

SISPIRATION

Issue 4

**Why Your Business
Isn't Growing**
(And It's Not Instagram's
Fault)

JUMOKE AKINWUNMI

**Building Institutions and Systems
in Africa's Corporate Landscape**

**African Women in
Media Conference**
Advancing Gender-
Safe Media Across Africa



The Intentional
Blueprint Issue



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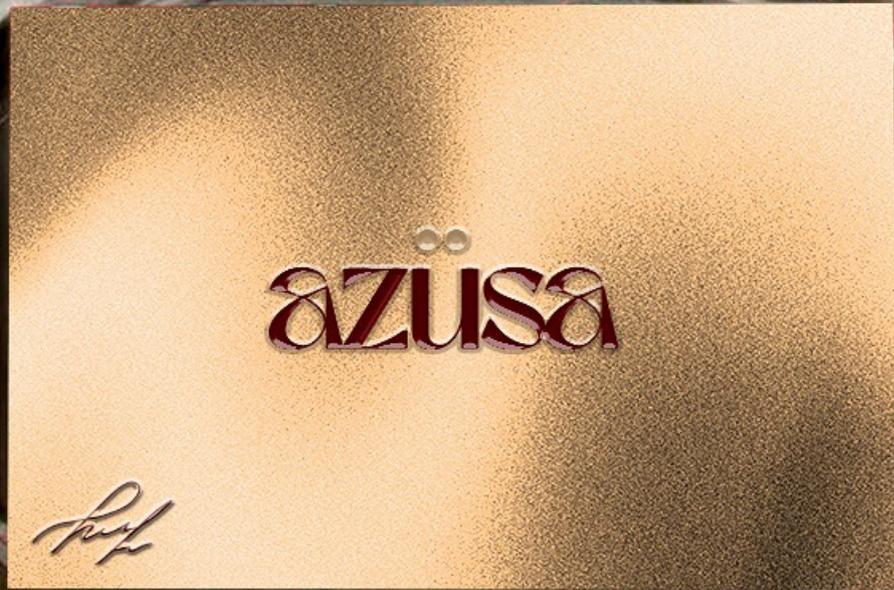
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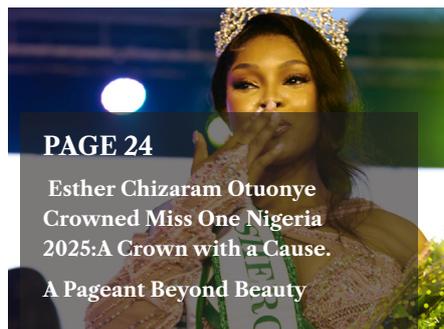
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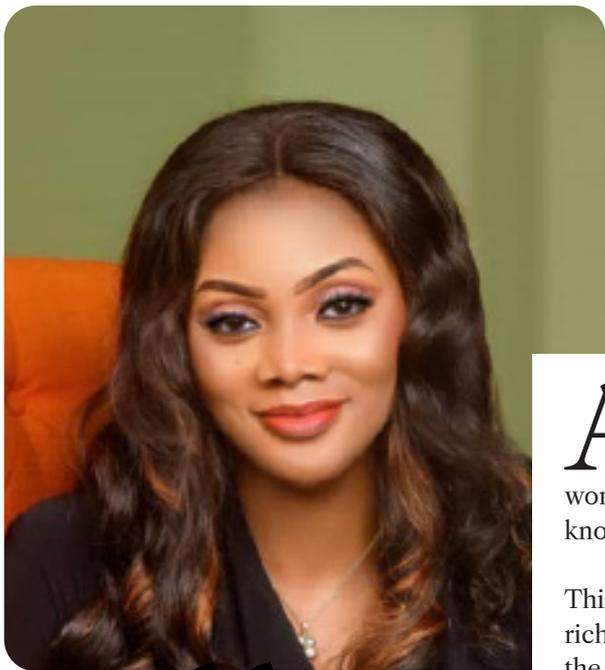
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AI in Clinics: Can Technology Close Africa's Healthcare Gap?

Sispiration Magazine is a monthly digital and print publication from Social Impact Steward (SIS), dedicated to celebrating the achievements, voices, and impact of women across the globe.

Each issue blends insightful features that inspire women to lead with purpose, create meaningful change and connect with opportunities for growth.



Editor's *letter*

What's Next?

At the start of each new year, I find myself both reflective and full of anticipation. Last year was a season of growth, learning, and laying foundations. We told worthy stories, spotlighted inspiring women, and began shaping Sispiration into a vibrant community and knowledge hub for women across Africa and beyond.

This year, we are dreaming bigger and taking bolder steps. We have richer narratives, fresh learning resources, and expanded platforms in the works, and we are excited to take you along this journey with us.

In this edition, we are honoured to feature Jumoke Akinwunmi on our cover. Her story speaks courage, visionary leadership, and the transformative influence of women who build, lead, and uplift other women.

We also explore a topic many women silently grapple with: business growth. In our Level Up column, Seun unpacks why your business may not be growing, and why Instagram isn't always the problem. It is an honest and practical conversation about strategy and structure, especially for women entrepreneurs navigating limited resources and overwhelming expectations.

One of our core priorities this year is to revive a culture of reading and continuous learning among women. Knowledge is power, and reading is still one of the most transformative tools for leadership and personal development. Our newly launched Resource Pages curate books, podcasts, documentaries, and learning tools to support your journey. We are also excited about the upcoming collaborations with the Savvy Ladies Book Club, creating spaces for collective learning, discussion, and sisterhood.

It is always refreshing to read what Dr. Funmilola has to say to us about wellness. In this edition, she is asking us to run for our lives... What could be the reason? Dive in and you'll find out.

As Sispiration continues to grow, we are staying true to lifting women's voices from across the continent; celebrating diverse stories, insights, and leadership journeys that reflect the richness and dynamism of African women. This edition carries that Pan-African spirit, bringing together narratives that transcend borders and connect us through shared vision and intent.

Here's to a year of learning and growth.

With Gratitude and love,



One of our core priorities this year is to revive a culture of reading and continuous learning among women.

Knowledge is power, and reading is still one of the most transformative tools for leadership and personal development.

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LIFE HACKS FOR CHANGE AGENTS

Letting Go as a **STRATEGY**

What to Unlearn in the New Year

The first time I heard the word unlearn was at a high powered conference, the convener said “I’m here to learn, relearn and unlearn...” and I began to wonder, is unlearning actually a thing? The answer is a strong yes!

Some of us have been affixed to certain patterns for so long, the only way to learn new sets of ways is to unlearn what we have been so used to.

As change agents, we are often conditioned to believe that progress comes from adding more: more goals, more commitments, more urgency; the most powerful strategy for a new season is not accumulation, but letting go. Letting go is not a weakness; it is discernment in action.

The new year invites us to unlearn habits that equate constant busyness with impact. Exhaustion is not a badge of honour, and burnout does not make the work more noble. Sustainable change requires rested minds, clear judgment, and the courage to pause when necessary.

We must also unlearn narratives that say we must do it all ourselves. Impact work thrives in community, not isolation. Releasing the need to be indispensable creates space for collaboration, shared leadership, and stronger systems. No mission collapses because one person chose balance.

Another expectation worth shedding is the pressure to show visible results immediately. Meaningful change, especially social change often unfolds quietly before it becomes measurable. Letting go of unrealistic timelines allows us to stay committed without becoming disillusioned.

Finally, unlearn the idea that rest, joy, or personal fulfillment distracts from the mission. In truth, they sustain it. A fulfilled change agent leads with clarity, compassion, and resilience. As this year unfolds, consider what you are carrying that no longer serves your purpose. Letting go is not stepping back from impact; it is realigning with it. Sometimes, the most effective way forward is to release what no longer fits and trust that clarity will follow.

“

Letting go of unrealistic timelines allows us to stay committed without becoming disillusioned.

THE CHANGEMAKERS PLAYBOOK

You Don't Need Another Program You Need Better Systems

The Situation

Across the social impact space, new programs are launched every year to solve familiar problems. More workshops. More pilots. More short-term interventions. Yet the same challenges persist. Communities are fatigued, teams are stretched, and impact remains difficult to sustain. Often, the issue isn't a lack of ideas or commitment, it's the absence of strong systems to support them. Programs come and go, but without the right structures, their impact fades just as quickly.

The Play

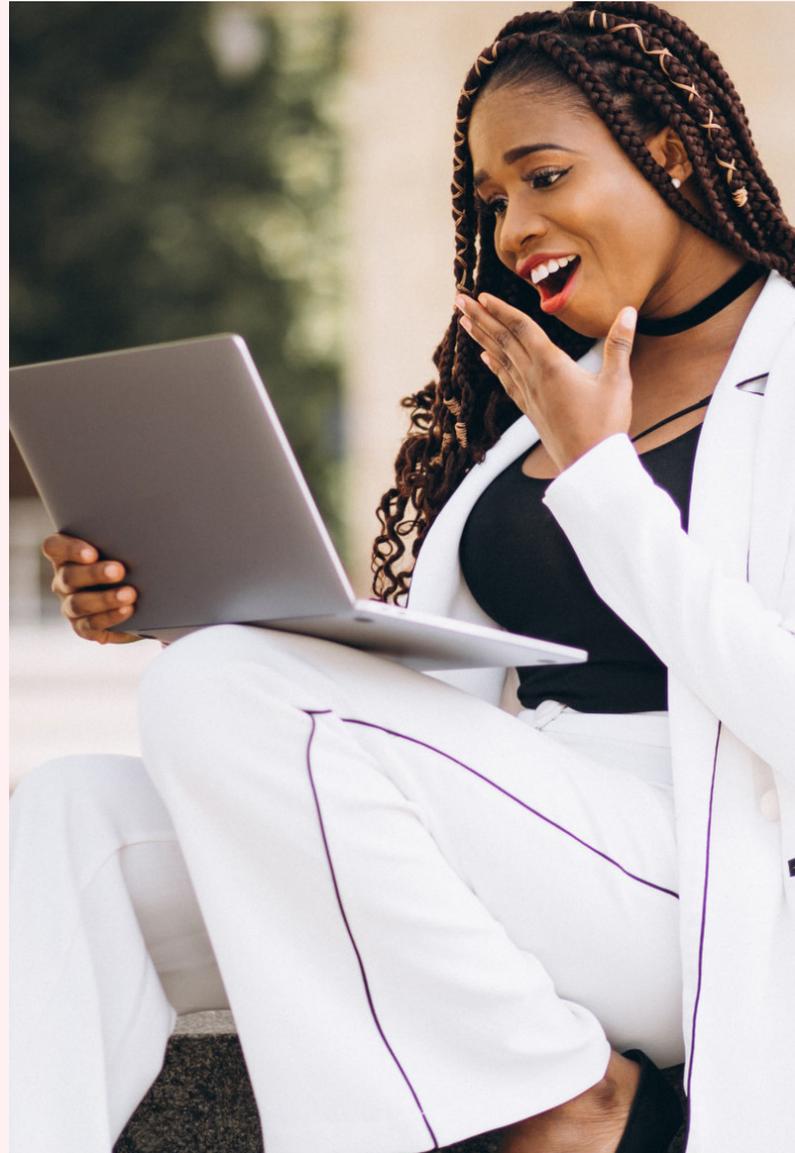
Shift focus from creating more to building better. Build strong systems: clear processes, accountable leadership, data tracking, feedback loops, and succession planning. Allow good ideas to live beyond funding cycles and individuals. Invest time in documentation, partnerships, and capacity building. Systems create continuity. They reduce dependency on hero leadership and make impact scalable, and resilient.

What to Watch Out For

Systems are not glamorous. They require patience,

Playbook Rule:

“Systems are not glamorous. They require patience, discipline, and long-term thinking.”



discipline, and long-term thinking. There's also a temptation to over-engineer: building rigid frameworks that ignore local context or human realities. Another risk is mistaking bureaucracy for structure. Systems should serve the mission, not slow it down.

The Takeaway

Programs may attract attention, but systems sustain change. If the goal is lasting impact, the real work happens behind the scenes - where processes are strengthened, responsibilities are clear, and knowledge is shared. Before launching something new this year, pause and ask: will this survive without me? If the answer is no, it's time to build better systems, not another program.

Funding Forward

The NGO Illusion:

When We Look Funded but Feel Broke

By Chidera James Edeh

A six-part Funding Forward series on the truth behind impact optics, funding fatigue, and the future of nonprofit leadership.



Part 2: NGO Founders Are Rich; The Community vs. Founders

At a community centre in Lagos, Nigeria, NGO founder Adesuwa prepared to speak at a local event. When she greeted local business owners, one remarked, “Since you people are funded, you can handle it.” However, a report by Kapital FM 92.9 Abuja indicates that many NGOs in Nigeria encounter significant challenges in securing adequate funding, underscoring the gap between public perception and the financial realities faced by leaders like Adesuwa. Rather than inquiring about actual needs, people often assume financial capacity. To address this misconception, Adesuwa now clarifies, “While we do receive funding for specific projects, managing resources proficiently is often a matter of balancing many priorities. We are always in need of community

aid and partnership to truly make an impact.” This approach encourages dialogue and helps correct misunderstandings about available resources.

In Part 1 of the Funding Forward series, I examined the illusion of appearing funded while experiencing financial difficulty. This second piece addresses a related misconception: that NGO founders are inherently wealthy. This belief arises not from actual wealth, but from the mistaken association of organisational funding, professionalism, and visibility with personal financial resources.

This myth is not only socially uncomfortable but also detrimental. It alters expectations, strains relationships, and undermines the sustainability of nonprofit leadership.

Research by Emmanuel, Oyedokun, and Felejaye suggests that public perceptions of NGOs in Nigeria are shaped more by organisational presentation such as official language, public reports, and donor engagement than by actual internal financial systems. These external indicators can create an impression of affluence, even when organisations operate on limited budgets. For example, The Guardian (2023) highlights that Nigeria’s nonprofit sector has expanded rapidly, but concerns persist about the adequacy of resources and the motivations of many NGOs. This reveals a gap between popular perception and the financial realities many founders face.

According to a 2022 report by Catherine O., in many communities, simply participating in donor-related activities or displaying a donor’s logo can create the impression of financial stability for NGOs, even though inconsistent donor funding and poor financial management remain significant challenges for these organisations.

NGOs serve as intermediaries rather than owners of resources. Increased visibility often blurs this

Funding Forward



distinction, leading to the perception that access and professionalism equate to personal wealth.

This dynamic creates a misleading impression that NGO leadership is financially stable, even when this is not the case. Consequently, organisations may lose volunteer support, encounter delayed grants, and experience founder burnout. For instance, the 'Hope Initiative' experienced a 25% decline in volunteer participation over three months due to perceived financial instability. (Renewed Hope Initiative Brings Support to Lagos Amid Rising Hardship, 2025) Kryvent reports that more than 40 per cent of pledged grant disbursements to small NGOs have been delayed by over six months, highlighting the need to address misconceptions about NGO financing. (Mbah, 2025)

The Hidden Financial Strain

Underneath the surface, a different financial reality exists, one that many founders experience but rarely discuss.

Most African NGOs are not immediately capitalised by grants. A recent analysis by the Group for African Philanthropy (2024) notes that founders such as Chidinma of Naija Cares are often perceived as entitled to use project resources and funds for personal needs, which leads them to cover expenses upfront with the expectation of eventual reimbursement. For example, I used my rent money last month to pay for team transport on a field visit, trusting that funding would arrive soon. These personal sacrifices demonstrate the founders' deep

financial commitment to their missions.

Founders frequently use personal savings for transport, printing, and communication. They advance costs for phone data, volunteer meals, and stipends well before donor funds are received. Reimbursements may take weeks or months, and salaries are often delayed. In this capacity, founders act as the financial buffer between organisational ambition and available cash. (Alumona, 2025)

Many nonprofits rely on invisible capitalisation, with founders' personal resources supporting operations without formal recognition. Although an NGO may appear financially stable, a report by KapitalFM notes that many Nigerian NGOs face significant funding challenges and must comply with strict requirements set by foreign donors, which can strain resources, especially for smaller or newer organisations. This situation is not necessarily a result of mismanagement but stems from broader structural issues within the sector. Grants typically fund activities rather than sustained stability, covering outputs but not the economic security of those delivering them. (Omojofodun, 2025) The Guardian Nigeria observes that while many founders work to secure funding for their organisations' real needs, the rapid growth of NGOs has intensified competition for resources, and the outward appearance of prosperity among leaders may not reflect the actual financial challenges these groups face. Internally, organisations are often financially stretched due to personal sacrifice. (EPIC-Africa, 2025)

Chidera Sandra James-Edeh

Chidera Sandra James-Edeh is a social innovator and global health advocate dedicated to empowering communities across Africa. With a background in Human Physiology from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and additional training in Project Management in Global Health from the University of Washington, USA, she blends community-driven innovation to bridge gaps in health access, digital equity, and social impact. A three-time grant winner, Chidera is the Founder and Executive Director of Her Period Slay Care Initiative and Laurenxia Global, where she has led cross-sector programs and campaigns impacting over 10,000 adolescents and women



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COVER STORY



CORE VALUES

 Professionalism

 Integrity

 Respect

 Fairness

From designing buildings to designing impact, Jumoke Akinwunmi's career is a masterclass in blending purpose with practice. She began as an architect, learning the nuances of creating spaces that work, but soon realised that improving lives required looking upstream at the systems, decisions, and structures.

About 20 years ago, alongside her partner Tokunboh Ishmael, she co-founded Alitheia Capital, one of Africa's pioneering impact investment firms, with a focus on profit with purpose. From championing gender-lens investing to empowering women through cooperatives and BuildHERng, Jumoke has consistently worked to remove systemic barriers while holding fast to integrity, rigor, and measurable social outcomes.

In a candid conversation with Sispiration, she opens up about the importance of sponsorship for women in male-dominated industries, and how real social change goes beyond metrics to restore dignity, ownership, and opportunity.

A Sispiration Magazine Exclusive

You began your career as an architect before transitioning to impact investing. What sparked that transition?

I realised that creating excellent projects alone doesn't improve outcomes, architecture is only one part of a broader system. My curiosity about decisions made before architects get involved led me into project management, where I saw how portfolios are structured, land is allocated, funding is accessed, risks are shared, and ultimately, who benefits.

Over time, it became clear that many issues blamed on the "market" are actually rooted in financial and institutional design choices. Even the best projects cannot succeed in systems where capital structures exclude most people and informal sectors are ignored. That insight pushed me to look upstream; towards finance and investment where incentives are shaped.

What drew you specifically to impact investing as the next step in that journey?

Almost 20 years ago, my partner Tokunboh Ishmael and I founded Alitheia Capital with a conviction that our work should improve lives, not just generate returns, long before "impact" became a buzzword. Impact investing allowed me to work where decisions about what gets built, for whom, and under what conditions are made.

It is also where gender, affordability, climate resilience, and governance can be integrated as core investment criteria, not afterthoughts. I haven't left architecture or project management behind; I brought that discipline with me, grounding investment decisions in how projects actually work.

Alitheia Capital is built on the idea of profit with purpose. How has your background in architecture and project management shaped your philosophy of blending financial returns with social and environmental impacts?

Integrity forms our foundation. 'Alitheia' is a Greek term that signifies integrity or truth. Our core philosophy is "doing well while doing good," grounded in the belief that addressing genuine problems would inherently generate value. We began by focusing on the simplest actions that could create meaningful impact.

We believe that we must conduct transactions honestly. I'm not referring to corruption here, but rather avoiding embellishments in efforts. I firmly believe that solutions should be straightforward. If a solution is simple, it should stay simple. If you're not addressing a real problem, you're just wasting time.

Alitheia runs Africa's largest gender-lens private equity fund. Why was a gender focus necessary?

In the early years, we faced the same challenge many female founders/business owners face: being treated differently at certain tables. More than ever, we understood the challenges that most women face, prompting us to focus on creating more equitable opportunities. Our experiences revealed that systems are rarely designed with women in mind. Data is often not gender-disaggregated, and policies tend to assume a single, default experience. This isn't about forming a women's league; it's about addressing an existing imbalance. Today, there is a plethora of data that affirms what we already suspected: women face systemic barriers to accessing resources, period! Nonetheless, empowering women benefits not only individuals but also their families and communities. Tokunboh leads Alitheia's Private Equity business and has a collection of stories (from beneficiaries themselves) to share about the impact being created, not just through Alitheia IDF (the gender-smart fund) but also through other vehicles under management. Alitheia's Impact Reports are a testament to the power of creating more equitable access

You often speak about cooperatives as vehicles for inclusion. Why is this?

Cooperatives are one of the few institutional models that naturally combine economic participation with dignity, scale, and ownership, especially for people excluded from formal markets, most of whom are women. Across housing and construction value chains, the core challenge is not demand or capability, but fragmentation, and cooperatives address this structurally.

For women, cooperatives are particularly powerful. When formalised and well-governed, they bridge social and financial capital gaps, strengthen collective bargaining power, improve tenure security, and create credible pathways to ownership in systems that often exclude women individually. I see the cooperative model as a practical way to overcome socio-cultural barriers to women's access to and ownership of assets.

Through BuildHERng, you're challenging male dominance in real estate. What does that work look like?

BuildHERng is focused not just on optics or representation, but on transforming power, participation, and ownership throughout the real estate and construction sectors. Women are already part of the built environment but remain mostly on the periphery, occupying junior roles and non-asset-owning positions. BuildHERng aims to remove these systemic barriers in practical ways.

Our efforts are structured around three interconnected levels: First, to promote women's involvement in the entire real estate value chain through education, entrepreneurship, and professional development; second, to provide visible role models such as





Beyond the individual, we also look at ripple effects. How has the investment affected the wider ecosystem? Who benefits along the value chain?

Over the years, many global impact frameworks have been developed, and we use several of them. However, housing is particularly local. You cannot lift a framework from another country and simply apply it here. Alongside standard tools, we have developed a nuanced framework: measures that reflect the realities of our environment, culture, and social norms. These will help us track whether we are truly improving lives or merely meeting reporting requirements. Based on your work on boards, how do you see innovation intersecting with social impact, particularly for women and underserved communities?

Most of the boards I serve on are in real estate, a sector often described as a “dinosaur” because it lags behind other industries. But that lag also creates an opportunity if boards deliberately embed environmental and social priorities into reporting frameworks and governance structures, change can become institutionalised rather than optional. Innovation matters most when it solves real problems, especially access to capital, information, markets, and ownership. I often ask: who does this innovation make visible, and who does it exclude? For women, the difference between being a user of a product and an owner of an asset or enterprise is transformative.

coaches, mentors, and sponsors; and third, to improve access to real estate investment opportunities. Many women are stuck in superficial roles and miss out on key opportunities in construction, development, financing, and ownership.

You work at the intersection of affordable housing, gender equality, and social development. How do you measure impact beyond financial metrics?

For us, impact has to be real. There’s a story I often return to. Many years ago, we supported a partner in developing passive homes in Rivers State. The aim was to relocate families from a well-known slum into this new housing development. The problems with their current accommodation were clear: poor ventilation, lack of privacy, and unsafe, shared facilities. Using those insights, the model was redesigned, along with a financing structure.

One of the most profound statements from an allottee was simple: “Thank you for giving me my dignity back”. When asked what she meant, she explained that for most of her adult life, using the bathroom meant walking down a long corridor to a makeshift shed outside. Anything could happen there; there was no privacy, no safety. She spoke of the constant fear, especially as a woman, of being exposed or violated. She also described raising a young girl in that environment and the emotional burden of being constantly alert. By the way, how do you put a metric to that? That moment reminded us that while frameworks are important, impact must first be felt in people’s daily lives.

I believe solutions should be straightforward. If a solution is simple, it should stay simple. If you’re not addressing a real problem, you’re simply wasting time. Doing well while doing good begins with honesty about the problem you are trying to solve.”

What role do internal organisational culture and women’s leadership play in accelerating inclusive innovation and impact?

Organisations cannot credibly claim social impact externally if they do not practise inclusion internally. Culture, incentives, and power dynamics shape whose realities inform product design and risk decisions, and I challenge leadership on internal inclusion as a value-creating practice, not symbolism.

Beyond boards, I’m encouraged by women-led organisations supporting young women in technical and creative fields, but we still lag in sponsorship. Many women receive mentorship, but few receive advocacy, someone willing to open doors and put their name forward. Sponsorship requires intention and courage, and if more women used their positions this way, innovation and impact would scale faster and more equitably..

Finally, what role do mentorship and sponsorship play in accelerating women’s progress?

Mentorship is important, but sponsorship is critical. Sponsorship is intentional and strategic, it’s about using influence to open doors. Many women didn’t have sponsors early in their careers. That has to change. If more women deliberately sponsor other women, systems will shift faster.

LEVEL UP

Why Your Business Isn't Growing (And It's Not Instagram's Fault)

by Seun Gbadamosi



I hear this one a lot: "I don't understand, I post on Instagram every day, I've done reels, stories, collaborations, sponsored ads even comment and engage diligently... why is my business not growing?"

And here's the truth: it's probably **not the algorithm**, it's probably **you**. Let me explain.

Business growth isn't determined by how many likes, comments, or views you get. Those are just numbers. What matters is whether your business **has a clear offer, a system, and a strategy that actually converts interest into income**.

Think about it like this: a friend of mine runs a small skincare line. She spent months crafting beautiful jars, taking stunning photos, and posting "educational reels" every week. People loved them, commented, saved, even shared, but very few bought anything. Why? Because she was **treating Instagram like a magic wand** instead of a tool. She had no clear pricing, no follow-up plan, and no simple path for people to actually purchase. All the reels in the world couldn't fix that.

Here's why this happens, and how to fix it:

You're confusing visibility with sales

Posting endlessly is not marketing; it's content. People can see you without buying from you. Sales conversion comes from **intentional action**, not consistent posting alone.

- Make your offer crystal clear.
- Tell people exactly what problem you solve.
- Make it easy to buy - don't force them to DM you three times, navigate a maze, or hunt for your payment info.

Your pricing is hiding your value

Undervaluing your service or product is like planting seeds in poor soil. You'll never grow. If you're scared to charge what you deserve, growth stalls. High-value pricing doesn't scare customers away; **it filters out tire-kickers** and attracts the ones who respect your work.

You haven't built systems

Consistency without structure is chaos. Growth comes when you have **repeatable, scalable processes**:

- A simple sales flow (from first contact to payment).
- A clear way to track orders or clients.
- A method to follow up, nurture, and upsell.

Even the best Instagram content can't turn clicks into customers if your systems fail.

You're chasing trends instead of solving problems

Yes, reels, hashtags, and viral challenges help. But growth happens when you solve a problem **people actually care about**, not when you copy what everyone else is doing. People buy solutions, not entertainment (even if your entertainment is amazing).

Bottom line

Instagram is a tool, not a strategy. The "growth" you crave doesn't live in algorithms; it lives in clarity, value, and action. **Plan more**, and focus on the part that actually matters; turning followers into paying customers.

Your business will grow when you stop blaming apps and **start building systems, owning your value, and making it easy for people to say yes**.

Women In Governance Conference



Women Leaders Call for Greater Female Participation in Governance

Women across Nigeria's public and private sectors were urged to step boldly into leadership and governance roles as influential voices gathered at the 7th Women in Governance Conference organised by the Association of Corporate Governance Professionals of Nigeria (ACGPN) in Ikoyi, Lagos.

The conference, themed "Women in Leadership: Navigating Challenges and Seizing Opportunities," brought together policymakers, corporate leaders, academics, and governance professionals to discuss pathways for women's increased participation in decision-making spaces.

Among the keynote voices were the Minister of Youth Development, Comrade Ayodele Olawande; First Lady of Lagos State, Mrs Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu; Vice-Chancellor of Lagos State University, Prof. Ibiyemi Olatunji-Bello; and governance expert Mazi Sam Oluabunwa, President and Chairman-in-Council of ACGPN.

Speaking through representatives, Olawande emphasized that while women's empowerment is crucial to national development, gender equality remains a persistent societal challenge. He encouraged women to "go out and shine," while calling on men to actively support women's advancement across sectors.

Mrs Sanwo-Olu echoed this call, advocating for full representation of women in governance and



leadership. She noted that empowerment unlocks opportunities and accelerates inclusive development. Prof. Olatunji-Bello, represented by Prof. Adenike Omotunde Boyo, urged women to pursue their ambitions with courage and resilience, describing barriers as “glass walls meant to be scaled or broken.” Sharing her own leadership journey, she highlighted perseverance and hard work as critical to success, adding, “We are the leaders the world needs.”

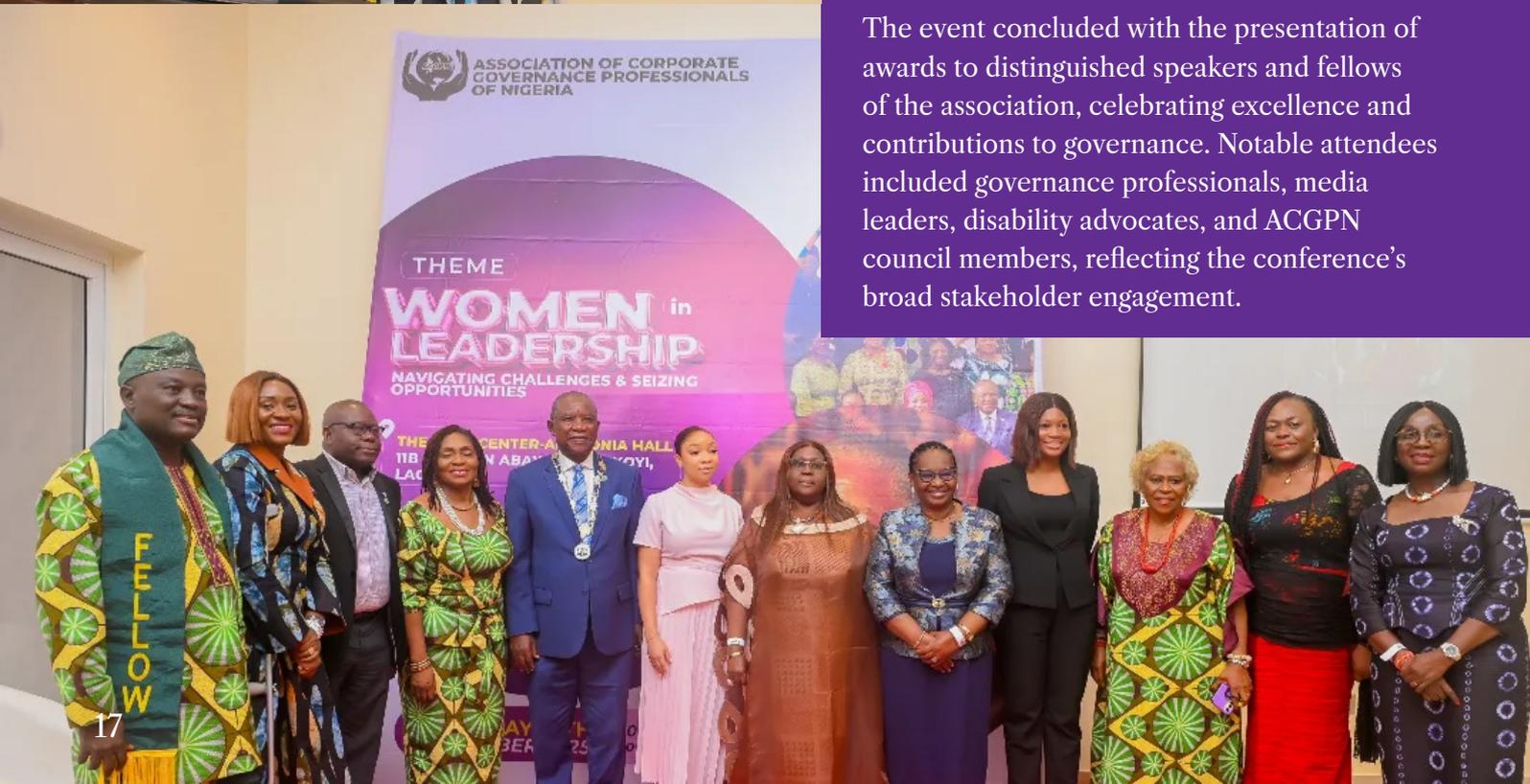
Mazi Oluabunwa acknowledged significant progress in women’s leadership across academia, banking, civil service, and government, noting that female leaders now head numerous institutions and agencies. However, he stressed that accountability, transparency, and ethical leadership must remain central as more women ascend to power.

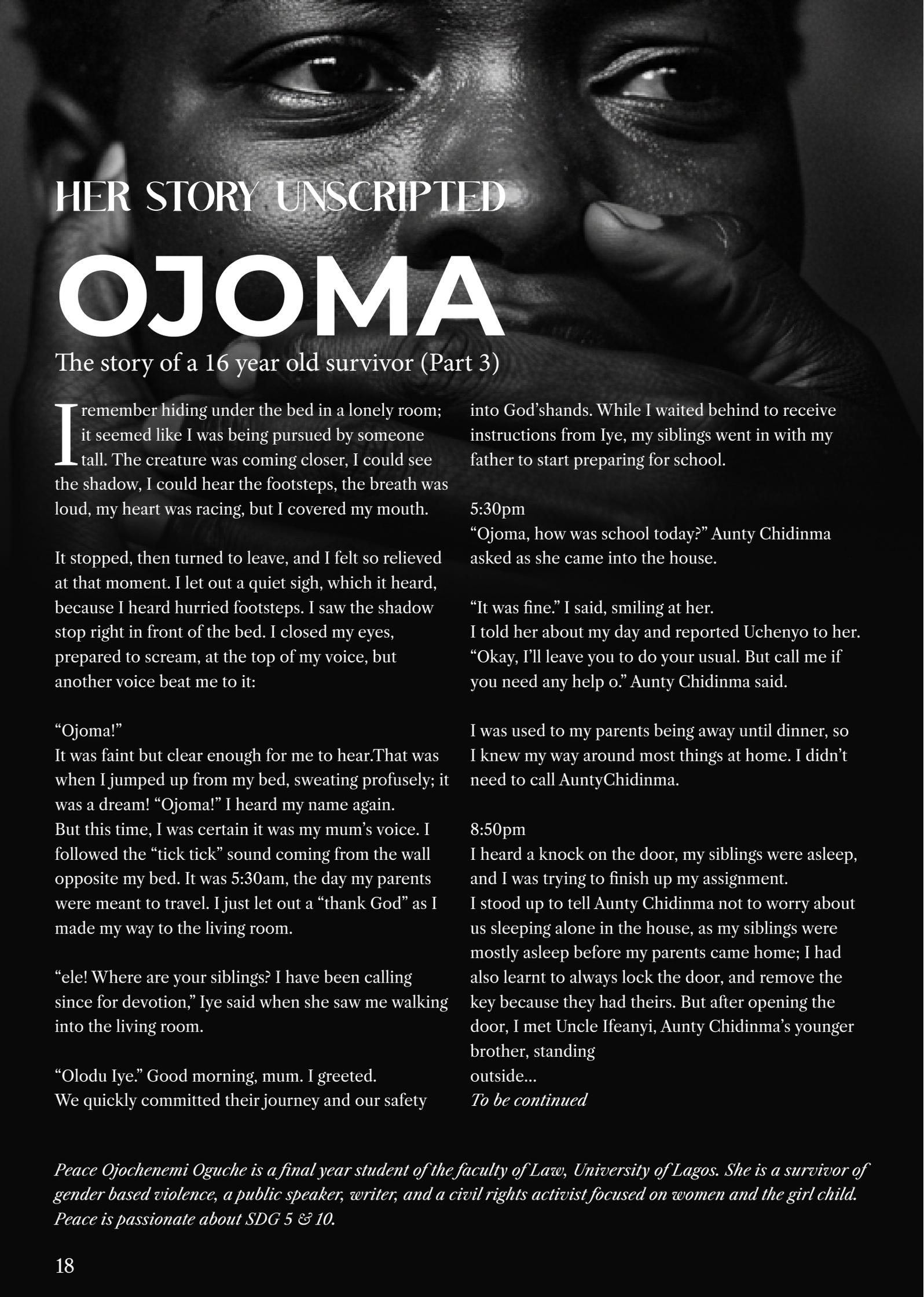
The conversation extended to mentorship and capacity building, with legal practitioner Mrs Funmi Roberts



calling for structured grooming and guidance for younger women. She encouraged patience, training, and integrity, noting that leadership journeys are demanding but rewarding. Welcoming participants, Mrs Olufade Olufunke, Chair of the Women in Governance Conference Committee, reiterated the association’s commitment to creating pathways for women to thrive in leadership and governance.

The event concluded with the presentation of awards to distinguished speakers and fellows of the association, celebrating excellence and contributions to governance. Notable attendees included governance professionals, media leaders, disability advocates, and ACGPN council members, reflecting the conference’s broad stakeholder engagement.





HER STORY UNSCRIPTED

OJOMA

The story of a 16 year old survivor (Part 3)

I remember hiding under the bed in a lonely room; it seemed like I was being pursued by someone tall. The creature was coming closer, I could see the shadow, I could hear the footsteps, the breath was loud, my heart was racing, but I covered my mouth.

It stopped, then turned to leave, and I felt so relieved at that moment. I let out a quiet sigh, which it heard, because I heard hurried footsteps. I saw the shadow stop right in front of the bed. I closed my eyes, prepared to scream, at the top of my voice, but another voice beat me to it:

“Ojoma!”

It was faint but clear enough for me to hear. That was when I jumped up from my bed, sweating profusely; it was a dream! “Ojoma!” I heard my name again.

But this time, I was certain it was my mum’s voice. I followed the “tick tick” sound coming from the wall opposite my bed. It was 5:30am, the day my parents were meant to travel. I just let out a “thank God” as I made my way to the living room.

“ele! Where are your siblings? I have been calling since for devotion,” Iye said when she saw me walking into the living room.

“Olodu Iye.” Good morning, mum. I greeted.
We quickly committed their journey and our safety

into God’s hands. While I waited behind to receive instructions from Iye, my siblings went in with my father to start preparing for school.

5:30pm

“Ojoma, how was school today?” Aunty Chidinma asked as she came into the house.

“It was fine.” I said, smiling at her.

I told her about my day and reported Uchenyo to her.

“Okay, I’ll leave you to do your usual. But call me if you need any help o.” Aunty Chidinma said.

I was used to my parents being away until dinner, so I knew my way around most things at home. I didn’t need to call Aunty Chidinma.

8:50pm

I heard a knock on the door, my siblings were asleep, and I was trying to finish up my assignment.

I stood up to tell Aunty Chidinma not to worry about us sleeping alone in the house, as my siblings were mostly asleep before my parents came home; I had also learnt to always lock the door, and remove the key because they had theirs. But after opening the door, I met Uncle Ifeanyi, Aunty Chidinma’s younger brother, standing outside...

To be continued

Peace Ojochenemi Oguche is a final year student of the faculty of Law, University of Lagos. She is a survivor of gender based violence, a public speaker, writer, and a civil rights activist focused on women and the girl child. Peace is passionate about SDG 5 & 10.

QUOTE WALL

Inspiring words from women making bold impact



Amina J. Mohammed (Nigeria)

“Leadership is about courage, compassion, and the willingness to take responsibility



Audre Lorde

“I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own.”



Minna Salami

“We are not born knowing how to be women; we learn, we unlearn, and we redefine.”



Graça Machel

“Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world.”



Joyce Banda (Malawi)

“When girls are educated, their countries become stronger and more prosperous.”



Zulaikha Patel (South African student activist)

“We can’t stay silent when the system was never built for us.”



Namatai Kwekweza (Zimbabwean youth)

“Young people are not waiting for the future, we are shaping it.”



Victory Ashaka (Nigerian climate justice advocate)

“Young voices are not noise, we are the data, the stories, and the solutions.”

TRENDS & EXPRESSIONS OF THE MODERN WOMAN

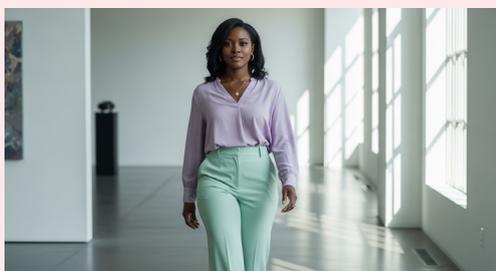
BY ANDREA ADIMORA

Blush, Bows and Satin: The Soft Girl Mood

The soft girl aesthetic is having a global fashion moment. Think satin textures, pastel tones, delicate bows, soft glam beauty, and kitten heels that blend comfort with elegance. It's nostalgic, playful, and effortlessly chic.



Satin, bows, and soft glam



Pastels are a power move



Soft textures, strong presence



Blush tones, bold energy

**TOOLS, RITUALS,
AND IDEAS FOR THE
MODERN WOMAN**

Desk Goals: The Aesthetic Work Guide

Your workspace is more than a desk; it's a mood, a mindset, and a creative sanctuary.

Do you own a minimalist desk or an entirely curated creative studio? Either way, productivity is getting a stylish upgrade. Welcome to the aesthetic work guide.

Work is no longer just functional, it is expressive. Productivity now comes with personality. And yes, the look and feel of your desk absolutely influences the mood and energy you bring into your work, which ultimately shapes your focus, creativity, and overall output.

Today's workspaces are no longer dull and purely corporate; they are being transformed into cute, cosy, and girly creative hubs. What does your workspace look like?



Cute Desk Serious goal



Your desk, your mood board



Productivity with personality



Work, but make it pretty



Styled Spaces, Inspired Minds

RUN FOR YOUR LIFE (IN A GOOD WAY)

Let's talk about running. The kind that gets your heart pumping, your mind clear, and your mood lifted.

We often talk about fitness in terms of weight loss or body size, but honestly, running (and movement in general) is so much bigger than that. It's not about being skinny, curvy, petite, or plus-size. It's about being fit, alive, and energized. Think of it as a daily investment in your future self.

Running is one of the simplest forms of exercise. No fancy equipment. No gym membership. Just you, your sneakers, and the road. And the benefits? They go far beyond what you can see in the mirror.

First, let's talk about the mind. Running is therapy in motion. Research shows that exercise helps reduce anxiety and depression, improves brain health, and even lowers the risk of conditions like dementia and Alzheimer's. Ever noticed how you feel lighter and happier after a jog, even when you didn't feel like starting? That's your body releasing those feel-good hormones: dopamine, oxytocin, and endorphins. Basically, running is your body's natural mood booster.

For women, running is especially powerful. It strengthens bones, helping to reduce the risk of osteoporosis as we age. It firms muscles, supports weight management, and keeps the body strong and resilient. It also helps regulate hormones - great news whether you're premenopausal, trying to conceive, or navigating menopause. Yes, a simple run can do all that.

Now, running is just one piece of the fitness puzzle. There are different types of exercise - strength training, stretching, stability workouts, Pilates, Tai



Chi, HIIT, swimming, cycling, hiking, skipping... you name it. They all work together to keep the body balanced. But running is often the easiest entry point. You just start where you are.

Before diving into intense workouts, it's wise to know your numbers: blood pressure, blood sugar, overall health status. But here's the encouraging part: regular exercise actually helps bring those numbers down and keep them in check. Pair it with good nutrition, and you're on a powerful path to long-term wellness.

You don't need to run a marathon. Start small. Thirty minutes, five times a week is ideal, but even that can be broken into ten-minute chunks. The real secret? Show up. Move your body. Do something, anything. Consistency beats perfection every single time.

So, whether it's a morning jog, an evening walk, or a weekend hike, remember this: you're not just running for fitness. You're running for strength, clear mind, for joy, and for longevity.

So please, run for your life; **in the best way possible.**

Dr. Olufunmilola Mojinyinola (Dr. Mo)

is the Founder of Smood Feminine Consult, ABOCare Initiative and GynoglowwithDrMo.

A sought-after speaker, consultant gynaecologist and board-certified lifestyle medicine physician with over 20 years of expertise, she has transformed the practice of preventive medicine into an art. As the pioneer of the Lifestyle Medicine Clinic at the Maternal and Child Centre, she has set the standard for integrating lifestyle medicine into women's healthcare. She is a member of Society of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of Nigeria (SOGON), Gynae Oncology Society of Nigeria (GOSON), and the Society of Lifestyle Medicine of Nigeria (SOLONg)



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- 🔑 Community Building & Career Pathways
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Esther Chizaram Otuonye

Crowned Miss One Nigeria 2025: A Crown with a Cause

On a night where culture and heritage took centre stage, Miss Abia Nigeria, Esther Chizaram Otuonye, emerged as the winner of Miss One Nigeria 2025, claiming the crown in a pageant that set out to redefine what it truly means to be a beauty queen in Nigeria.

Held at the Oriental Hotel, Lagos, the grand finale was more than a spectacle of gowns and glamour; it was a powerful declaration that Nigerian women are voices, leaders, and change-makers, beyond the runway.

To be crowned by a nine-time pageant winner, international pageant delegate, and Olori to the Ooni of Ife, His Imperial Majesty Adeyeye Ogunwusi, Ojaja II, Her Royal Majesty Queen Tobi Phillips Ogunwusi was a moment steeped in symbolism and prestige; bridging royalty, legacy, and the rise of a new generation of purposeful queens.





Regional Queens Redefining Representation

Rejoice Onuwa Onyemaechi – Miss One Nigeria South 2025

Representing Delta State, Rejoice Onuwa Onyemaechi emerged as First Runner-Up and was crowned Miss One Nigeria South 2025. She also received the Miss Photogenic Award.

Kenny Adeeko – Miss One Nigeria West 2025

Kenny Adeeko, Miss Lagos Nigeria, clinched the Miss One Nigeria West 2025 title. She also

won the Best Speaker Award at the GirlPower Debate Competition, showcasing her intellect and confidence.

Byencit Wuyep – Miss One Nigeria North 2025

Byencit Wuyep became the inaugural Miss One Nigeria North and received the Miss Popularity Award, winning the hearts of audiences nationwide.



A Pageant Beyond Beauty

Convener Violet Ejiata and the Miss One Nigeria team reinforced the pageant’s core mission: unity, inclusion, and women’s empowerment. With the tagline “Beyond Beauty,” the platform seeks women with vision, values, and voice, leaders who embody a

unified Nigeria beyond tribe, religion, and region.

The Miss One Nigeria pageant has positioned itself as a cultural movement that stands as a platform for advocacy and national cohesion, championing a Nigeria that is united beyond tribe, religion, and region; empowered in its diversity and proud of its heritage.



Crowned for Impact

Esther Chizaram Otuonye Receives the Sispiration SHERO Award

Esther Chizaram Otuonye stands out as a queen whose crown is anchored in cause. Recognised with the prestigious Sispiration SHERO Award, Esther exemplifies the modern African woman who leverages visibility for social change. At the forefront of the SHERO Campaign Against Period Poverty, she mobilised awareness, inspired grassroots action, and demonstrated that true beauty lies in impact, advocacy, and service.

Esther's journey to the crown was anchored in service beyond the spotlight. She was awarded the Social Impact Award for leading the SHERO Campaign Against Period Poverty, a nationwide initiative championed by Miss One Nigeria semifinalists to raise awareness and drive action in their respective states. Within just 30 days, Esther raised approximately \$1,000, emerging as the highest donor in the campaign; an achievement that underscored her commitment, passion, and grassroots advocacy.

Her dedication earned her recognition from Sispiration Magazine, Africa's first social impact magazine, with the SHERO Award presented by

Oyebola Oyedele, Publisher of Sispiration. Her story reflects the essence of Miss One Nigeria's philosophy: not just being beautiful, but also making the world more beautiful.

Period poverty remains a silent barrier for millions of girls denying them dignity, education, and opportunity. Ending it requires awareness, empathy policy and collective action.



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African Women in Media Conference Advancing Gender-Safe Media Across Africa

The African Women in Media (AWiM) Conference is the largest and most influential annual gathering focused on the intersection of women’s rights and media development across Africa. Since its inception in 2017, the AWiM Conference has toured several African countries, convening media practitioners, academics, civil society organisations (CSOs), policymakers, and technology experts to collaboratively advance gender equality in and through media.

The 2025 edition (AWiM25) was hosted at the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 4 to 5 December 2025, at a critical moment for gender advocacy on the continent. Building on the momentum of the Kigali Declaration on the Elimination of Gender Violence in and through Media in Africa by 2034, developed collaboratively by the AWiM community in 2023, this year’s convening focused on translating commitments into tangible action.

With the theme “Beyond Commitments: Advancing Policies for Gender-Safe Media,” AWiM25 underscored the urgent need for policy implementation and accountability. The conference aligned with the newly adopted African Union Convention to End Violence Against Women and Girls (AU-CEVAWG) and other key continental frameworks shaping Africa’s gender equality agenda.





Conference Highlights

The **African Women in Media (AWiM) 2025 Conference** convened over **300 participants** for two impactful days of dialogue, learning, and collaboration at the **African Union Commission**. Held in partnership with the **African Union's Women, Gender and Youth Directorate (WGYD)** and the **Information and Communication Directorate (ICD)**, AWiM25 brought together media professionals, policymakers, academics, civil society organisations, and technology actors. Participants engaged in discussions aimed at advancing gender equality, youth empowerment, and the elimination of violence against women and girls (VAWG) in and through media.

Conference Focus Areas

Through plenaries, panel discussions, workshops, fireside chats, and networking sessions, participants explored key issues including:

- Strengthening gender-safe and youth-inclusive media and policy frameworks
- Addressing violence against women in media

workplaces and media representations

- The role of technology, artificial intelligence, and digital platforms in shaping equitable narratives
- Promoting human rights through media, with a focus on AU-CEVAWG and the Kigali Declaration

Key Outcomes

AWiM25 delivered several critical outcomes, including:

- **Concrete policy recommendations** and an emerging accountability roadmap
- **Strengthened cross-sector collaboration** among media, policy, and civil society actors
- **Reinforced Communities of Practice (CoPs)** committed to sustaining action beyond the conference

AWiM25 reaffirmed the power of **collective feminist leadership** in shaping accountable, inclusive, and future-ready media ecosystems across Africa—moving beyond commitments to action.



Rising Force



Teni Agana

Building Economic Pathways for Ghana's Most Vulnerable Girls

Teni Agana's story is one of grit, determination, and an unshakeable belief that background should never define destiny. Once a kayayei (a young girl carrying heavy loads to survive), Teni refused to let circumstances dictate the limits of her future. With tenacity and quiet courage, she worked her way through high school, carrying not just goods on her head, but dreams in her heart.

Her breakthrough came in 2014, when she was admitted to Ashesi University as a Mastercard Foundation Scholar. There, her excellence shone beyond the classroom. At graduation, she received the President's Award for exemplary scholarship, leadership, and citizenship, a reward for her resilience and the leader she was becoming.

Teni's journey goes beyond personal success; she was also determined to lift others as she rose.

She is the Founder of the Loozeele Initiative, a social enterprise transforming the lives of young kayayei girls and women in Ghana's Upper East region. Today, Loozeele provides a sustainable source of income for over 40 girls and women, while delivering educational programs that equip youth with skills, confidence, and opportunity.

Through entrepreneurship training in basketry, fabric weaving, baking, and shea butter production, Teni is rewriting the narrative for girls who, like her, once believed their only option was migration and street labour. Her vision is clear: empower girls in the north so they never have to migrate south in search of survival.

Having walked that path herself, Teni understands how fragile dreams can be, and how easily they can be derailed without support. Her long-term mission is to build a support system for underprivileged girls, especially those who share her background, ensuring they stay on track toward education, dignity, and economic independence.

Her impact has not gone unnoticed. Recently selected by Those Who Inspire as one of Ghana's inspiring youth leaders, Teni represents a powerful symbol of transformation, proof that with opportunity and determination, a kayayei can become a changemaker, a graduate, and a leader.

Teni Agana is living proof that when girls are given tools, trust, and training, they don't just escape poverty, they create pathways out of it for others. Where society once saw a burden bearer, she now stands as a burden lifter, restoring dignity, building livelihoods, and shaping a future where every girl can rise.

DEAR SIS

When a Beneficiary Calls You Out, What Should an NGO Do?



Dear SIS,

Our NGO works with young women and girls, providing vocational training and small business starter kits. As part of the program, beneficiaries are required to attend weekly training sessions and complete basic assignments before receiving their starter packs. One particular beneficiary missed several sessions and didn't complete the required tasks, so she wasn't included in the beneficiaries who received support. Shortly after, she posted a long thread on social media, accusing our organization of favoritism and claiming we 'used her story for publicity but failed to support her.'

The post spread quickly, and people began questioning our integrity. A particular donor even reached out for clarification. We feel frustrated because we followed our process and communicated expectations, but we also worry that we may have failed in how we managed expectations and communicated decisions.

How should we handle this publicly, and what can we do to prevent misunderstandings like this with beneficiaries?"

- Program Manager, Women-Focused NGO

Dear Change Maker,

Public criticism from beneficiaries can feel deeply personal, especially when your organization is genuinely trying to do good. However, moments like this are also opportunities for accountability and learning.

1. Respond with Transparency, Not Defensiveness

Resist the urge to publicly "set the record straight" in a defensive tone. Instead, acknowledge the concern with empathy:

- Thank the beneficiary for sharing their experience.
- Clarify your program criteria and processes in a factual, non-accusatory way.
- Reaffirm your commitment to fairness and community well-being.

A calm, transparent response builds credibility with donors and the community, even when the criticism is unfounded.

2. Engage Privately and Compassionately

Reach out to the beneficiary privately to listen to her experience. Even when program requirements were communicated, personal challenges can affect participation. Showing empathy does not mean changing your standards, it means recognizing the human experience behind the process.

3. Review Communication and Consent Practices

This situation highlights a common gap in the sector: beneficiaries often do not fully understand expectations, timelines, and decision criteria.

NGOs should:

- Provide clear written guidelines for participation and support eligibility.
- Use simple, accessible language and repeat expectations verbally.
- Obtain informed consent for storytelling and media use, explaining how stories will be shared and what beneficiaries should and should not expect in return.

4. Strengthen Feedback and Grievance Mechanisms

Create safe, structured ways for beneficiaries to share complaints or concerns internally before they go public. Anonymous feedback forms, community check-ins, and designated complaint officers can help surface issues early and build trust.

5. Turn Criticism into a Learning Moment

Internally, reflect with your team:

- Did we clearly manage expectations?
- Did we provide adequate support for attendance and participation?
- How can we better communicate decisions and timelines?

Documenting these lessons improves program design and donor confidence.

Finally, note that public criticism is not always a failure, it is often an invitation to lead with greater transparency, humility, and professionalism.

Sis is rooting for you.

With purpose,

SIS

Dear SIS is a segment where we respond to questions from our community, gathered through our channels, To have your question featured, kindly send an email to sis@socialimpactsteward.com

She Heals, She Leads She Empowers Women Luncheon

Where Healing Met Leadership



She Heals, She Leads: She Empowers Women, held at Zimbali Coastal Estate in KwaZulu-Natal's Dolphin Coast region, felt less like a conference and more like a powerful collective moment of transformation. Convened by Ayanda Mthembu and Andile Pieterse, the gathering brought together women across industries, life stages, and experiences, creating a powerful space for connection, reflection, and leadership-building under the theme "Shades of Pink."

What stood out most was the intentional focus on healing as a pathway to leadership. Conversations went beyond surface-level empowerment, addressing personal growth, emotional resilience, and the

importance of supportive female networks. The atmosphere was warm, affirming, and deeply collaborative. Women sharing stories, building relationships, and forming partnerships that extended beyond the event.

The speaker lineup added depth and credibility to the experience. Minéhle Dlamini, Managing Director of Gagasi FM, delivered a compelling keynote on leadership, visibility, and navigating corporate spaces as a woman.

Dr. Sibububelwana, Dr. Ntokozo Mzimela, and Dr. Serantha Foolchand provided critical insights into women's health across life stages, while Sindisiwe



Cele shared lessons from her global beauty and entrepreneurship journey. Rashika Reddy brought energy and embodiment to the room, reminding attendees that strength is physical, emotional, and mental.

The impact of the event was tangible. Women left with renewed confidence, practical knowledge, and meaningful connections. Beyond inspiration, She Heals, She Leads values, community, reinforcing the idea that when women gather with intention, healing becomes collective and leadership becomes inevitable.



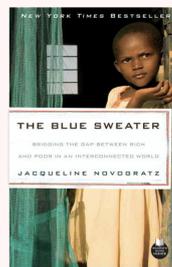
Knowledge is power. Knowledge fuels confidence, leadership, and impact. If you are a woman leading an organization, building a career, advocating for change, or simply evolving into a better version of yourself, the right resources can shape your journey.

Our editor has curated a selection of books, podcasts, and documentaries that inspire women, deepen understanding of social impact, and offer practical insights for nonprofit leaders, entrepreneurs, and advocates across Africa and beyond. These knowledge tools are tested and trusted and will form a major part of your growth, reflection, and action.

Books



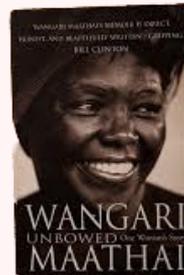
Lean In - Sheryl Sandberg
A modern classic on women's leadership, ambition, and navigating power structures in professional and social spaces.



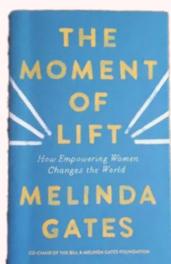
The Blue Sweater - Jacqueline Novogratz
A powerful memoir on social entrepreneurship, impact investing, and the realities of creating social change.



Becoming - Michelle Obama
A deeply personal memoir on identity, leadership, and the journey of becoming a woman of influence and purpose.



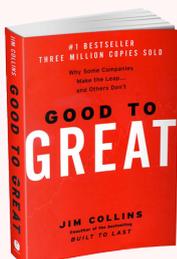
Unbowed - Wangari Maathai
The inspiring story of Africa's Nobel laureate and environmental activist, highlighting courage, advocacy, and leadership.



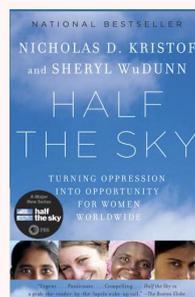
The Moment of Lift - Melinda French Gates
An insightful exploration of women's empowerment, philanthropy, and how lifting women lifts entire communities.



Dare to Lead - Brené Brown
A transformative guide on courageous leadership, vulnerability, and building trust-driven organizations.



Good to Great - Jim Collins
A leadership and organizational strategy guide widely used by nonprofits and social enterprises to build sustainable institutions.



Half the Sky - Nicholas D. Kristof & Sheryl WuDunn
A global exploration of women's challenges and solutions, widely referenced in gender and development conversations.



Podcasts

How I Built This - NPR (Guy Raz)

Inspiring conversations with entrepreneurs and changemakers on building impactful organizations.

African Business Stories

A deep dive into African entrepreneurship, leadership, and innovation across the continent.

Social Good Podcast (Stanford Social Innovation Review)

Expert insights into philanthropy, nonprofits, and global social innovation trends.

Unlocking Us - Brené Brown

Conversations on vulnerability, leadership, courage, and emotional intelligence for personal and professional growth.

Documentaries

He Named Me Malala

The powerful story of Malala Yousafzai and her global advocacy for girls' education.

Becoming (Netflix Documentary)

A behind-the-scenes look at Michelle Obama's book tour and her impact on global audiences.

Girl Rising

A moving documentary on girls' education and empowerment across diverse global contexts.

Inside Bill's Brain

An exploration of philanthropy, innovation, and solving complex global challenges.

The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross

A historical and social justice documentary exploring identity, resilience, and systemic change.

Grants and Opportunities for Women

Here are some grant opportunities to explore!

1. Tony Elumelu Foundation - \$5,000 seed capital plus training
<https://lnkd.in/d6vAxmWd>

2. She Leads Africa Accelerator - Business support for women-led startups
<https://lnkd.in/dHFVUBW8>

3. African Women's Development Fund (AWDF)
<https://awdf.org>

4. Women Entrepreneurship for Africa (WE-Africa) - EU-funded grants up to €10,000
<https://www.we-africa.org>

5. Investisseurs & Partenaires - €50,000 to €2 million financing
<https://www.ietp.com>

6. Vital Voices VV GROW Fellowship
<https://lnkd.in/dQvfPb6T>

7. UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality
<https://www.unwomen.org>

8. African Development Bank AFAWA - Closing the \$42B finance gap
https://lnkd.in/dYrxx_Hb

9. Cherie Blair Foundation Tech Programme
<https://lnkd.in/dBS9iCyn>

10. Women in Tech Africa (WITA)
<https://lnkd.in/dTcw46ps>

AWARDS & COMPETITIONS

11. Anzisha Prize - For entrepreneurs aged 15-22
<https://lnkd.in/dx-XbR8N>

12. Standard Bank Top Women Entrepreneur Awards
<https://lnkd.in/d36JRizq>

13. Cartier Women's Initiative - Up to \$100,000
<https://lnkd.in/dNFRdpBm>

14. SEED Awards - Sustainable development enterprises
<https://seed.uno>

15. Diamond Challenge - Up to \$10,000 for young entrepreneurs
<https://lnkd.in/dKU8Qi9i>

16. Orange Corners Africa - Multiple African countries
<https://lnkd.in/dpPRpPW5>

17. SheInvest by Ashden - Clean energy focus
https://lnkd.in/dQ_2Jyqg

18. Village Capital Africa Programs
<https://vilcap.com>

19. GreenHouse Capital Fund - Venture capital
https://lnkd.in/dTi_EycQ

20. Absa Women in Business Grant Programme
<https://www.absa.africa>

21. Standard Chartered EmpowerHer
<https://lnkd.in/dVTSWRKE>

22. Women's World Banking Africa
<https://lnkd.in/dSfr635d>

23. Women Founders Network (WFN)
<https://lnkd.in/dqSNGUSn>

24. Global Fund for Women
<https://lnkd.in/dUafHBTg>

25. AfriLabs Funding Opportunities
<https://www.afrilabs.com>

26. Mastercard Foundation Young Africa Works
<https://mastercardfdn.org>

27. African Management Institute (AMI)
<https://lnkd.in/dJQFc4Qr>

28. Graça Machel Trust Accelerator
https://lnkd.in/dpV_-KYF

29. Women in Africa Initiative (WIA)
<https://lnkd.in/dnT3HWgB>

30. Women's Entrepreneurship Day Organization
<https://www.womenseday.org>

AI in Clinics: Can Technology Close Africa's Healthcare Gap?



The Story

Rwanda is piloting artificial intelligence tools in over 50 health clinics as part of a Gates Foundation backed initiative to strengthen frontline healthcare delivery across Africa. The technology is designed to support clinicians with diagnostics, triage, and decision-making, especially in overstretched systems where health worker shortages are severe.

Rwanda, for instance, has roughly one healthcare worker per 1,000 patients, far below global recommendations. AI tools aim to improve efficiency, reduce administrative burden, and enhance clinical accuracy without replacing human judgment.

The Debate

While promising, critics warn that digital health tools

could deepen inequalities if language barriers, digital literacy gaps, and infrastructure limitations are not addressed. Africa's AI future, they argue, must be inclusive, locally contextualized, and ethically governed.

What Does This Mean for African Women Leaders, Funders, and Changemakers?

Women dominate Africa's frontline health workforce and lead many health-focused NGOs and social enterprises. AI could empower them with smarter tools, data-driven insights, and scalable solutions. But it also raises questions: Who designs these systems? Who controls the data? And who benefits? Women leaders must be at the table shaping Africa's digital health agenda; ensuring technology works for communities, not just institutions.

Philanthropy or Promotion?

Inside the Rise of “Charity Marketing” Scandals

In recent years, philanthropy has found a new stage: social media. Influencers, brands, and celebrities increasingly tie products and campaigns to charitable causes, leveraging empathy, storytelling, and digital reach to drive engagement and sales. But as this trend grows, so does controversy. A new wave of scandals is raising urgent questions about transparency, ethics, and trust in modern philanthropy.

One of the most high-profile cases emerged in Italy, where influencer Chiara Ferragni promoted luxury Christmas cakes and Easter products as charity initiatives, implying proceeds would benefit children’s hospitals. Investigations later revealed that only a limited donation had been made before the campaign launched, while consumers were led to believe purchases directly supported the cause. Authorities fined Ferragni’s companies over misleading marketing, sparking nationwide debate and new regulations on influencer charity promotions. Although she was acquitted of criminal fraud charges in 2026, the scandal reshaped how influencer-led philanthropy is regulated and perceived.

This phenomenon, often referred to as “charity marketing”, blurs the line between altruism and advertising. Critics argue that emotional causes are being exploited to boost sales and personal brands, while supporters say influencers can mobilize funds and awareness faster than traditional nonprofits.

However, the reputational fallout is real. Brands have severed partnerships, regulators have tightened disclosure rules, and audiences have become more skeptical. For nonprofits, the stakes are high: every misleading campaign erodes public trust and makes genuine fundraising harder.

As philanthropy becomes increasingly digital, the sector faces a defining question: Is charity becoming a marketing strategy, or can marketing truly serve charity?



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