laws, treaties, religious texts and diplomatic correspondence, including the famous peace treaty between the Hittites and Egypt. Written in several languages, they reflect the empire's wide political and cultural reach. Many tablets survived because fires that destroyed the city baked the clay, preserving the records. For historians, the archive offers rare insight into Bronze Age governance, diplomacy and belief systems.



### Library of Ashurbanipal – Assyrian Empire

The Library of Ashurbanipal was one of the ancient world's most important centres of knowledge, created in the 7th century BCE by King Ashurbanipal

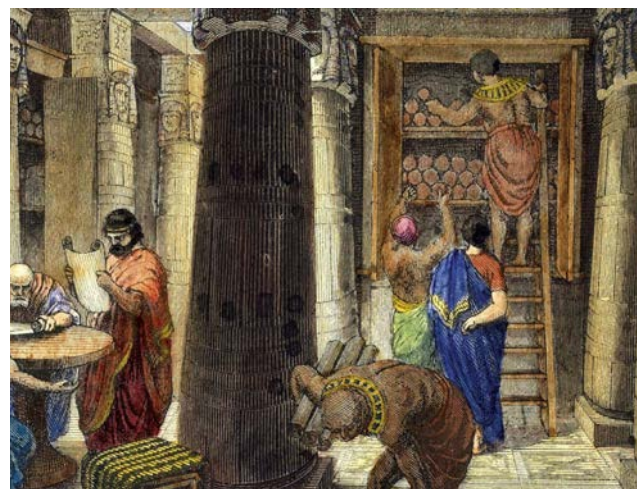


of the Assyrian Empire. Located in Nineveh, it housed thousands of clay tablets written in cuneiform.

The collection included royal records, scientific texts, omens, prayers and literary works such as the Epic of Gilgamesh. Many tablets survived after the destruction of Nineveh in 612 BCE, as fires baked the clay, preserving the texts. Today, the library provides invaluable insight into Assyrian administration, religion and intellectual life.

### Library of Alexandria

The Library of Alexandria in Egypt was the most famous centre of learning in the ancient world. Built during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, the complex was opened between 286 to 285 BC, it sought to collect all known knowledge, housing hundreds of thousands of scrolls on subjects ranging from science and medicine to philosophy and literature. Though its destruction remains debated, the library became a lasting symbol of humanity's pursuit of knowledge and the tragic loss of ancient learning.



## Hadrian's Library – Greece

Hadrian's Library in Athens, Greece, was built by Emperor Hadrian, One of the greatest and most well known Roman emperors in the 2nd century AD. It served as a major centre for learning, housing scrolls, lecture halls, and reading rooms, and remains an important archaeological site showcasing Roman architecture and scholarly culture.

The building was seriously damaged during Sack of Athens in 267 AD, but repaired in the following centuries. The library would eventually fall into disrepair and become the ruin seen today.



## Library of Celsus – Turkey

The beautiful ruins of the library of Celsus can be found in the ancient city of Ephesus, now part of Selçuk, Turkey. was built in the 2nd century AD to honor the Roman senator Tiberius Celsus Polemaeanus, Commissioned in 110 AD by consul Gaius Julius Aquila it was the third largest library in the Roman Empire and is one of a very few buildings of its kind that has survived from antiquity.

The building was heavily damaged by a fire in 262 AD, though it is unclear if that resulted from natural causes or of a Gothic invasion. The facade stood proudly until earthquakes in the 10th and 11th centuries left it in a ruinous state as well. It once held thousands of scrolls and served as a monumental symbol of knowledge and Roman architectural grandeur. Today, its striking façade remains a popular historical landmark.



## Saint Catherine's Monastery in Egypt

Saint Catherine's Monastery in Egypt, founded in the 6th century AD at the foot of Mount Sinai, the longest continuously inhabited Christian monastery in the world and one of the world's oldest working libraries. It houses a priceless collection of ancient manuscripts and religious texts, preserving centuries of Christian scholarship and heritage such as the 4th century 'Codex Sinaiticus



## University of al-Qarawiyyin – Morocco

The University of al-Qarawiyyin in Fez, Morocco, accommodating 22,000 worshippers It is also the centre of an early medieval University and was founded in 859 AD, and is considered the world's oldest continuously operating university. Its library holds a vast collection of ancient manuscripts, making it a historic centre of Islamic learning.



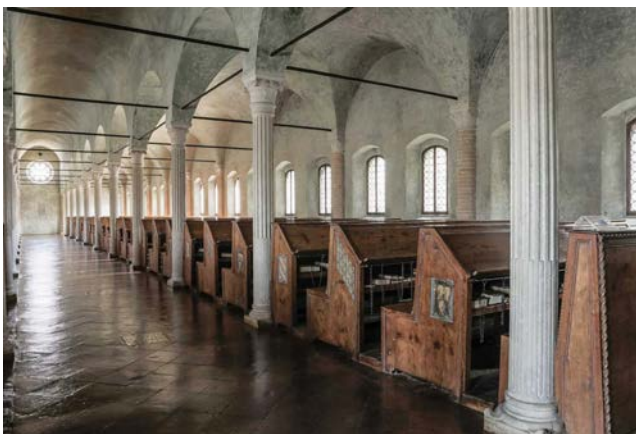


### **Mogao Grottoes or Cave of 'The Thousand Budhas' – China**

The Mogao Grottoes, also known as the Cave of a Thousand Buddhas, in China date back to the 4th century AD. In the early 20th century a 'library cave' was discovered which housed manuscripts from the 5th until the 11th centuries. This network of caves houses thousands of manuscripts, murals, and Buddhist texts written in a large variety of languages, making it a priceless repository of religious, cultural, and historical knowledge along the Silk Road.

### **Malatestiana Library – Italy**

The Malatestiana Library in Cesena, Italy, built in the 15th century, is one of Europe's earliest public libraries commissioned Malatesta Novello . It preserves a vast collection of manuscripts and early printed books and remains a remarkable example of Renaissance architecture and knowledge preservation. Over 400,000 books being kept at the historic library



### **Bodleian Library – United Kingdom**

The Bodleian Library in Oxford, United Kingdom, named after Sir Thomas Bodley was founded in 1602. It is the main research library of Oxford and one of the oldest libraries in Europe. It houses millions of books, manuscripts, and historical documents, serving as a major centre for research, scholarship, and the preservation of knowledge.



# UNLOCKING AGRIBUSINESS: THE PARADISE DYNAMIC MODEL FOR RURAL AND URBAN WEALTH CREATION



**N**igeria's agribusiness sector remains one of the country's most critical yet underdeveloped economic pillars, employing millions while offering untapped opportunities across crops, livestock, processing and technology.

As the country looks to reduce its reliance on oil and food imports, private sector players are stepping in to bridge gaps in skills, access and trust.

One such effort is coming from Paradise Dynamic Farms, an agribusiness company

that says it is focused on empowerment, training and value creation across Nigeria's food system.

Agribusiness is widely seen as a pathway to economic diversification, offering jobs, export revenue and value addition.

Despite these advantages, challenges remain. Weak links between production and consumption, limited access to training, and poor market coordination continue to restrict growth.



In return, beneficiaries gain access to training and, in some cases, farm inputs such as livestock.

**From Doubt to Proof**  
At the event, Chiamaka Umegwu emerged as the first prize winner, receiving N1 million and a one-year supply of farm produce. Second and third prize winners, Abayomi Omolofe and Rashidat Monisola, received N500,000 and N250,000, alongside produce supplies for six and three months respectively.

### Training, Trust and Grassroots Empowerment

Paradise Dynamic Farms says it designed its empowerment programme to respond to these gaps.

Speaking at a recent prize-giving event, Gloria Robson, Brand Director said the company combines agricultural training with technology and financial literacy to help participants build sustainable livelihoods.

According to Robson, the programme focuses on families and targets long-term self-reliance rather than short-term aid. Training includes agribusiness skills, technology such as web development and digital tools, and financial literacy to help participants manage and grow income.

The programme operates on a low entry cost, with participants purchasing tickets valued at N1,000.

Umegwu said she initially doubted the programme but later became convinced after receiving her prize. “I only bought a N1,000 ticket and did not expect to win,” she said.

### Closing the Value Chain Gap

Also speaking at the event, Abraham Ofokor, Vice Chairman said one of Nigeria’s biggest agribusiness problems is the weak middle layer between producers and consumers.

He said Paradise Dynamic Farms is experimenting with advance sales and brand ambassadors to reduce price volatility and losses.

As Nigeria’s population grows and demand for food rises, initiatives focused on agribusiness investment, agri-tech, and market access are increasingly viewed as essential to sustainable growth.

# ASIAN COUNTRIES OFFERING E-VISA ACCESS TO NIGERIAN PASSPORT HOLDERS

CHISOM MICHAEL



Several Asian countries have adjusted their visa processes to allow Nigerian passport holders to apply electronically. The move reduces in-person visits to embassies and shifts most stages of the application online. For many travellers, this change affects how quickly travel plans move from intention to action.

While e-visa systems simplify access, Nigerian applicants are advised to confirm requirements through official immigration platforms before applying. Visa rules, supporting documents and eligibility conditions may change without notice.

**Below are 7 Asian destinations where Nigerians can access e-visa options**

## 1. South Korea

South Korea provides an e-visa route for Nigerians, but the process still involves physical interaction. Applicants complete the application online, then submit supporting documents at a Visa Application Centre operated by VFS.

Documents such as passports, application forms and supporting evidence must be presented in hard copy. The e-visa platform handles registration and tracking, while document verification remains offline.

This structure places emphasis on compliance with documentation, as incomplete submissions can affect comes.

## 2. Singapore

Singapore does not operate a direct self-service e-visa platform for Nigerians. Instead, it uses a referral-based system.

Nigerian applicants must apply through one of three channels: a Singapore citizen, a permanent resident, or a licensed visa agent approved by Singapore's Immigration and Checkpoints Authority.

Applications are submitted electronically by the sponsor or agent. The applicant does not apply independently. This system relies on third-party initiation rather than personal access to an e-visa portal.

## 3. Malaysia

Malaysia grants Nigerians access to its e-visa programme for tourism, business and social visits.

The process is completed online from start to finish. Applicants fill out forms, upload documents and receive decisions electronically. No embassy visit is required at the submission stage.

Required documents usually include passport data, travel details and supporting information based on the visit category. Approved visas are issued electronically.

## 4. Thailand

Thailand allows Nigerians to apply for an e-visa for tourism and other approved purposes.

In addition to standard documents, applicants must submit a police character certificate and a report from the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA). These documents form part of the eligibility assessment.

Applications are submitted online through Thailand's official e-visa platform. Decisions are communicated electronically, but compliance with documentation remains central.

## 5. Philippines

The Philippines offers an e-visa option for Nigerians seeking short stays for tourism or business.

The system enables online submission of applications and supporting documents. It removes the need for repeated embassy visits during the application phase.

Applicants are expected to provide proof related to travel purpose, identity and intent to return. The e-visa supports short-term entry rather than long-term residence.

## 6. Hong Kong

Nigerian travellers can apply for entry to Hong Kong through an online visa application or a pre-arrival registration, depending on travel purpose and length of stay.

The process requires detailed documentation. Applicants may need to provide pictorial records of previous travel history, alongside financial and personal records.

All submissions are completed online. Approval outcomes depend on documentation and travel profile rather than the application channel alone.

## 7. Indonesia

Indonesia allows Nigerians to apply for visas through its e-visa platform for tourism, business and other approved categories.

The application process involves online form completion and digital document upload. Compared to several other destinations, documentation requirements are limited to core travel and identity records.

Approved visas are issued electronically, allowing applicants to proceed without embassy visits.

# CREATIVES, EVENT PROFESSIONALS MOVE TO FOSTER NIGERIA'S OLD SKOOL CULTURE .....

## holds 'OWAMBE programme

CHISOM MICHAEL



Industry stakeholders under the auspices of the Association of Professional Party Organisers and Event Managers of Nigeria (APPOEMN) have perfected plans to pay homage to the vibrant, timeless, and colourful heritage of Nigeria's classic party era.

This step will be achieved during its iconic annual celebration, OWAMBE 5.0 event, to be held in Lagos, which will bring together top event professionals, vendors, creatives, and industry stakeholders for an unforgettable night of culture, networking, and entertainment.

According to the organisers, the fifth edition of the event, scheduled for the 3rd of February, 2026, with the theme 'Nigeria Old Skool Concept - The 1940's REVIVAL' will pay homage to the vibrant, timeless, and colourful heritage of Nigeria's classic party era. From vintage fashion to evergreen music and the energetic social vibes that define our culture.

Speaking on the upcoming edition, Ayiri Oladunmoye, president of APPOEMN, said that OWAMBE has established itself as one of the most anticipated gatherings

within the Nigerian event landscape, and the 5.0 edition promises to be the biggest yet.

Oladunmoye said that to the association, OWAMBE is more than just a party; it is its own way of thanksgiving and ushering in the new year.

According to Oladunmoye, the event is a platform to celebrate excellence, strengthen professional networks, appreciate talents, and promote the values that keep the Nigerian event industry thriving.

“OWAMBE 5.0 is our way of honouring the spirit of collaboration and creativity that drives the event industry. This year’s theme brings back the elegance and nostalgia of the old skool era while showcasing modern innovation, professionalism, and unity within our community,” Oladunmoye said.

Segun Inanwolay, event director of APPOEMN, said that activities of the event would include recognition of industry contributors, premium networking opportunities and exclusive entertainment curated for event professionals.

“Expectations from the event will include Red Carpet Old Skool Fashion Parade. High-energy performances and live band sessions,” Inanwolay said.

He further said that attendees are encouraged to embrace the theme by appearing in their best Old Skool-inspired

outfits. The event promises unforgettable visuals, music, food, and ambience befitting the golden eras of Nigerian celebrations.

Sakirat Bello, the public relations director, while acknowledging the contribution of APPOEMN as the umbrella body of the event industry in Nigeria, said that the Owambe event has consistently attracted high-level participation from planners, decorators, caterers, vendors, media partners, hospitality brands, and corporate supporters. It is a space where partnerships are built, creativity is celebrated, emerging talents are discovered, and Industry visibility is amplified.

Bello said that Owambe 5.0 will once again reaffirm APPOEMN’s commitment to promoting standards, unity, and innovation in Nigeria’s event management space, adding that registration is currently open to members and non-members as well as partnership and sponsorship opportunities.

She reaffirmed that the Association of Professional Party Organisers and Event Managers of Nigeria (APPOEMN) is a leading body dedicated to promoting excellence, professionalism, and ethical standards within the Nigerian event industry, noting that APPOEMN empowers members through training, networking, advocacy, and industry support.

# HOW 27% YOUNG NIGERIANS ARE DENIED UNIVERSITY EDUCATION BY POVERTY

CHARLES OGWO



**F**or many young Nigerians, the dream of a university education ends not in failure, but in lack of funds. Brilliant students with strong results are forced to abandon their academic ambitions as household incomes collapse under rising living costs.

Today, poverty denies 27 percent of Nigerian youth the chance to attend university, turning education from a right into a privilege for the few who can afford it.

According to data from UNICEF, the World Bank, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), NBS, NUC and several other national data sources available today show that, out of 100 children born in Nigeria, about 20 never enter school at all.

Of the remaining 80 who enter primary school, only about 56 complete primary education. That means 20 do not enter primary school, and an additional 25 will drop out of primary before they get to primary 6.

And of those who complete primary school, only about 45 percent will go on to complete junior or secondary school. From that point, only about 39 will eventually finish SS3. And at that point, only 12 gain access to tertiary education.

According to Orondaam Otto, the founder of Slum2school Africa, "This is where the greatest loss happens, because 27 capable and passionate young Nigerians, are blocked by limited capacity.

"They're blocked by high tuition costs, catchment area policies; and out of those 12 who eventually get into the university, just about eight make it out of university."

Otto emphasised the concomitant implication is that conservatively, just 90 percent of Nigerian children would pass through the education system, but never get the full benefits of formal employment to pipeline employment.



“They simply end up in different economic realities as traders, artisans, farmers, transport workers, wage earners, bus conductors, drivers, and multiple informal activities.

“They are economically active, but most of them are in an informal economy, where they are unregistered, untaxed, unprotected from labour laws, no job security, no health insurance, and no pension,” he stressed.

Majority of Nigerian youth in the labour market are simply surviving the system. And survival is what people do when the system has not created a pathway for them to fully realise their potential.

Otto outlined a framework, which he called a framework of national evolution, how countries could evolve and become prosperous.

The first state is what he called the stage of survival, the second is a state of stability, the third is a state of sovereignty, the fourth is sophistication, and the fifth is supremacy.

Nigeria, he said, is a very incredible country with immense potential, but we are at a delicate stage between survival and stability.

“A nation cannot be stable if its people are merely surviving. It cannot be sovereign without long-term vision, agency and collective ownership.

“It cannot be sophisticated if it consumes more than it produces, and it can’t be supreme if it doesn’t shape global ideas and solutions,” Otto emphasised.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), “Cost of food in Nigeria increased 13.12 percent in October of 2025 over the same month in the previous year.

“Food Inflation in Nigeria averaged 14.14 percent from 1996 until 2025, reaching an all-time high of 40.87 percent in June of 2024.”

Poverty is higher in rural areas, with about 72 percent of rural Nigerians living in poverty, compared to about 42 percent in urban areas; rural areas are more exposed to insecurity, disruption of agriculture, and displacement.

The survey shows wide variation by state: for instance, poverty incidence ranges from as low as 27 percent in some states to as high as 91 percent in others, such as Sokoto State, many of the worst-off states are those most affected by banditry, insurgency or communal conflict.

According to a World Bank report in 2024, about 129 million Nigerians live below the national poverty line, a sharp increase compared to prior years.

Insecurity is a key driver of poverty increase in Nigeria by disrupting livelihoods, agricultural production, and economic activity, especially in the north and conflict-affected regions.

Poverty rates have worsened sharply in recent years, coinciding with heightened insecurity coupled with inflation and economic shocks.

Available records show that Nigeria’s extreme poverty rate increased from about 40 percent in 2019 to over 60 percent by 2025, according to World Bank and NBS-based projections.

Until poverty is no longer a deciding factor in who accesses university education, Nigeria’s goal of inclusive growth will remain out of reach. Reducing the 27 percent exclusion rate demands targeted scholarships, affordable tuition structures, student loan transparency, and economic support for vulnerable families.

Investing in education is not optional, it is essential for breaking the cycle of poverty and securing the nation’s future.



# A CRY FROM THE WATERS: AN URGENT CALL TO SAVE NIGERIA'S FISH TRADE

**FEMI OLAWOORE**

Mr. President,

They say when the well runs dry, only then do we know the worth of water. Today, Nigerians are staring at a well that is fast depleting — not from drought, but from poor management and policy distortion.

For years, I have operated a lawful business importing fish — helping to feed millions, create jobs, and support national food security. I write not in anger, but in deep concern for the survival of our industry and, by extension, the nutritional well-being of our people.

By all indicators, Nigeria faces a nutritional emergency. When fish becomes a luxury, hunger is not far behind. Our nation consumes between 3.2 and 3.6 million metric tons of fish annually, accounting for over 40% of the animal protein Nigerians rely on. Yet, our domestic production from artisanal, aquaculture, and industrial sources barely reaches 1.1 to 1.2 million tons, leaving a deficit of more than 2 million tons — a gap that imports currently bridge.

To grasp the urgency, consider this: the FAO recommends a daily protein intake of 53.8 grams per adult. For our 250 million citizens, that's about 13,450 metric tons of protein needed every single day.

Even in 2019, before the economic shocks and currency crisis, Nigerians were already consuming below standard — at 45.4 grams per day. With today's import restrictions and rising costs, that number is falling fast, and a protein crisis looms.

Mr. President, regulation is necessary — it ensures order, sustainability, and fairness. But when regulation becomes a weapon of exclusion, it defeats its purpose.

The problem is not policy; it is the corruption and opacity that now infect the fish import quota system — a system once intended to balance imports with local growth, but now hijacked by private and greedy interests.

I have learned that this critical quota allocation process has reportedly been outsourced to a foreign company — effectively surrendering control of a key instrument of Nigeria's food security to private, non-Nigerian hands. What began as a patriotic effort to encourage local fish farming has been turned into a rent-seeking racket.

This distortion deepens the already heavy burden on importers: unstable exchange rates, high interest rates, skyrocketing freight costs, and multiple levies. Now, access to quotas itself is being traded like a commodity — shutting out genuine Nigerian operators who have complied with every rule and invested heavily in the business.

The effects are devastating and visible everywhere. Prices of frozen fish have surged beyond the reach of ordinary families. Small-scale aquaculture farmers — who depend on imported fingerlings and feed — are gasping for survival. Market

women and traders are left with empty freezers, and Nigerian households are forced to abandon an affordable source of protein.

As the Yoruba say, “*Ẹran rí lá tò bá ní sùn, kì í ẹ̀jì*” — a great animal left too long in the sun will rot. The longer this system festers, the more it endangers both our economy and our people's health. And as the Igbo warn, “When one finger is dipped in oil, it spreads to the others.” Corruption in this quota regime, if unchecked, will soon taint the broader credibility of your Renewed Hope Agenda.

Your administration's goal of achieving 3.6 million tons of domestic fish production is noble and necessary. But we cannot reach that goal by strangling the import system that sustains the population today. Building the future of aquaculture must not come at the cost of starving the present. A balanced transition — where responsible importation continues alongside genuine local capacity growth — is the only sustainable path forward.

Therefore, Mr. President, we respectfully appeal for decisive action:

Restore national control and oversight of the fish quota system to Nigerian authorities. Food security is a sovereign duty, not a contract to be outsourced.

Recognize and empower genuine Nigerian importers with proven compliance, tax history, and integrity — not shadowy intermediaries.

Mandate full transparency by publishing all fees, processes, and quota allocations. Openness breeds accountability and public trust.

Maintain a stable import flow to ensure fish remains affordable for consumers and available to small farmers who rely on imports for inputs.

Enforce anti-corruption measures to remove bottlenecks and sanction officials who exploit regulatory loopholes for personal gain.

If wisdom is born of experience, then Nigeria has seen enough to know that good policies in corrupt hands harm more than they help. We cannot pour from an empty pot — and our current mismanagement is emptying the pot while millions go hungry.

Mr. President, I write in faith — faith that your leadership will not allow the humble staple of millions to vanish from our tables. From the lagoons of Lagos to the ponds of Kaduna, the waters of this nation carry the promise of life, employment, and dignity.

The true test of leadership is not only what we build, but what we protect. Protect our food. Protect fair business. Protect the millions who depend on fish to survive. In doing so, you will preserve not just an industry — but a lifeline for Nigeria.

Femi Olawoore is the Managing Director, Mariplus Services Ltd.

# THE QUIET POWER OF AFRICAN WOMEN BUILDING ART ECOSYSTEMS

The most powerful people in African art are not always the most visible ones. Often, they are the ones arranging meetings, holding histories, mentoring younger artists, and making sure things continue long after attention has shifted elsewhere. Their influence doesn't announce itself. It accumulates—through care, consistency, and an insistence on staying.

Spend enough time in African art spaces, and this pattern becomes unmistakable. Across cities and smaller towns, the same women appear again and again—not always on panels or named in press releases, but always present. They are the ones artists turn to when funding collapses, when an exhibition needs rescuing, or when a project is at risk of disappearing altogether. By the time the public encounters the work, much of the real labour has already taken place, quietly and without ceremony.

This digest discusses how African women—often outside the spotlight—shape and sustain art ecosystems across the continent and its diaspora. It looks beyond exhibitions and visibility to consider less acknowledged forms of power: care, continuity, emotional labour, and long-term commitment. Rather than profiling individuals or celebrating success stories, it traces patterns of cultural work that hold communities together over time.

## TOP PICKS FROM OUR COLLECTION



Title: Tomorrow's couple • Artist: Emmanuel Dudu • Medium: Oil on canvas • Dimensions: 12 x 16 in | 30.5 x 40.6 cm • Available on Request



This digest is brought to you by Patrons MCAA. Think African art, think Patrons. Patrons is Africa's leading art advisory and dealership firm with deep expertise in African art, helping private and corporate art collectors diversify their wealth through art collection, appraisal, packaging & transportation, storage, insurance, maintenance, and restoration. Purchase or general inquiry? Reach out: [art@patronsmcaa.com](mailto:art@patronsmcaa.com).



Title: Like a seed • Artist: Abrifor Silas • Medium: Mixed media on canvas • Dimensions: 40 x 40 in | 102 x 102 cm • Available on Request



Title: Grateful • Artist: Francis Denedo • Medium: Metal  
• Dimensions: 13 x 15.7 in | 33 x 40 cm • Available on Request

## Power That Doesn't Need a Stage

In many African art contexts, influence is not determined by titles or public recognition. It moves through relationships. Women often function as connectors—between artists and institutions, generations, languages, and funding structures. They know who to call, how to translate intent, and when to intervene quietly before a project unravels.

This kind of power is not loud. It is built through trust and repetition. Artists return to the same people not because of institutional authority, but because of reliability. Over time, these women become cultural reference points, shaping scenes without needing to center themselves within them.

## The Work of Building, Again and Again

Starting and maintaining art spaces, archives, residencies, or publishing platforms is rarely glamorous. Across the continent, many initiatives begin with personal savings, borrowed spaces, and unpaid hours. Women are often the ones who stay when initial enthusiasm fades—writing proposals, managing logistics, and keeping projects alive through periods of uncertainty.

Reports from foundations and museums may document outcomes, but they rarely capture the ongoing labour that sustains these initiatives year after year. What looks stable from the outside is often the result of constant adjustment and quiet persistence.

## Care as Cultural Infrastructure

Art ecosystems are emotional systems as much as professional ones. Women frequently carry the work of mentorship, conflict mediation, and memory-keeping. They support artists through doubt and loss, preserve community histories, and create environments where experimentation feels possible.

This is not about self-sacrifice or martyrdom. It is strategic care—knowing when to listen, when to intervene, and when to step back. Over time, this labour shapes artistic production as much as funding or institutional backing.

## Rethinking Leadership and Legacy

These practices challenge dominant ideas of leadership in the art world. Leadership here is not about rapid growth or visibility but about staying power. Legacy is measured in continuity: artists who keep working, archives that remain accessible, and communities that feel held rather than consumed.

As readers, we often look to exhibition walls and headlines to understand where power lies. But the deeper story is usually elsewhere—in the people who arrive early, stay late, and ensure that art scenes endure long after attention has moved on.



Keturah Ovio

Keturah Ovio is an Executive at Patrons Modern & Contemporary African Art. She is also an engineer and Founder of Dukka, a Fintech startup providing bookkeeping and payments solutions for small businesses. Keturah is passionate about African Art and has been collecting art since her early 20s. Now, she advises, curates, and manages collections for individuals and corporate organisations looking to start or diversify their wealth management through art collecting. She strongly believes that a fine marriage exists between Art and Technology.

# POWER OF VERBAL BRANDING

FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA

**B**randing, just like art, is detailed, and visuals will always capture the audience's attention first. However, it is the wording placed that aid in making the company unforgettable. "Verbal branding" goes beyond logos and mission statements, it is the history that inspires deep emotional connection from the audience.

The power of words in brand building  
Imagine walking into a room full of people. Some speak with clarity and purpose, while others mumble incoherently. Who would you pay attention to? Your brand is no different. A brand without a verbal identity is like a person who doesn't know what they stand for. A strong brand expression defines who you are, what you offer, and why it matters.

Think about Nike's "Just Do It". It isn't just a tagline—it's a mindset. This is the power of brand building through language. Words create associations, inspire action, and build long-term brand loyalty. Without strategic verbal branding, even the most visually appealing brand can fall flat.

Understanding verbal branding: defining your brand's voice

Every brand needs a voice—one that doesn't just speak but compels. Your verbal branding voice should be as consistent as your visual identity. The key is ensuring that your verbal strategies align with your audience's expectations. Consumers subconsciously judge whether a brand's words align with its image.

## What is a brand platform?

A brand platform is the foundation of your brand's messaging. It consists of your core values, mission, tone of voice, and messaging pillars. This platform tips the brand's verbal style guidelines operates within, ranging from social media to customer service.

Brands without a strong verbal foundation risk inconsistency that can erode trust and recognition.

The verbal branding process

Creating a verbal identity is more than just choosing the right words; it's about an entire experience.

## 1. Research and discovery

In crafting a verbal identity, brands need to know their audience as well as their industry and competition first. This phase comprises:

- Doing market research for target demographic identification.
- Studying competition to provide distinct messaging for the brand.
- Developing brand value, mission and essence of traits.
- Identifying pain points and aspirations in audiences in order to sculpt messages that truly work.

## 2. Defining the brand voice

The brand voice is a personality behind written or spoken words. A brand, and its voice, can be described in the words or terms. Such a strong verbal identity has to have a clear tone of voice and its partnered image to the brand.

- Determine the brand's persona—Is it playful, authoritative, empathetic, or inspiring?
- Choose a tone that fits different communication channels (e.g., casual for social media, formal for investor relations).
- Establish brand guidelines to ensure consistency in writing style and tone.

## 3. Crafting core messages

Core messages are the principles and values that your brand communicates across all platforms with consistency.

- The brand's unique value proposition that sets it apart.
- Craft key messaging pillars that reflect the brand's mission and goals.
- A tagline or slogan that encapsulates the essence of the brand.
- Standardised responses and phrases for customer interactions to reinforce consistency.

## 4. Integration across touchpoints

All communication touch points, ads and even customer support channels have to conform to your brand identity:

- Aim towards a strong and established presence on all the social media platforms and reply in kind to consumer engagement.
- Set captions and ads which conform to your brand identity.

## 5. Reputation management and renewal

A brand's voice should not be static. While still in touch with true essence of the brand, it needs to shift with audience expectations and market trends. Regularly shift messaging and watch the brand become more relevant in your audiences' lives.

## Key elements of verbal branding

Just like essays and stories, a brand has a verbal identity that has multiple components.

### 1. Brand story

Your story isn't just what you tell people—it's what they believe about you based on the signals you send. Your brand story should be engaging, authentic, and rooted in your mission.

### 2. Voice

The public's perspective regarding your brand is determined by the tone. Those strategies must indicate if the tone is supposed to be casual, serious, colloquial, or commanding.

### 3. Taglines and slogans

Taglines breathe life into your business. They should be memorable and reinforce your brand positioning. Mastercard's "There are some things money can't buy. For everything else, there's Mastercard." is a great example of a memorable tagline. The best taglines transcend mere marketing—they become cultural catchphrases.

### 4. Naming conventions

From product names to campaign slogans, naming should align with your branding building process. Names should carry meaning and align with your brand's vision.

## Verbal branding strategies

Once your verbal branding strategy is in place, the next step is application. How to build a brand strategy? Make sure your verbal identity is seamlessly integrated into all your communications.

### 1. Website and digital presence

Your website is often the first touchpoint customers have with your brand. An engaging copy can make or break a visitor's experience. It's not just about what you say but how you say it.

## 2. Social media communication

Social media is where brands can be their most human selves.

## 3. Selling and marketing strategies

Every piece of content, from e-mail advertisement to billboard, is supposed to be in line with the process of brand management. Strong campaigns are built around strong slogans and such campaigns are easy to remember. Trust and recognition of a brand is increased by consistent use of language.

## 4. Customer service language

Even your support team should embody your verbal branding. The way a brand addresses customer queries—whether through e-mails, chats, or phone calls—should reflect its core values and personality.

## Last line

Your brand isn't just a logo or a product—it's a living, breathing entity that communicates with the world. A strong verbal identity doesn't just differentiate your brand—it defines it.



FEYISITAN IJIMAKINWA

Feyisitan Ijimakinwa is a Reputation and Perception Management expert. He is a prolific writer and researcher who, at different times, served as Head of Corporate Communications of top brands quoted on the Nigerian Stock Exchange. A versatile communications specialist, he practiced extensively as a print journalist and was variously engaged in the broadcast media, working on radio and television. Feyisitan continues to write on corporate communications, brand reputation and perception management, and brand intelligence, among others. He organises the 'Brand Intelligence and the Marketplace' masterclass. Feyisitan advocates a pollution free and sustainable environment.

# DELOITTE MONEY LEAGUE: REAL MADRID LEAD GLOBAL REVENUES, LIVERPOOL SET ENGLISH BENCHMARK

## ....Madrid Extend Financial Dominance Despite Trophy Drought

ANTHONY NLEBEM



**R**eal Madrid have retained their position at the summit of football's rich list, while Liverpool emerged as the highest-earning English club for the first time, according to Deloitte's latest Football Money League report.

The Spanish giants generated close to \$2.4 billion (€1.16bn) in revenue during the 2024/25 season despite failing to win a major trophy. The ongoing transformation of the Santiago Bernabéu into a multi-purpose venue continues to deliver strong financial returns, with Madrid's \$1.18bn in commercial revenue alone enough to secure a top-10 ranking.

Barcelona Reclaim Second as Bayern and PSG Complete Top Four

Barcelona climbed back into second place with revenues of \$1.94bn, despite playing the entire season away from the Camp Nou due to ongoing redevelopment.

Bayern Munich ranked third with \$1.72bn, narrowly ahead of Paris Saint-Germain, whose revenues were boosted by winning the UEFA Champions League for the first time.

Liverpool Overtake Man United as England's Financial Standard-Bearers

Manchester United fell to their lowest-ever position in the Deloitte Money League, ranking eighth, as Liverpool overtook their domestic rivals to become England's top-earning club.

United, who topped the Money League ten times between 1996 and 2017, were hit by a sharp decline in broadcast income following their absence from the Champions League in 2024/25. Broadcast revenues dropped from €258m to €206m, with further pressure expected due to reduced matchday income this season.



### United's Revenue Hit Deepened by Fewer Matches

United's lack of European football and early exits from domestic cup competitions mean they will host only 20 competitive matches at Old Trafford in the 2025/26 season, further limiting revenue streams.

**Deloitte: Modern Revenue Race Goes Beyond Matchdays**  
Tim Bridge, Deloitte's Sports Business Group Leader, said the modern revenue race now extends far beyond matchdays.

"The clubs with the biggest brands have an opportunity to engage fans 365 days a year, both on matchdays and non-matchdays," Bridge said. "Manchester United are arguably still the biggest global football brand, but to fully maximise that potential requires fit-for-purpose facilities."

He added that while United were once the benchmark for commercial and matchday revenue, they now trail clubs such as Real Madrid and Barcelona, who have moved faster in stadium redevelopment and diversification strategies.

### English Clubs Miss Top Four for First Time

United ranked fourth among English clubs, behind Liverpool, Manchester City and Arsenal, while Liverpool placed fifth overall following their return to the Champions League and a seven per cent increase in commercial

revenue, driven largely by non-matchday events at Anfield.

Notably, this is the first time no English club has featured in the Money League's top four, with Real Madrid, Barcelona, Bayern Munich and PSG all benefiting from deep runs in the expanded Champions League and the enlarged FIFA Club World Cup.

### Club World Cup Delivers Broadcast Boost

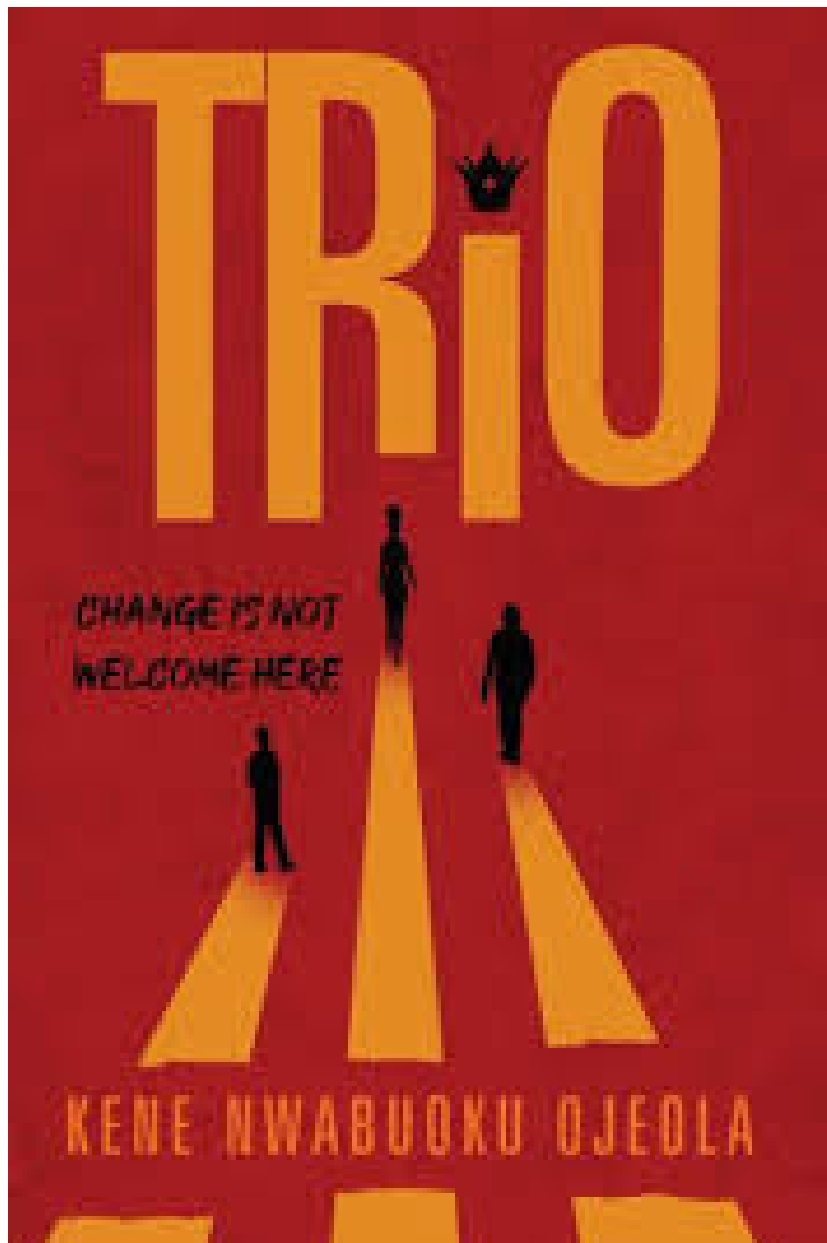
Deloitte reported that participation in the Club World Cup delivered an average 17 per cent uplift in broadcast revenue for the ten clubs involved.

### Outlook: Diversification Key to Staying at the Top

Looking ahead, Premier League clubs are expected to perform more strongly in the 2027 Money League, which will reflect the league's new broadcast deal running through to 2029. However, Bridge stressed that sustained success will depend on balancing on-field performance with off-field diversification.

"The highest revenue-generating clubs are now broader than football alone," he said. "Maintaining both sporting success and commercial innovation is the key to staying at the top."

Manchester City placed sixth, their lowest ranking since the Covid-19-affected 2019/20 season, underlining the increasingly competitive nature of football's financial elite.



When Power Refuses to Retire -A Review of Kene  
Nwabuoku Ojeola's Trio

Title: Trio  
Author: Kene Nwabuoku Ojeola  
Year of Publication: 2025  
Number of Pages: 296  
Category: Fantasy

# TRIO

TITILADE OYEMADE

When the young come close to power, hope naturally rises. We expect new ideas, honesty, and the courage to fix old mistakes. Trio quietly challenges that hope. From the start, Kene Nwabuoku Ojeola shows that power does not yield simply because a new generation arrives. It resists, fights, and adapts to survive. The subtitle, *Change Is Not Welcome Here*, is not just for show, it is the heart of the story.

Set in the fictional kingdom of Ikain, Trio is a political fantasy that feels familiar. Though the world is imaginary, its struggles are recognisable: powerful families clinging to authority and young heirs trying to step into roles shaped by their predecessors' mistakes. The novel asks an important question: what happens when power should pass on, but those in control refuse to let it go?

At its center are three young characters, Ardarora, Uzhor, and Ifarnyi each showing a different approach to power. Together, they form the emotional and political core of the story.

Ardarora, born into royalty, faces constant scrutiny and blame, yet her strength is steady and quiet. She does not rebel but stands firm, showing the heavy burden women in leadership often carry. Uzhor, the heir, masks uncertainty with charm, aware that the throne is both a gift and a trap. Ifarnyi is guarded and unsettling. His silence challenges everyone around him, making him a quiet but powerful force of resistance.

As their paths cross, Ikain is pushed toward a reckoning it has long avoided. The old rulers, weakened by corruption and fear, cling tightly to power.

At its core, the novel is a battle between generations. The older rulers guard power even as the consequences of their actions emerge. Their children inherit not only authority but unresolved conflict. As the saying goes, an apple does not fall far from the tree, cycles of ambition, fear, and control repeat. Yet hope remains: the younger generation, flawed and sometimes divided, shows boldness and courage, suggesting that change, though difficult, is possible.

Ojeola also includes a quiet love story within the political tension, showing that personal vulnerability does not

pause for national crises. This adds depth, highlighting how private desires often clash with public duty.

Ultimately, Trio is more than a tale of succession or political struggle. It reflects any system grown comfortable in corruption, mistaking tradition for progress and stability for true growth. The author raises important questions about leadership, accountability, and renewal, offering insights that reach far beyond Ikain. By showing the story through those closest to power, she provides a rare, honest look at how leaders face their failures and how difficult real change can be.

This is not a comforting book, but a necessary one. Trio demands patience, reflection, and engagement with hard truths. It is worth reading, not to reassure, but to challenge.



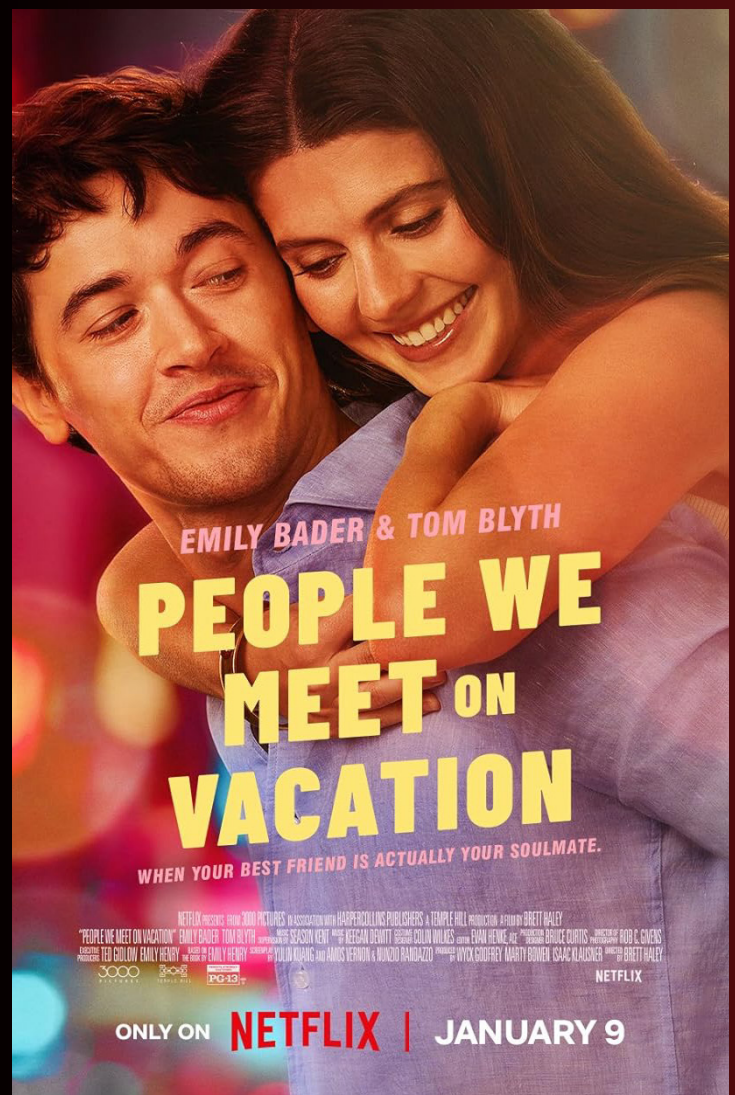
Titilade Oyemade is a business executive in a leading organisation and holds a degree in Russian Language. She's the convener of the Hangoutwithtee Ladies Event and the publisher of Hangoutwithtee magazine. She spends her weekends attending women conferences, events and book readings. She loves to have fun and to help other women have the same in their lives. Email: [titi.oyemade@gmail.com](mailto:titi.oyemade@gmail.com) Social: [@tiipreeofficial](https://www.instagram.com/tiipreeofficial)

# WEEKENDER

## MOVIE REVIEW

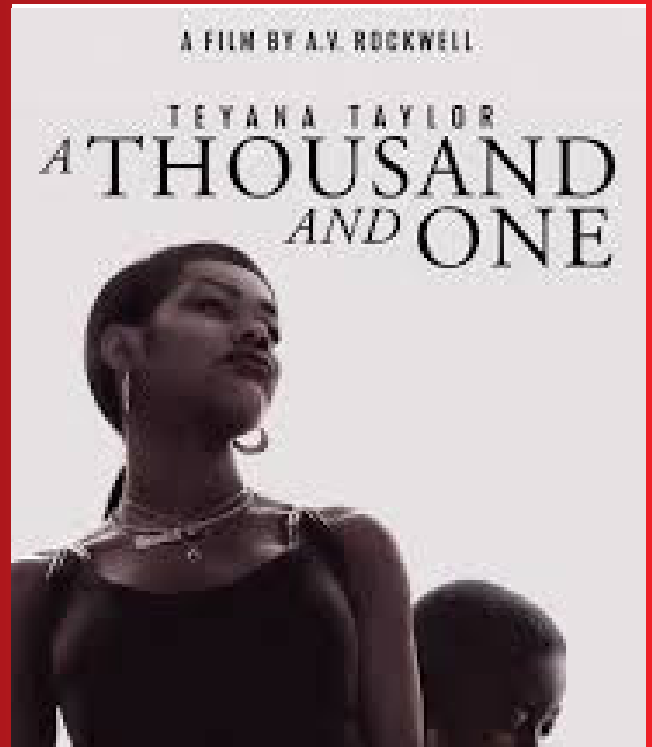
### PEOPLE WE MEET ON VACATION (2026)

If you are searching for a nice drama, romantic movie, that will make you smile then this movie is the right choice. I couldn't help but smile at the end. I was glad it went well. Poppy was a young selfless lady who love to live well and travel. On one of her trips homes, she hitched a ride with Alex through a friend and it was a total disaster. Alex almost threw her out, but luckily, they made it home in one piece. After that trip they became friends and for years, every summer they would travel around the world, just exploring the world. At some point I assumed they were going to date each other, but because they had very different personalities, things never worked out. You will need to check out this movie to find out how their friendship for over a decade ended up. The 117m romance, romantic comedy movie was directed by Brett Hally, they featured brilliant cast like Emily Vader, Tom Blyth, Sarah Catherine Hook, Lucien Louiscourt, Miles Heifer, Jameela Jamil, Tommy Do, Lukas Gage, Alice Lee, Molly Shannon etc.



## CAPTIVE (2015)

Let us go down memory lane to 2015, this movie was trending on the top 10, so I decided to check it out. In this movie Brain was accused wrongly and wasn't happy at all. On the day of his judgement, Brain knocked down the warden, made his way out, shot down the Judge and secretary and some corps who tried to stop him. He wanted to explain that he was innocent, but he went about it in the wrong way. To make his way out of town, he had to take Ashley as a hostage to avoid being caught by the corps. You will need to go check out the movie to find out if Brain made it out of the chase alive, if he killed Ashley or allowed her to go, the movie talked about having a purpose driven life and Ashley helped Brain to be a better man. The 97m mystery, thriller, drama, crime movie was directed by Jerry James, they featured actors like David Oyelowo, Kate Mara, Lenor Carmela, Jessica Oyelowo, Mimi Rogers etc.



## A THOUSAND AND ONE (2023)

If you are going to watch this movie, make sure you start from the very beginning, make sure you pay full attention and watch till the very end, the end will leave you speechless, because I honestly didn't see that twist at the end. Inez was a free spirited, temperamental young lady. She had just returned from the prison after serving her time, so she decided to go check on her son Terry, who was left in the foster home. When she saw him, he didn't look well Kept and this troubled her. She went to him in the hospital only to find out that he fell off the window trying to escape from his foster mom. Inez decided to take the law into her hands and acts out of emotions. You will need to go check out the movie to see what she did and how she went about it. The 117m drama, independent social issues movie was directed by A.V. Rockwell, they featured actors like Teyana Taylor, Josiah Cross, Will Catlett, Aaron Kingsley Adetola, Sven Courtney, Adriane Lenox, Teri Abrey, Amelia Workman, Mark Gessner and many more.



# WEEKEND QUOTES



1

Opportunities handled  
well gives rise to more  
Opportunities  
.....WhispersbyTEN

2

Wherever your thoughts  
travel to, your action reflects  
.....WhispersbyTEN

3

I am more than my work and  
daily accolades.  
Who are you?  
.....WhispersbyTEN

4

In your wilderness moments  
when God decides to create  
a well for you, you will not  
require rope and bucket. It  
will be easy!  
.....WhispersbyTEN