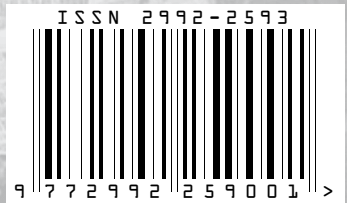


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NIGERIA'S 3 MILLION BILL GATES

DR BOSUN TIJANI LEADS

Betta for Better Hope

Republic of Burundi Celebrate Onyeagba in Grand Style

Rinsola Abiola on Renewed Citizen for Real Hope



The Mistakes of the Supreme Court



NIGERIA'S TOP TEN UNDER 50 TECH LEADERS

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Abiola**



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Nigeria's 3 Million Bill Gates Led by Dr Bosun Tijani | 15-18

Dr Bosun Tijani is gradually leading a digital revolution that in the next decades will usher a new generation of technology leaders from Nigeria both in transforming the country's economic progress and provide value to the global market. Nigeria is gearing towards transforming its export base from commodity to technology driven human resource under his leadership FMCDE.

Burundi Celebrates Onyeagba in Grand Style | 20-21

Amb. Elijah Onyeagba PhD in the past two years has made Nigerians come to love a country that so many people could never have known that it existed on the African continent. The Tinubu government has called for a recall of all diplomats so as to reappoint new ones yet for the people of Burundi, Amb. Onyeagba deserves a grand exit.

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Betta for Better Hope | 13-14

Dr Betta Edu is one minister of federal republic of Nigeria who came well prepared to make a stint at the federal ministry of humanitarian affairs and poverty alleviation. It is less than 6 months since she assumed office yet there are outstanding achievements trailed by her leadership cutting across the length and breadth of the country. We bring you a recount of her many achievements in the past months.



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Nigeria's Top Ten Technology Leaders | 21-56

Over the past two decades Nigeria has soared in technological advancement becoming one of the fastest markets in the world, but this has been purveyed by the grit, dexterity and stern persistence of young tech visionaries. From Benue born Oyaje Idoko building world class internet infrastructure with layer3 to Bruce Ayonote who pioneered the Abuja's technology development with investment in internet infrastructure. Discover individuals who are lubricating the technology revolution in Nigeria with venture capital systems, Olumide Soyombo and so many leaders you are yet to know.

The Mistakes of the Supreme Court | 50 & 54

Our contributor, Yusuf Usman thinks the Nigeria's apex court still has unfinished verdict on the 2023 presidential election petition. He raises legal questions that maybe the lordships ought to answer.

A Renewed Citizen for Real Hope | 40

Rinsola Abiola is the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Citizenship and Leadership shares the president's vision for the citizens and the responsibility of every Nigerian to ensure that the deliverables of the Renewed Hope agenda of this administration is enjoyed by all. She reverberates the two way stripe of governance; the citizen and the leadership.. The role of each party of national progress.

Max Siollun's Books for Every Patriot | 57

The 2023 general elections is one event that should not be forgotten in a hurry as we saw the resurgence of historic strife that became the banner of campaigns and for students of Nigeria's history or those who have keenly studied our political theatrics, this manifestation was germane. Yet it points to the fact that our growing population that may soon overtake the most developed nations of the world is more shallow minded and vague knowledgeable of



Nigeria's journey.

THE TEAM

Simon Tuleh
Publisher / Editor-in-Chief

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Bob Ugee

Bob is the founder/CEO of Payfair supermarket in the heart of the Federal Capital Territory with growing chain of franchises. He started his business using the ingenuity of networking to building a formidable branding that is quick spreading. He shares his thoughts of entrepreneurship.



NEW BANK OF INNOVATION



From The Editor-in-Chief

It is winding down to the end of year that seemed a distant future just months ago in 2022 with trepidations of what the year held whilst many had foresaw doom for us all at the end of it. We are here right now greatly amplifying the valid argument that very few human beings could be Nostradamus or so often predict the outcome of human affairs with precision. Nigeria and Africa have rather charged ahead stronger than ever before.

In far away East Africa, one of Nigeria's outstanding diplomats gets a grand style honorarium as he exits the gates of Bujumbura where the Nigerian government sent him two years ago. His achievements in a short time of diplomacy earned him a reputation as one of the best ambassadors in the previous administration, Ambassador Elijah Chinezim Onyeagba left a foot print that can only be notched of ingenuity.

Dr Bosun Tijani had been at the forefront of incubating tech talents from the sidelines of Nigeria's commercial city of Lagos, though working with young tech enthusiasts to attract the world's top technology leaders to the country, the stage has gotten higher for him as Tinubu led government appoints him the Minister of Communications and

Digital Economy. Dr Tijani's passion could no longer be stifled by the governance blockade when he is now at the helm of driving the technology ecosystem with a robust tech governance system. 3MTT is one objective that could prove that he came with his sleeves up.

Top ten tech leaders we sampled from across the country maybe doing more than you could imagine and yet have not got the publicity they deserve. From Bruce Ayonote and Oyaje Idoko leading Abuja's tech space to Olumide Soyombo, Kola Aina, Ruth Iselema, Odunayo Eweniyi and Babatunde Akin Moses leading tech financial solutions from Lagos to Africa. Know them and the impact they are silently making.

Dr Betta Edu has upped the confidence of Nigeria's masses in the sincerity of government in addressing the rising poverty index in the country. She has gone to the nooks and crannies talking to the poor and vulnerable to renew their hope of a better future and assured that the Tinubu administration means well beyond just mantras. Her 100 days strides worthy of note.

Don't forget our commitment to bringing you positive information in our Good Beats column with news of recent achievements by Under 50 Nigerians from governance to private sector. Discover people like you who are accelerating on the trajectory of progress and making significant contributions to national advancement, whether it is Aisha from terrorism torn Borno state who has used photojournalism to tell our stories to the world to a \$100 billion dream for the creative industry by Barr Hannatu Musawa, the Minister of Arts and Creative Industry. This is worth reading. Our team thanks you for being in our readership circle.

SimonTuleh

Editor-in-Chief/CEO

BUZZ FEED

YOUR COMMENTS ABOUT OUR PREVIOUS EDITION

This is great. Well done
*Derek Terver, Founder/COO,
Clinicbank*

Wow, this is interesting and
informative. You guys are doing
a fantastic job by promoting
young leaders who hold great
potentials to make our country
great. Keep it up
*Fortune Takon, CEO, Topnotch
Prime Enterprises*

This is excellent and we will be glad to have this in the
United Kingdom where they are many Nigerians who
are making significant impact in business here yet they
are not well known back home.

Nigerians are making positive difference in the world
and it is sad that it is mainly the negative part that gets to
international press, these kinds of efforts will greatly
enhance the image of the country and its citizens
abroad.

Dr Tony Irechukwu, CEO, Pharmadynamics UK

This is great. Many thanks brother for promoting what
we are doing in Burundi and our vision to redefine
affordable housing Africa.

*Fablice Dieudonné Manirakiza,
Founder/CEO, Ubakanation and Come and See Burundi*



Remarkable efforts and commendable. Well done to
you and your team for identifying and promoting
under 50 Nigerians who are contributing positively
to nation building.

I am glad to be part of your list of outstanding under
50 legislators in the 10th National Assembly.

*Prof Lillian Orogbu, Honorable Member,
Federal House of Representatives,
Anambra State*

U50 Magazine is a great project that holds
enormous potentials as you remain consistent and
steadfast. This is how world class media
corporations started. Keep it up guys.

*Adams Abimiku,
Founder/CEO, Askpro Services UK*

GOOD BEATS



Dr Jamila Ibrahim Become First Female Youth Minister

Dr Jamila Ibrahim made history as Nigeria's first female minister appointed in both the erstwhile Federal Ministry of Youths and Sports Development and the newly created Federal Ministry of Youths. Her delayed appointment put to rest the clamor from young people to have their ilk at the helm of one of the oldest federal ministries since democratic transition in 1999. The 37 years old trained medical doctor is the daughter of a former Minister of Transportation during President Goodluck Jonathan administration, Ibrahim Bio from Kwara State and a member of the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

The medical doctor, politician, and development expert before her appointment had not been a stranger to youth organizations and civil society groups as a result of her active participation in various initiatives and programmes that impacted positively including involvement in advocacy campaigns for the United Nations and Presidential Committee on the North-East Initiative in humanitarian capacity. Her desire to serve in public service paved the way for her exposure at various levels in government including

being Senior Special Assistant on Health Matters to the Governor of Kwara State and served as the National President of the APC Young Women Forum prior to the 2023 elections. She is dedicated to advocating for women and youth emancipation, emphasizing their participation in socio-political activities for community and national development.

Borno Born Female Photojournalist Gets World's Attention

34-year-old Fati Abubakar, a photographer, nurse and a humanitarian worker from Borno state, took a bold step at the time of suzerainty and onslaught by the group Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad notably known as Boko Haram. Born and raised in Maiduguri, Borno state's

Her budding career had not been unnoticed such that her efforts have endeared several accolades to her name including; Clean Nigeria Ambassador award for contributions to Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene, UN Peace Ambassador by the International Association of World Peace Advocates, Distinguished Honorary Award for contributions to Education and SDGs, supported by UNESCO Nigeria and Nigeria and Kwara State as a Speaker on international platforms like the United Nations and the African Union (AU).

decision to tell untold narratives of her hometown in constructive ideals, through the eyes of a camera has helped the world see the real outcome of the place. After her Master's Degree in Public Health and Health Promotion, at the South Bank University, London in 2015, Fati, upon her return back to her hometown, where she took up photography.



MSMEs Get Practitioner As DG SMEDAN

The appointment of 35 year old entrepreneur and start up support advocate, Charles Odii, is a pick that truly demonstrates government's commitment to addressing the lingering gap between the MSMEs and government as he is one with firsthand experience about the travails of the bottom strata of the economy.

Mr Odii holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Management Information Systems from Covenant University. He then pursued Project Management Certification (Prince 2, Foundation and Practitioner) in 2011, at the same university. He also has a Master's Degree in Marketing and Communications and a PhD in Media and Communications from Pan Atlantic University in Lagos, Nigeria.

The author, enterprise development expert and entrepreneur who played a pivotal role in advancing the interests of SMEs in Africa through SME100 Africa, has decided to step down from his role as management of SME 100 AFRICA. Under the leadership of Charles Odii, SME100 Africa achieved numerous milestones, most notable of all being the Africa Small Business Summit, Nigeria's youth leadership program (25 Under 25 Award), and Young Entrepreneur Programs, entrepreneurship World Cup to mention a few. He raised \$2M to invest in small businesses. Grew the SME100 Africa community by over 500% as well as the SME100 Africa team.

Minister Hannatu Musawa Targets \$100 billion for Creative Industry

The Minister, Hannatu Musa Musawa, stated this while unveiling the ministry's roadmap at its maiden Creative Economy Roundtable held at the Banquet Hall, State House, Abuja. She enumerated the five key pillars upon which the vision of the ministry rests, which include Policy, Legislative, Regulatory and Intellectual Property Reforms, Cultural Plan and Economic Plan, Private Sector Engagement and Destination 2030, Nigeria Everywhere. She said, "The Economic Plan is aimed at creating millions of jobs, supported by comprehensive skills

training programs. Our objective is to contribute 10% to the nation's GDP, expanding sectoral GDP to a remarkable \$100 billion by the year 2030. "The creative industries are the heartbeat of the new economy, serving as an engine of economic growth, a catalyst of change, and a generator of employment opportunities. We are uniquely positioned in this great nation, endowed with an abundance of human capital and boundless possibilities.

"Our transformation team has delved deep into the very fabric of this sector, understanding its dynamics, seizing up the opportunities it presents, and benchmarking against model countries and sectors."



Two U50 Nigerians Appointed CBN Governors



The reformation of Nigeria's apex bank, Central Bank of Nigeria by the Tinubu led administration resulted in the overhaul of the entire leadership with appointment of a new governor and his deputies as statutory. Two young vibrant Nigerians with stellar records in the financial sector made the list of the new deputy sheriffs, Mr. Muhammad Sani Abdullahi and Dr Bala Mohammed Bello as deputy governors of Nigeria's number one financial institution.

Muhammad Sani Abdullahi popularly known as *Dattijo* is the Deputy Governor of Economic Policy at the Central Bank of Nigeria appointed by president Bola Ahmed Tinubu in September 2023 after which his appointment was later confirmed by the Nigerian Senate.

His illustrious career spans over two decades both locally and internation-

ally, with the pinnacle of his international career serving as a policy adviser at the Executive Office of United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon in New York.

He formed the think tank that developed the Sustainable Development Program at the time.

Dattijo later resigned upon the call to serve the people of Kaduna as Commissioner for Budget and Planning Kaduna state.

Sani Abdullahi obtained his master's degree in Development Economics and Policy from the University of Manchester and obtained a second Masters from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria where he studied International Affairs and Diplomacy. He obtained certificates including in Public Finance at the London School of Economics; Sustainable Development at Columbia University and Advanced Project Management

at Oxford University. He was part of the 2017 Cohort of Georgetown University's Leadership Seminar.

Dr. Bala Mohammed Bello, is the deputy governor Corporate Services, Central Bank of Nigeria and served as *Executive Director*, Corporate Services, NEXIM bank before his appointment by president Bola Ahmed Tinubu. He has more than two decades experience in the financial services industry, spanning through banking, capital market and pension fund management. He has worked at senior executive level in the last seven years prior to his appointment as Executive Director at the Nigerian Export-Import Bank in 2017. Dr. Bello holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting, and an MBA, both from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

He began his banking career with Guaranty Trust Bank Plc; and later joined the Securities and Exchange Commission.

GOODBEATS

In 2005, he joined Sigma Pensions Ltd, and was appointed the first Nigerian Executive Director/Chief Operating Officer in 2011 and later Executive Director Operations from 2013 to 2014. In this capacity, he had direct administrative responsibility for over N260 billion (\$1.5 billion) funds/assets under management (A-U-M). Dr. Bala established and served as the founding CEO of Marine Capital Limited, a real estate development and business/pensions advisory firm in February 2015; and subsequently joined Apricot Investments Limited in March 2016 as the pioneer Managing Director/CEO.

Dr. Bala has completed the High Potential Leadership Program at Harvard Business School, Boston, Massachusetts and Executive Development Program at Wharton Business School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania both in the United States of America. He also holds a certificate in Operations Leadership from the prestigious Richard Ivey School of Business, University of Western Ontario, Canada, as well as Portfolio Management Academy Certificate at the New York Institute of Finance. He has also successfully completed modules 1 & 2 of the highly sought-after GMP programme at the Harvard Business School in March 2020.

He is an honorary senior member of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria, a Fellow of the Institute of Credit administration, a member of the Institute of Directors, a member of the Certified Pension Institute of Nigeria, and a member of the Nigerian Institute of Management. He was conferred with Doctor of Philosophy (Honoris Causa) in Leadership and Management by ESAE University, Republic of Benin, and Doctor of Business Administration (Honoris Causa) by Commonwealth University.



Nord Set To Lead Africa Market

Nigeria's growing population of over 200 million people is one that has greatly depended on foreign automobile brands to drive its transportation industry with about 100% of its vehicles either imported or assembled. The leading automakers like Peugeot, Toyota, Honda, Mercedes Benz and so many others have controlled the industry and determined the trend for consumers. But in recent times we saw the emergence of an indigenous brand like Innoson Motors which has sought to take those foreign brands head on. Also, Nord Motors is one indigenous brand that seeks to introduce customized automobile choice for consumers built to suit your taste.

It unveiled its first auto assembly plant to be the first established in a university in Africa was inaugurated at the University of Lagos; Nord Automobile plant. The plant which provides more than just assembling new automobiles and giving students relevant hands-on or practical skills, the facility will also make drones for commercial purposes.



Appeal Court Affirms Ugochinyere's Victory

The affirmation by the Appellate Court on the victory of member representing Ideato North and South Federal Constituency of Imo State, Hon. Ikenga Imo Ugochinyere Ikeagwuonu, when the Court of Appeal, sitting in Lagos, unanimously affirmed him as the validly elected member of the House of Representatives. The indefatigable young politician who jived for greater inclusion of youths in politics made his stand at the 2023 general election under the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and enjoyed overwhelming support from his constituency. He had suffered a miscarriage of justice when the Imo State National and State House of Assembly Election Petitions Tribunal nullified his election and ordered the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to conduct a supplementary election within 90 days.

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International humanitarian interventions that will benefit Nigerians and remove them from poverty.

In driving the commitment of Tinubu government to lift 134 million Nigerian out of poverty she assured that under her leadership the ministry will not operate in silos and duplicated efforts that have led to wastage in the past. She visited every IDP camp in the country and interacted with people in some of the poorest rural communities in the country.

In September 2023, she announced the federal government's plan to establish the first humanitarian hubs in all 774

local government areas in the country as a long-term initiative for alleviating poverty in Nigeria since they would house locally generated items that will be supplied at lower prices to Nigerians.

On the 23rd of October, 2023, she received the approval from the Federal Executive Council for the establishment of the country's first humanitarian and poverty alleviation Trust Fund, a programme designed to provide relief for many of the citizens affected by economic hardship. A flexible financing initiative that is supposed to help the country adequately respond to humanitarian challenges such as experienced with Boko haram terrorism in the north which has greatly affected

Betta for Better Hope

A New Day for the poor and less privileged

Dr Betta Edu is Nigeria's Minister in charge of Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation appointed in August 2023 by president Bola Ahmed Tinubu, less than 5 months ago but would Nigerians say that her leadership has brought better hope for the mass poor? We bring you some of the remarkable achievements recorded by Nigeria's youngest minister.

The 37 years old former women leader of the leading All Progressives Congress (APC) is known for nothing less than her lusty personality in any given task or assignment, and since her confirmation by the Nigerian Senate

she has been relentless in bringing hope to the poor and most neglected in the country, from visiting shanties in Ajegunle in Lagos to IDP camps in Borno and Benue. She is often known to confess that she is not one who will sit behind the office desk to run things when millions of Nigerians are languishing in poverty.

Immediately she assumed office in August 2023, she flagged a 10 million jobs campaign under her ministry to ease human suffering and maintain/reestablish circumstances that honor and protect human dignity with a mission to develop good humanitarian policies and provide effective coordination of National and

UNDER 50 NIGERIA SPOT

BETTA FOR BETTER HOPE

the development of the region. The \$5billion fund has been considered a milestone in the country's commitment to humanitarian intervention and a bold move.

Dr Betta is one person who has maintain a firm stand on developing the educational sector for accommodation of the less privileged, this led to her rolling out education-related programmes to alleviate poverty. In addition to highlighting how the country's unity schools could benefit from the initiatives, the minister said work is now being done to put programmes in place to alleviate poverty nationwide.

As one of her topmost priorities when appointed as minister, Dr Betta canvassed for broader inclusion of the Persons With Disabilities in federal government interventions which received overwhelming support by the federal government, and approved the dedication 10% of social intervention to PWDs in November 2023. The flag-off of the empowerment of people living with disability set in motion the allocation of 10% of funds for conditional cash transfer, cash for traders, school feeding etc.

Her zest for youth empowerment could not be shouldered better than on the Npower programme that was created set up by the former administration led by president, Muhammadu Buhari in 8 June 2016, to address the issues of youth unemployment and help increase social development. The scheme was created as a component of National Social Investment Program, to provide a structure for large scale and relevant work skills acquisition and development and to ensure that each participant will learn and practice most of what is necessary to find or create work. But as a result of purported corruption in the programme, the Tinubu government suspended it to restructure it. It was on the basis on this that Dr introduced the introduction of a concise social register that seeks to curb corruption in the process of the youths enrolled into the programme to receive their pay. This was commended as the right direction in ensuring the right direction in ensuring the erstwhile practice of the programme to those who were either underpaid or were overdue.

Dr Betta Edu places high premium on relationships and exudes contagious enthusiasm in her assignment. This includes both personal and professional connections. Her lack of discrimination in relating with people of all classes, whether high, middle or low, she never hides her genuine interest to their wellbeing and always willing to go out of her way to solve a problem within her influence. No wonder many have expressed confidence in her leadership to drive the ministry to make more remarkable impact on the poor in the country. With Betta, it is not beyond reach the possibility that the Renewed Hope agenda would be a breath of fresh air to the people in the years ahead of this administration.





Dr Bosun Tijani

Honorable Minister
Federal Ministry of Communications
& Digital Economy

Dr Bosun Tijani is the Honorable Minister overseeing Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy, technology hub enthusiast and advocate of effective technology governance. He was appointed by president Bola Ahmed Tinubu to steer the country's over 100 million youth population in the trajectory of mining its rich talents in the technology ecosystem. Find out more on how his leading the 3MTT for emerging tech leaders.

Dr Bosun Tijani was appointed by president Bola Ahmed Tinubu in August 2023 to stir the ship of Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy and taking over the baton from Prof Isa Pantami who is credited with stellar innovations at the ministry. It is no doubt that no Nigerian could have filled that space like Dr Bosun at a time when the country was gathering momentum to lead the technology revolution in the world. His wealth of experience within the technology ecosystem, his direct and indirect influence in building some of the tech startups that form the pillars of the Nigerian startup scene today which cannot be shoved aside by any serious government that seeks to exploit the immense potentials that abound in the country tech.

Principally, his influence was made largely through CcHub, Nigeria's first tech hub founded by Tijani in 2010 which has now grown to the largest in Africa with a physical presence in other African countries including Kenya.

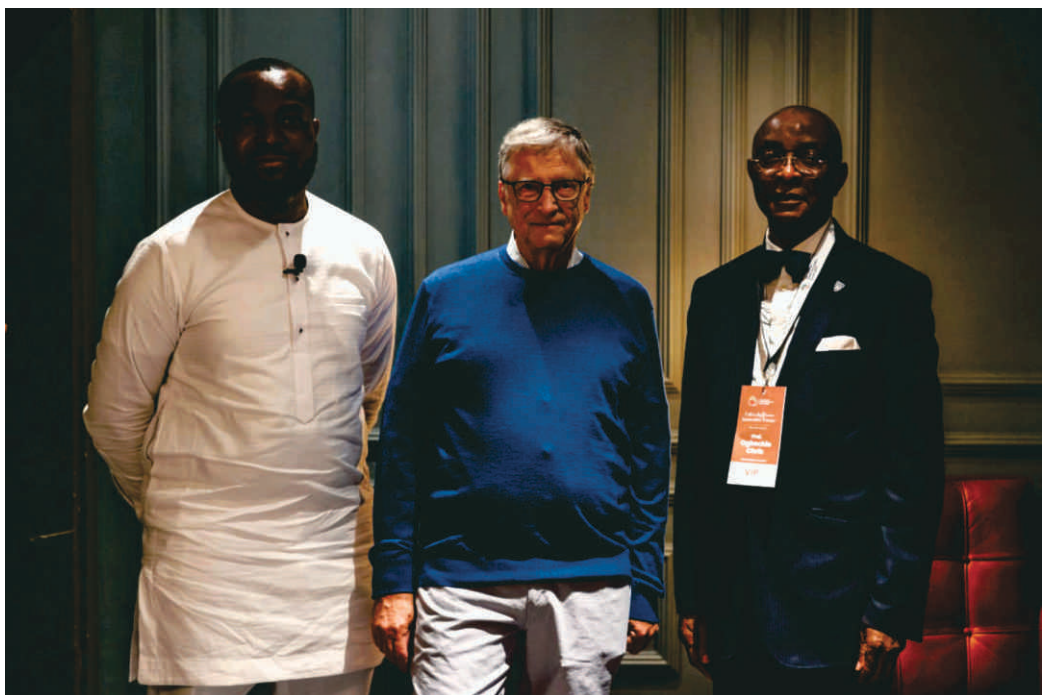
The young, technovator amplified his vision of facilitating the country's technological development through unlocking its potentials shared as the cardinal areas under his leadership titled the blueprint: "Accelerating our Collective Prosperity through Technical Efficiency" and expressed optimism that if the five pillars are critically exploited and development policies framed around them, in the next four years, the dividend will be a Nigeria with digital capabilities like most developed countries of the world.

Leading Nigeria's 3Million Bill Gates

These five pillars that are designed to spur rapid development include; "Knowledge: In a rapidly interconnected world, knowledge is the foundation upon which countries build a robust and sustainable economy. As a critical prerequisite, knowledge influences how people generate innovations and technologies that drive economic growth, expand the talent pool to drive competitiveness, improve productivity and inform evidence-based

necessary incentives for an environment where businesses and innovators are empowered to grow. Over the next four years, the policies will focus on encouraging investment, research and development and the protection of intellectual property.

"Infrastructure showcases the commitment to building the critical tool required to power a strong digital economy. We recognise that economic prosperity is linked to a robust digital foundation. Our emphasis on building



policy-making, amongst others.

"Policy: This highlights the fundamental role of policy in enabling innovation, entrepreneurship and inclusive growth. When properly designed and executed, the policy provides a platform for innovation and entrepreneurship to thrive. Effective policy provides regulatory clarity and

stronger digital infrastructure extends beyond connecting people but also focuses on economic empowerment and creating opportunities for inclusion. With improved access to quality broadband, and upgraded critical services, this pillar will catalyse a digital transformation that impacts our entire population.

"Innovation, Entrepreneurship & Capital: In the rapidly evolving global technology landscape, innovation,

UNDER 50 NIGERIA SPOTLIGHT

entrepreneurship, and access to capital are critical components of a strong digital economy.

This pillar provides a roadmap for Nigeria to harness the potential of the other three pieces as catalysts for the transformation of our digital economy. This pillar is the driving force behind the creation of an environment that encourages innovation, supports entrepreneurship



and attracts the required capital to deliver on our ambitions.

“Trade pillar embodies our commitment to position Nigeria as a major player in the African and global technology ecosystem. As a rapidly growing economy, with the ICT sector contributing 18.44% to Nigeria's GDP in Q2 2022, and e-commerce spending projected to grow to \$75 billion by 2025 (Statista), our primary goal is to enhance Nigeria's participation in the global technology trade over the next 4 years. A core part of this pillar is our aim to improve Nigeria's ranking in the ECI (Economic Complexity Index) Technology Index.”

The 3 Million Bill Gates Programme:

The name Bill Gates needs no introduction to so many people as he is reputed as being one of the most successful entrepreneurs and technology innovator in the world. The Co-founder of Microsoft is one man who has left an indelible mark on the technology industry by founding the world's largest personal-computer software company, and went to become one of the richest human beings on the planet.

Bill Gates was responsible for putting the layer in between the user and DOS (Disk Operating System). He pioneered the

technology revolution, and became a great leader because he had a vision: A personal computer in every home, on every desk running Windows. Gates drive and his company's determination will not give up until this happens.

People used to doubt how he made a big company from a garage, especially without a college degree. Hard work and determination is what helped him get this big, not overnight success. Gates' impact on the technology industry and society as a whole is immeasurable. His innovations have greatly transformed the way people work, communicate and interact with each other. Through his Microsoft's

TECHNGOVERNANCE

software, millions of people have been empowered to become more productive and effective both at work and personal lives. As a commentary says about Mr Gates; his vision for a world where everyone has the opportunity to live a healthy, productive life has inspired countless people around the world.

“One Man who discovered technology.”

Dr Bosun Tijani is leading the emergence of these new generations of Gates in Nigeria who can use technology and transform the way millions of people will live their lives under the 3MTT programme managed by the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA). The 3 Million Technical Talent (3MTT) programme, a critical part of the Renewed Hope agenda, is aimed at building Nigeria's technical talent backbone to power our digital economy and position Nigeria as a net talent exporter. The first phase of the programme, executed in collaboration with NITDA, will involve multiple stakeholders including fellows, training providers, partners and placement organizations.

The first phase of the programme will be executed as a fellowship model in collaboration with NITDA. We will select individuals with interest in specific skills and fund the cost of their training with training providers accepted into the programme. While, in line with Ministry's 1%-10% and 100% implementation approach, this first phase will aim at training and

UNDER 50 NIGERIA SPOT

place 30,000 technical talents, representing 1% of our overall target. It will be executed based on the framework co-created with key stakeholders across government agencies, training providers, educational institutions, development agencies and the private sector.

For many observers, this initiative led by Dr Bosun is an easy brush off since they doubt the instant result this could yield, but according to the World Economic Forum:

“With an explosion in internet penetration across the world accompanied by the proliferation of digital labour marketplaces or platforms, 'gig-work' is going to become the predominant mode of work. This shift has larger ramifications for low-skilled/blue-collar workers who usually comprise more than 80% of the workforce in developing countries. Internet platforms in e-commerce, food delivery, ride-sharing, logistics and so on have low barriers to entry and are creating a wealth of earning opportunities in countries where there aren't enough jobs for low-skilled populations.

Workers can engage with many platforms in parallel and maximize their earnings. Soon, digital labour marketplaces will embed financial services into their products which will make credit accessible for many people who are ignored by traditional financial institutions.

Over time, technology will enable financial stability and discipline without the need for people to gain relevant knowledge. AI and machine learning advisors will become ubiquitous, constantly recommending the next gig, next investment or next online class to us, truly democratizing growth and financial wellbeing.”

It further reveals, “The one sector that has gone through breakneck change in the last two years is the workplace. Office work has been the default for knowledge workers for decades and did not warrant a full re-think until the pandemic. The pandemic tested it to its fullest but although we saw flat to increased productivity, the loss in cultural connectivity and an increase in anxiety, fatigue, apathy and burnout are all also some of the effects being felt. In a pace of rapid change, it is hard to parse out each piece independently. The pandemic also lasted long enough to truly change the talent landscape for many companies to a permanent global and hybrid one. This means that companies can seize the day in thinking about a global talent market



to tap into in a realistic fashion.

Undoubtedly, it is agreeable that building digital skills across societies of countries has the potential to open up opportunities for those who have been traditionally 'left behind', and

TECHGOVERNANCE

allows businesses to unlock technologies to their full potential to deliver their vision, including fostering diversity, equity and inclusion.

In EU countries, there is a shortage of digitally skilled talent in the labour market where 57% of enterprises find it difficult to fill ICT specialist roles (for larger enterprises, this figure stands at 64% and for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the figure is 56%).⁹ This trend is also observed in other parts of the world, from the United Kingdom, where over 75% of job openings request digital skills,⁹ to sub-Saharan Africa.

Dr Bosun Tijani is gradually leading a digital revolution that in the next decades will usher new generation of technology disruptors from Nigeria both in transforming the country's economic advancement and providing value to the global market. Nigeria is gearing towards transforming its

export base
from
commodity to
technology
driven human
resource. For a
country's with a
growing
population that
is rank the third
highest in the
next 20 years, a
generation of
young

technology savvy population will not only curb the fear of national distress but become a world economic giant.

There are greener days ahead.

Burundi Celebrates Onyeagba in Grand Style

Despite the misgivings about his posting to Burundi which considered not commensurate to his experience, in just few months of resuming to the country's city, Bujumbura he



Ambassador Elijah Onyeagba PhD is one diplomat whose appointment and posting has given credence to the cliché that when preparation meets opportunity then success becomes inevitable. He was appointed in 2021 by former president Muhammadu Buhari as the youngest ambassador at the time and among the new breed of non-career ambassadors under the government

The Economist, banker, politician, real estate investor, financial expert and entrepreneur was set to cut his teeth in diplomacy.

The nomination of Amb. Elijah Onyeagba PhD by president Muhammadu Buhari in the year 2020 as a Nigerian envoy and later posted to Burundi in 2021 after the confirmation by the Senate put the economist cum banker to the saddle to prove his mettle at the foreign mission even though having excelled very well in the private sector.

extrapolated excitement and pride when he began to show leadership and coalesce soft powers from different sectors of the Burundian Economy for Nigeria. Burundi is not exactly that country any ambassador would love to get posted to, a Google search of economic indices from the country will sadden the incurable optimist but not Elijah who believes in miracles. Excitedly he left for Bujumbura with one thing in mind promote Nigeria for

UNDER 50 AFRICA SPOT

all its positivity and to ensure that the Burundian people find Nigerians worthy allies in their journey to economic prosperity.

It is now two years since Elijah was sent to Burundi and in the wisdom of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the 2021 set of Ambassadors has been recalled. As Ambassador Elijah winds up his term as the Nigerian Ambassador it is vital that we look at what has made him one of the best Ambassadors to emerge from Nigeria in the last decades and the lessons thereof; whether it is his tireless exposition of Burundi's richness or going all out facilitating a seamless trade agreement between governments and the private investors.

The first lesson is that the economy is still the major soft power in diplomacy; Diplomacy is the ability to influence without being seen. Countries who wish to extend their reach and influence across the globe have found economic tools as the quickest way to influence without being seen. It is for no reason that the USA has considerable interest in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and through that has been able to influence countries for the protection of the US interest. China, fast emerging as a world power is also using economic diplomacy veritably for its interest, especially in Africa. It is therefore necessary that Nigeria, the dominant power in Africa, must toe the same path to increase its influence across the globe.

This Elijah understood and within his first three months in office set up the Nigerian-Burundi Business Council headed by Paul Chukwuma to explore areas of common interest for Nigeria and Burundi economically. The Maiden summit of this Council was held in September 2022. From this initiative, a Nigerian-owned University, Olivia University now exists in Burundi. Nigerian companies now supply urea and fertilizers to Burundi whose economy is built on Agriculture. Another Nigerian company has also supplied thousands of palm oil seedlings to Burundi and is on the verge of supplying plantain suckers. All These never existed till Elijah came and performed a miracle. With his efforts, Burundians see Nigeria as a country that seeks out its well-being in Africa and is ever ready to protect the interest of Nigeria whenever the need arises.

Another Important lesson we learnt from Elijah's stay in Burundi is that it's the job of the diplomat to intentionally seek friendship with his host country for the interest of his country. Their relationship need not be binary or excessively bureaucratic. Elijah went out of his way to court friendship for Nigeria. This intentional



DIPLOMACY

act has led Burundian President Evariste Ndayishimiye to visit Nigeria twice, including one that involved him having a town hall meeting with the Nigerian youths led by the National Youth Council of Nigeria, NYCN. Members of the Burundian Parliaments have also visited Nigeria and various government delegations from Nigeria including Senators and the hierarchy of the Nigerian Military have also visited Burundi. In these visits, they never hesitated to express their profound gratitude to the Nigerian government in sending Elijah to their country as no one could have done better than the young innovator diplomat.

Our Arts were not left out, as the Ambassador was able to take our Afrobeats to Burundi with the likes the popular singer Timaya thrilling the Burundian audience.

For Amb. Elijah Onyeagba, two years was just the tip of the iceberg of unleashing phenomenal ideas that would make many diplomats desire to be posted there. However, for the beginning of every assignment there is also an end, and as the president

Tinubu led government recalls all diplomats back home, it is no doubt that somebody like Amb. Onyeagba will get a pat on the back for representing Nigeria well. Why not? Good work calls for more work.

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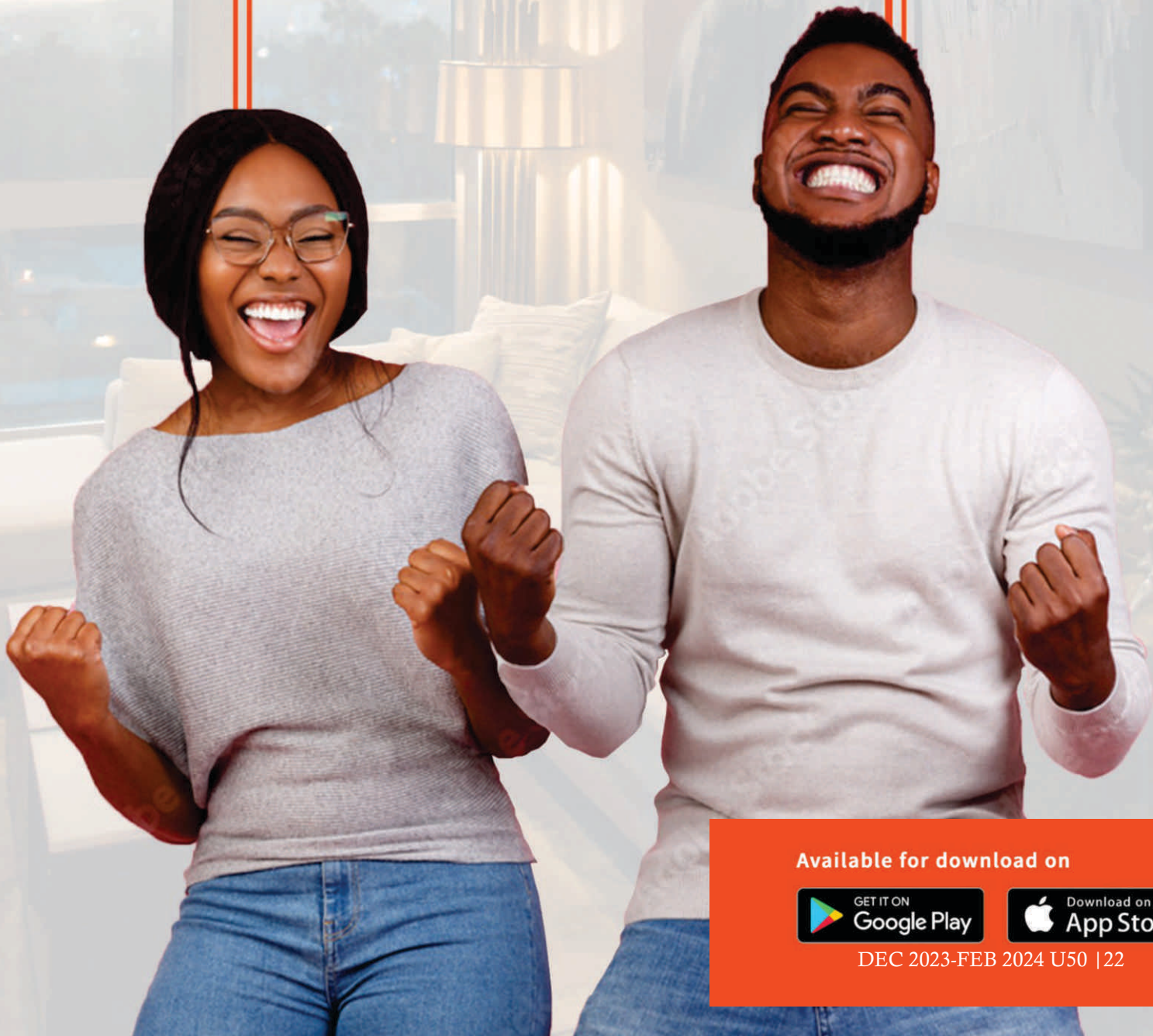


Oyaje Idoko
Co-founder/CEO, Layer3 Communications

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UNDER 50 NIGERIA SPOT

Oyaje Idoko is the CEO and Founder of Layer3, a prominent cloud and IT solutions provider in Nigeria. With over 19 years of experience in the ICT sector, he embarked on his professional journey with brief tenures at the now defunct Prodigy International and Startech Connections before establishing Layer3 more than 18 years ago. Under his guidance, Layer3 has consistently experienced growth, distinguishing itself as one of Nigeria's most customer-focused IT companies. The company has expanded its reach across Africa, prioritizing the delivery of peace of mind to its diverse clientele.

Oyaje holds a degree in Communications Engineering from the Federal University of Technology, Owerri, and furthered his education at the Stanford Graduate School of Business Executive Program. Additionally, he is an alumnus of the Stanford Seed Program.

The name Layer 3 is one that anyone who hears will easily point one foreign company or American tech brands to create such a hard to forget name for a company.

The company was founded in 2005 when the telecommunication penetration was gathering momentum from the major cities to other parts of the country with less than 10% of the population at the time connected to a mobile phone or internet.

Under the visionary leadership of Mr Oyaje, the company aimed to remain at the forefront of our technology business transformation in the country.

With a team of local content well equipped and groomed by the founder to combine our knowledge of world-class technology solutions, in addition to partnership with some of the global technology providers to deliver exceptional value for clients.

These cutting edge solutions which are targeted at addressing technology solutions cross all sectors and includes

TECH LEADERS

Oyaje is driven by a laser focus on the things that matter to him. He is an introvert with a naughty streak and believes in the continuous pursuit of excellence. He is certain that perfection can be achieved with determination and effort.

“Arduous and downright rewarding” has characterized his journey. And yes, he used to program over 1000 lines of code at age 12, with no doubt that he would wear this techie badge for a long time. No wonder he obtained a Bachelor's degree in Communications Engineering from the Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Nigeria and moved on to kick off his formal career as a Network Engineer with Prodigy International. Shortly after, he led the team that built the first fixed wireless broadband network in Nigeria at Startech Connections which launched the first fixed wireless access as 3.5 GHz operator in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and the company was the first to rollout this service among the 19 companies that were awarded licences by the National Communications Commission (NCC) on 1st July 2002.

Pure entrepreneurial ambition and a love help fuelled his commitment to learning and diligence to work setting him at the top of his team. This rich attribute elevated him to led the Engineering Team at Startech from 2002 to 2005 and in that same year, started Layer3.



the innovation of the data center, software



By 2001 it had a 37% share of the core routers market, challenging Cisco's once-dominant market-share. It grew to \$4 billion in revenues by 2004 and \$4.63 billion in 2014), opened its Lagos office with distribution of B2C VMware,

Every new day since then has signaled exciting challenges and experiences that keep him ticking.

In the quest for more knowledge, Oyaje took on a Stanford University Graduate School of Business Executive program because learning improved methods as the world around you evolves is the only way to keep the eyes focused on the moving target that is technology and the business of it.

Mr Oyaje and his team have built a 24/7 network management and support center that allows them to provide round the clock remote monitoring and support services for its customers' IT and network infrastructure as well as our expansive metro fiber network infrastructure

guaranteeing optimal performance and quick fault resolutions.

The company has progressively transitioned through various strides from launching its initial operations with just two staffs in 2005, becoming a Juniper registered partner in 2006 (*Juniper Networks, Inc. is an American multinational corporation headquartered in Sunnyvale, California. The company develops and markets products including routers, switches, network security products and software-defined networking technology.*

The company was founded in 1996 by Pradeep Sindhu with Scott Kriens as the first CEO, who remained until September 2008. Kriens has been credited with much of Juniper's early market success. It received several rounds of funding from venture capitalists and telecommunications companies before going public annual revenues by 2000.

Metro Fibre License Juniperselect Partner Commissions Longhaul Service in 2009 and rolled out Abuja and Kano Fibre.

Mr Oyaje in the past decades has demonstrated his consummation of exploring new ways of doing things, thinking of ways to scale goodness on earth through mentoring and volunteering. You can catch him on the flip side tucked in his sofa enjoying war and epic movies, buried in a book somewhere, engaged with a podcast or enjoying playtime with family. His efforts alongside his co-founders to build Layer3 Communications to become one of Africa's technology penetration leaders.

UNDER 50 NIGERIA SPOT

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Bruce Ayonote
Co-founder/CEO, Suburban Fibre Company

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UNDER 50 NIGERIA SPOT

Bruce Ayonote was born on the 15th of April 1974 in Lagos Nigeria, he is a member of the board and one of the founders of Suburban Fibre Company, one of Nigeria's leading internet service providers that have stood the test of time spanning over a decade since launch. He has over 20 years of International Business experience specializing in telecommunications.

He is responsible for driving the group's advanced technology adoption strategy which has given Suburban its unique advantage in the Telecommunications market and early innovators that shaped the technology industry in the country, especially in the federal capital territory when the industry was dominated by foreigners.

Mr Bruce is a founding member of what is known today as Suburban Group, he has been part of the team that has grown the company from its formation in 1999 through its various growth stages to its present position. He is also a substantial shareholder and member of the board of directors. He is a regular contributor on Entrepreneurship and business forums and is deeply committed to youth development ventures in Nigeria.

Mr. Ayonote holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Politics and Public Administration from the University of Maiduguri and has received the BT Diploma in Telecommunications

Management Studies from Hull Business School in the United Kingdom. He is an alumnus of the General Management Program (GMP) at Harvard Business School and has also attended several courses at the London Business School.

He has received several awards and recognitions, celebrated in 2021 as Abuja's Most Outstanding Under 50 CEO in Internet Service Provision and also Abuja's Most Outstanding Under CEO of the Year. He tirelessly continues to lead a team of young and vibrant innovative technology enthusiasts through the Legend brand with Legend Internet, Legend, Home, Legend Fibre and various other world class products and services.

Bruce and his co-visionaries founded Suburban Fibre Company as one of the pioneers of internet technology in Nigeria and part of the turbulent fashioning of the country's technology space with the transition of decades of military rule to democratic system of government in 1999, situated in no other city but the newly formed Federal Capital Territory. As one of the country's indigenous fiber optic internet companies, it became popular through its urban savvy world class advert of legend internet when it was launched in 2016.

TECH LEADERS

Legend is an offshoot of Suburban Fiber Company was about enabling easy access to content using broadband technology for Nigeria with a population that largely could not have access to affordable internet solution; when internet was considered by many to be just for the upper class. Legend is a product of Suburban FibreCo.

Learning this solved the mystery of how Legend is able to deliver fibre-optic connections right inside people's homes. Suburban is a 24 year old company, and has had quite a while to set up the groundwork, way before the concept of Legend was even conceived.

Legend is in fact a product that takes



advantage of years of investment in deploying a robust fibre network that spreads across the breadth of Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory that has become one of the fastest growing cities in the world.

After 7 years since its launch, Legend has gone beyond just a

UNDER 50 NIGERIA SPOT

product suite that delivers premium content, TV, internet and voice services – all over a high-speed fiber optic data connection in Nigeria's capital city of Abuja in its initial vision but significantly contributed to the growth of the technology industry beyond the Federal Capital Territory.

Bruce has led his team to offer solutions for government, rural communities, hospitality industry and other private sector businesses enabling the spiral leap of the technology development in the country.

Legend studied and tried various solutions but only got a deeper appreciation for the underlying issues ranging from wide and general factors like social & economic to granular issues like the power switch in a customer's home being turned off.

The company has focused on delivering stellar customer service to its customers as a result of its critical study and analysis of the market after which it launched the hilarious My Legend App. "At the heart of My Legend App was company's commitment to ensuring that its customers have a seamless experience when using their services such as LegendPay and other products and services of the Legend Ecosystem. The services eliminate the need to go through third parties or cumbersome media to reach support function which will respond to the consumers' interactively.

Legend also ensures that its product enables consumers to track their tickets and enquiries so they never have to worry about insufficient information on your Legend services.

The App is available on both iOS and Android platforms which can be downloaded for free from the App Store or Google Play. During the upsurge experienced by telecommunication service providers and customers during the Covid-19 pandemic,

Legend as a digital service provider has moved towards an audacious task of delivering the customer service expectations that emerged post COVID-19 pandemic. While the magnitude of this responsibility can easily be mistaken for regular customer service the pre COVID-19, expectations are coming out differently from the regular which has made it possible for Legend to transform its services.



TECH LEADERS

Legend is a digital services platform headquartered in Abuja, with a focus on three main markets in the technology space: broadband, fin-tech and mobile. The company's broadband services, Legend Fiber and WiFi, are the largest fiber-to-the-home and public WiFi networks in Abuja and Minna.

According to the company, "Legend Pay is directly integrated with merchants, banks and digital payment platforms to enable easier and seamless payments. Our Fiber to the Home service boasts of a robust customer base with over 250,000 homes passed and 10,000 homes activated. We also have a mass market consumer service which has over 100,000 connections monthly."

Mr Bruce Ayonote is one personality who is media shy and prefers to hide behind the spot light of his company's success, yet it is without a doubt that whilst so many indigenous businesses that were founded within the same period have shut down or failed, through his innovation and altruistic team drove the company to better days.

He very rarely accepts accolades for the giant strides the company has achieved under his leadership yet he was awarded in 2021 as Abuja Most

Outstanding CEO in 2021 and Abuja Most Outstanding CEO in Internet Service Solutions in 2021. But to the humble, easy going Bruce Ayonote, he is just getting started.

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Olumide Soyombo
Co-founder/CEO, Bluechip Technologies/Voltron Capital

Olumide Soyombo is the co-founder and chief executive of Blue Chip Technologies Ltd and Voltron Capital, one of the pioneer technology startup companies based in Lagos state. He holds a BSc in Systems Engineering from University of Lagos and MSc in Business and Information Technology from the Aston Business School in Birmingham, England.

The 40 year old technology enthusiast is one of the those young Nigerians who many considered strange during childhood due to his passion for technology at a time when many people in Nigeria had very little knowledge of it beyond just the type writer.

At the age of 12 when many people had never seen a technology device except the NITEL phone booth which they would queue up to make phone calls, Olumide had already been fascinated with technology after immersing himself for hours into the world of his father's desktop computer. He seized upon the innovative idea to leverage on emerging

technology need and initiated his inaugural venture; registering email addresses which were later sold to customers.

Around 1999 when Nigeria was leaping into a technology boom, Olumide had secured a significant capital investment of about \$40,000 from his father forming the foundation for what is known today as Bluechip Technologies Ltd.

His dogged commitment shaped by years of experience led him on a trajectory that gradually positioned him to stand out and inspire so many young technology enthusiasts at the time. That investment was nurtured over the years to blossom into a multi-million dollar enterprise of considerable growth and influence today.

Olumide's streak of entrepreneurship was quite uncommon for many young people his age who had come from wealthy backgrounds such as his own, yet as an undergraduate in University of Lagos he engaged in personal development through several professional training programs fashioning his business foray.

Many years before starting Bluechip Technologies, Olumide had returned from the United Kingdom after completing his Masters in Business and IT, and then started his career as a junior analyst for Tavia

Technologies established in year 2000. Tavia Technologies was one of the technology pioneers specialized in data analysis providing business solutions to financial institutions in the country.

It is his experience at Tavia that further illuminated Olumide's mind to explore more opportunities in the technology space facilitated by his father's determination to encourage him to become successful.

Olumide would leave Tavia few years later to found Bluechip Technologies Ltd in 2008 with his business partner Kazeem Tewegbade who had worked with him at Tavia.

With just a few staff in 2008 when the company started, he had built the company into one of the leading business application firm focused exclusively on assisting organizations in planning, designing, implementing and operating business application solutions and strategies that are central to creating and maintaining a competitive business advantage. The company in 2022 announced its expansion based on growing demand beyond the company's initial products and services offer, leading it to other African countries like Ghana, Kenya, Zambia and the DRC, providing warehousing growth.



UNDER 50 NIGERIA SPOT

His passion driven leadership has grown the company into an enterprise technology company that has worked with top tier companies in financial and technological industries, including MTN, 9mobile formerly Etisalat, Guaranty Trust Bank, First Bank and Access Bank. Bluechip Technologies also worked with internationally reputed technology leaders like Apple and Amazon in providing cutting edge solutions for businesses across Africa.

Mr Olumide became popular not just from the success of his technology based company but his significant investing and developing human capital in the technology space. The ethos of his father to leave his impact on people's lives engineered his commitment to funding startups becoming what is referred as pre-seed investor.

Pre-seed investing is not what many will venture into in a developing economy like that Nigeria, not even financial institutions would venture into seed funding talk more of pre-seed funding. This is because pre-seed investing is investment made at the earliest stage of a business, incubation period which require developing the product, identifying the market before launching it.

This is no mere move by Olumide, as even the top tier banks and financial institutions shied away from funding startups and when they decide to, they request white elephants that made it practically impossible for the creators of the idea to meet up. He had singlehandedly funded about 100 startups with many of them breaking-even into successful independent ventures. His venture capital firm, Voltron Capital has helped 53 African startups through its Fund 1 stream using an empirical funding approach that focuses on several streams of funding.

Mr Olumide's investment in different startups as an angel investor using gains from Bluechip Technologies led to the remarkable successes of multi-million dollar companies like Piggyvest, Paystack and TeamApt.

He launched his literary composition in a memoir titled, "Vantage," the book which exposes his vantage point, investment in the African technology sector, and the profound business and life lessons he acquired on his journey on blazing the trail in the tech.

The story of Olumide Soyombo is on that redefined the

TECH LEADERS



subsistent one to an evolving generation of formidable business system that will last generations from today.

Mr Olumide has expressed his excitement in helping ideas turn into successful enterprises that can create employment and add significant value to the country's economy. His venture capital firm is working strategically to launch into African countries to simplify start up financing and business development in the technology industry.



A professional portrait of Tosin-Faniro Dada, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark blue blazer over a white top. She is standing with her arms crossed against a light-colored wall. The image is framed with a white outline.

T E C H

Tosin-Faniro Dada
Pioneer Team Member Lagos Innovate/Former
CEO, Endeavor Nigeria/Board Member, Flutterwave



Tosin Faniro-Dada is the former Managing Director/CEO of Endeavor in Nigeria, a non-profit organization that selects, mentors and accelerates the best high-impact entrepreneurs in Africa through provision of various support systems to enable them scale business challenges and former Head of Startup at Lagos Innovate.

She is a certified public Accountant licensed in Massachusetts USA, a graduate Summa Cum Laude (highest honors) with a B.Sc in accounting from the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, and an M.sc in Accounting from Boston College. She also obtained advanced Management Certificate from INSEAD, United States.

Tosin was the Director, Programmes & Coordination, Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF) where she led the fund's intervention programs; providing access to finance to MSMEs, facilitating training and job placements for young people and supporting entrepreneurs in Lagos State, under the Lagos Innovates program. The program which aimed at providing enabling environment for Tech startups and innovation driven enterprises to thrive in the state also provided tech founders with access to co-working space, talent and event sponsorship.

Prior to the establishment of the programme, most tech startups and innovation driven enterprises had little or no support from the government thereby stifling so many startups and leading some of them to fizzle into oblivion. As the first of its kind in the entire country at the time, Lagos State Employment Trust Fund for resident founders and Lagos-based high impact, high-potential startups in smart ways, drawing from the experience and successes of similar government-led initiatives like Startup Chile, Startup India and Startup Singapore.

UNDER 50 NIGERIA SPOT

She had joined the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund as the head of Strategy & Partnership in 2016 and was responsible for raising private sector finance to fund the activities of the Fund and also engaging strategic methods of promoting the Fund. Her efforts as one of the pioneer members of the founding management executives contributed the phenomenal success of the programme and its sustainability over the years with groundbreaking support of idea hubs, talent development programmes, hub loans and work space vouchers.

In 2022, about 6 years since its establishment, the programme had created over 168,000 direct and indirect jobs within Lagos state by empowering micro, small and medium enterprises putting the state

at the country's access to finance index to 20%. The organization which has spread to 26 local government areas in the state has over the years received funding of up to N8.4 billion.

Tosin's strides cannot be far from her years of cutting her teeth in practicing in top notch firms like PricewaterhouseCoopers in Boston, United States. She attributes her analytical thinking skills that have contributed immensely in her ability to successfully deliver on client engagements as a Lead Senior officer. This included planning and executing financial statement audits, managing associates, and keeping partners and clients well informed of the audit progress.

Before working with LSTEF, she worked in the Corporate Banking Division at Skye Bank (Polaris Bank) where she executed Oil and Gas Upstream transactions.



TECH LEADERS

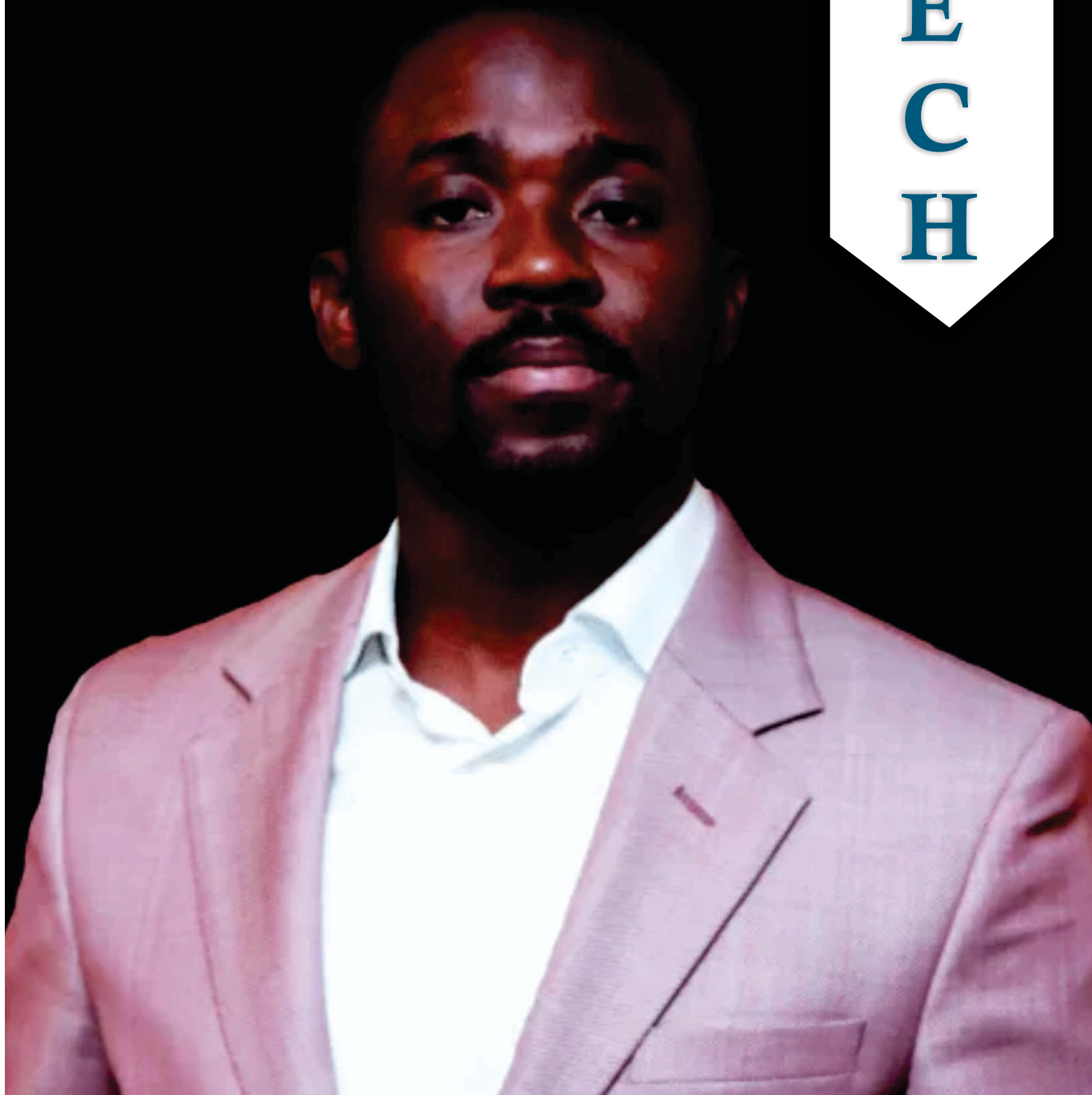
Her foray into tech will be considered by many as an unforeseen event, yet to her it was taking a dive in untested waters when the opportunity came calling her to work at Lagos Innovate. She emphasized that her finance and project management skills gave her an edge over other people in tech enabling her to easily facilitate funding of the tech ecosystem.

She joined Endeavor Nigeria, a subsidiary of the global community of, by and for high-impact entrepreneurs – those who dream bigger, scale faster and pay it forward. Driven by the belief that high-impact entrepreneurs transform economies, Endeavor is on a mission to build thriving entrepreneurial ecosystems in emerging and underserved markets around the world.

The organization creates multiplier effect by inspiring high-growth founders to dream bigger, supporting and investing in them to scale faster, and providing a platform to pay it forward – thereby compounding their individual impact. It was launched in February 2018 with the support of seven local business leaders – founding board of directors and in partnership the Omidyar Network.

Endeavor's network spans 42 markets and supports more than 2,300 entrepreneurs whose companies generate combined revenues of over \$42 billion US and have created more than 3.9 million jobs. Endeavor's unique entrepreneurs-first model and network of trust provide a platform for founders to dream big, scale up, and pay it forward to the next generation of entrepreneurs.

After her successful exit in 2023 from Endeavor Nigeria, Tosin Faniro-Dada currently sits on the board of one of the most valued companies in the world, Flutterwave where she provides her wealth of experience in driving the company's multi-national vision.



Olalekan Olude
Co-founder Jobberman/Board Member
WhogoHost, CicoServe & E-Settlement

UNDER 50 NIGERIA SPOT

Olalekan Olude is one of the top technology leaders in Nigeria, the Co-founder of Jobberman, West Africa's most popular job search engine and served as Special Adviser on Job Creation and Youth Empowerment to Ogun State Governor Dapo Abiodun. Olude was named as one of the 100 Most Influential Young Nigerians by Avance Media in 2016.

Olude is from Imasayi in Yewa North Local Government in Ogun State; he started his education at Iganmode Grammar School, Ota between 1993 and 1999 where he obtained his Senior School Leaving Certificate. He proceeded to Obafemi Awolowo University where he earned a Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Computer Science between 2005 and 2009. He also attended Lagos Business School (Pan Atlantic University), completed the Executive Management Program,

and The Wharton School (University of Pennsylvania), with certificate in Executive Education in Strategy and Leadership.

Before Jobberman, Olude had few experiences including working with TeleMobile Nigeria Limited as a Network Engineer and with Goldman Sachs as Technology Analyst.

In August 2009, at 28 years old he co-founded Jobberman with his friends from university, Ayodeji Adewunmi and Opeyemi Awoyemi. Olude acted as Jobberman's Chief Operating Officer from 2009 to 2017. After exiting Jobberman, he was appointed Special Adviser Job Creation and Youth Empowerment to the Ogun State Governor in 2019.

In 2021, Olude founded an employee health benefits startup called roHealth, which later rebranded to become Motherboard (a comprehensive employee benefits platform) in 2023.

TECH LEADERS

Jobberman, the platform which was built with his team of cofounders connected employees and recruiters to the right opportunities and talent. Before LinkedIn and social media blew up in Nigeria, Jobberman was the premier space for job-search interactions.

Jobberman launched in August, 2009, in the middle of a nationwide public universities' strike. Olude was in his final year of school. In those early founding days, each co-founder focused on managing different aspects of the business: Adewunmi was its face and strategist; Ope its engineering and product marketing lead; and Olude its sales, operations, and finance lead.





In 2019 Olalekan alongside Ayodele Adewunmi and Opeyemi Awoyemi cofounded Jobberman.

At Jobberman, Olalekan operated in the capacity of the Chief Operating Officer from 2009

On graduating from the university in 2010, Olude and Awoyemi left Ife for Lagos to continue hacking away at building their new company. The years between 2009 and 2014 would prove “formative” for the founders on their entrepreneurial journey, Olude recalls.

As a successful business that became a goldmine for investors by 2015, Olude and his partners had gotten a few approaches from investors wanting to buy them out. They didn't take up any of the offers, but they kept an open mind with the big picture in view.

In 2017, Jobberman got acquired by Ringier One Africa Media, and Olude and his co-founders exited the business, leaving behind them a legacy of 50,000 employers and over 3 million users on the platform. Each partner and friend wanted to “do other things” and “conquer the world”, Olude says, explaining why they exited.

Two years after leaving Jobberman, in 2019, Olude was appointed Special Adviser to the governor of Ogun—a state in southwestern Nigeria—on job creation and youth empowerment strategies. At first, he did not want the job. Government and entrepreneurship, he says, are two different worlds. When he left the latter for the former, he realised that government gave him the platform to create more impact, “with the stroke of a pen.”

Olalekan is invested in building and scaling businesses. To his credit, Olalekan Olude is the Founder and Advisor of Rovedana Limited, a startup providing staffing and payroll financing services to SMEs in Nigeria. Olalekan Olude is also Co-founder at CicoServe Payments Limited, a fintech startup providing grassroots banking to millions of Nigerians through more than 5000 agents nationwide. Olalekan cofounded Jobberman, Nigeria's biggest recruitment website and the largest in Africa.

to 2017. Jobberman has now grown to become West Africa’s most popular job search board supporting over 60,000 companies and 5 million candidates in Nigeria and Ghana. Olalekan is also a Founding Partner at African Talents Company, an executive recruitment agency. He worked short-term as Africa Head, Executive Search at Ringier One Africa Media, South Africa from 2016-2017. Prior to these, he was Network Engineer at TeleMobile Nigeria Limited and Technology Analyst at Goldman Sachs, a global investment bank.

In recognition of his numerous contributions to startups growth and youth development, Olalekan was named among the 100 Most Influential Young Nigerians by Advance Media in 2016.

He sits on the board of various startups including WhoGoHost, CicoServe Payments Limited, and E-Settlement Limited.



Ruth Iselema
Co-founder/CEO, Bitmama Incorporated



With a degree in Pharmacy, she jived to forge a path that would significantly impact the world rather than settle for a payday employment leading to her launching of crypto company Bitmama Inc, launched in 2016.

Bitmama offers two products to the crypto market in Nigeria; the first product is an eponymous mobile (Android and iOS) app that allows users to buy and sell crypto currencies, including Bitcoin, Ethereum, or Celo. And the second one is Changer, *“an International money transfer app that lets millions of people send and receive money in any currency around the world in a very fast, easy, and secure way.”*

The name Bitmama comes from a combination of Bitcoin and mama. *“I started learning about blockchain and cryptocurrencies earlier in 2015, through a friend and a couple of Telegram and WhatsApp groups I joined. Just as it is now, I turned out to be only one out of maybe two women in the space. Because most of the conversations happened online and we did not see one another physically, people assumed I was an elderly woman. So they started calling me ‘Bitmama’ — a combination of bitcoin and mama — and the name stuck.”*

Ruth Iselema heads one of the top crypto tech companies in Nigeria, CEO of Bitmama Inc, a pan-African blockchain startup offering crypto products across payments, trading, loans, and investments, with footprints across Africa, Europe, and the US.

Prior to founding Bitmama, Ruth consulted for other leading global exchanges and blockchain protocols on their product strategy and market entry into Africa. A 2020 online survey by data platform Statista found that 32% of those Nigerians who took part used cryptocurrencies the highest proportion of any

country in the world. Estimates show that of the top 10 countries for trading volumes, Nigeria ranked third place after the US and Russia in 2020, generating more than \$400m worth of transactions.

Her over 6+ years of experience trading and managing blockchain accounts, she leads a network of distributed global team of 25+ at Bitmama that are spread across Nigeria and other African countries. Fondly called the Bitmama of Africa's blockchain space, Ruth has also been recognized as one of the female leaders in tech and top 20 individuals shaping Africa's blockchain space by leading media such as Crypto Asset Buyer and received other recognition from the German and Austrian Missions in Africa.

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The adventure started when she was scammed of NGN250, 000 (about US\$576) when trying to invest in crypto currencies. "Even though I did my due diligence, I still got scammed. So I decided this has to stop," she explained.

In September 2022, Ruth secured US\$1.65 million in funding to scale

While Bitmama is a highly-secure crypto-fiat exchange that allows traders to buy and sell Bitcoin, Ethereum and other digital assets in Africa, Changers is a solution that makes cross-border payments easy and efficient for businesses and individuals. Ruth graduated as a Pharmacist from Central University



beyond Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya. The funding was added to the US\$350,000 she raised in October 2021. Thanks to the overall financing, she wanted to build "*Africa's most user-friendly, innovative blockchain company.*"

In 2018, she was one of the beneficiaries of the Green House Lab accelerator program organized by Venture Garden Group. Between 2017 and 2018, she was the director of the tech company Venhub. In late 2021, she made it to the media outlet Crypto Asset Buyer's list of the Top 20

Accra, Ghana and forayed into entrepreneurship back in 2013 when the African blockchain and fintech landscape were quite nascent. Crypto traders relied on social media like WhatsApp and Telegram to exchange coins despite associated risks and the process of conducting cross-border remittances proved very rigid for individuals and businesses.

In 2016, she was inspired to build solutions that address both challenges in parallel. This led to the birth of Bitmama Inc. In 2018, Bitmama emerged one of the startups selected

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female accelerator by Venture Garden Group. Since then, the company has joined other accelerators and programs like LSETF, Seedstars and Startup Germany.

Bitmama's solutions cater to thousands of users across the globe. Ruth leads the company's globally-distributed team who are passionate

and excited about the possibilities of their products, Bitmama and Changers. Bitmama offered to acquire the cross-border payment startup, Payday for a reported sum of \$1 million. The acquisition deal, which puts Payday's value at \$30 million, allows Bitmama to broaden its product offering to include cross-border remittances without having to start this

service from scratch.

Ruth Iselema has expressed her resolve to facilitate Africa's seamless transition from a conventional financial transacting system to a more technology driven system; cryptocurrency.



Renewed Citizen

by Rinsola Abiola

SSA to the President on Citizenship & Leadership

The date, 29th May 2023 is still fresh in the minds of the citizens of Africa's most populous nation with the speech of renewed hope and the commitment to unburden them by the new president, Bola Ahmed Tinubu. The unequivocal passionate speech ended with the covenant thus; *"This is the proudest day of my life. But this day does not belong to me. It belongs to you, the people of Nigeria...."*

"In this spirit, I ask you to join me in making Nigeria a more perfect nation and democracy such that the Nigerian ideal becomes and forever remains the Nigerian reality."

It is more than 150 days from the day of that speech and the clarion call for the Nigerian citizen to take responsibility and live up to its civic duty in order to enjoy the gains of a Renewed Hope. The president is taking the call more seriously than many people know and his Senior Special Assistant gives insight into what awaits.

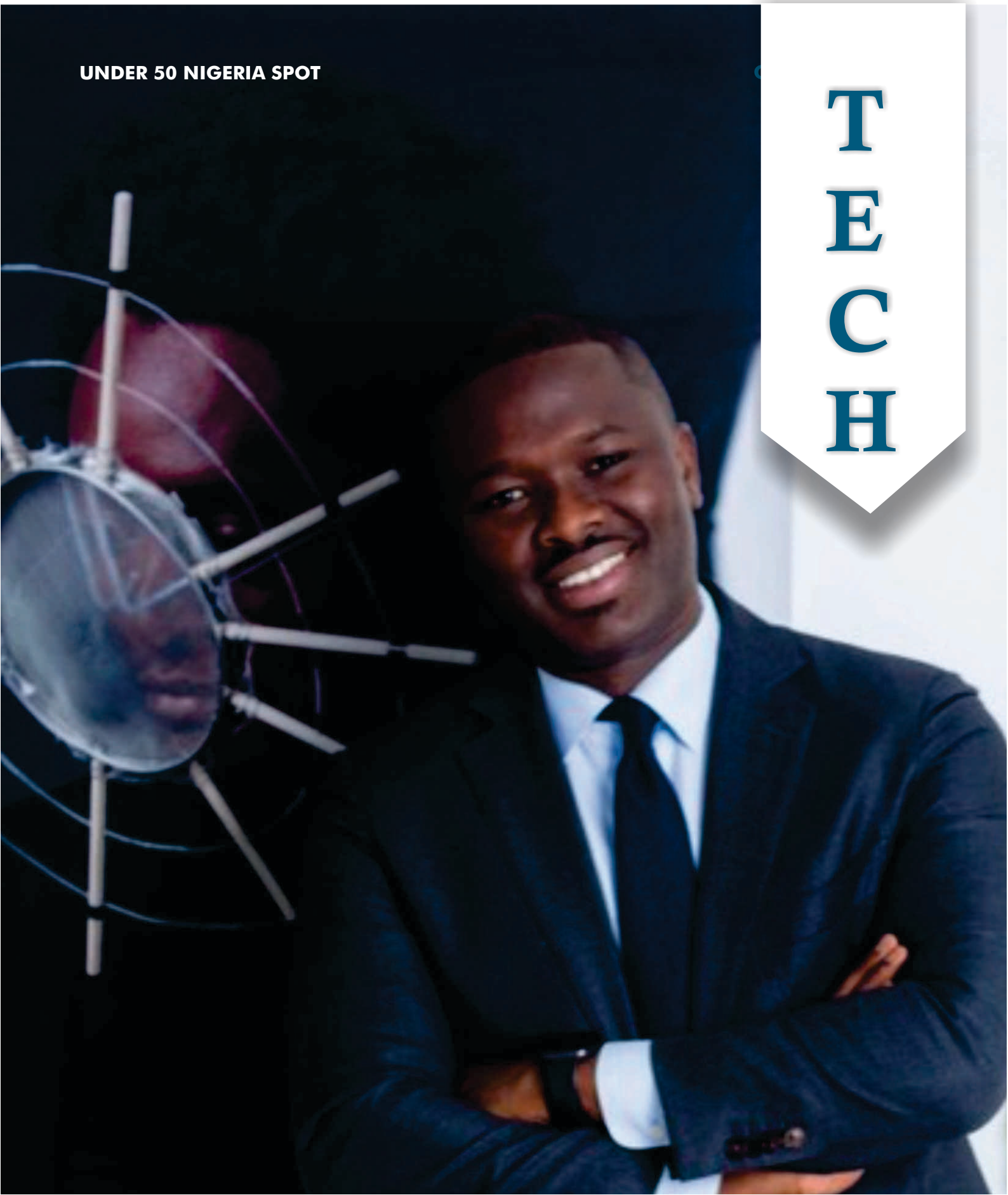
There is no denying the fact that our nation presently finds itself navigating

through stormy economic waters shaped by a confluence of both local and global events. This government was confronted with the old monster of fuel subsidy that had grown large in size and became very influential for decades threatening the development of our country for the benefit of its citizens. Despite the forewarned dread that removal of oil subsidy could strangle this good plans of this administration the Tinubu administration faced it headlong, and removed it to forestall future devastation for the citizens.

This government took the giant step of unifying the dollar rate and allowing perfect market forces to drive its trajectory to when it will become beneficial for the business community and the masses. In cushioning these the government equally rolled out various programmes such as grants, civil servants temporal increment, transportation palliatives, MSMEs loans and so many others that will gradually phase out as the economy stabilizes and regains its foothold. The president has made a bold commitment to revamping the country's economy with the projection of \$2 trillion in the coming years, increased employment opportunities, improved infrastructure development and heightened investors' confidence.

The success of this administration is intricately tied to the patriotic support of the citizens and their refusal to participate in activities that are capable of undermining the government's good intentions. In times of transformation and structural adjustments, there is often a tendency for citizens to resist or pressure the government into reversing beneficial policies as a result of temporal discomfort. Great nations became what they are today because their citizens refused to settle for momentary convenience but rather made enormous sacrifices through hard work, patriotism and diligence that generations after them are reaping from. How can the country develop faster when citizens are involved in destructive vices such as vandalism of national assets, counterfeiting of products and disregard for authority. Nigerians must realize that those in government are so few compared to the mass population outside the system, and it is largely on every citizen to esteem our nation and hold her dear.

The promise by government will be delivered when the citizen also does his part.



Kola Aina
Founding Partner, Ventures Platform



Kola Aina, Founding Partner at Ventures Platform. He is an avid angel investor and mentor to startup founders. He founded companies and sits on the board of some of them. Prior to focusing on venture building, Kola worked in corporate finance, administration, corporate turn-around and strategy.

He had started off his early career in banking with Fifth-Third Bank in the United States where he grew from entrant Electrical Engineer to financial analyst. He was an excellent student of Electronics Engineering Technology at Savannah State University. He concluded his programme in 2004 and basically handed over his degree certificate to his father. Afterwards, he focused on his own thing. As Aina preferred business to screws, engines, and electricity, his exit from Savannah was

almost immediately followed up with an MBA programme at Bowling Green State University. There, Aina was a blazing sun, brilliant enough to become the President of the MBA Students Association, take over several other prestigious positions. All of these—and more—polished Aina with enough experience to make his foray into the world of business, starting with being a financial analyst at Fifth Third Bank in Ohio, USA, in 2005, and going on to raise funds for business he believed in. He further obtained professional training from the Harvard Business School, University of California – Berkeley Law, Lagos Business School, and IESE Business School.

He served on the Presidential Committee on Job Creation and a mentor at the World Bank XL Africa program. Kola's foray into technology started with when he co-founded a leading Nigerian enterprise software company – Emerging Platforms. This penchant for developing new businesses inspired his investments into startups as a Venture Capitalist, identifying and investing in early-stage technology companies focused on the disruption of financial services, healthcare, education, agriculture, and enterprise software. He built a strong investment portfolio that became top tier among venture capitalists and investors in Nigeria. Some of those successful investments included category-defining companies including Mono, PiggyVest, Reliance HMO, and Paystack, which was acquired by Stripe in 2020.



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A passionate ecosystem builder, Kola Founded Ventures Park, a co-working space and community for entrepreneurs as well as Ventures Platform Foundation, which empowers entrepreneurs by providing access to capital, education and digital resources and advocates for entrepreneur-friendly policy.

Kola Aina is Founding Partner at Ventures Platform, an early-stage “discovery” venture capital fund championing the next generation of African entrepreneurs. He is a leading executive and board director who combines a powerful mix of entrepreneurial, investment, and technical experience across diverse industries including technology, finance, media, agriculture, infrastructure, and real estate.

He also served as the Chair of the Advisory Group on Technology and Creativity to the President of Nigeria and Co-Chaired of the Committee on Job Creation & Youth Employment to the President of Nigeria. He was also a board member and advisory board member for institutions including ARM Financial Advisers Limited, Reliance HMO, and the Yemisi Shyllon Art Museum.

Ventures Platform has supported over 140 founders to launch technology solutions from healthcare to logistics. Some of the companies have made to the top tech companies in the country with significant positive

impact on the economy through enormous job creation and employment opportunities. Among them are Credable; a driving the future of banking by enabling financial and non-financial institutions to deploy various digital financial solutions, such as digital savings wallets, lending products, payments, and more, to their end consumers, through a modern API-driven platform. Paystack is a Nigerian financial technology company that offers payment processing services to businesses and was acquired by Irish-American financial services company Stripe for \$200M in 2020. Pigyvest, the first online “Savings & Investment” app in West Africa. These are just few from the list of 140 businesses initially backed up by Ventures Platform.

Kola is passionate about mentoring and advising young entrepreneurs

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underserved -markets. This has put him on many stages both locally and internationally, where he has delivered speeches, lectures, and talks on technology, entrepreneurship, social change, and various other topics. He gave a TED talk at TEDxEuston where he spoke on the topic “Who will own our future unicorns?” He was also a speaker at Techcrunch's first event in Nigeria, Techcrunch Startup Battlefield Africa 2019.

He has received multiple awards and has been featured in various lists such as The 20 most important people in Nigerian tech, The ten most influential people in Nigerian Tech and #YNaijaPowerList2018 for Technology and many more. In his spare time, he enjoys writing on topics he's passionate about in his blog or on Twitter, reading books and spending time with his family.





Temitope Omotolani
Co-founder/CEO, Crowdyvest



Temitope Omotolani is the Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Crowdyvest; an impact driven community focused on creating an interdependence between individuals and businesses by providing an all-in-one financial solution geared towards achieving financial freedom, while facilitating impactful growth in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Regardless of the tough business terrain, Temitope's resilience also seeks to solve hard problems.

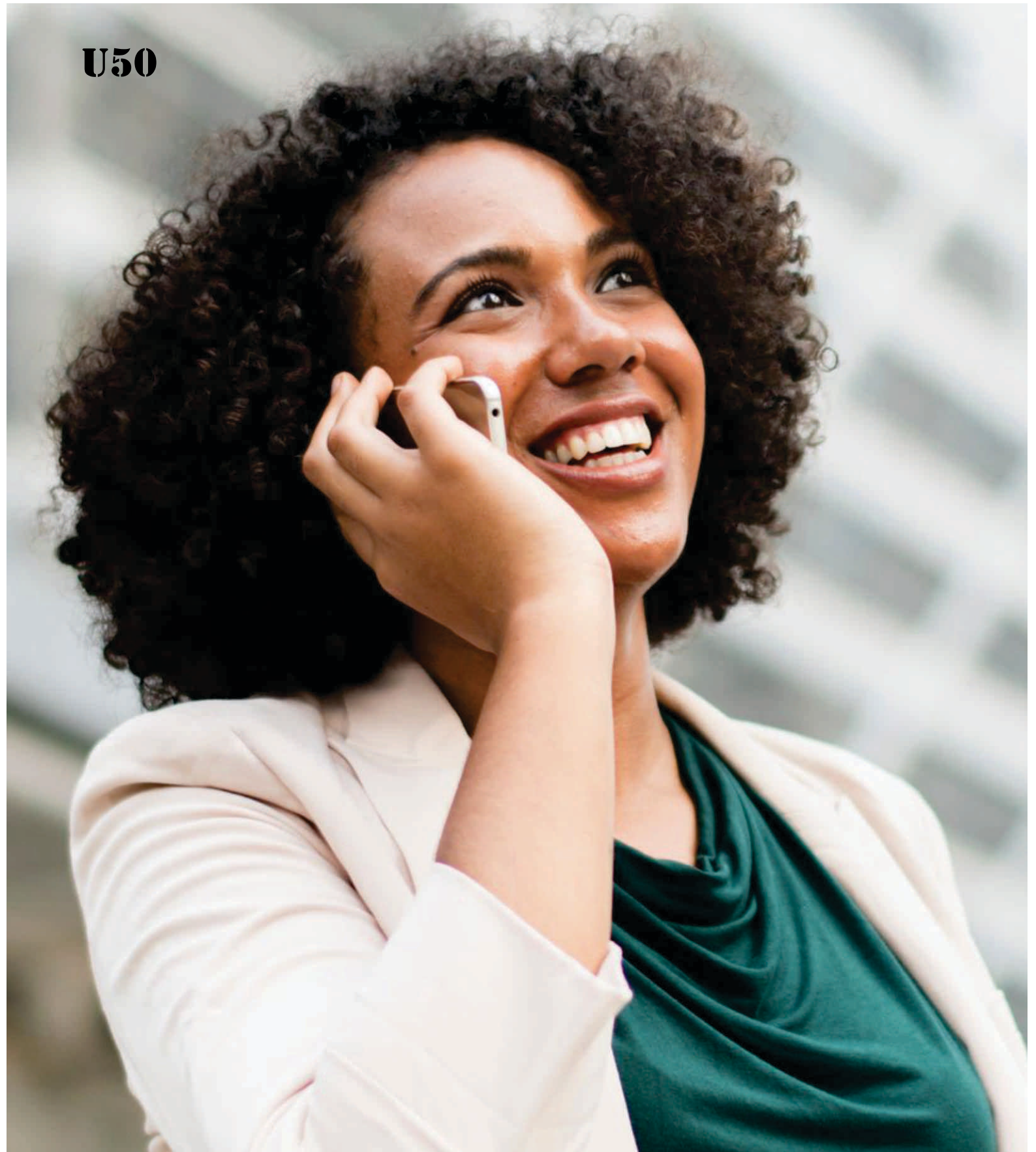
She is one of the Co-founders of Farmcrowdy, Nigeria's First Digital Agricultural Platform that launched in November 2016. Her first role was Product Development & Sales and in 4 months, she grew to become the VP of operations and in 1 year she became the COO. As Chief Operations Officer (COO) of Farmcrowdy, she coordinated all farm operations across over 14 states with over 25,000 farmers.

when she was 16, called 'Gifted Hands', a make-up business that ran for 10 years. At age 19, she founded a cleaning services company known as 'Fínífiní' enterprises.

In 2012, she built a product that focused on the buying and selling of agricultural produce from the rural areas and sold to the urban parts of the city of Lagos with over 18 million people, through offline crowdfunding, and set up a local market in Lekki every last Saturday of every month. It was called 'Ojawara.' Tope is mentioned by HEDA Resource Centre as one of the "30 Super Women" who choose to challenge issues in Food Security & Environmental Justice for International Women's Day 2021 and is also listed as one of the "Top Female Founders in Africa" who raised 2.5 million USD for the Nigerian agri-tech start-up Farmcrowdy.

and a young woman who cares about the community, she was the Project Director at "Beyond the Classroom Foundation"; an organization that helps raise funds for the purchase & distribution of school supplies to kids in less-privileged areas. She also volunteered at "The Irede Foundation" which aims to educate and empower children living with congenital and/or acquired limb loss. The graduate of Economics from the University of Lagos is also an alumni of Lagos Business School (LBS) and FATE Foundation's Aspiring Entrepreneurship Program. She has mentored and spoken on multiple panels and platforms both locally and internationally, addressing various topics around entrepreneurship and impact.

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She also sits on the board of some businesses across the world. She is an ardent believer in disruptive innovation, impact, and entrepreneurship as the most sustainable ways to eradicate poverty in Africa. Tope loves traveling, good music, strategy, planning and execution, and is passionate about creating businesses that focus on solving economic problems and adding value to humanity.

Crowdyvest is an impact-driven financial technology platform that creates financial solutions for a community of individuals and organizations that are committed to long-term growth and financial freedom. The company was founded out of the need to address impact-driven opportunities in different sectors of the economy. It was founded by Temitope Omotolani (CEO), Onyeka Akumah, Akindele Phillips, Christopher Abiodun, and Ifeanyi Anazodo – the same team that started Farmcrowdy, as a digital platform that connects investors to impact-driven opportunities through sponsorship packages to fund higher yields for a share of the returns.

The Digital investment platform, Crowdyvest, provided investment solutions to Nigerians into the tech startup's investment opportunities, plus interest offering returns on investment through savings and yields, with an assurance that the investment opportunities are “well-vetted.” A company that started as a team of 8 who sat around just one

table and did all the operations. Things were a bit rocky in the early stages of the start-up, but as time went on, gained more structure, definition, unified vision and mission. It later grew to a staff strength of 27 with over 101,000 members from across the world and a range of 7 major product offerings within 18 months and have been able to help more than 10 businesses across different sectors achieve many of their project targets.

Temitope took over the leadership of the company in 2021 during its most turbulent and difficult time with a debt

of about N7.7 billion which have been converted to equity for the investors. Her track record of remarkable success at Farmcrowdy leaves many with little doubt that she will fail and reposing investors' confidence in a rebound moment for the company in the days ahead. She is pronounced as one of the few women, who have contributed to the growth of communities in Nigeria even as a philanthropist, she has helped in putting the local farmers on the world scale to modernize farming and monetize it.

The present challenges of Crowdyvest do not in any deter her commitment to beat the storm as according to her, “Failure should be demystified and celebrated just as much as its vaunted counterpart.”





Babatunde-Akin Moses
Co-founder/CEO, SycamoreNG

The Mistakes of Supreme Court On 2023 Petition?

by Yusuf Usman Esq

Partner at Mildred & Patriarch Attorneys



There is hereby established a capital territory in and for the Federal Republic of Nigeria to be designated as the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja (hereinafter referred to as the "Federal Capital Territory").

With these words, the Federal Capital territory was created under the Federal Capital Territory Act, 1976.

The establishing legislation was Decree No. 6, promulgated by the Federal Military Government.

Subsequent Constitutions in Nigeria, particularly the 1979 and 1999 Constitutions expressly made provision establishing the Federal Capital Territory. Prior to Decree No 6, the administrative and commercial capital of Nigeria was situated in Lagos State.

A question that has agitated the mind of academics, constitutional lawyers, politicians and persons who are indigenes of the FCT is whether the FCT is a state like the 36 others and if not, why not? It would appear, from existing legislation and case law that the answer in neither here nor there. It would be useful to have another look at some provisions of the Constitution, comparing the features of the federating units (states) with that of the FCT. What is obtainable in other countries and why the FCT was created may also hold clues for us.

Decree No 6 does not disclose the purpose for relocating the Federal Capital to Abuja, but writers and historians like Yusuf Omotayo and Max Siollun have offered up several reasons.

One of such reasons is security and defence. Even though Nigeria was not at war at the time of the promulgation of Decree No 6, the government considered that the Federal Capital in Lagos would be susceptible to air and sea attacks in war times, because Lagos is a coastal city. It would, therefore be strategic to situate the Federal Capital in a safer location. There was also the need to situate the Federal Capital somewhere more central. Government officials from the North would have to drive hundreds of kilometers from borno, for instance, to get to Lagos. A more central location would be fair to all. This is in addition to the thought of situating the Federal Capital in a place that is ethno-religiously neutral. These were the geo-political reasons for the relocation.

There were also socio-economic reasons for the relocation. Lagos was and till date remains the hub of commerce in the Nigeria. The government, desired to expand the economic activities and prosperity of Lagos to the other parts of the Country and they reckoned that relocating the

Federal Capital would have the effect of igniting similarly rigorous commercial activity in other parts of the Country. The economic activities in Lagos caused congestion in Lagos, traffic and domestic congestion was such that the government concluded was not good for a Federal Capital, hence the decision to relocate.

Drawing from these reasons for leaving, the Government formed a committee with Justice Akinola Aguda as the Chairman and Mohammed Isma as Secretary which recommended the geographical region now known as Abuja as the Federal Capital Territory. Abuja was chosen out of over thirty possible options. The factors that Abuja had in its favour include its centrality. The geographic centre of the territory called Nigeria is in Katampe, Abuja. Another attraction was that Abuja did not have ancestral dominance by any of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria.

The journey to making Abuja the capital of Nigeria effectively commenced with Decree No. 6 of 1976 but it took fifteen years for Abuja to actually become the Capital of

[Continues on Page 54](#)

Babatunde Akin-Moses, the Co-founder / CEO, SycamoreNG, one of the young Nigerians who turned the traditional loan business into a seamless technology driven business model.

“...If you are in other countries, once you have a job, you can easily get a mortgage. But here in Nigeria, even if you are working, you need to be working for an upstream oil and gas firm or basically earning a lot of money before you can access a significant credit facility without having to present a landed property as collateral. You can see how that's a major problem in a country where there are 100 million poor people,” explains co-founder and CEO Babatunde Akin-Moses.

In 2017, Babatunde Akin-Moses who holds an MBA from Lagos Business School and Bachelor of Science degree in Economics from Bowen University had worked with reputable organizations such as Shell, PwC, KPMG and Pezesha before starting off SycamoreNG. These experience built across various financial consulting giants fashioned his eye for financial solutions to the growing Nigerian population. One of such pivotal moments was the release of a survey on MSMEs in the country by PriceWaterhouseCooper in 2020 that obtaining finance for



business operations was a major challenge for 22% of the survey respondents. Whilst about 48% of those who obtained alternative business finance confirmed that they received it from friends and family.

At Lagos Business School, Akin-Moses would meet Mayowa Adeosun and Onyinye Okonji who would later join him as co-founders at Sycamore.

Despite seeing a clear need in the market, Akin-Moses and his co-founders did not have the capital to finance a lending business, but as they conducted more research around the problem, they came across the peer-to-peer lending model used in the United Kingdom and Sycamore was born.

Akin-Moses says the name Sycamore is a reference to the biblical story of Zacchaeus climbing a sycamore tree to see Jesus and is a metaphor for the company's vision to provide financial upliftment for its customers.

Having identified a problem and a solution, the team set about building the first version of Sycamore. Their idea was to facilitate SME lending using technology but with no technical skills, they outsourced the building of the website while spreading the word about what they were doing. This was where their class at the Lagos Business School came in handy. After sharing what they were doing with the class, a classmate reached out with a loan request for her business. The trio also got their first angel investment from their classmates.

In addition to being able to lend to businesses, their first set of customers helped them validate the possibility of issuing loans without meeting in person.

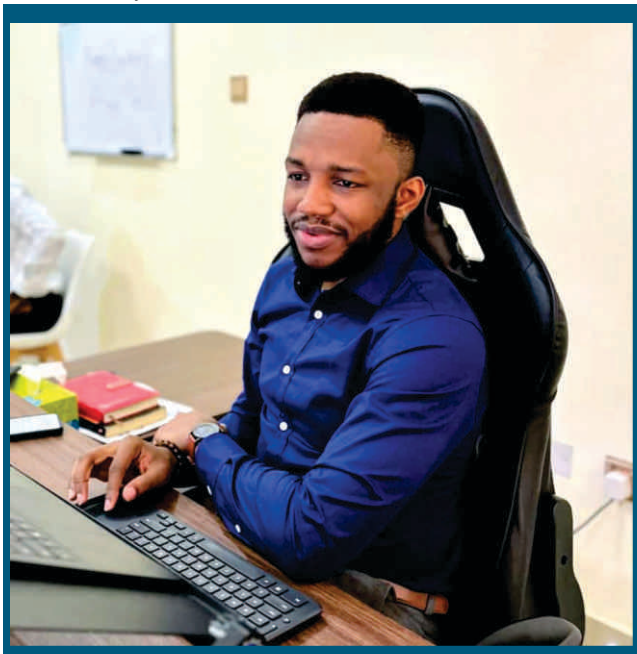
UNDER 50 NIGERIA SPOT

Sycamore has come a long way since 2019 and now offers additional services on its website and mobile app. Users can lend to friends or family through the app earning some money through interest rates but without the hassle that comes with lending to friends and family. Akin-Moses explains that building a solution to enable peer-to-peer lending was the result of numerous requests from users who wanted a relatively safe way to lend to their friends.

"People were asking how they could safely lend to their friends and people they know with some assurance of getting their money back. When we started getting more and more of those questions, we started to look at the data and then we saw that all over the world, people are getting more credit from friends and family than any financial institution, so we decided to make loan friends strictly for communal lending."

With this in mind, I asked Akin-Moses about the repayment rate for this service. According to him, about 90% of the people who take loans from friends on Sycamore repay the loans. This is aided by the fact that Sycamore runs it like any lending service and requires users to

tokenise their accounts before loans are disbursed.



"The person you're giving money to, the app requires them to tokenize their account. So basically the borrower won't get the money out until they've attached a debit card. So just the way you would pay for DSTV or Uber, when it's time to repay the loan, it will just repay your friend automatically, which is more convenient for everybody." It is not uncommon to find people who are unable to pay after the deadline has passed but the Sycamore app continues attempting to debit the borrower until the loan is repaid.

Since its launch in 2019, Sycamore has given out loans valued at more

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than \$15 million to its customers and currently serves 50,000 users.

Babatunde's SycamoreNG is one of



the budding technology brands that is positioning itself to grow into one of the top financial technology companies that will be integrated into the country's mainstream financial sector. Its services have greatly eased the access to finance for many Nigerians despite its operations mainly within Lagos, and enormous potentials in the future is inevitable.



Odunayo Ewuniyi
Co-founder/COO, Piggyvest/
Founder Feminist Coalition



Odunayo and her team at Piggyvest committed to surmounting the many difficulties that stifle great innovations in the country, from fundraising, market penetration, inconsistent government policies and unfair competition by big time businesses but they did not give up. Even when it meant building a business model that would become a strong competition against

the conventional financial institutions. She revealed that the inspiration behind the business was from a Nigerian lady who had shared on her Twitter now X handle, how she had saved N1,000 daily for a whole year in a wooden box that many people refer to as a piggy bank. At the end of the year, the lady broke this box and shared the tons of money she had saved within 365 days. Like a snap of lightning for Odunayo and her team, they decided to digitize the idea into a system that people can easily subscribe to. This simple business model became

Odunayo Eweniyi wears many hats beyond just being a tech pioneer in Nigeria but also an activist. She is the Co-founder and Chief Operations Officer PiggyVest and co-founder of Feminist Coalition. Eweniyi is the first child of two professors that take up origins from Oyo State, Nigeria.

Eweniyi graduated from Covenant University in 2013 with a first-class degree in Computer Engineering.

The graduate of Computer Engineering made her debut in the tech space with the launch Push CV with her fellow visionaries, Somto Ifezue and Joshua Chibueze after she graduated in 2013 leading to later starting what is known today as Piggyvest in 2016.

PiggyVest is the first ever online app for personal savings and investment in West Africa. The purpose behind it is to empower people to better manage and save their money. Users can save and earn interest on their money through the Piggybank feature, and invest in pre-vetted investment opportunities. With this innovation in Nigeria at a time when digital penetration and trust in digital apps was really low yet her and her team went headlong in overcoming the challenge of gaining customer trust.





Considering the reasons for the relocation of the capital to Abuja and the provisions of the Constitution, is Abuja a State like the other 36 states or not?

Firstly, it would appear that none of the reasons for the relocation of the capital suggests that Abuja should not be a state. As a matter of fact, Lagos as a Capital of Nigeria was a full-fledged state, with a governor or military administrator, depending on which regime held sway in Nigeria. The last military Governor of Lagos before Decree No 6 was Commodore Adekunle Shamsudeen Lawal.

Interestingly, when one examines the 1999 Constitution, the provision which introduces FCT does not suggest that the FCT is a State, rather it appears obviously distinguished from other federating units of the Country.

Section 3 expressly states that there shall be thirty-six states of the Federation and went ahead to list all thirty-six. The FCT is obviously excluded. Section 298 describes the FCT, Abuja as the 'Capital of the Federation and Seat of the Federal Government of the Federation'. None of these provisions would suggest that the FCT is a state, as a matter of fact, these provisions, without more must lead one to the logical conclusion that the FCT is something other than a state. It gets even more interesting that the FCT has area councils, while states have local governments. States have governors and lands in all the states are vested in the Governors and such lands are held by the respective governors of the states in trust and administered for the use and common benefit of all Nigerians.

On the other hand, the ownership of all

lands comprised in the FCT shall vest in the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in other words the Federal Government. It would appear, from the language of the constitution and the land use act, vesting ownership of land and trust on the federal government and Governors respectively, that the status of a state and the FCT are dissimilar.

Ownership and trust do not mean the same thing. While an owner is one with the right to possess, use and convey something, a trust is a right to something (land) held by someone (the governor) at the request of another (the Nigerian State) for the benefit a third party (all Nigerians). An owner cannot be asked to explain or render account for how he has put his property to use but a trustee is accountable under the law. It follows, therefore, that the land comprising the FCT, Abuja is for the Federal Government to utilize as it deems fit while lands within state territories are to be held in trust for Nigerians. One may argue that this is a matter of semantics, but it is not. The powers conferred on the Federal Government and the Governors in this regard are not the same.

Continues in Next Edition

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an innovation that has helped so many people transform their financial lives and enabled people achieve erstwhile difficult financial goals.

In an interview she retells how Piggyvest became a success; *“We decided to rely on peer-to-peer recommendations and word of mouth, instead of spending money on marketing. In December 2016, after about a year of operations, the early adopters who were using the platform were, kind of, withdrawing their money after a full saving cycle, and we saw an interesting thing happening. As soon as they withdrew money successfully, they would go to Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook to tell everyone, “Oh, I used this platform to save for Christmas, I withdrew the money successfully, earning interest is so quick” and other people were seeing that and asking “How can I sign up?” They would then share the link to the platform. So we decided to build on that, people experiencing PiggyVest positively and then telling their friends and family about it. We offer about 1,000 Naira for a successful referral.*

The focus is on growing the platform. That means adding more features to further the

Also, Odunayo was on Forbes Africa’s list of 20 New Wealth Creators in Africa 2019. She was nominated for The Future Awards Africa Prize for Young Person of The Year in 2020. She was also listed on Bloomberg50 in 2020 and Time Next 100 list in 2021 for her joint contributions during the END SARS Protests of October 2020. In March 2022, she won the Forbes Woman Africa Technology and Innovation Award.

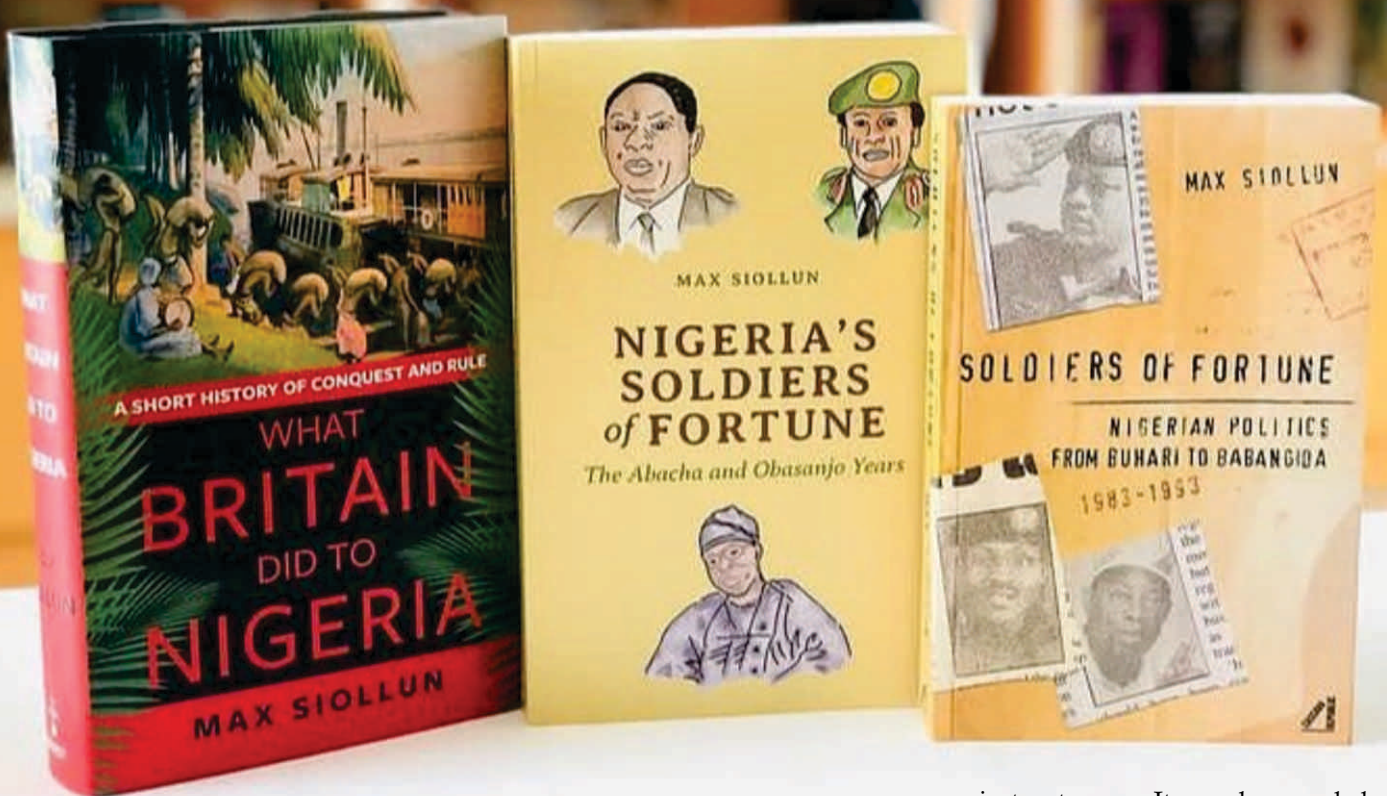
In 2022, She was selected as a Bloomberg New Economy Catalyst.

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As part of the program, she attended the annual New Economy Forum held in Singapore, and the Bloomberg New Economy Catalyst Retreat that same year.

As part of the program, she attended the annual New Economy Forum held in Singapore, and the Bloomberg New Economy Catalyst Retreat that same year.





Max Siollun's Books for Every Patriot

by Simon Tuleh

The 2023 general elections is one event that should not be forgotten in a hurry as we saw the resurgence of historic strife that became the banner of campaigns and for students of Nigeria's history or those who have keenly studied our political theatrics, this manifestation was germane. Yet it points to the fact that our growing population that may soon overtake the most developed nations of the world is more shallow minded and vaguely knowledgeable of Nigeria's journey.

Max Siollun's books that ought to be world bestsellers are the tools I consider the best to reset ones mental

trajectory from a blurred imagery to one that opens one's eyes to the magnitude of Nigeria's problems.

My topmost on this list is the revelation of our people's journey to nationhood and the magnitude of the influence of puppeteers in driving our trajectory; What Britain Did To Nigeria.

What Britain Did to Nigeria: A Short History of Conquest and Rule; Max Siollun offers a bold rethink: an unromanticised history, arguing compellingly that colonialism had few benevolent intentions, but many

unjust outcomes. It may have ended slavery and human sacrifice, but it was accompanied by extreme violence; ethnic and religious identity were cynically exploited to maintain control, while the forceful remoulding of longstanding legal and social practices permanently altered the culture and internal politics of indigenous communities. The aftershocks of this colonial meddling are still being felt decades after independence. Popular narratives often suggest that the economic and political turmoil are homegrown, but the reality is that Britain created many of Nigeria's crises, and has left them behind for Nigerians to resolve.

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- Any applicant applying with NABTEB (NTC) must in addition to the five(5) O'level possess a core subject for the Trade Related Area (TRA), and not Book Keeping, Commerce or Secretariat Studies.
- Applicants who scored 100 and above in UTME but did not choose Asteven Energy Institute and are interested in changing to the institution.

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