



The NLI White Papers

Volume 1, May 2011



These White Papers address issues of leadership, values and nationhood. They demonstrate the urgent need for action and proffer practical suggestions on steps to be taken. The White Papers also support StandUP Naija, a video project by NLI which gives a voice to the issues faced by average Nigerians and their expectations of elected leaders.

www.nli-global.org

© 2011. Nigeria Leadership Initiative.

This material may not be copied, reproduced, republished, posted, transmitted, or distributed in any way without the express, advance, written consent of Nigeria Leadership Initiative.

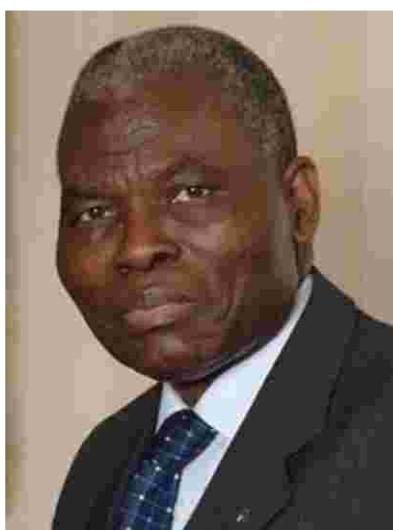
Designed by ennovateNIGERIA

About NLI

The Nigeria Leadership Initiative (NLI) is a platform for credible, accomplished and patriotic Nigerians to develop and express values-based leadership skills with the aim of assuming a transformative role in the development of Nigeria.



Mr. Segun Aganga
Honourable Minister of Finance, Nigeria
Founder, NLI



Dr. Christopher Kolade CON
Pro-Chancellor, Pan-African University, Nigeria
Founding Patron, NLI

Established in January 2006, we are an international non-profit, non-partisan organisation registered as a charity in Nigeria, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Through our Leadership Seminars, Symposia, Projects and Publications, we are mobilising the energy, talent and resources of Nigerians

worldwide to collectively tackle the challenges that confront Nigeria.

Motivated by the vision of our founders and the necessity of nation-building, we are blending the lines between citizenry and leadership to enhance engagement, moving Nigerians from “Thought to Action...Success to Significance”.

To view a list of NLI fellows, please go to page 72

Foreword

Dr. Christopher Kolade (CON) is presently the Pro-Chancellor, Pan-African University, was Nigeria's former High Commissioner to the United Kingdom. He has been, at different points of his career, Director - General of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, Chief Executive and Chairman of Cadbury Nigeria Plc, and Lecturer in Corporate Governance and Human Resources Management at the Lagos Business School.

I am certain there cannot be a more crucial time—or place—to strengthen the principles of leadership and nationalism than in present-day Nigeria.

Africa's most populous nation has just emerged from its general elections, with over 73 million registered voters. About two-thirds of the country's parliamentary leaders will not be returning to office. Lesser-known political parties have also made an entrance at state and legislative levels of leadership. Beyond words improvised, printed and voiced on the campaign trail, beyond the pomp of swearing-in ceremonies, the need to prioritise fiscal, human and leadership resources towards development remains critical. By 2030, estimates indicate Nigeria will be one of the few countries in the world with young workers in plentiful supply. However this may be against a backdrop of a mere four percent (4%) budgetary allocation going to healthcare, a 79% O-level failure rate, and our continuing to import food whilst utilising less than half of our arable land; all exacerbated by periodic violent, often politically motivated, communal and religious clashes. Unless we do something about it.

These White Papers attempt to address many of these challenges, showing the need for urgent action, deconstructing where possible root causes, and making practical suggestions on actions to be taken. NLI is putting forward the learned views of accomplished Nigerians at home and abroad with the aim of starting a dialogue around critical issues pertinent to our nation's continued development. It is our humble wish that these papers are not merely received, but also read and acted upon.

In concluding, Nigeria's elections place a great burden of trust on its present crop of leaders. Crucially, as we move forward on much needed reforms, and as noted by one of our contributors, we must be mindful that a reform process that does not transcend the person of the reformer or political leader is a failure: It cannot be sustainable.

If these papers contribute to leadership and electorate decisions in some way, and lead to a concerted effort at implementing change, then some of our work is done.

Thank you.



Dr. Christopher Kolade

Founding Patron/Chairman Advisory Board
Nigeria Leadership Initiative

NLI would like to thank the following individuals
for their input to this publication.

Folashade Adefisayo
Ruona Agbroko Meyer
Opeyemi Awoyemi
Dr. Titi Banjoko
Adaku Uche Ekpo
Tony O. Elumelu, MFR
Asue Ighodalo
Chude Jideonwo
Bunmi Lawson
Hauwa Magoro

Jinmi Morgan
Dr. Abdul Raufu Mustapha
Ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli, MFR
'Tunde Olanrewaju
Prof. Jacob K. Olupona
Dr. Lola Oni, OBE
Subomi Plumptre
Gbenga Sesan
Lola Solebo
Maryam Uwais

CONTENTS

- 6**
Leveraging private sector approaches in transforming government delivery
Tony O. Elumelu, MFR
- 14**
Unleashing the power of the Nigerian agricultural sector
Ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli, MFR
- 21**
Diversity as a platform for progress
Maryam Uwais
- 32**
Nigeria at the crossroads: Religion, education, and nation-building
Prof. Jacob K. Olupona
- 40**
Tackling the sickle cell disease challenge in Nigeria
Dr. Lola Oni, OBE
- 51**
79% failure is unacceptable: A roadmap for education in Nigeria
A collaborative essay
- 60**
Adopting a holistic and integrated approach to developing Nigeria's human capital
Dr. Titi Banjoko
- 67**
Reformers in government: The roles of blueprints, incentives and political will
Dr. Abdul Raufu Mustapha



Government can, and should, learn from leading practices used by the private sector



Strengthening and streamlining targeted policy areas can be the key to unlocking the potential of agriculture



Our uniquely rich and varied heritage is an asset we are failing to exploit



Pluralism and the role of religion in taking Nigeria forward should be explored



Practical actions should be taken to transform our approach to managing the disease



To get the maximum value from our investment in education, we must address the structural inhibitors



Our collective skills and experience, properly harnessed can drive sustainable growth and development



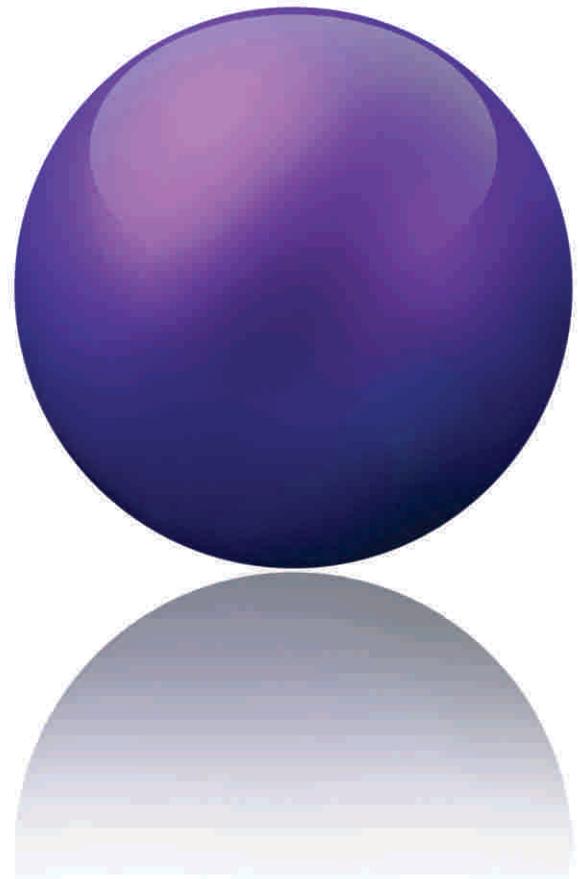
Agents of reform in Nigeria operate in a unique context they must be mindful of

NLI Values



NLI promotes 10 core values identified by Nigerians in an essay competition, as the values that are necessary to build a good Nigerian society. The values are:

- Integrity
- Industry
- Compassion
- Justice & Equity
- Tolerance
- Discipline
- Family Values
- Contentment
- Spirituality
- Patriotism





Leveraging private sector approaches in transforming government delivery

Government can, and should, learn from leading practices used by the private sector

Tony O. Elumelu, MFR

Governments play an obvious and critical role in determining the quality of life of the populace — through the provision of critical infrastructure such as roads and power, healthcare, social security, education and law enforcement, to name a few. It is clear that in Nigeria today many of these basic services are simply not functioning, and in dire need of transformational change. Wide-ranging reform plans across most services have been developed and published, ostensibly laying out well intended paths for addressing current gaps. However the execution of these plans (or rather lack thereof) leaves much to be desired even when the will is there, with efforts in Lagos State being one of the few positive notable exceptions. A famous quote by Thomas

Edison, the inventor of the light bulb, seems very appropriate: “Vision without execution is hallucination”. It is critical we boost our public sector’s ability to actually deliver promised transformation, in the interest of Nigeria’s people and our collective future.

Transformation

It’s worth defining what is meant by Transformation – I would characterize it as profound and radical change that orientates an organization in a new direction and takes it to an entirely different level of effectiveness. This implies a fundamental change of character, resulting in a new model with potentially little or no resemblance with the past configuration or structure. This

is about making a step change. Private sector leaders, due to constant market and competitive pressures, have to be comfortable and adept at transforming their businesses. Such transformation could include effecting the necessary changes to launch a new product line/category, enter a new market/geography, adjust their cost structure in response to a price war/economic downturn, capture synergies from an acquisition/merger, and many other examples. In these situations many unfamiliar challenges must be successfully navigated typically in a limited time window; otherwise the enterprise will rapidly fall behind competitors and could ultimately fail. As you can imagine this focuses the mind. Can the public sector learn from this? While we should acknowledge private enterprise in Nigeria is not insulated, as in other economies, from occasional market challenges, it is fair to say the private sector has an enviable track record around transformation. For example, mobile telecom companies have successfully exploited their licenses to provide coverage across the nation, surmounting serious infrastructure and skills deficiencies in the process. The banking sector went through unprecedented consolidation and reform in a rapid and orderly fashion, dealing well with the execution complexity of merging

multiple institutions' cultures, systems and customers. I daresay the public sector would have struggled to replicate this performance. Put together, these insights beg the question: what can the public sector learn from the private sector about transformation and execution?

The private sector approach

Government, in wrestling with its many complex challenges, has historically tried to leverage a private sector approach by creating competition and instilling the profit motive into public services. In other words, it tries to create the same market and competitive dynamic that drives the private sector. This has often taken the form of state owned monopoly privatization and industry deregulation, which one could say is effectively a shift of the transformation and execution burden away from the government. It does not necessarily develop the capacity of the public sector to develop and deliver transformational change itself. My sense is that irrespective of how much this approach is pursued, in most scenarios difficult to privatize areas such as law enforcement, public administration and tax collection, will likely remain with the government. Therefore it remains crucial that actual transformation and execution capabilities are developed within the public sector. It will always have a core

of services to discharge, and a need to respond to the dynamics of the economy and electorate, so must have the capabilities to do so successfully and repetitively.

At its essence, the main way private sector actors drive transformational change can be (grossly) simplified as follows. Firstly, there is usually a clear, tight and accountable structure – usually the transformation team – that is empowered to work across boundaries and silos, or bring the right people together in innovative ways, to deliver change alongside the existing organizational functions. Secondly, there is full clarity and alignment on what the goals are, and these are expressed in hard targets,

metrics and plans with widely communicated milestones. Thirdly, performance management is regular, swift and effective with delivery being non-negotiable and real upside/downside existing for the transformation team. Around these “pillars”, a wide variety of supporting tools/frameworks/techniques are additionally employed (e.g. project planning tools, organizational design techniques, codified best practice approaches to certain types of change, such as post-merger integration, etc). Finally, where necessary, external expertise is explicitly brought in (e.g. consultants) to help on aspects of the transformation, in recognition of the outsider's view and experience of change they can bring.

The UK Prime Minister's Delivery Unit (PMDU) – Overview

Description

The Prime Minister's Delivery Unit (PMDU) helped government deliver improved public services. The Unit reported jointly to the Prime Minister and to the Chancellor, was based in the Treasury and worked closely with Downing Street, the Cabinet Office and a range of other departments.

PMDU was originally set up under the leadership of Professor Sir Michael Barber, formerly a Professor at the Institute of Education, University of London and a prolific author.

The unit had 40 staff, was organised around priority areas, and consisted of small delivery teams with a mix of capability profiles, each led by a senior civil servant.

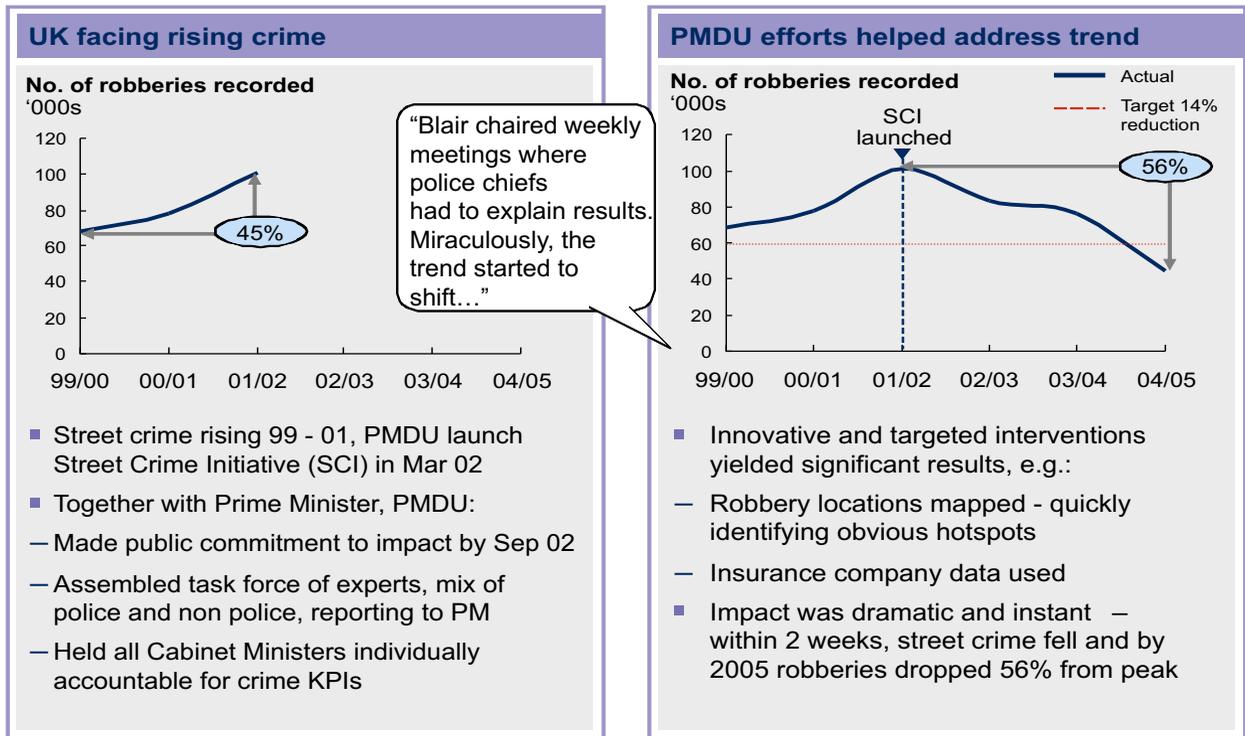
Work

PMDU was focused on a core set of national priorities across multiple ministries, including some in which short-term impact was possible.

It focused on monitoring & reporting progress in relation to priorities; identifying key barriers to improvement and the action needed to strengthen delivery. It also shared knowledge about best practices in delivery, and it supported the development of high quality targets that would effectively incentivise improvements in public services.

The Unit worked in partnership with departments to ensure a shared understanding of issues and a shared commitment to action, engaged with people at all levels in the delivery system and produced high-quality data and analysis to drive effective actions.

The UK Prime Minister's Delivery Unit (PMDU) - Sample impact



SOURCE: Press search, Press releases

Applying this approach in the public sector

Lessons from the private sector should not be applied thoughtlessly to the public sector. It is critical to understand that the public sector is subject to several complexities that challenge the traditional methods of strategic and process planning used in the private sector. Some of these complexities include:

- The scale at which government needs to have an impact, typically across whole sectors and broad constituencies, as compared with the private sector which can segment its target customers and

“cherry pick” where it decides to play.

- The political nature of the public sector, which can pressure leadership to shift priorities, disrupting projects and changing their direction mid-flight in a typically detrimental way, and often requiring involved stakeholder processes and uneasy compromises.
- The challenges faced in accurately assessing success, as appropriate targets and metrics can be difficult to define. In contrast the private sector benefits from a (largely) singular

focus on bottom line impact.

- Generally unclear consequences for poor or failed delivery, which is typically much less ruthless than the private sector (where non-delivery is typically met by the firing of the individuals responsible).

- Stakeholder motivations that are broader and can be less transparent, are not easily ignored, and are difficult to prioritize.

- Inflexible hiring and resource allocation practices, further exacerbated by low staff turnover. It can be exceedingly difficult to get the right people and capabilities into the right roles when they are required, and generally lower compensation makes talent attraction even difficult from the onset.

- Often times limited change capability and experience, due to the reduced dynamism and pace of innovation undergone in government. In other words too many people have worked in the same way for too long and have limited experience, and much fear, of transformation.

- Transformational leaders in the public sector – especially in developing economies where their work is most important – quickly become highly sought after public

speakers and participants at events around the world, taking them away from the important work that raised their profile in the first place.

These complexities should not be taken lightly, and are many of the reasons celebrated private sector leaders who have gone into public service struggle to replicate their past success. It would also suggest that private sector approaches would not work in government. That would be too simple: seasoned private sector leaders deal with similar issues, perhaps not at the same scale, but successfully nonetheless – politically motivated regulator intervention in their businesses, aging unionized workforces that block change, universal service obligations that damage profitability (e.g. regular postal service in rural areas) etc. So the issue is not that private sector techniques or mindsets won't work in the public sector, but rather that the unique context and realities must always be borne in mind as they are taken across.

My research has surfaced examples of many governments around the world that are increasingly leveraging the private sector approach outlined here to drive change. This has manifested through the creation of dedicated “Transformation Units (TUs)” that

allow a more dynamic approach to addressing whatever challenges are being prioritized (see chart below for overview of some TUs from across the world). These units can be focused on individual issues or more broadly (e.g. UK “Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit”, see side bar for case study). They seek to leverage private sector techniques but also reflect public sector realities as outlined previously. Overall, the most successful among them tend to have some of the following common features:

- They are formed as separate non-partisan organizations with real authority, not special committees or ad hoc forums that could become ineffectual.

Importantly they bring in external and/or proven government expertise, to help with establishing the unit.

- They have true sponsorship from the very top, often reporting directly and regularly engaging at that level. This is combined with strong integration across all key government departments, and strong links to other stakeholders (private sector, unions, etc).
- They establish a persistent cross government focus on a few key priorities, which are reflected in the focus of multiple government departments. They articulate crisply the associated joint aspirations and targets, and are

Transformation Units around the world

	Taiwan	Malaysia	South Korea	UK
Program	Rural Reconstruction	Economic Development	National Economic Growth	Reform Agenda of Prime Minister
TU	Joint Commission for Rural Reconstruction (JCRR)	Economic Planning Unit	Economic Planning Board	Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit (PMDU)

SOURCE: Press, search, interviews

able to convince public sector leadership – who are often fearful of setting targets that may not be met – to set ambitious time-bound targets (sometimes locking this into contracts).

- They understand their role can be much more about cross government coordination than direct action on issues, depending on the priority. They work in close concert with other government areas, but are prepared (and empowered) to do whatever it takes to achieve the objectives.

- They use a very robust performance management framework to ensure holistic review and debate around progress, always anchored in real facts not opinion.

- They have a creative approach to staffing and sourcing the right capability. This includes paying market rates to attract top talent and/or crafting roles with exceptional exposure, which whilst not having high compensation are still attractive to top performers (e.g. working at highest levels of government).

- There are real consequences for staff for non-delivery and a supporting culture that routinely tracks and rewards outcomes. This includes taking a proactive approach to addressing risks to

delivery (vs. reactive firefighting).

Actions to be taken

As I look at the transformation challenges for Government in Nigeria today, it strikes me that these lessons, insights and experiences could be beneficially applied to great positive effect. To that end, I would like to offer up for debate the following actions we could take:

Action #1 – Agree on a limited set of priorities. We have myriad issues needing attention but we must prioritize to be able to successfully tackle any. Let us agree on a core set of cross-government priorities and exactly how each government department/ministry will contribute to realizing the goal according to a prescribed timeline. We need shared goals and an understanding of how individual actions contribute to delivery. It is also important to agree on some priorities in which short-term impact is possible.

Action #2 - Establish a delivery unit. Our challenge is not ideas, it is delivery. Let us explore the benefits of establishing a “Transformation Unit” of our own as a focal point for driving delivery against the agreed priorities. This cannot be a “paper tiger” and must be set up with the right conditions for success (public

presidential support, adequate authority, resources, etc). Leverage the best expertise in setting it up, and learn from successful structures internationally. Absolutely ensure the right talent, particularly the unit's leadership, is appointed. Explicitly avoid just installing friends or political allies, rather recruit rigorously the right person with requisite execution discipline and performance culture to lead it, irrespective of their background.

Action #3 - Create transparency on progress. The transformation unit will need to articulate clear, hard metrics, and how they are expected to change over time, to underpin the transformation. The metrics should not be open for “gaming”, and perhaps can be compiled and monitored by an independent entity. It should be abundantly clear where blockages are and where we are falling behind. This process should be managed carefully and positively, with a focus on exposing progress so remedial action is taken, not on politically motivated assessments.

Action #4 - Have real consequences for delivery performance. Often our large transformations are launched with great fanfare and promise, and then allowed to falter and die quietly. Let us have real performance contracts

around these activities and the individuals driving them (in the unit and across government), and be willing to take swift action if there are issues.

I believe these actions could be a good starting point, and hope this essay triggers a broader discussion around these themes. I look forward to the benefits that successful transformational change in and of Nigeria's public sector will bring to the nation. We have the talent to make this happen. It is just a matter of getting the commitment and signalling from the very top that execution is of the utmost importance and that people in positions of authority will be held accountable for delivery.

The writer is the Founder of The Tony Elumelu Foundation, an African based and funded not-for-profit institution dedicated to the promotion and celebration of excellence in business leadership and entrepreneurship across Africa. He is also Chairman of Heirs Holdings, an investment company focused on key development sectors across Africa. He is the former Group Chief Executive Officer of UBA Plc.



Unleashing the power of the Nigerian agricultural sector

Strengthening and streamlining targeted policy areas can unlock the potential of agriculture

Ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli, MFR

Agriculture is the most important sector in the Nigerian economy. According to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, the country has a land area of 92.4 million hectares, with approximately 79 million hectares suitable for agriculture. However, less than half is being utilized. The sector engages approximately 60% of Nigerians, many who are rural women and contributes 42% of the country's national GDP. Unlike many other African countries, agriculture in Nigeria is largely focused on food crops such as yam, cassava, sorghum, millet, rice, maize, beans, dried cowpea, groundnut, cocoyam and sweet potato, aquaculture and livestock. In spite of this reality, Nigeria remains a net importer of food and spends over \$4.2 billion annually on food imports. In addition, local food prices are prohibitively expensive for the average Nigerian family and the

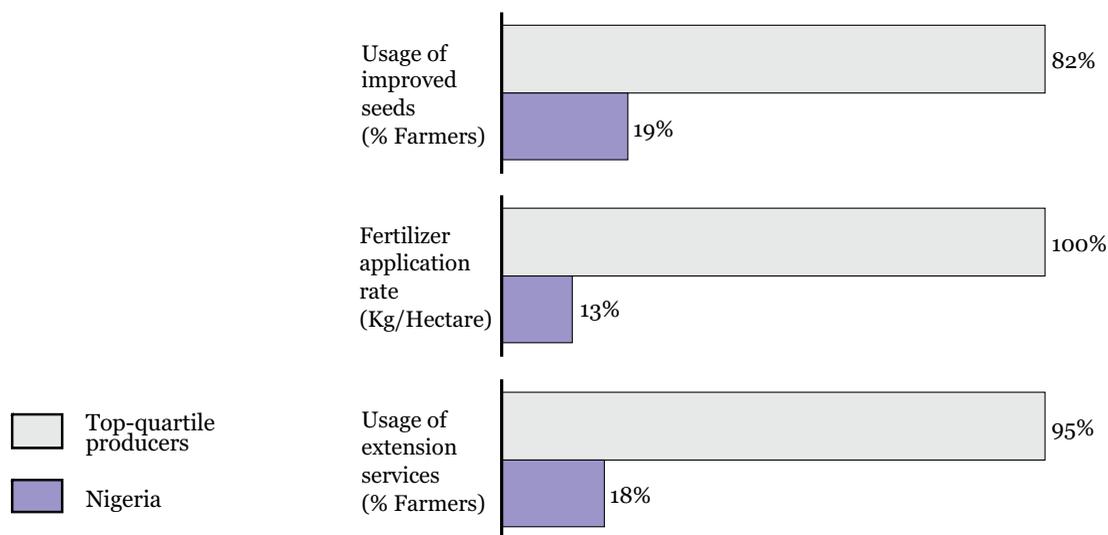
country continues to experience alarming rates of malnutrition. This paper will aim to surface a few of the underlying causes of the current situation and will outline practical actions that should be taken to strengthen the sector.

The current situation

There are three main factors that have led to the current state of the agricultural sector in Nigeria:

- 1. Structurally poor approaches to agricultural production* – Majority of the agriculture-focused operations in the country are small scale, dominated by small holder farmers who operate at a subsistence level. With limited innovation around inputs - water; soil health; seeds; production techniques and poor harvesting, processing,

Selected Nigerian agricultural statistics



Source: Field interviews; Federal Ministry of Agriculture & Water Resources

distribution techniques and limited access to markets and training, they perform significantly below their potential. Some of the worrying statistics are highlighted in the sidebar, which underline the very limited use of irrigation and other technologies (e.g. improved seeds, fertilizers, etc) and overwhelmingly small-holder based agricultural landscape. This is exacerbated by market failures in key areas such as seed production: Four seed companies dominate the seed production space, causing significant market distortions in availability, quality and pricing; there is also a significant amount of bad seed in the system due to poor quality of produce. As such Nigerian farmers generate yields that are significantly lower than

those generated by their counterparts in other countries, making Nigerian produce uncompetitive versus imports. For example, rice production in Nigeria generates 1.7 tons per ha on average. Coupled with high labour costs, this results in a price of paddy of about US\$ 300/MT compared with \$130-\$140/MT in Thailand.

2. Weak policy and operating environment – Nigeria's policy and operating environment simply does not support agricultural growth. There are weak, un-enforced, unimplemented and often conflicting policies at the local, national or regional level which often frustrate operators across the agricultural value chain. Local producers and

processors are hurt by the heavy government involvement in fertilizer and seed distribution, multiple subsidies, and government quotas around the importation of commodities such as rice and sugar. Until recently, the sector had been largely neglected by the public and private sectors, civil society and bilateral and multilateral agencies, especially in terms of investment and funding. In spite of the fact that Nigeria signed the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) in 2003 and the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) in 2005, which stipulated that each country in Africa should devote at least 10% of its budget to agriculture, the country has struggled to implement and sustain this commitment at the national and state levels. The sector has also been severely constrained by the poor infrastructure across the country. This includes the epileptic power situation, absence of feeder roads and other transportation networks and limited access to affordable financing (even though this is changing with the recent reforms being spearheaded by Mallam Lamido Sanusi and his team at the Central Bank of Nigeria). Operators in the sector also face significant hurdles with accessing markets and high transaction costs associated with transporting produce across the country and the West African region.

3. Absence of credible agricultural institutions to help develop the sector
 – There is an absence of credible research, technology and educational institutions focused on agriculture, and inadequate links between these institutions and the private sector. This is despite the fact that Nigeria currently has 17 commodity-based research institutes, and a special national extension institute, over 45 faculties of agriculture in conventional federal, state and private universities, three universities of agriculture, and several colleges of agriculture/polytechnics. Unfortunately, these institutions, and the farmer associations, trade and industry bodies in the sector are relatively weak and have not been able to serve as effective sources of innovation in the sector or as advocates for policy changes at the federal, state and local levels. Civil society/nonprofit actors in the agricultural landscape have really struggled for survival and relevance due to the lack of funding in the sector. They have been displaced by large international NGOs who have dominated the space across West Africa.

This starting point is an important backdrop for the development of any plan to address agricultural output in Nigeria.

Strengthening the agricultural sector

The potential of the agriculture sector in Nigeria is immense. Given the country's natural assets including its land, climate and rainfall, its coastal areas, its history as an agrarian economy, and its current status as one of the world's largest producers of cassava, cashews, tubers – such as sweet potato and yams, fruits such as mango and papaya and grains such as millet, sorghum and sesame, it has a substantial base to build upon. In addition, the country's population – of 150M - the largest in Africa, represents a large domestic market that can support and sustain local production and processing. Nigeria also plays a pivotal role in West Africa and there are tremendous opportunities to access regional markets. Finally, the recent world food crises, the rising prices of locally sourced food, and the country's alarming rate of malnutrition, especially among children under 5 years old, have all reinforced the urgent need to ensure food security for us all.

The Nigerian agricultural sector needs significant attention and investment from the public, private and nonprofit sectors to move it forward. Each of these sectors has a distinct and important role to play in addressing the country's immense challenges.

Public sector imperatives

The public sector is responsible for creating an enabling environment for agriculture to thrive. As a result, it needs to invest in addressing the structural issues that currently hinder the sector. Specifically:

Action #1: Increase and refocus the funding devoted to

agriculture. The country should consistently fulfill its commitment to the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)/ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) process – and comply with the commitment to invest at least 10% of its annual budget to agriculture at the national and state levels. With increased funding being devoted to the agricultural sector, there is also an urgent need for more agricultural governance and transparency in the use of funds being allocated to the sector.

Action #2: Institute and enforce consistent and reinforcing

government policies. This should include trade and land tenure policies that favour local farmers, processors and actors across the value chain. There is also an urgent need to streamline and harmonize government policies, institutions and activities being managed by various ministries including the Ministries of Agriculture, Commerce & Industry, Finance, Environment, Planning,

Transportation, etc., which all affect the agribusiness sector. Additionally, the Government needs to ease its involvement in fertilizer, seed and input supply, distribution, and financing – and ensure effective and smart subsidies. Ultimately this will significantly reduce the high levels of corruption and bureaucracy in the sector.

Action #3: Invest in strong agricultural educational/ research institutions and strengthen their links to the private sector. Investing in, and streamlining, the agriculture institutes that already exist will ensure that they provide world-class training, research and management capacity that directly meets the needs of the sector. This can be coupled with provision of incentives for financial institutions, especially banks and insurance companies to ensure that they can support the agribusiness sector. The Central Bank has shown tremendous leadership in this area and its efforts need to be supported and sustained.

Action #4: Boost infrastructure provision affecting the sector. Farmers need strong and effective extension support services, and efficient and effective Agriculture Development Programs at the local government level. They also need

adequate infrastructure, especially feeder road networks, rail and water transportation and consistent and affordable electricity – starting with major bread-basket clusters.

Private sector imperatives

The Nigerian private sector has a critical role to play as the real driver of growth in the agricultural sector. A first step is that agriculture needs to be recognized as a pivotal business sector in Nigeria, and farmers and fishermen need to be recognized as entrepreneurs, who require support. In addition, the private sector can benefit from the following:

Action #5: Stimulate the whole agricultural value chain. Beyond the key “producers”, there are tremendous opportunities for actors, especially small and medium enterprises across the agricultural value chain. These should receive as much focus from investors as core production. These areas include:

- a) Sourcing and provision of agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, irrigation, cultivation, harvesting and processing equipment.
- b) Storage, transportation, processing, packaging and marketing of the produce, fishes, and livestock.
- c) Provision of financing, training and support systems for the sector.

Action #6: Form networks to drive the sector's progress. As the private sector recognizes the potential of this sector, it will be valuable and more impactful for it to work through strong value chain and industry associations to effectively capitalize on the opportunities in this sector. This will aggregate the scale of the sector in effective lobbying and investment/ risk pooling, and lead to the creation of an efficient sector run by Nigerians for the benefit of Nigerians. This will in turn foster job creation, import substitution, food security and sustainable growth.

Civil society/Nonprofit sector imperatives

With the emergence of new sources of funding for agriculture, there is renewed interest by foreign aid donors/ institutions in working with local organizations to improve the sector. There is also increased hope that they can effectively play their role as independent, impartial and constructive stakeholders in the Nigerian agricultural landscape. In particular they can help to identify and address gaps left by inaction (or poor action) by the public and private sectors. Specifically, they can:



Action #7: Hold the public sector accountable. Play the critical role of holding the government accountable to deliver on its commitments to the sector, in terms of funding and the creation of an enabling environment, and actively monitoring the use of government funding for the sector to ensure transparency and accountability.

Action #8: Ensure a strong voice for key stakeholders. Help with fostering the formation of strong cooperative, industry, trade and value chain associations that can serve as credible and independent voices, advocating for positive changes in government policy.

Action #9: Tactically plug “gaps” in the value chain. In particular, this will mean providing support to actors across the value chain through the provision of training, extension, financing, linkages and other support services, where market or policy failures may occur.

Concluding thoughts

Unleashing the potential of Nigeria's agricultural sector is a critical prerequisite for the sustainable development of our country. A stronger agricultural sector will ensure stable and lucrative jobs for at least 60% of our population who

are already engaged in the sector, new jobs for the countless entrepreneurs who will provide support services across various value chains, affordable food prices, and lower rates of malnutrition in the country.

The good news is that Nigeria is already blessed with the land, rainfall, climate and coastline for agriculture. All that is required is the political will, and sincere commitment to comprehensive reforms at the national, state and local levels, and the creation of an enabling environment for the sector to grow and thrive, and to reclaim its rightful place in the national economy.

The writer is the Co-Founder of AACE Foods, an indigenous agroprocessing company as well as Director of the Agribusiness Growth Institute of West Africa (AGIWA) and Sahel Capital Partners & Advisory. She is also the founder of LEAP Africa, a leadership development NGO.



Diversity as a platform for progress

Leveraging our diversity for socio-economic development

Maryam Uwais

The strength of any nation lies with its citizenry and their ability to peacefully unite around a common purpose, harness their resources in order to live in an orderly manner for the purposes of building a progressive society. Nigeria has a population of over 150 million, making us the most populous country in Africa, with more than 250 ethnic groups with a good balance of Christians, Muslims and a sprinkling of other religious adherents, and atheists. Indeed, there are very few countries with the assortment of cultural capital available in Nigeria. Most regrettably, and especially in the recent past, politicians and some of our elite chose to highlight aspects of our diversity in divisive contexts, thereby manipulating the poor and using them as a vehicle for

promoting ethnic and religious violence. There is much to be gained from our cultural diversity, so our ethnic and religious differences should not be an excuse for conflicts and disharmony; we have an immense wealth of cultural and intellectual capacity that we can tap into for the benefit of Nigeria.

Overview of ethnic and religious divisions in Nigeria

Nigeria is a country endowed with vast natural resources that include an estimated 82 million hectares of arable land and other resources such as natural gas, bitumen, petroleum, tin, iron ore, coal, limestone, niobium, lead, and zinc. However, and without a doubt, our most important resource is our human capital. In 1960, our population stood at 35

million and according to statisticians; by 2016 we are expected to grow to 218 million people. So although we have come a long way, we have regrettably failed to plan for our potential growth.

Pre-Independence, Colonial Nigeria was constructed around a 'divide and conquer' policy for the administrative convenience of the British. Led by Lord Fredrick Lugard, the then British Governor General of Nigeria, the colonial Government endorsed segregation by introducing separate governments in the northern and southern parts of Nigeria with the obvious aim of weakening the people's potential for resistance.

In 1947, the British introduced a new Constitution that divided Nigeria into three regions: the Northern Region composed of a large population of ethnic groups, comprising Hausa, Fulani, Tiv, Epira, Kanuri, Idoma, Jikun, Bura, Birom, Angas, (and numerous other smaller ethnic groups) many of which are Muslims, but with a significant Christian population; the Eastern Region composed mainly of Igbos who were predominantly Christians; and the Western Region composed of Yorubas who were evenly split between

Muslims and Christians. The regions each had their own legislative assemblies, with appointed members.

This governance strategy served to not only fortify ethnic groups into identifying themselves as 'nationalities' within the Nigerian nation, it also reinforced ethnic divisions along religious lines. When we became independent in 1960, we did so with a very fragile sense of unity and patriotism. Following independence, our leaders neglected to focus on uniting the country, which led to a civil war and eventually thirty-three years of crippling military rule.

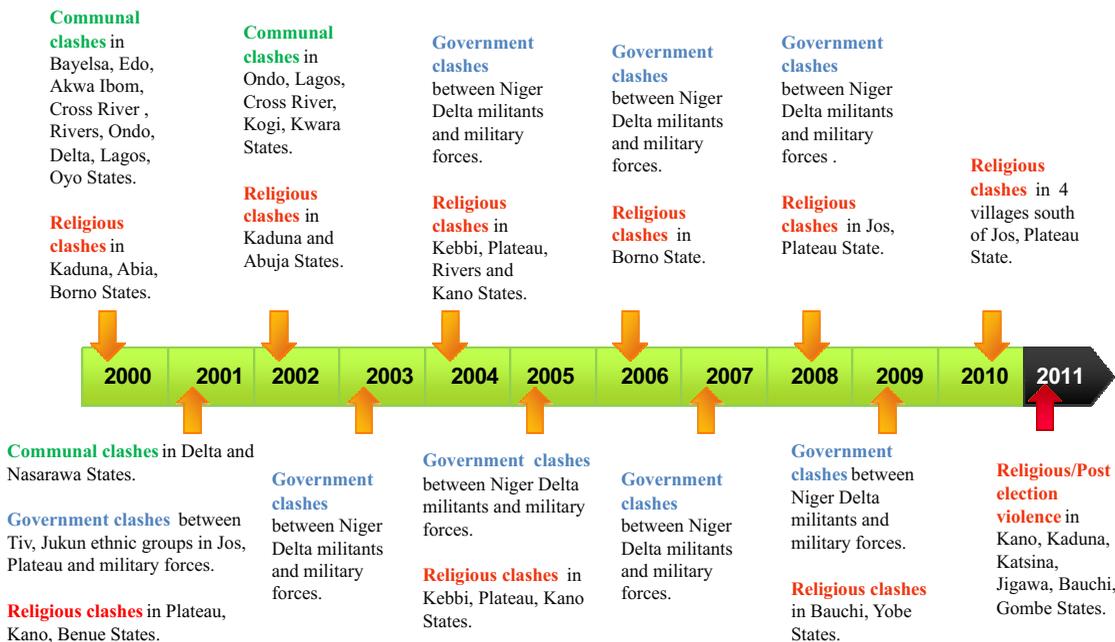
Comparative analysis: Malaysia

Like Nigeria, Malaysia is an ethnically heterogeneous country, which has been a socio-economic success story since the 1970s. Malaysia's population is comprised of Malays (53.3 percent) other groups regarded as indigenous (11.8 percent), ethnic Chinese (26 percent), Indians (7.7 percent) and others (1.2 percent). Unlike Nigeria, Malaysia (while not a perfect example) is widely accepted as a country that has been remarkably successful in managing and containing ethnic conflict in a post-colonial context against expectations.

In May 1969, riots broke out in Kuala Lumpur and elsewhere, mainly between Malays and ethnic Chinese. Several hundred people were killed or injured. As a result of the riots, the government of Malaysia undertook a series of initiatives including the New Economic Policy (NEP), which contained a series of affirmative action policies designed to benefit Malays and certain indigenous groups (collectively known as Bumiputras or 'sons of the soil'). The Constitution was amended to limit dissent against the specially-protected and sensitive portions of the Constitution pertaining

to the social contract. The government identified inter-communal harmony as one of its official goals. Malaysia's economic development proceeded hand in hand with human development. Despite racial and cultural differences, socio-political development was equally nurtured in an atmosphere of democratic values based on tolerance, goodwill, sympathy and mutual co-operation. Malaysia is a good example of what can be achieved by focused planning in strategic areas. The key element of Malaysia's program that Nigerian leaders ought to focus on is the need

Selected examples of ethnic-religious violence in Nigeria: 2000-2011



Sources:
 Tattersall, N & Cutler, D. (2010, March 7). Timeline: Ethnic and religious unrest in Nigeria
Reuters. Retrieved April 25, 2011 from <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/03/07/uk-nigeria-clashes-religion-idUSTRE62610O20100307>
 Olu-Adeyemi, L. (2006, February 3). *Ethno-Religious Conflicts and The Travails of National Integration In Nigeria's Fourth Republic*. Retrieved March 13, 2011, from <http://www.dawodu.com/adeyemi3.htm>

to make inter-communal harmony a priority and incorporate it as a cross cutting element in a national economic development strategy.

Patriotism for unity, unity for economic development

Faced with similar ethnically and religiously motivated violence, past Nigerian governments attempted to encourage unity and patriotism through a number of policies ranging from the creation of new states and local governments, the introduction of a new national anthem and pledge, establishment of the National Youth Service Corps, the National Orientation Agency, the federal character clause in the Constitution, and a slew of poverty alleviation programs. Unlike Malaysia, these policies were not formulated or executed properly, because Nigeria's dependence on oil and gas has created a "rent-seeking elite" who control the state apparatus and who have no incentive to implement viable policies. The political elite in Nigeria appear to consider peace, stability and unity averse to their economic interests and frequently ferment strife along ethnic or religious lines.

Religion and ethnicity are not root causes of violence, they are simply used as excuses for violence. The political elite often arm and encourage violence

by the large numbers of unemployed and disaffected youth so that they can take advantage of the chaos from the violence to lobby for influence and a greater share of our country's wealth. For instance, in September 2001 deadly riots in Jos, Plateau State, were triggered when a Christian woman crossed a roadblock in front of a mosque. This was considered a sacrilegious and insensitive act by the Muslims praying in that mosque, so there was a huge outcry leading to carnage, killings and destruction. Shortly afterwards, there were reprisal killings. After that incident, a Muslim attempted to rebuild a house belonging to him, without using Christian labourers in the effort. This again was considered unacceptable by the Christians in the neighborhood, leading to another frenzy of violence. However, it was obvious that the true cause of the riot was not the state of Christian – Muslim relations, it was clearly much deeper and related to issues surrounding access to land and the concept of 'settlers' and 'indigenes' in Nigeria.

In Plateau and some other States in Nigeria, local governments often classify the populace as so-called 'indigenes' and so-called 'settlers'. In Jos, the so-called 'indigenes' are

predominantly Christian and the so-called 'settlers' are predominantly Muslims, mostly Hausa and Fulani herdsmen who had initially settled in those areas with their cattle for grazing purposes. The 'settlers' complain that even though they have lived in Plateau State for generations, they do not have the right to attend public schools, attain public office or even own land. They have gradually been edged out of governance and access to their rights as Nigerian citizens, while the 'indigenes', increasingly growing insecure by the growth and 'encroaching' nature of the 'settlers', continue to dig deep into the trenches about conceding rights to the 'settlers', believing that such concessions would translate into less for them and their kith and kin. Consequently, both parties have resorted to violence to assert themselves, utilizing every small excuse to inflame passions and inflict carnage on one other.

The Federal Government has responded to this violence by deploying soldiers and increasing funding allocations to Plateau State to address security issues. Several Commissions of Enquiry have also been set up to investigate and establish the causes for the mayhem, with a view to curtailing the senseless destruction and killings. However, the measure of success in achieving the purpose of addressing the underlying issues remains poor, so the conflicts continue, unabated.

Leveraging our diversity

Our country is the fourth largest democracy in the world, and one of the youngest, but with earnings averaging N4 trillion in oil revenues and 70% of Nigerians living on less than \$2 a day, Nigeria remains one of the most egregious examples of poor leadership in Africa. History and contemporary events have shown that the mere possession of capital and natural

resources are not by themselves sufficient to create and sustain wealth. Countries like Singapore and Japan have proven this case; the leaders of these countries properly identified their key resource as their human capital, then designed and implemented policies to effectively harness these resources in order to build strong economies. Renowned management expert Peter Drucker said following Japan's rise as an economic powerhouse after the Second World War: “their success was the result of political behavior that used the diversity in national life to produce effective economic action.”

The Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy outlined in Chapter 2 of our Constitution provides a blueprint of economic and social imperatives of good governance, which along with the more popular Fundamental Rights and Freedoms provided under Chapter 4, are designed to secure “happiness” for all Nigerians. These principles underpin the material targets of quality healthcare, education, shelter, employment, sanitation, and many other imperatives of good governance. These are the rational basis of connection between citizens and government. With the guarantee of these entitlements, the religion or

ethnicity of individuals in power or authority becomes irrelevant. All 3 organs of government are compelled to observe and comply with the principles outlined in Chapter 2 of our Constitution, with the Executive utilizing those indices as the foundation for budget preparation, the Legislature using them as the yardstick for measuring compliance to the basic criteria for good governance by the Executive in preparing the budget, and the Judiciary, in assessing the performance of both arms, in budget analyses, thereby setting criteria for assessing the actors for the purposes of re-election.

According to key findings from the Next Generation Task Force convened by the British Council, Nigeria is on a threshold of great transformation. By 2030, Nigeria will be one of the few countries in the world with young workers in plentiful supply. If the right policies are in place, the average Nigerian will be as much as 3 times richer by 2030 and 30 million people lifted out of poverty. If the right policies are not put in place, the growing numbers of young people, frustrated by a lack of opportunities, faced with increased competition for the relatively fewer jobs, land and natural resources will bow to the pressures of political

patronage and become cannon fodder for radicalization. If this happens, Nigeria's prospects will be dismal and clearly catastrophic. This highlights the urgency for our leaders to be committed to investing in our most important resource- its own people, particularly youth and womenfolk.

Presently, Nigeria is poorly positioned to maximize its demographic opportunities despite marked improvements in the policy environment in the past decade. Health and educational standards are at their lowest peak, especially in disadvantaged regions and in the rural areas, despite the increased allocation of funds to Governments at all levels. Many young Nigerians are ill equipped for life in a modern economy, while our women folk are excluded from opportunities for gainful employment and even active political office. Efforts to ensure their inclusion in the Electoral Reform Committee Report were roundly rejected by male dominated and gender-insensitive White Paper Committees and the National Assembly, so the prospects for the emergence of balanced and better governance in our political space, remain bleak. Meanwhile, we have a National Assembly that continues to budget and appropriate monumental

amounts of monies to its members, having amended the Constitution to accord itself a direct line charge on the Federation account. These monies are outrageous and need to be reduced drastically, even because, as a Nation, we cannot afford to continue down this trajectory, and funds, if any, need to be redirected towards real growth and development, certainly not private pockets.

In order for economic development to occur in Nigeria, our leaders have to be visionaries that will set out to address the flaws in the concept of our nationhood and citizenship. As that happens, Nigerians will begin to buy in to the idea that we can only succeed together because in the absence of unity and peace amongst us, there will be no progress. There is little need to create new policies; we simply need leaders willing to take action using existing mechanisms as outlined below:

Action #1: Unify Nigerians.

The Nigerian Constitution forbids discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, and circumstances of your birth, yet in practice we continue to make the distinction between state of origin and state of residence. Being Nigerian does not mean we do

away with the concept of State of origin, but by creating separate rules for residents and so-called “indigenes”, we continue to encourage violent inter-communal conflicts and as long as we have frequent conflicts, we will not accomplish our socio-economic goals. Our leaders have to make it a priority to unite Nigerians by identifying and ending practices that create second-class citizens within the same jurisdiction.

Action #2: Strengthen existing job creation plans.

Conflicts persist in Nigeria because of our failure to address pressing issues such as poverty, and youth unemployment. We need to develop human capital by empowering critical groups (youth, women, etc) in the regions prone to conflict. The recent violence in Northern Nigeria highlights the urgency to address youth unemployment. There are existing initiatives from the Niger Delta Development Commission to the newly proposed National Job Creation Scheme, all designed to create jobs. While these schemes are laudable, the best way for our leaders to approach job creation is to create a business friendly environment that objectively harnesses and motivates our women and our youth, enabling them to

become thriving entrepreneurs for their businesses to grow.

As such, in volatile communities, the government should focus on:

- Understanding and identifying the context, nature and interests of the various target groups, as also the natural resources available in the various jurisdictions, with a view to motivating the targeted audience towards gainful employment in the specific areas.
- Strengthening basic infrastructure, and in the process provide jobs in public works for unemployed young people.
- Ensuring that women and youth have access to small business training and the requisite resources, including financing.
- Developing public-private partnerships to build factories with dedicated, uninterrupted power supply that can provide mass employment in these communities.
- Investing in education (including skill acquisition and vocational training) so that future generations are prepared for the emerging potential jobs of the future.

Action #3: Strengthen justice actors in regions prone to ethnic-religious conflicts.

At the State level, there is limited capacity to prevent and abate violence. Our leaders have to make a concerted effort to resuscitate effective public institutions for law and order and the provision of social services. Without a trained police force or prosecutors with the requisite skills and adequate resources, peace-building efforts are doomed. Justice actors such as lawyers, judges and police should also be trained to work with local civil society to initiate conflict mediation and resolution techniques in communities prone to conflict. The rule of law must be ensured in our country; its main components being that government (its officials and agents) are subject to the same laws, being accountable to the people; that our laws should be publicized and consistently applied across board; while access to justice must be guaranteed and upheld by competent, independent and ethical law enforcement officers, judges and attorneys.

Action #4: Utilize media to highlight synergies across cultures

Most Nigerians are largely ignorant of other ethnic groups in the country. We

are not even aware that for the most part all of us across the country face the same challenges. Our ignorance makes it easy for us to engage in unhelpful and unproductive dialogue and in many cases, destructive actions. The government could utilize the resources of the growing film industry in Nigeria as well as the Ministry of Information (and a well-funded National Orientation Agency) in developing jingles, programs, movies and role plays that not only showcase our different cultures but provide examples on how we could draw from our positive customs and traditions for our mutual benefit. For all our variances, diversity and analyses, there is only one indisputable truth; we are all human beings. We share the same emotions, and impulses, have common motivations, aspirations and needs, no matter our affiliations or specific identities. As with all persons around the world, we are the complex products of our social and political histories, socio-economic conditions, life experiences, education, exposure and environments. This must be the basis of understanding, from which we can draw synergies and a coherence that unites us, as Nigerians.

Action #5: Support organizations that demand transparency and fiscal responsibility.

Every month, the Federal Government disburses funds to all States and Local Governments, according to the revenue sharing formula. Very few of us know or care to know how much is allocated to each jurisdiction and more importantly, how local leaders utilize the funds, yet these figures are available from the Federal Ministry of Finance and are published in our newspapers monthly. We need to engage with budget tracking and the training of young people to monitor spending by our Local and State governments, if only to hold the persons in authority accountable and to ensure growth and development in the jurisdictions that are their responsibility.

Action #6: Constructive dialogue across stereotypes.

In his book, *Ahmadu Bello Sardauna of Sokoto*, John N. Paden recounted the following dialogue between Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto that took place in the mid-1960s:

Azikiwe: “Let us forget our differences....”

Ahmadu Bello: "No, let us

understand our differences. I am a Muslim and a Northerner. You are a Christian, an Easterner. By understanding our differences, we can build unity in our country.”

Undoubtedly, good governance is the panacea of many of our national problems and while it is easy to blame our leadership for our shortcomings, as citizens we should also reexamine our role and take ownership for moving Nigeria forward and holding our leaders accountable. Too many are manipulated by some members of the political elite whose self-serving conversations dominate much of the discourse in our land. Instead of focusing on the inability of our local and state governments to provide basic services, we get caught up in debates about the ethnicity and religion of the persons in authority, as if that is the determinant for performance.

Instead of asking why state budget allocations for education are meager or why community health centers are non-existent, we allow ourselves to be drawn into destructive, ethnocentric debates over the superiority of one ethnic group over another. This is not

only conceited and dishonest, it is unproductive and only ferments disharmony in our communities. The temptation to assume that things would have been better if we (or ours) had been in charge must be fought hard. It is necessary to speak across the artificial social, religious and ethnic borders that we have created in our country, as these are thrown up, all too often, as the excuses for failures to address genuine concerns in so many spheres of good governance. We need to be humble enough to understand that our self-declared wisdom is often more limited than we care to admit, and that when we criticize and lecture others with a different history and background from ours, we are only displaying our own ignorance. We need to look beyond the stereotyping that marks our daily discourse, to analyzing in depth the reasons for non-performance.

Conclusion

We need to urgently develop an action plan for our next generation. Investment in our people must be substantially boosted. Targets must be set for increasing expenditure on education, health, and capital growth in the real sector. We need to create avenues for open dialogue as that will help us to focus on what our real

challenges are. Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of public spending must be entrenched.

We need to focus on the larger picture and stop pursuing sectional, private and individual interests. We need to think whole, rather than fragments. We need to accept our diversity as a common and unifying heritage of our humanity. It should be what enables us to be creative, innovative and *finally* become the great Nation we are destined to be.

The writer is a lawyer and a human rights activist based in Abuja, Nigeria. She is the founder of the Isa Wali Empowerment Initiative, an NGO that works to improve the conditions of women and children in the spheres of education, healthcare and empowerment in Kano, Nigeria. She was a task force member of the Next Generation Nigeria Report convened by the British Council in November 2009. In March 2010, she was appointed to the Presidential Advisory Council. She is currently a member of the African Union Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the Job Creation Committee established by the Ministry of Finance



Nigeria at the crossroads: Religion as a catalyst for nation building

The influence of religion extends to governance, healthcare, education, sexuality, the environment and youth culture. Therefore, it can be used as an effective tool of nation-building.

Prof. Jacob K. Olupona

My essay will focus on the ways Nigeria can approach nation-building using religion. Here, I am primarily concerned with how religion manifests itself in our civil society and how it can be useful in national development. Its influence extends to governance, democratization, and the political crises of our time. It affects issues plaguing the environment, healthcare, medical treatment, sexuality, education, and youth culture.

My position as a professor and representative of the premier institution for an education centered on religious pluralism, the Harvard Divinity School, affords me a unique perspective on this

issue. The Divinity School was the first school established at Harvard and has since cultivated a faculty and student body committed to public service and education based on core community values found in all the world's religious traditions.

In deciphering the status of religion in this paper, permit me to first explore the relationship between what a Nigerian writer, Peter Ekeh, called the primordial public and the civic public. My aim is to relate these two publics to the national crisis of corruption and lack of discipline.

In his seminal article, "Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical

Statement,” Peter Ekeh argues that the primordial public and the civic public exemplify two separate and conflicting epochs of African historical life. Primordial public refers to a realm in which “primordial groupings, ties, and sentiments influence and determine the individual’s public behavior.” In contrast, the civic public is “amoral and lacks the generalized moral imperatives operative in the private realm and in the primordial public.” The author further defines the civic public as a “realm which has become identified with popular politics in post-colonial Africa. It is based on civil structures: the military, the civil service, the police, etc.” This model characterizes the modern public in contemporary African nations, including Nigeria. By placing emphasis on the primordial public based on traditional values, I believe we as a nation can transform the amorality Ekeh identifies in the civic public. Key to this transformation is the adoption of social welfare principles inherent in our religious traditions.

The concept of social welfare as enshrined in religion

Religion is central to the lives and social values of Nigerians. Indeed the concept of “giving and showing gratitude” has its roots in our various religious practices of tithing, zakat and

moral sacrifice. Therefore, we should respond to the needs of our nation and help develop the educational, social, political, and cultural systems of our country. If there is a time that we need to rise to these challenges, it is now.

The beneficiaries of the nation’s investment in education have the obligation to see the education they received as a form of patrimony, an inheritance for which an appropriate responsive attitude is gratitude to the nation. As former American president, John F. Kennedy, said, “We should not ask what our country can do for us, but what we can do for our country.”

Religion and the crisis of corruption

The crisis of corruption in Nigeria’s public life requires that we re-examine the role of religion and morality in that realm. All available statistics indicate that public profession of faith has increased tremendously in Africa, with new churches and mosques springing up weekly everywhere. If what the BBC report says is true, we are the most religious people in the world. Furthermore, the already large numbers of Christians and Muslims going on pilgrimages to Jerusalem and Mecca respectively continue to double yearly. But conversion to Islam and Christianity, and an increase in public professions of spirituality, seem not to

have succeeded in structuring public life and citizens' obligations to their community.

Why are so many Nigerian civil servants who have taken oaths of office on the Bible or the Quran still involved in corruption? We can assume that unlike the ancestors and gods of the primordial public, who are strict guardians of morality and who quickly address 'sins' committed against the community, the gods of the new public are invisible and silent, suspending judgment of the sinner until the next world.

In the Nigerian context, religion and public life are intimately intertwined. For Nigerians, religion is a way of life, not just a collection of doctrines, documents, and belief systems.

But we must ask to what extent have these scriptural traditions influenced the public sector? I argue that religious traditions play a crucial role in the organizing of Nigerian civil society. Civil society refers to organized groups at any level, able to redistribute resources and social services while operating without direct affiliation to the state. As part of this civil society, religious institutions have a fundamental advantage, since they inherently contain sources of legitimacy, truth, and authority independent of the state.

The place in which to begin to develop the idea of religion as a social actor is

in the alleviation of poverty.

Religion and poverty alleviation

Across the nation, poverty “among plenty” appears to be worsening. The causes of poverty are vast and varied, rooted in natural and human factors such as drought, corruption, globalization, mass migration, war, and genocide. In many instances, though we can praise religious institutions for providing critically needed social services, we can also implicate them in the circumstances that necessitate such services. For instance, churches and mosques have been known to exacerbate poverty by sowing the extremist seeds of protracted religious conflict. Rather than investing in eradicating poverty, many religious organizations promote a false prosperity ethos. Thus, churches and mosques must address material as well as spiritual needs by cultivating a mindset similar to that of the colonial era “mission church” that sought physical, economic, and spiritual uplift. In this sense, Nigerian religions should play a crucial role in eradicating poverty in Nigeria.

The bane of religious intolerance in Nigeria

Religion is often seen as the cause of violence and instability in Nigeria as the country's northern and southern regions are equally divided along

religious fault lines. However, the Southwestern religious demographic makes this simple geographical division more complex. There are two schools of thought about the issue of religion and conflict in Nigeria. The first school asserts that religious conflict is a political, economic, and social phenomenon. In this view, the root of Nigeria's problems lie in its power struggles, not in religion itself. The second school of thought sees religious conflict as a problem of religion qua religion. Our notion of religion as Nigerians and Africans tends towards a puritanist ideal that sees religion as an objectification of the sacred. We always tend to look at religion as sacred, not as secular or profane. Religion is never seen as a critical, human, social and cultural phenomenon. Beyond this purely academic exercise of understanding the intersection of religion and society is the larger question of nation-building. We cannot solve the Nigerian crisis if we do not look at the full picture. The crisis of religion is no different from the crises that we see in other sectors such as education, energy, health, and law and order. In its intensity, unpredictability and violence, religion is more daunting than these other crises. Furthermore, it is no secret that Nigerian political leaders have almost total impunity for mass corruption and sponsoring

political violence.

The issue is not that there is something inherently flawed in our religious traditions, but rather that people often mistake the relationship between different religions as a contentious one. We deal with an extreme form of Islam versus an extreme form of Christianity. I am talking about the people who believe that there is no salvation outside the church and the umma. Religious extremists employ various forms of violence, including physical, rhetorical, and what French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu would call symbolic violence, a clever use of force which aims to convince people that one's own religious affiliation holds the key to salvation. Symbolic violence is a legacy left from Western and Arab missionaries who sought to superimpose their religion on indigenous African traditions and subsequent Africanized forms of Islam and Christianity. Symbolic violence is employed so that foreign forms of capital can triumph over indigenous ones. I believe that Nigeria's best hope for responding to religious violence exists in indigenous and indigenized forms of religion. Though I do not suggest that every Christian and Muslim in the nation adopt indigenous religion, I do believe we should approach the nation building process from an

African worldview that is deeply influenced by indigenous social practice. Among these practices is the concern for communalism, peaceful coexistence, and the ethos of live and let live.

I fear that Nigerians have lost the moral compass for assessing communal relations, detecting problems and finding viable solutions to them. The models of peace and conflict resolution that we do operate are mainly brought in from abroad. What is needed in the Nigerian experiment of modernity is a people concerned with their own political culture, a people that understand the rule and the power of indigenous thought systems. Any nation that fails to take these things into consideration will become a slave to outsiders and outside initiatives.

Modernity vs. values in the quest for a national ideology

In Nigeria, there is a misunderstanding of modernity and the meaning of a secular nation-state.

We assume that modernity must be defined in terms of Western value systems and culture. Although

I do not completely reject the Western liberal model of development, it may be inappropriate for the Nigerian context if it is taken hook, line, and sinker and forcibly excludes the religious experience so central to

Nigerian identity. Not only does Western secularism exclude religion, but it also provokes extremism by working against a Nigerian affinity for open religious expression. Religion and public life are closely intertwined in the Nigerian context.

The golden period of peaceful coexistence of religions in Nigeria was the era when indigenized Islam and Christianity dominated our public life. It was a time when Muslim brotherhoods such as the Tijaniyya and Quadriyya enjoyed private and public influence in Nigeria. This was also a time when the independent African churches, also called the Aladura, wielded great influence in Christian circles. At that time these two monotheistic faiths were domesticated by Nigerian culture and tradition, but radical doctrinal forms of religion were abhorred. The encroachment of radical fundamentalism soon dissolved those peaceful forms of Christianity and Islam. This evolution of radical forms of tradition should however be contextualized.

Efforts must be made to mine both national and religious histories and to search the practices of contemporary communities for elements of an ethos that are required to form new visions of the commonwealth. A good example is the Tanzanian Model based on the principle of “ujamaa” as

enshrined in the 1967 Arusha Declaration (See box).

Like Tanzania, Nigeria must examine its values and philosophies, in search of a national ideology. Our leaders must understand the tenets of nation building. They must realize that it

involves not only their own commitments and paying more than mere lip service to programs, projects, and activities that support nation building, but it also requires a new imagination and a new vision that will enable them put in place programs and activities that will propel Nigeria

Tanzanian model for nation building using foundational religious precepts

Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania had the right attitude to governance and nation building. By promoting the unifying ideology of “ujamaa” in the 1967 Arusha Declaration, Nyerere demonstrated the potential for citizens of the nation of Tanzania to galvanize around one, indigenous ideology. Ujamaa comes from the Swahili word for extended family or familyhood and is distinguished by several key characteristics, namely that a person becomes a person through the people or community.

The pronoun of ujamaa, mjamaa, was coined to represent the model citizen. Every Tanzanian was expected to aspire to the status of mjamaa. The mjamaa was expected to follow closely the principles of ujamaa, and adherence to this ideology was essential to the nation building process. According to Laurenti Magesa, this quasi-socialist process sought economic transformation by promoting a keen sense of national consciousness, converting exclusionary mentalities to one national consciousness based on the principles of “equality and dignity, justice and peace.” The aim was to develop a Tanzanian culture, which would pull together the best aspects of the country's indigenous belief systems such as the ethics of brotherhood and communal cooperation in realizing a better society. Initially, this scheme garnered significant success, committing to economic development and Tanzanian national control, equality, a participatory democracy and free and compulsory education for all Tanzanians. This movement resonated with Tanzanians because it rejected the colonial legacy and adopted an African intellectual identity. Tanzania managed to use indigenous culture and social values to galvanize people around the goal of nation-building. Its example suggests that pride in one's indigenous heritage does not represent a step backwards on the road to modernity, but rather allows one to define modernity in one's own terms.

to the greatness and international reputation its people deserve. This is the tithe and zakat we must all contribute to this country as patriotic Nigerians.

I present below some brief solutions for nation building based on the precepts of religion.

Action #1: Embracing pluralism and social welfare. Nigerians must emphasize the political, social, religious, and economic benefits of pluralism.

Nigerians must also adopt a sound value system which places emphasis on the sharing of resources in order to

promote common welfare. The notion of allocating funds equally for the benefit of society finds its basis in the religious practices of tithing and zakat described earlier. Therefore, it is important to focus on the central role of religious practice and ideology in the nation-building process.

Action #2: Employing religious institutions as reform agents.

Churches and mosques may act as catalysts for opposition, reform, and resistance by advocating for social change in adherence to their faith traditions. In the face of national conflicts and violence, religious

A comparative table of happiness & religion in Nigeria vis-a-vis other factors

S/N	Item	Nigeria's Ranking
1	Ranking of world's happiest countries	1
2	Ranking of world's most optimistic countries	70 points (out of 100)
3	Largest Christian populations in the world	6
4	Largest Muslim populations in the world	6
5	Corruption Perception Index 2010	134 (Out of 178 countries)

It is intriguing that in a Gallup World Poll, countries in which almost all residents say religion is important in their daily lives are poorer nations in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the least religious countries include several with the world's highest living standards.

Sources

- 1: University of Michigan's World Values Surveys (WVS) 1999 – 2002
- 2: Gallup World Poll (2006 – 2008)
- 3 & 4: The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life
- 5: Transparency International

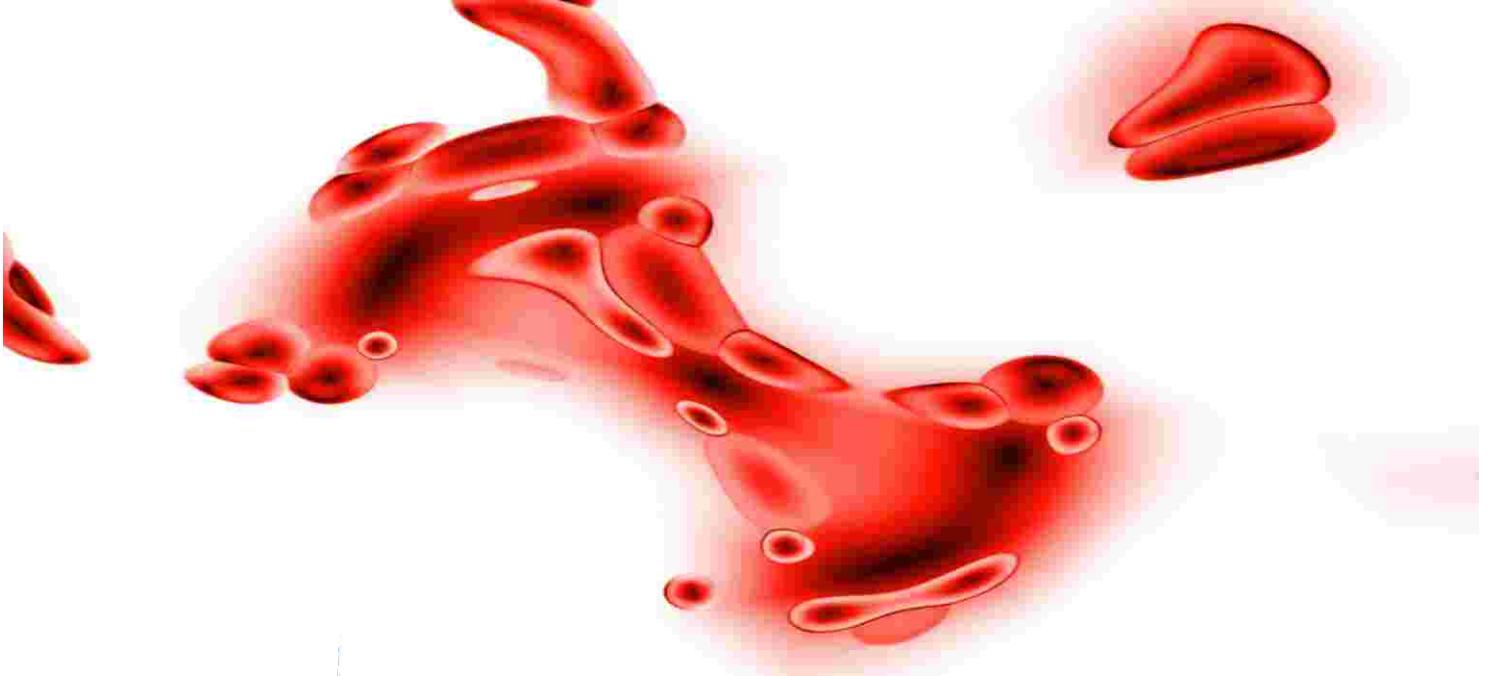
institutions provide much-needed sources of social assistance and mediation, mitigating the effects of chronic conflict. Nigeria's religious traditions should also be involved in the construction of public life, particularly in the building of the nation and national identity.

Action #3: Instituting visionary leadership. Nigeria badly needs visionary leadership that could galvanize the nation around a central ideology or civil religion propelling change and development. Civil religion is understood by sociologist Robert Bellah, as the sacred principle and central anchor without which societies cannot function. It is the incorporation of common myths, values and symbols that relate to a society's sense of collective identity. It is this common sensibility and ethos that is absent from the concept of nation-building in Nigerian society today. We are in desperate need of a leader that can galvanize the nation to a more positive reorientation, national purpose and goals.

Action #4: Alleviating poverty and focusing on education. Religious institutions and state and civil agencies must take a combined approach to alleviating poverty. As participants in civil society, religious

institutions foster humanitarian and spiritual values that parallel economic, social, and political development. As poverty affects the most vulnerable members in any society, the status of women and children should be of paramount concern. We also see the effects of poverty on youth. The spirituality of the youth is a critical variable in public life as the lack of opportunities and systemic individualism breed youth violence and alienation, which can lead to an increased desire to find “community” through gang membership. Our religious institutions can create more avenues to value youthful expressions of religious culture. Our youth can be integrated into religious and public life as viable contributors to civil society. This contribution begins with a strong education.

The writer is a noted scholar of indigenous African religions and a Professor of African Religious Traditions, with a joint appointment as Professor of African and African American Studies in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the Harvard Divinity School. In 2007, he received the Nigerian National Order of Merit, for intellectual accomplishment.



Tackling the sickle cell disease challenge in Nigeria

Practical actions we can take to transform our approach to managing the disease

Dr. Lola Oni OBE

Nigeria has the largest population of people with sickle cell disease in the world. Approximately 1 in 4 Nigerians carry one copy of the sickle cell gene and have the sickle cell trait, a healthy carrier state. On the other hand those with two copies of the sickle cell gene have sickle cell anaemia or one form of a group of conditions called sickle cell disease (SCD). SCD is a serious debilitating disease which can be fatal, especially in young children and in those who are not aware that they have this condition. SCD poses a significant threat to the economic and social development of Nigeria, and there is an urgent need to invest in prevention and treatment. In

addition, by addressing the prevention and treatment of SCD, the government will also be able to create a health care policy that covers other pressing health care issues.

Sickle cell disease

Sickle cell is a condition which affects Haemoglobin (Hb), a protein in the red blood cells which is responsible for carrying oxygen around the body. Haemoglobin is inherited via the genes and one gets one copy of the haemoglobin gene from each parent. Normal red blood cells are flexible, soft and can fold in order to pass through the narrowest blood vessels. Sickle red blood cells on the other

hand are hard, brittle, inflexible, break easily and resemble the blade of an old farming tool called a 'sickle'. These sickle shaped red blood cells find it difficult to go through narrow blood vessels, because of this they gather together clogging up the blood vessels, stopping blood flow and causing recurrent episodes of severe, crippling debilitating pain known as a 'sickle cell crisis pain', this being the hallmark of SCD. The red blood cells containing mostly sickle or sickle with another haemoglobin live approximately 10 – 20 days in circulation compared to 120 days of the normal red blood cells.

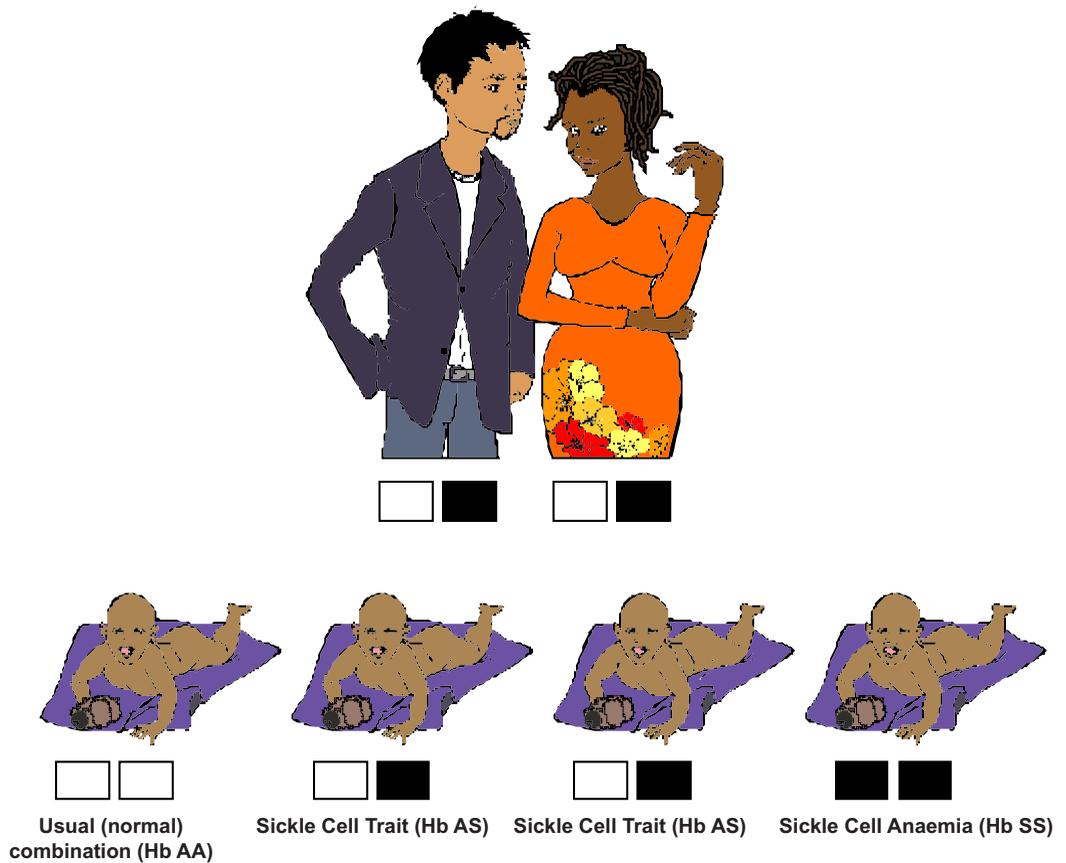
Inheritance of the sickle cell gene

If a person inherits two usual (normal) haemoglobin genes they will have the usual haemoglobin combination AA commonly written (HbAA). If a person inherits one usual haemoglobin A gene from one parent and one sickle haemoglobin S gene from the other they will have the sickle cell trait (HbAS), a healthy carrier state in which they will not experience any signs of the illness. People with the sickle cell trait will not know that they carry this unusual haemoglobin gene unless they have had a special blood test. However, most people do not know that they carry this unusual haemoglobin until they have a child who is later found to have sickle cell

disease (SCD). Those who inherit two sickle haemoglobin genes have sickle cell anaemia (HbSS), which is a form of sickle cell disease.

The sickle cell trait is beneficial because it offers some protection against Falciparum Malaria; a particularly damaging malaria parasite which has difficulty reproducing successfully within red blood cells that contain haemoglobin S. This protective aspect of the sickle cell trait has resulted in carriers of the gene living longer, being more fertile and being able to reproduce themselves more successfully in malaria prone areas, more so than those who have the normal haemoglobin combination and even more so than those with sickle cell disease.

The sickle cell gene is just one of a number of unusual haemoglobins known in humans. Other common unusual haemoglobin genes are haemoglobin C and beta thalassaemia haemoglobin gene (Thal). Where an individual inherits a sickle gene from one parent and one of these other unusual haemoglobin genes, they can inherit other forms of sickle cell disease: sickle haemoglobin C disease (HbSC) or sickle beta thalassaemia disease (HbS^{Thal}) respectively. These two combinations with sickle cell



Each time a couple with sickle cell trait (Hb AS) is expecting a child there is a:

1 in 4 chance the child could inherit the usual (normal) combination (Hb AA)

2 in 4 chance the child could inherit sickle cell trait (HbAS)

1 in 4 chance the child could inherit sickle cell anaemia (Hb SS)

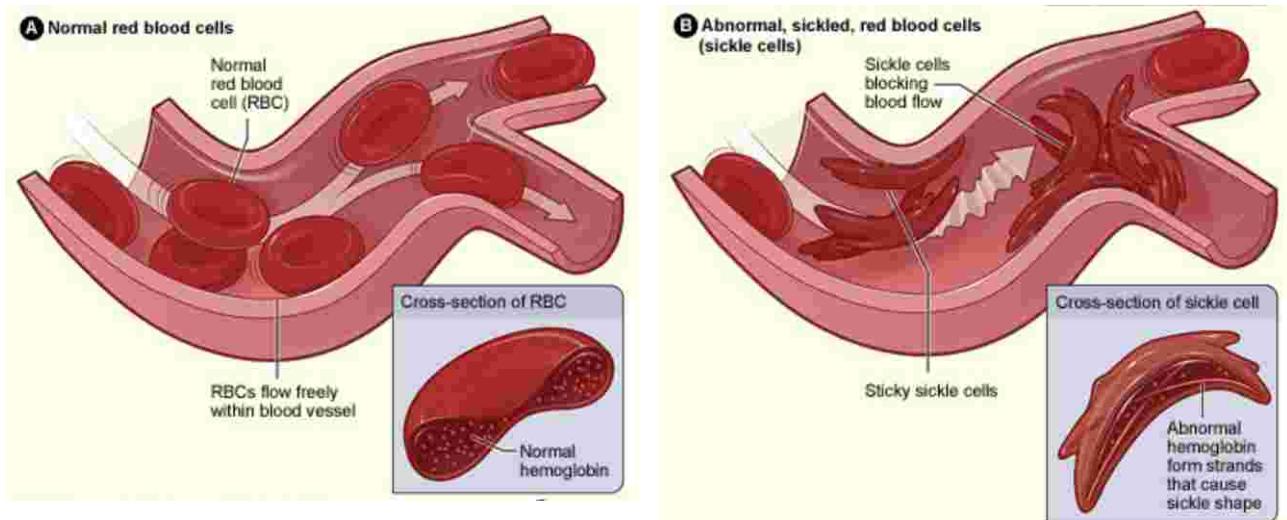
anaemia (HbSS) are the three most common forms of sickle cell disease worldwide. HbSS is often regarded as the most serious of the three and is the most common type seen in all parts of Nigeria. Unlike the sickle cell trait, sickle cell disease (SCD) does not offer protection against malaria and malaria can prove fatal in people with SCD. Usually individuals with the sickle cell gene can only have a child with sickle cell anaemia (HbSS) if their partner also has a copy of the sickle cell gene and they both pass on the sickle cell gene to their child.

Effects of sickle cell disease

The most common symptom of sickle cell disease is occlusion of the blood vessels. When the red blood cell gives up its oxygen to the body tissues it changes from a round shape to that

resembling a curved blade, like a farmer's 'sickle'. These sickle shaped red blood cells cannot pass through the blood vessels easily and on occasion they gather together and stop blood from flowing through the small blood vessels, leading to 'sickle cell crisis pain', referred to earlier. This is the most common symptom of SCD and the main cause of hospitalisation. Long term these repeated episodes of sickling crisis can cause long term damage and irreversible complications.

Complications of SCD can affect any part of the body including major organs and can cause early unexpected death. Worldwide children are particularly at risk from the fatal complications of SCD, with 50% of the deaths occurring in the first year of life. In Nigeria, about 80% of children



born with SCD each year die before their fifth birthday, often as a result of not being diagnosed, effects of infection and other complications of the disease.

Nigeria – the world's largest population of people with SCD

Although sickle cell disease was first formally described in the early 1900s in USA by a physician named James Herrick, SCD has long had an intimate relationship with West Africa. Many West African tribes gave SCD specific names that evoke acute,

painful episodes or early infant death, or that refer to children destined to die early and be reborn to the family. For example, among the Yoruba speaking people of Nigeria, these children are often called '*Abiku*' whilst the Igbo speaking people call them '*ogbanje*', terms which describe malevolent children who are born into a family but destined to die at an early age, thus bringing heartache to their family.

Although there is a scientific explanation for the early death of many children with SCD it is

Box 1: Complications of sickle cell disease

- Severe sickle cell crisis pain: Due to blockage of blood vessels. Long term, this leads to irreversible tissue and organ damage
- Infection: Especially in childhood and the most common cause of death in children especially in Africa and other developing countries
- Lung (chest) problems: Episodes of rapidly worsening lung function and long term damage
- Stroke: 10% of children with SCD will have a stroke and it can be fatal
- Heart enlargement – as a result of chronic anaemia
- Eye problems - due to long term damage to the organ
- Spleen enlargement and damage: This occurs more commonly in children and results in poor development of immunity, making the child prone to getting serious infections. This is often a cause of death in children.
- Bone and joint damage: In early adulthood joint damage can cause loss of mobility and individuals may require joint replacement at an early age in order to gain mobility
- Reproductive problems – A small proportion of men with SCD experience a complication known as Priapism, an involuntary erection of the penis caused by sickle cell disease, this can lead to loss of sexual function and loss of fertility

It is important to note that any part of the body or body organ can be affected by SCD and its associated complications.

unfortunate that this perception continues to be perpetuated even amongst well educated Nigerians. Many of these deaths can be avoided by educating the child's parents, offering basic health and social care and improving population awareness.

The World Health Organisation has estimated that three quarters of all SCD cases occur in Africa, and the epicentre of this epidemic lies in Nigeria, the world's most populous nation of black people. SCD cuts across every strata of Nigerian society –the disease is no respecter of gender or socioeconomic status. It is estimated that 1 in 4 Nigerians carry the sickle gene, and there are some

areas of the country where the carrier rate is as high as 1 in 3. Many labs in Nigeria which test for the disease report a test as 'normal'. Because they are testing for 'sickle cell disease', they fail to report carrier states. This can and often has a devastating impact on the lives of individuals who believe that their result is normal when in fact they have the sickle cell trait.

This scenario is not uncommon, hence the need for public education and development of infrastructure for ensuring accurate laboratory diagnosis, provision of genetic counselling and support services.

Case Study

AK was born and grew up in Lagos. He has the sickle cell trait (HbAS), known to him since he was ten years old when his younger brother was diagnosed with sickle cell disease. All the family members were tested at the time. AK observed how SCD affected his younger brother and vowed that he would avoid having a child with SCD. When AK got engaged, his fiancée took a blood test and was told that her result was 'normal'. Reassured that they were not at risk of having a child with SCD, the couple got married and subsequently moved to London. Whilst expecting their first child his wife was tested routinely at the local hospital, she was sent a letter which told her that she has the sickle cell trait. She was invited for genetic counselling and told to bring her partner for testing. Since she had been told in Nigeria that her result was 'normal' she ignored the letter and invitation for counselling on three occasions. Six months later when the couple were told their first born son had sickle cell anaemia (HbSS), they were understandably very distressed.

The disease burden in Nigeria

Each year more than 150,000 babies with SCD are born in Nigeria, and 50% of them die before the age of five. For many of those that make it past the age of five, enlargement of the heart, kidney failure and severe infections lead to premature death. In addition to the pain and disability that are central to the physical challenges they experience, the disease also takes a toll on the social and psychological well-being of those affected and their families. Over 40 million Nigerians are carriers of the sickle cell gene and with the population expected to significantly increase in the next few years, the number of those with SCD will increase significantly unless a population education and screening programme is established.

Sickle cell disease is classified by the World Health Organization as a chronic disease, because it has a life-long impact characterised by recurrent unpredictable episodes of pain that frequently require medical care and hospitalisation. In view of this, family members often have to take excessive time off work or from managing their small businesses in order to care for the individual. This adversely affects the family's economic stability and may lead to them becoming dependent on extended family and friends for sustenance. The expense of medical

treatment, hospitalisation and managing the care of SCD patients increases the family expenditure and the likelihood of the family becoming impoverished. School aged patients may fail to fulfil their full academic potential due to the physical demands of the disease. In a recent study of school aged children it was found that school absence due to recurrent sickle related illness was significantly higher in comparison to other students, and that there were a significantly larger proportion of under-achieving pupils amongst the sickle patients.

Even though sickle-cell disease is a major public health concern in Nigeria, there has not been a concerted effort to create a national control programme; there have not been any investments in basic facilities to manage patients; systematic screening is not a common practice and simple, cheap and very cost-effective procedures such as the use of penicillin to prevent infections are not widely available in Nigeria. The burden of the disease is compounded by the country's weak health care system. The WHO currently ranks Nigeria's overall health system performance as 187th among its 191 members. Recently, the Ministry of Health announced that it had collaborated with many organizations to improve the management of SCD in Nigeria, including the London-based Focus Sickle Cell Africa (project based

in Zankli Clinic, Abuja) and the Sickle Cell Foundation of Nigeria to help in managing Sickle Cell Centres in communities, mobilizing resources and providing telemedicine facilities and resources for research.

However, these efforts are not poised to have any far reaching national impact: the government's 2011 budget allocated about four per cent (4%) of the total budget to health care and the main priorities in the health care budget are largely focused on tackling infectious diseases like polio, malaria and tuberculosis which account for a large number of deaths in the country. Tackling sickle cell disease would involve the creation of a coordinated, multi-disciplinary health programme

that would cover surveillance and research, prevention, genetic and health counseling, screening and treatment, education and community/hospital/laboratory collaborative networks. The infrastructure created by this programme would enable Nigeria to tackle many of the other diseases which threaten its future.

Tackling life threatening genetic disorders

In 1969, the UK government rolled out a national newborn screening programme to detect children with phenylketonuria, a rare but treatable metabolic disorder which affects 1 in

Box 2: The aim of the English sickle cell screening programme

- Early identification of children with SCD
- Commencement of daily prophylactic medications (penicillin) by 3 months of age and folic acid
- Registration on a national database of patients
- Baby to be seen by a paediatrician before age 2 months and have routine follow up care life long
- Follow up of all children who miss even one hospital appointment

Other benefits of newborn screening include:

- Development of clinical networks of health and social care
- Enabling at risk couples to be aware of future risk and plan for a future pregnancy
- Identification of siblings who may be undiagnosed and are therefore at risk of developing unexpected fatal complications
- Enable extended family to be aware of the presence of the sickle cell gene in the family in order for them to make informed choices about getting tested especially when planning to get married or have children
- Raise public awareness and empower communities

15,000 births. The collaborative hospital laboratory and community networks developed to manage the screening programme grew over the following decades to include testing for thyroid disease (hypothyroidism) in 1981. In 1999, the English government made a commitment to a national sickle cell and thalassaemia antenatal and newborn screening programme and by 2002, the newborn screening programme commenced with Cystic Fibrosis screening being added in 2008.

Cystic fibrosis (CF) is an inherited chronic disease that affects the lungs and digestive system of about 70,000 children and adults worldwide. It is rare amongst Africans. A defective gene and its protein product cause the body to produce unusually thick, sticky mucus which clogs the lungs leading to life-threatening infections; and which stops natural enzymes from helping the body break down and absorb food. In the United Kingdom about 1 in 2500 babies are born with cystic fibrosis (in comparison to the 1 in 33 Nigerians newborn with SCD).

With the implementation of a national screening programme, childhood mortality from cystic fibrosis has fallen dramatically, there are decreases in hospital admissions during the first years of life, and patients are able to

manage the disease better with a reduced burden on health and social care services. Since the early 1980s the national policy in Greece and other Mediterranean countries is to screen men and women for thalassaemia before they are allowed to marry in the Greek Orthodox Church, in order to reduce the number of children born with this devastating condition that was threatening to consume the entire health budget of the Greek society. Thalassaemia is also a genetically inherited condition which affects the red blood cell haemoglobin but it is seen most commonly in people of Mediterranean and Asian origin and less commonly among African communities including Nigerians. This policy is the Greek government's response and an attempt to reduce and where possible eradicate thalassaemia in Greece.

In April 2011, the Human Genetics Commission (HGC), a government advisory body in the UK, recommended provision of screening for men and women prior to having children (preconception screening), in order to enable individuals to make an informed choice about having or avoiding children who are potentially at risk of having a serious genetic condition such as sickle cell disease. The English national sickle cell newborn screening programme aims

to identify children with sickle cell disease by the age of two months and commence treatment and preventive care by the age of three months.

While the model of a national control programme established in a developed country like the United Kingdom is not easily replicable in a developing country like Nigeria, the effort still has to be made. In 2006, the World Health Organization secretariat reported on the current global state of play with regards to sickle cell disease, and put forward key recommendations covering all aspects of public health. These include:

1. Promoting surveillance and systematic information gathering.
2. Identifying individuals with SCD at or soon after birth, in order to institute early treatment and improve outcomes for those with SCD.
3. Establishing dedicated specialist centres in areas where the disease is common.
4. Gradually introducing primary health care / community health services which are closely linked to specialist centres, starting with areas where this is most feasible.
5. Increasing awareness of the new genetics/ genomics and its potential impact on the society.

However, in order for any of these recommendations to be implemented, the government has to make a concerted effort to invest in the health care system. Presently, health care provision in Nigeria is shared between the three tiers of government and it is not entirely clear which tier is legally responsible for ensuring quality health care of the citizens. NLI is recommending the following:

Action #1: Increase public health education and funding.

The core functions of public health are to assess the health of communities and identify health priorities, develop policies to address these priorities and assure that all populations have access to quality health care. In order for Nigeria to be able to address SCD and other health care priorities, the government has to increase her per capita spending in health from 4% to at least 15%, as recommended by the WHO.

Action #2: Strengthen the primary health care system.

Ordinarily, the local government should be responsible for primary health care centers, but there is no evidence that across the board they are doing this. The federal

government should provide funding directly to non-governmental and private institutions working within public health care and closely monitor these organizations to ensure that PHCs are adequately structured, properly managed and well equipped.

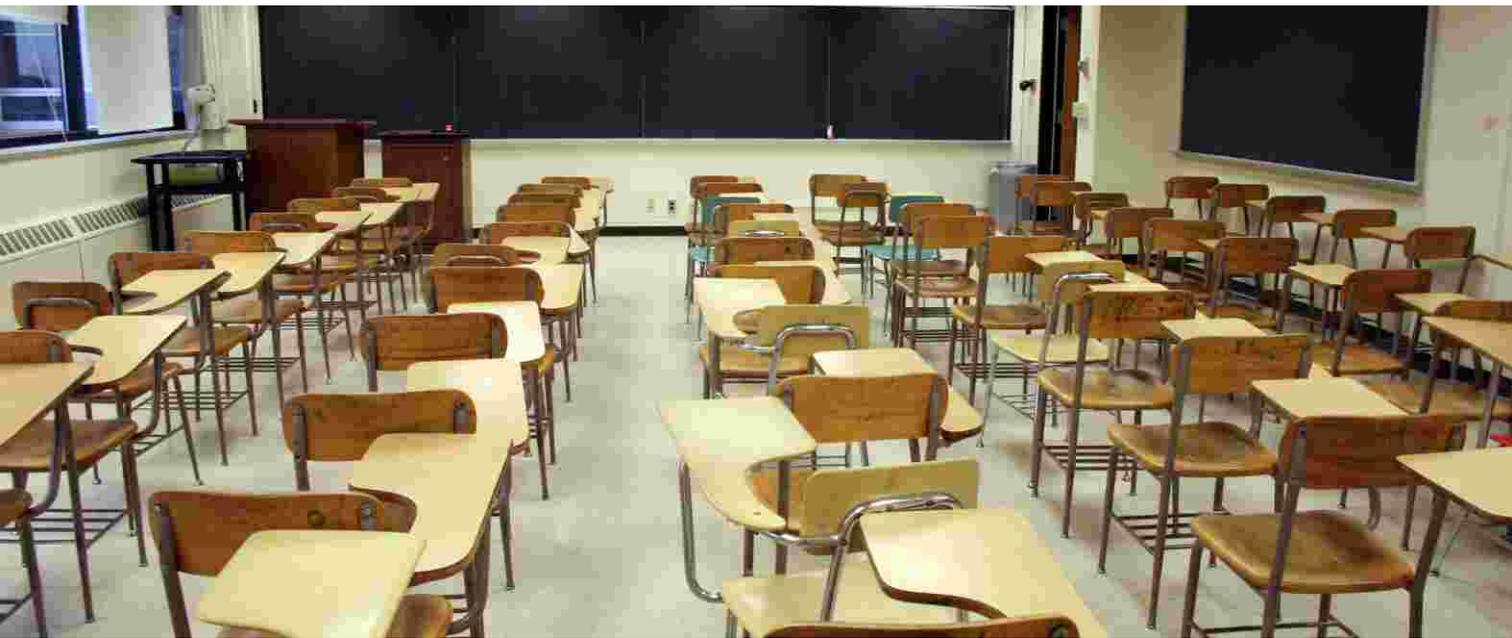
Action #3: Institute sickle cell health care policy. Unless Nigeria institutes a sickle cell public policy the country will not be able to meet her MDG goals to reduce under-five mortality. A coordinated policy on the management of SCD in Nigeria should be put in place to cover increasing population awareness and education, premarital / preconception screening, genetic counselling, establishment of a national reference laboratory for proper training of laboratory scientists and technicians, accurate diagnosis, treatment and research. The Nigeria health minister should consider NLI's proposal for the establishment of a phased newborn screening programme in Nigeria. This proposal has the endorsement of the Nigerian High Commissioner to the UK and the support of the director of the UK National Health Service newborn screening programme. This development will ensure that babies with sickle cell disease are diagnosed as soon as possible after birth and

reduce the current high levels of handicap and mortality.

Action #4: Establish a genetics horizon scanning and surveillance team. Sickle cell is just one genetic condition and although it can be used as a template, there are major advances shaping the future of genetic technologies globally. Unless Africa becomes aware of these developments and participates in the discussions, raising population awareness and increasing research into how these developments will impact on human society as a whole, African societies will become victims of these genetic developments.

Sources of further information:
www.sickle-thal.nwlh.nhs.uk,
www.sct.screening.nhs.uk,
www.hgc.gov.uk

The writer is a Specialist Nurse Consultant and Multi-disciplinary Professional Services Director of the Brent Sickle Cell & Thalassaemia Centre, NW London Hospitals NHS Trust, in the United Kingdom. In addition she is on the steering group of the Department of Health National Antenatal & Newborn Screening Programme and a member of the Human Genetics Commission, a government advisory body in the UK.



79% failure is unacceptable: A roadmap for education in Nigeria

**To get the maximum value from our investment in education,
we must address the structural inhibitors**

Folashade Adefisayo
Bunmi Lawson
Subomi Plumptre
Chude Jideonwo
Gbenga Sesan

There is almost no way of exaggerating the statistics or the conclusion: Nigeria's education system has all but collapsed. The fact that universities no longer have faith in the results of the entry examinations into tertiary institutions (JAMB) and need to organise additional exams is one pointer. Another is the fact that employers have had to extend training periods after employment before new staff can be deployed.

But, nothing underscores the issue more than the secondary school examinations result released by the two exam bodies in Nigeria. The results of the November/December 2010 West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), show an overall poor performance with only 20% percent obtaining credit passes in Mathematics, English and three other subjects. (The five subjects that make a candidate

suitable for tertiary school admission and the minimum requirement for a high school diploma). In the same vein, the June/July 2010 Secondary School Certificate Examination conducted by the National Examination Council (NECO) shows 79% failing to get a credit pass in English and 75% failing to get a credit pass in Mathematics. No candidate had a credit pass in French, with Arabic having the highest overall pass rate, 37%. The examination malpractice rate was 16.73% and 55% at WASSCE and NECO respectively. At primary school level, things are not much better. In an international study reported by the World Bank in which learning achievements in 22 countries in sub-Saharan and North Africa are compared, the learning achievements of students in Nigeria's primary schools were the lowest, with national mean scores of 30% compared with 70% in Tunisia and 51% in Mali.

The problem

There are a series of factors that have led to this point. This is an example of a near-perfect storm of negative factors combining in a synchronous yet disastrous harmony. To this extent, most of the angst expressed recently about the latest results may be misplaced. Emotions do not solve problems. We failed to invest in Education and so we reaped the results.

For a long time now, the standards of education in Nigeria have been in free fall due to the following well known reasons:

Financial mismanagement, corruption and bureaucratic complexity. The problems here include corruption amongst education and government officials, such that allocated monies are not received or utilised effectively. While some may argue that the budget allocation is too

3 Year Comparative Table of WAEC and NECO Results

Year	WAEC pass rate (5 credits including English & Maths)	NECO pass rate (5 credits including English & Maths)
2010	20%	21% English; 25% Maths*
2009	26%	2%
2008	14%	28%

* NECO did not release overall pass rates (i.e. 5 credits incl. English & Maths) in 2010

little, however, virtually no country in sub-Saharan Africa has the volume of funds that Nigeria can afford to allocate to education. Yet other countries do much better in terms of education quality (as can be seen from the primary school results in the World Bank study).

There is also the issue of how education is treated in the constitution. Education is on the concurrent list and the funding structure is opaque and very complex. There are too many agencies and too much replication. This fuels corruption and huge bureaucracy that prevents funds from reaching where it matters most - the classroom.

Therefore, there is a need to address governance and legislation.

Many parents do not see the relevance of education as it is taught in Nigeria today. The curriculum is deemed outdated and out-of-touch with 21st century skills and realities. There is also the issue of enrolment. In many Nigerian states, enrolments have fallen. According to the Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria has 7 million school aged children that are not in school. This is the highest in the world! Cultural norms & traditions contribute to the low enrolment figures.

The quality of teachers and teaching is abysmal. Unmotivated teachers, poor quality of teaching and low learning outcomes are rife across all levels of education. According to the Kwara State Commissioner for Education, an aptitude and capacity test was organised for a total of 19,125 teachers in the State's public school system in 2008. Out of these, 2,628 were university graduates. The teachers were given tests that were designed originally for primary four pupils in English and Mathematics. At the end of the exercise, only seven teachers out of the 19,125 crossed the minimum aptitude and capacity threshold. Only one out of the 2,628 graduate teachers passed the test, 10 graduates scored outright zero. The teachers fared worse in literacy assessments which recorded only **1.2%** pass rate.

Infrastructure and low capacity are also issues. Pictures of primary school pupils taking their lessons under trees while sitting on the floor, or huddled under leaking classroom roofs, have become all too common. But infrastructure is not the primary issue facing the education sector (as our forefathers who studied under worse conditions can attest to). In truth, the quality of instruction is even more of an issue.

Warped values have introduced corruption to the classroom.

Learning is no longer of prime importance to students. Inordinate focus on riches and short-cuts seems to be. There is an increase in exam malpractice and lecturer abuse.

Policy flip flops are the order of the day. The influence of politics and policy instability has been damaging to education. The head of a parastatal recently expressed deep frustration with “working with eleven Ministers and 14 Permanent Secretaries in the past eleven years”!

The outcome

According to a previous Central Bank Governor, “71 per cent of Nigerian graduates like bad cherries won't be picked by any employer of labour because they are not fit for anything even if they were the only ones that put themselves forward for an employment test”. The next generation is largely illiterate. Where are the leaders, managers, engineers, doctors, craftsmen and artisans of the future? Who is going to be working when this generation is old? Concrete efforts and solutions are required. It is not simply a matter of giving multi-million Naira contracts for providing furniture, a perfunctory

increase in budget, education summits without new ideas and formats, or superficial competitions. There has to be a comprehensive strategy that engages the problem from its many different angles and the strategy has to be sustained. Above all else, it has to be outcome-oriented. Following are some solutions to address this state of emergency in education.

The Solution

The role of teachers and teaching

Teachers are at the heart of education. The most important interaction in any educational system is what goes on in the classroom between the teacher and the child. Therefore, any solution must support this interaction. The McKinsey & Co. 2007 report on The World's Best Performing School Systems highlights only 3 key solutions that can drastically improve a country's educational system. 2 of those solutions focus on teachers:

- (a). We must get the right people to become teachers; recruiting from the highest percentile. (An educational system cannot rise above the level of its teachers). Teachers must also possess motivational and communication skills.
- (b). We must continuously develop teachers to become effective instructors through rigorous

professional development.

(c). We must put in place mechanisms to ensure that schools deliver high quality instruction to every child/student. (The system must be held accountable and rigorously tested and measured).

Therefore, our solutions must focus primarily on teaching and accountability.

A credible living wage must be instituted for teachers. Teachers should earn enough to live on and should be paid on time. The States must be held accountable for this.

Ongoing teacher training must be institutionalised. For instance, The Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria may be restructured into an institute capable of re-training and administering accreditation examinations [much like the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN)]. All teachers in Nigeria must be continuously retrained and take examinations every year to be re-accredited as teachers.

An emergency plan must be put into place to attract volunteer teachers and retain existing ones. A Teachers Volunteer Programme must be set up to attract

individuals who wish to give up a few months to go into schools to teach. A fund should be set up to defray the administrative expenses. The NYSC should be repurposed for 3-5 years to focus on education. Corpers should sign up to teach and the 3-week orientation should no longer be used for frog jumps and endurance treks; instead, corpers should be taken through a teacher training module on volunteer teaching. A competition should be held to identify teachers who are well regarded and voted effective by students in public secondary schools. These teachers should become national role models, be co-opted to train other teachers (in a restructured Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria) and should be rewarded. A national award should be given to volunteer teachers who sign up for an appreciable amount of time as well as existing role model teachers. The award should be endorsed by the President.

Financial mismanagement in education must be stopped. The States are responsible for funding basic and secondary education as well as their state-owned tertiary institutions. They receive funding from the Federal Government as well as internally generated funds. A

system must be put in place to ensure that the monies generated go towards school infrastructure and teachers' pay. Therefore, there should be an independent poll on teachers' pay and the production of photographic evidence of school infrastructure in each State on an annual basis. The Federal Ministry's Operation Reach All Secondary Schools (ORASS) was a good initiative in this area. It should be continued and extended to primary and tertiary institutions. Funding policies must also be streamlined.

A League Table of exam success rates in WAEC & NECO should be published annually. The Table should show the results for each State AND each school (public & private). In doing so, the public will be informed of how each school is faring and whether public taxes are simply going down the drain or being effective. This serves the twin purpose of transparency and keeping these schools and their authorities on their toes. The League Table should show how much each State receives from the Federal Government compared with the number of students they cater to and the students' success rate. That way, Nigerians will know the spend-per-child and how effective the spend-per-child is. The table may be

published in conjunction with WAEC, NECO and an independent actuarial firm.

Schools must be held accountable for students' results.

In the 1950s, Nobel Prize winning economist Milton Friedman argued for the introduction of a “school voucher system”, stating that competition would improve schools and cost efficiency. While we are not sure Nigeria is ready for a voucher system, we do advocate for schools to be subjected to competitive pressure. The government may release a base sum to schools (to take care of basic administrative expenses), however, the rest of the money should be released on a “per-child” basis. Parents should be free to choose a desired school based on the school's performance on the published “League Table”. Schools will then receive the bulk of their funding from the government based on the number of students that willingly enroll in the schools. Parents may also be given a tax credit if they choose to send their children to public primary or secondary schools. In 5 years, non-performing/non-competitive schools on the League Table should be penalised. Schools must also be properly licensed

and monitored to ensure high standards. Monitoring must be above-board, independent, thorough and devoid of corrupt practices.

Education should be made an election issue & priority for incoming administrations. The electorate should reject any candidate (or political party) who does not make education a critical part of his/her manifesto. Education must be brought to the forefront of any electoral debate.

Complementary institutions to universities must be promoted to meet the excess demand for tertiary education. In 2004, it was reported that Nigerian Universities could only cater to 15% of those who applied. Today, it is reported that Nigeria's public universities can cater to 65% of applicants, notwithstanding that in some cases a class designed for 40 students accommodates 400! In view of this low carrying capacity, we advocate that the Vocational Enterprise Institutes (VEIs) & Innovative Enterprise Institutes (IEIs) initiatives set up by the Federal Ministry of Education should be promoted as credible alternatives to Universities. VEIs and IEIs provide certificates in specialised vocational

and technical fields. Champions must be identified and promoted to raise the interest in and brand profile of these certificates, thereby driving up enrolment.

Implementation steps

In order to deliver on the solutions presented, there is a need to inform and then engage the citizenry. We must move beyond just talking about the solutions to becoming a part of it. Here are some preliminary implementation steps:

Action #1: Concise information on the state of education in Nigeria must be made available.

A comprehensive document on the state of primary and secondary school education in Nigeria must be produced, accompanied by statistics from WAEC and NECO, where available. This information should be published in the form of a League Table of the exam failure rates in each State of the federation. This is because, while there is an assumption that, nationally, everyone is aware of this problem, the depth of the decay needs to be highlighted and brought to the attention of the Nigerian public at large. Also, it is important for Nigerians to be well informed about the issues, with the correct data and

perspective. The document (and accompanying statistics) should be published as editorials in the newspapers and downloadable from the web. It should also be circulated as emails/letters to anyone who expresses concern about the state of education in Nigeria. The articles and letters will serve as an invitation to concerned Nigerians who wish to support an education intervention with their intellect and resources.

Action #2: Town Hall Meetings should be held to harvest contributions and feedback.

Meetings should be held locally & internationally with persons, groups and institutions to harness input and contributions and to also chart the way forward in concrete terms. We also recommend active engagement with Nigerians in Diaspora and foreign educational institutions. Key outputs from the deliberations should be partnerships with organisations or individuals who will:

- Volunteer credible implementation agencies to intervene in education.
- Champion a “Technical Volunteer Corps (TVC)”, made up of individuals with deep experience in and passion for education. They include (past and present)

government officials, private sector practitioners and international consultants who have experience in transforming education in countries.

- Dedicate their voices and media platforms to bring education issues to the fore.

Action #3: A solutions document on Education must be produced with input and wide support from the youth.

After due consultations, a solutions document should be produced and presented to all State Ministries of Education and the Federal Ministry of Education (The Minister). The document will contain no more than 5-10 major solutions. It should not be a dense soporific document that will be shelved. Rather, it should have both long term solutions as well as quick wins that can be implemented within a year. It must also be accessible by all stakeholders in education. Any plan to fix education that does not take into account the views of the youth should be rejected, as education directly concerns them. The document must be on the agenda of the next National Council on Education and each State Ministry should be pressured to execute at least one or two of the solutions in the next 6 months.

Action #4: Hands-on support by the “Technical Volunteer Corps” must be provided to the Federal and State Ministries of

Education. The “Technical Volunteer Corps” should offer their services to implement the education solutions proffered. The idea is to not just proffer solutions, but to help implement them.

Action #5: Results must be well documented and the Ministry held accountable.

In 12 months, a report should be produced documenting what has been accomplished by the Federal and State Ministries of Education.

Concluding thoughts

We do acknowledge that many credible solutions have already been prescribed for the educational sector. However, we must question why the solutions are not being implemented or proving effective. Questions raise solutions.

For example, while a “Technical Volunteer Corps” is being instituted in Lagos State, we noticed that the volunteer teachers are largely made up of individuals who are currently unemployed. Efforts have not been made to engage or accommodate professionals who may be able to

bring specialized skills & knowledge to the table and impact pupils as volunteer teachers.

We believe that until radical and strategic steps are taken to solve the problems of education in Nigeria, efforts will be tactical at best and may prove ineffective in the long run.

Data Sources: Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria; National Universities Commission; WAEC and NECO websites, McKinsey & Co. Report on Best Performing School Systems, THISDAY Newspapers, Nigerian Muse.

The writers include an education expert, an MD of a microfinance bank, a brand strategist, a journalist with a foremost Nigerian paper/youth advocate and an IT expert. One thing they all have in common is an abiding passion for education.



Adopting a holistic and integrated approach to developing Nigeria's human capital

Our collective skills and experience, properly harnessed can drive sustainable growth and development

Dr. Titi Banjoko

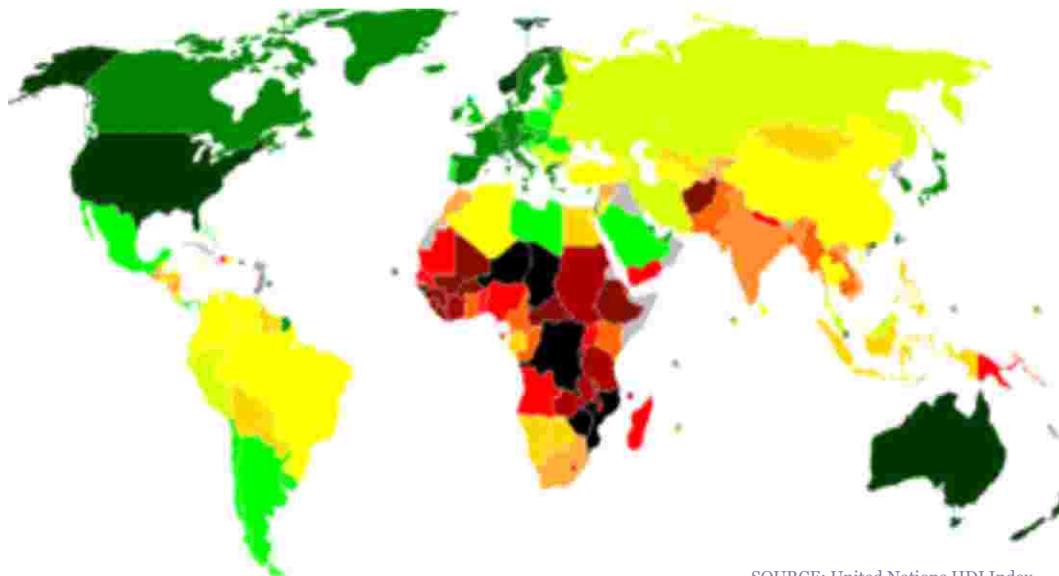
Human capital is a key ingredient for a nation's development and in ensuring that it has a competitive advantage over other countries. Technological advancements and the dissemination of knowledge have increased the pace of innovation and speed of the movement of people within our increasingly global society. This has resulted in a global competition for high-level skills, with profound implications for countries not in a position to develop, retain and attract the skills required for their development. Nations have survived and thrived by ensuring that their skill gaps are plugged through importing people from other countries (and thereby draining the human resources of the less fortunate country). As such, the ability of a country to induce

and sustain its growth will rest upon its commitment to Recognise, Acquire, Develop, Utilise and Retain its Human Capital. To gain a competitive advantage in this increasingly global world Nigeria cannot afford the luxury of ignoring its human resources. Although Nigeria, with a population of about 150 million people, can boast of large quantities of human resources, the lack of capabilities means the required quality is not available. As such these resources cannot be effectively deployed against the nation's priority areas for growth and development.

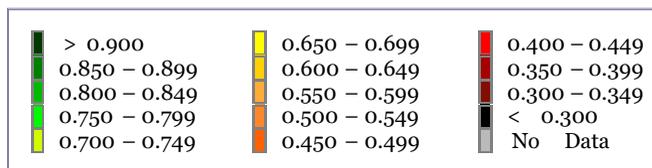
Where are we now

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a well acknowledged composite statistic compiled by the

Human Development Index ranking



SOURCE: United Nations HDI Index



United Nations to rank “well-being” across countries. It was introduced as an alternative to conventional measures of national development, such as level of income and the rate of economic growth. It represents a push for a broader definition of “what good looks like”. It integrates multiple measures across life expectancy, literacy, education and standards of living, to yield an aggregate score. Nigeria is ranked low in this index, as can be seen in the sidebar.

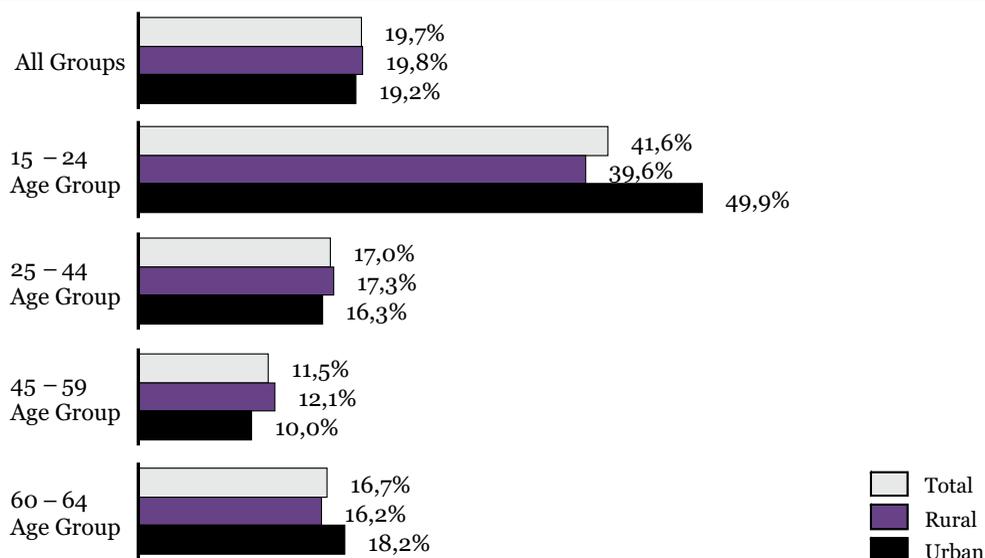
But the news gets worse. Data from our own National Bureau of Statistics indicates that unemployment in Nigeria is running at ~20% on average (see sidebar). This aggregate figure hides an even starker statistic –

almost 50% of 15-25 year-olds living in urban areas are jobless.

Many graduates have to abandon their dreams and ambitions to take up low-paying menial jobs, or even worse enter into illegal activities, to earn a “living” and try to “survive”. There is a palpable lack of confidence in the graduates of the country's educational system.

This has resulted in individual organisations setting up structures and processes by which they can validate, retrain, and assure the recent graduates they recruit. This individual led short-term solution or stopgap is proving very expensive to organisations and the country as a

Nigerian unemployment rates



SOURCE: National Bureau of Statistics

whole. The current practice of having individual-led solutions to a systemic problem has resulted in a systemic breakdown of the institutions and the infrastructures that support them.

“Employability” is a terminology that is frequently used in an environment where there is unemployment but yet there are vacancies, business opportunities and projects that could be developed by nationals. Even though such opportunities exist, the unemployed do not have the necessary capabilities to take advantage of them. This is the case in Nigeria, given the many untapped business opportunities and absence of so many services prevalent in other countries. Another issue in Nigeria is that of “underemployment”. This is a measure of employment and labour utilization in the economy that looks at how well the labour force is utilized

in terms of the matching of skills, experience and availability to work. Labour that falls under the underemployment classification includes those workers that are highly skilled but working in low paying jobs, workers that are highly skilled but work in low skill jobs and part-time workers that would prefer to be full-time.

Anecdotal evidence is that the rate of underemployment in Nigeria is also high; some quarters have quoted this to be as much as 60 million of the working population. The government's role in addressing these issues would be to create an enabling environment where all its citizens who are willing and able to work are given opportunities that will make it possible to maximise their talents and abilities for the greater good of the society irrespective of their

background. Nigeria needs to follow the well trodden paths of other successful countries in taking a national approach to skills development. For example, the government of Singapore, recognizing their lack of natural resources, focused on building capability in the people. It invested heavily in training and education around specialist skills and has created an acknowledged industrial hub. India's human resources have also played an important part in helping to develop their economy. It created a Public Private Partnership, called the National Skill Development Corporation India, as part of a national drive to fulfill the growing need in India for skilled manpower across sectors. The organization has an explicit objective “to contribute significantly (about 30 per cent) to the overall target of skilling / upskilling 500 million people in India by 2022, mainly by fostering private sector initiatives in skill development programmes and providing viable gap funding”. These are examples Nigeria can learn from.

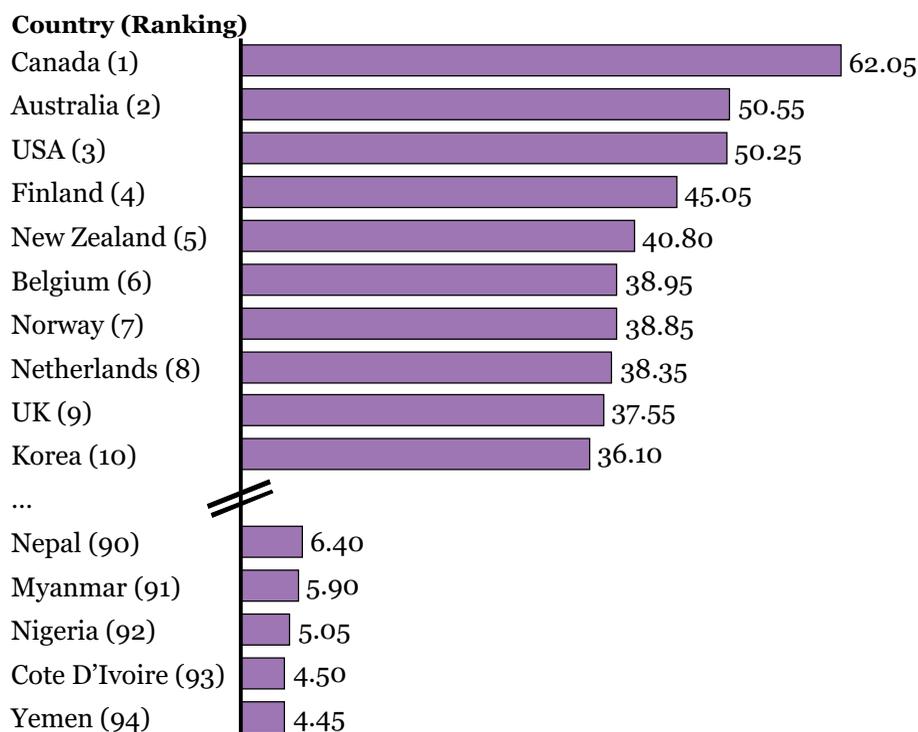
Strengthening the nation's capabilities

Sanjaya Lall, a noted Development Economist, studied extensively the development of technological capability and industrial competitiveness in developing countries. A core finding of his was that effective migration from simple to

complex technologies in a competitive world market required the carefully managed acquisition of associated new and diverse skills. Access to new technology was pointless without the attendant capabilities also being sourced. Emerging new technologies as we well know often call for entirely new types of skills, both for direct production of services and for the organization of production/ managing of required knowledge networks. But how well do we perform at developing skills as a nation? The answer is poorly. Nigeria ranks 92nd on the Harbison-Myers Index, which measures the percentage of population attaining secondary and higher education. This is one indication of the absence of a coordinated system wide approach to skills development, a key thing that needs to change. Some of the other changes I believe are required include:

- Changes to how we develop the higher end level of skills
- Changing our approach to accreditation to ensure that skills are up to international standards
- Changes to the perception and myths that define success only to certain professions and not always those linked to the national development programme
- Changes to the practices of mortgaging positions for favours and patronage
- Changes to practices of choosing people for a post and then fitting

Harbison - Myers skills index ranking



the post round the person

- Changes to the practices of putting technical experts into posts that require managerial expertise
- Changes to the practices of closed recruitment and selection processes

Strengthening institutions is critical to this development. This can only be achieved by ensuring that the right skills and knowledge within the system are not only retained but consolidated.

Creating an environment that nurtures skills and innovation ultimately leads to growth and productivity. The right people, with

the right skills, in the right place to deliver required outcomes will require changes to old style perceptions, boundaries and “ways of doing things”. A holistic approach, such as that put forward by the World Bank STEP model (see sidebar), is the type of model we should be deploying to achieve these aims. Practical actions should include:

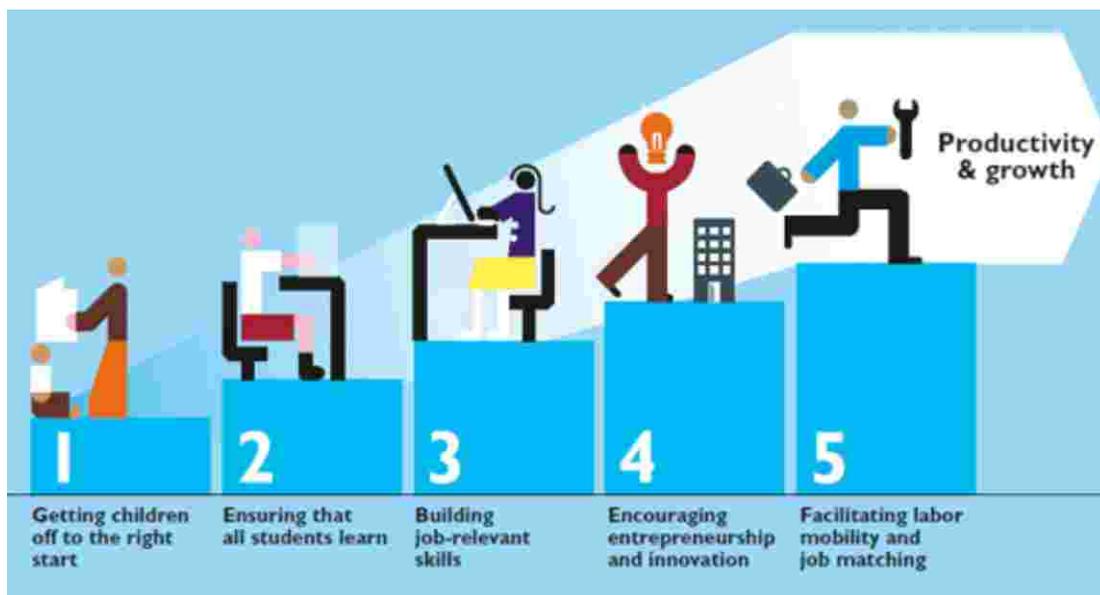
Action #1: Get clear on the nation's capability needs and manage it more proactively. We need to start by clearly identifying what Nigeria's unique selling point is. Sample questions to test include; What are the real growth sectors?

What are the supporting capabilities required to ensure that we are able to develop high end output efficiently? We must then look critically at how we evolve the entire system for developing capabilities, leading towards a virtuous skills cycle between and across all relevant systems and structures. We should base this on a solid system framework, such as the World Bank STEP model, taking care to integrate other issues that are important for Nigeria into it (e.g. how to manage our loss of top skills to other nations and our failure to leverage on the best and brightest in and outside Nigeria).

Action #2: Address the issues in our educational system.

Another paper covers this more substantively, but I would be amiss not to mention it. The development and implementation of “fit for purpose policies” is critical, for instance ensuring that legislation on education is not superseded and impinged upon by religious practices and state policies. We need to improve the quality and capacity of the educational system to actually produce employable human capital that is aligned with the nation's capability needs. Whatever approach we take needs to be quality assured, using a collective approach involving all key stakeholders, particularly business who are the ultimate “consumers” of our Human Capital.

Stepping up skills for more jobs and higher productivity (STEP)



Source: World Bank

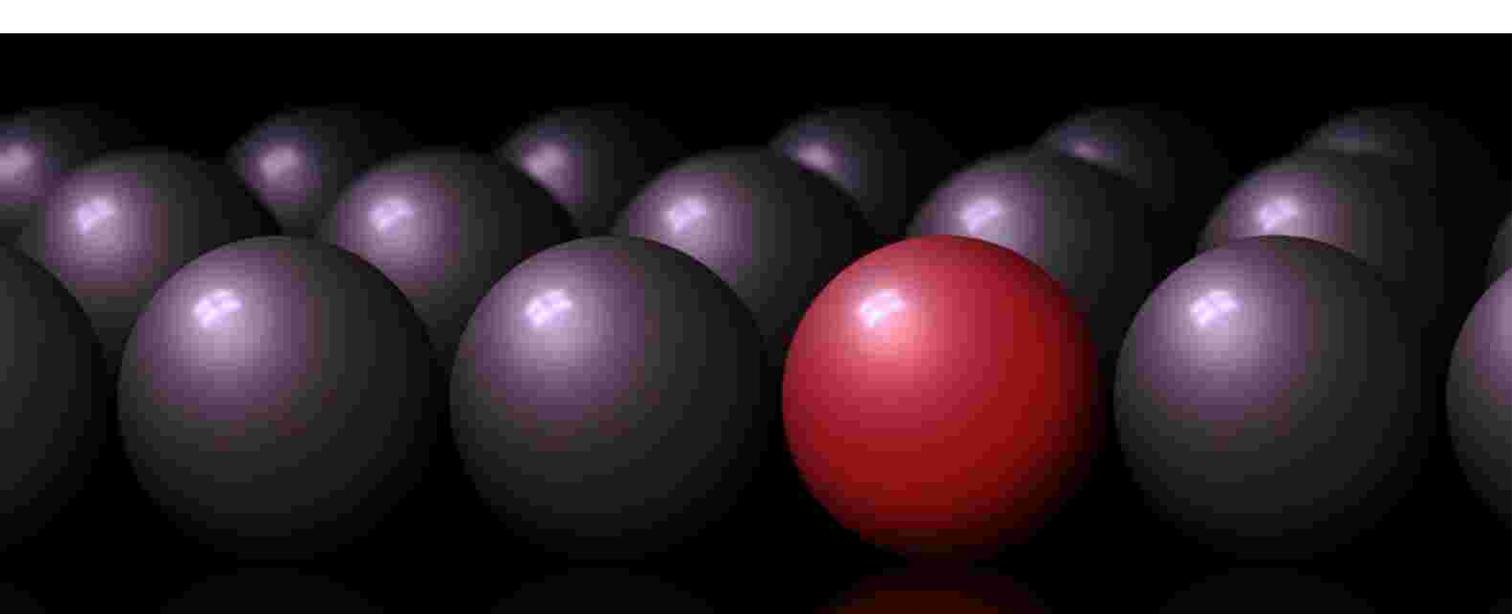
Action #3: Extend national capability building efforts into the workforce. Many of our current workers are still suffering from the legacy of our failed educational system. We need remedial attention on this so the workforce have the tools to deliver. Most employers, as mentioned previously, have created their own mechanisms to deal with this, but we need a national approach. We should develop enhanced models for ongoing training and development of the workforce. For instance, through models like internships, secondments, mentorships, cross industry collaboration, etc. We should also consider policies and incentives that support the nurturing of skills and creation of innovative business support centres, particularly for SMEs and employees at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum.

Action #4: Drive execution on these issues in a “new” way. We should avoid simply identifying a “technocrat” expert to design and execute these types of actions. We will require both technical and managerial skills to make this happen, and should aim for a multidisciplinary approach. Where possible we should also try to set up models and structures that use organizations that are already in place, rather than setting up new ones.

Closing thoughts

The focus in Nigeria needs to shift from “laudable statements and policies” to delivery. No longer should it be about activities, but outcome-focused. An integrated holistic solution delivered through a programme management approach with clear outcomes is critical. It is important that as part of the confidence building process the programme records a number of quick victories.

The writer is the founder and director of AfricaRecruit, a program designed to inform and reach out to people worldwide about the plethora of job opportunities in Africa. She has also served on the executive board of the Commonwealth Business Women's Network and is a member of the Migrant Advisory Board of the European Commission – UN Joint migration and development initiative. Her current roles include working as a NHS Healthcare manager on the 2012 Olympic-Paralympic in London, and serving on the advisory board for DFID's Global Poverty Action Fund.



Reformers in government: The roles of blueprints, incentives and political will

**Agents of reform in Nigeria operate in a unique context
they must be mindful of**

Dr. Abdul Raufu Mustapha

In this Think Piece I want to explore some of the dilemmas that are likely to face reformers in any government in Nigeria. This approach is, of course, predicated on the assumption that we all agree that the reforms are indeed needed. I take it for granted that it is self-evident that our governance institutions, economic processes, basic infrastructure, social services, and human security systems are all in serious need of reform. (For my extended discussion of this point see Murtala Muhammed Foundation, www.mmfconference.mmfng.org). So how does the odd reformer in government go about addressing these enormous tasks? Various governments in Nigeria have developed blueprints

and masterplans in response to specific problems. Unfortunately, however, many of those blueprints are not translated into concrete transformative reality. Why? Because the institutional structures, the political will, and the structures of incentives necessary to engineer sustained change are absent. It is in this context that the reformer makes an appearance in government.

Pursuing a reform agenda

From the infancy of human governance, as the works of scholars like Machiavelli demonstrate, advisers with technical expertise have sought to influence the actions of

wielders of power. Our reformer is best seen as someone with specialized technical expertise called in to help address some pressing problems of the day. Not a run-of-the-mill politician, but an expert in a particular field who is sufficiently concerned about the common good to get involved in direct governance responsibility. In my view, the key criteria for evaluating the reformer should therefore include the following:

- Has the reformer got a sufficiently clear understanding of the problem(s) and the context(s)?
- Can the reformer contribute to devising appropriate and operationable blueprints to begin the process of transformation?
- Can the reformer contribute to the creation of appropriate institutional and incentive structures at different levels of society to embed the desired changes so that they begin to transcend individuals?
- Can the reformer make the reforms – at least - politically unthreatening to the wielder of political power?
- Finally, to whom is the reformer ultimately accountable?

It is critical that the reformer knows precisely what the nature of the

problem is that needs intervention. We all remember in 1999 when Chief Bola Ige was put in charge of the ministry of power in the incoming Obasanjo administration, he stated that NEPA would be put right within six months. Today, twelve years later, we are still saddled with the same inefficient electricity supply system. The fault was not in Chief Ige's commitment or his brilliance; he simply had not well understood the nature of the technical and organizational problems besetting NEPA. It might be said in response to this point that Chief Ige was a brilliant lawyer, orator, and columnist, but certainly not an engineer. Well, in that case, it is the responsibility of the reformer to find out from those who know the terrain. You don't have to be an engineer to transform NEPA, but you must have access to clear technical analysis and advice.

It is equally important, however, that the reformer does not get captured by the 'cult of expertise' – his or those of others. Reforming a society is by nature a social process; expertise is important, but it is not everything. It has to be grounded in the societal and cultural context of the reforms. It was important for Chief Bola Ige to have understood all the technical intricacies of electricity generation, distribution,

and costing. It was equally important for him to have understood what proportion of Nigerian electricity consumers actually pay their bills; what levels of collusive corruption were going on within NEPA; and the links between people who can influence NEPA and importers of generators and diesel. The reformer is someone with moral authority and technical expertise who must then combine these attributes with societal understanding in order to craft workable reform blueprints.

The best technically qualified reformer may not necessarily achieve the best results. This is especially the case if the challenges faced are enormous. It is therefore necessary to have realistic targets, wherever possible, with a time-frame and costing. The guiding philosophy should be to go for the lower hanging fruit first, so that some tangible results can be used to justify further expenditure of effort.

Incrementalism – one realistic target replacing another as the previous target is achieved – might be the best operational strategy. But for that strategy not to get lost in the long grass of governance, the reformer must have a clear vision of where the ultimate objective lies.

Incrementalism must therefore go hand in hand with a vision.

Power dynamics and their impact on the reformer

Governance in many African countries is highly personalized.

Nigeria suffers from the same problem. The personal context of power is therefore important for the reformer. This primacy of personal power over institutional power poses two challenges to the reformer: The first is what I call the imperative of power; the second is the imperative of institutionalization. In general terms, these two imperatives pull in opposite directions, so the reformer must find a way to bridge them without falling between the cracks.

As I stated earlier one reason why blueprints and master-plans are not translated into reality in Nigeria is because there is insufficient political will to carry them through. Where powerful interests object to any particular reform, the likelihood is that they will find abundant ways to frustrate or pervert the reforms. Many Nigerian leaders continue to be beholden to powerful vested interests who continue to undermine societal transformation. A reformer must therefore understand the 'power logic' within which he or she is operating. This is both a moral and technical issue. Moral in the sense that the reformer must have a personal line

beyond which compromise with the powers-that-be becomes impossible, otherwise his or her moral authority becomes undermined. But it is also a technical issue in the sense that the reformer must be able to influence the exercise of power otherwise carrying out reforms becomes a near impossibility.

To my mind, the answer to the imperative of power is for the reformer to seek out like-minded people within the bureaucracy and the political class. A mind frame which identifies 'hardliners' and 'reformers' at all levels of governance and administration helps the reformer to build bridges and common cause, wherever possible. A reformer should therefore avoid the temptation of being seen as a lone ranger. This approach helps to maximize the reformer's influence while providing a measure of political protection. However, in seeking alliances within the power structure, the reformer must avoid the trap of 'normalization' through which he or she may become sucked into the very dysfunctional system. A reformer with no moral compass to draw the line between the acceptable and the unacceptable is in danger of turning into what he or she set out to transform.

While the imperative of power suggests that the reformer pay close attention to the power equation surrounding the reforms, the imperative of institutionalization draws attention in an opposite direction. A reform process that does not transcend the person of the reformer or the power-wielder is by definition a failure because it cannot be sustained. Embedding the reforms in rule-based procedures and de-personalizing the institutional context is therefore critical to the long-term survival of the reforms even as these processes would seem to challenge some of the established prerogatives of the powers-that-be. When the vision and strategy of reform is shared by more people than the reformer, then we can say that a process of institutionalization is taking place. Creating the right incentive structure for bureaucrats, politicians, and citizens helps in the process of institutionalization. These incentive structures are not just to reward correct behavior, but also to punish wrong-doing. Crudely put, if the imperative of power points to the need for the survival of the reformer, the imperative of institutionalization points to the need for the survival of the reform. The reformer is therefore constantly

shifting between calming the waters and rocking the boat. By definition, this calls for more than technical expertise; a measure of cultural sensitivity and political courage are necessary attributes of a successful reformer. By appointing/promoting the reformer, the power-wielder has demonstrated a measure of political will; the reformer must follow this up with professional integrity, political judgement and personal courage.

Concluding thoughts

Every reformer in government must constantly ask themselves: who am I accountable to? The question of accountability is intimately connected to the moral compass of the reformer and to some of the structural tensions I have highlighted already. A reformer must be accountable to the power holder, lest he or she loses power. Yet a reformer who is solely accountable to the powers-that-be becomes a mere tool in the power calculus of others. A reformer must therefore also be responsible to the wider public good. But pursuing this second objective at the cost of the interests of the power-holder might lead to a fracturing of their relationship. Not for the first time, the reformer must balance

competing demands – the demands of political accountability on the one hand, and of societal accountability on the other. It will not do to do away with either. In my view, therefore, a reformer in the dysfunctional governance structures we have in Nigeria must develop the ability to serve two masters at once – and that is what distinguishes him or her from our often self-serving politicians and bureaucrats.

The writer's research focuses on the politics of rural societies in Africa, ethnicity and identity politics and the politics of democratization in Africa. He teaches African Politics at the Department of International Development, University of Oxford, UK, and has held teaching and research positions at Bayero University, Kano, and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Development Research and Projects Centre (DRPC), Kano, and on the Scientific Committee of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Dakar, Senegal

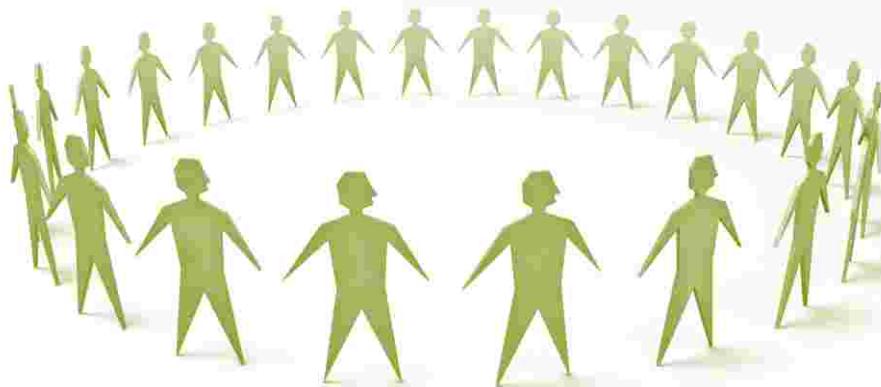
NLI Fellows

NLI currently has over 40 fellows; senior leaders and influencers in Nigeria and the Diaspora. This group is led by a 3-member Executive Board.

Asue Ighodalo is founding and managing partner of Banwo & Ighodalo, a multidisciplinary firm with offices in Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria which provides first-class legal advice on numerous aspects of corporate and commercial Nigerian law. He has a degree in economics from the University of Ibadan, another in Law from the London School of Economics and was admitted into the Nigerian Bar in July 1985. Asue sits on the boards of public and private companies and NGOs including the Christopher Kolade Foundation, Dangote Flour Mills Plc, FATE Foundation, Main Street Technologies Limited, the Nigerian Economic Summit Group and Union Bank UK Plc.

Dr. Titi Banjoko is a Senior Research Associate at UK's Foreign Policy Centre, member of the Migrant Advisory Board of the European Commission-United Nations Joint Migration and Development Initiative and Director of the AfricaRecruit programme. She sits on numerous boards including the selection panel on the International Health Links Funding Scheme (UK), the Department for International Development, the Global Poverty Action Fund, as well as a steering group on the Africa-UK project. She is also currently a healthcare manager in the NHS on the 2012 Olympic-Paralympics in London. Dr. Banjoko has over 15 years experience working on capacity building and diaspora initiatives.

Jinmi Morgan is a chartered accountant who has worked in the UK and Nigeria, with 15 years experience working on employment programmes and on capacity building initiatives. He has been a member of the Steering Committee of the Black Londoners School Governors and Parents Forum, the Greenwich Strategic Local Partnership, Shoreditch Business Forum (City Fringe) and Haggerston Community Forum. He is a member of the Reconstituted Presidential Task Force on Customs Reform, Nigeria. Jinmi currently works as founding member of Temple Crest, a financial services advisory and assurance boutique. Prior to that he worked at 3T Consulting and Ernst & Young. He was awarded a life membership of the Society for Aid to the Disabled, an NGO to assist disabled soldiers of the 'Biafran' war, at the end of his National Youth Service Corp year. Jinmi has initiated mutually beneficial engagement between Africa and Asia, one of which is CABS - China Awareness and Business Seminar.



1. **Bola Adesola** – Banker. Managing Director, Standard Chartered Bank. Fmr. Executive Director, Lagos Directorate, First Bank of Nigeria Plc. Lagos, Nigeria.
2. **Olusegun Adeniyi** – Journalist and Author. Fellow, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard Univ, USA; Fmr, Special Adviser to the Presidency on Communications. Former Editor, THISDAY, Lagos, Nigeria, Member, Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI).
3. **Professor Tayo Akinwande** – Academic. Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, United States. Recipient of the 1996 National Science Foundation Career Award.
4. **Dr. Festus B. Dada** – Surgeon. President of Crown Medical Group, California, United States.
5. **Gboyega Delano** – Entrepreneur. President & Chief Executive Officer, Ilora L'Original Beauty Concepts Inc, Chicago, United States. Former Vice President Soft Sheen / L'Oreal (the largest manufacturer of beauty products in the world). 2006 Chicago Minority Business Man of the Year.
6. **Nasir El-Rufai** – Public Servant. Former Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. Former Chief Executive of the Bureau of Public Enterprises and Member of President Obasanjo's Economic Team. Recipient of a national honour – OFR.
7. **Tony O. Elumelu, MFR** – Financial services expert, Chairman, Heirs Holdings Limited; Former Group Chief Executive Officer, UBA Plc (the largest financial services company in sub-Saharan Africa), Lagos, Nigeria; Founder, The Tony Elumelu Foundation.
8. **Asue Ighodalo** – Leading Capital Markets Lawyer. Managing Partner, Banwo & Ighodalo, Lagos, Nigeria. Member of the Board of Union Bank UK.
9. **Bridget Itsuelli** – Certified Counsellor & Mediator. Proprietor, Lagos Resource Centre, Lagos, Nigeria.
10. **Reverend Matthew Kukah** – Scholar, Negotiator and Renowned Public Affairs Analyst. Vicar General, Catholic Archdiocese, Kaduna, Nigeria. Served as Secretary to the National Political Reform Conference in 2005.
11. **Jinmi Morgan** – Chartered Accountant and Financial Analyst, London, United Kingdom. Founding member, Temple Crest.
12. **Major-General Sarki Mukhtar** – Retired Military Officer & Diplomat. Fmr National Security Adviser to the President of Nigeria. Has held many senior positions in the Army and public service including military Governor of both Kaduna and Katsina States and member Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council. Recipient of a national honour – CFR.
13. **Ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli** – Leadership Advocate & Entrepreneur. Founder & Chief Executive Officer, LEAP Africa, Lagos, Nigeria – a leadership development NGO. Director of the Agribusiness Growth Institute of West Africa (AGIWA) and Sahel Capital Partners. Recipient of a national honour in 2004 – MFR.
14. **Dr. Olu Obaro** – Radiologist. Head of the Department of Radiology, King George Hospital, London, United Kingdom.
15. **Dr. Adhiambo Odaga** – Ford Foundation Representative for West Africa – overall responsibility for overseeing the Foundation's grants in the region. Recipient of a national honour in 2004 – MFR.
16. **Oye Hassan-Odukale** – Managing Director / Chief Executive Officer – Leadway Assurance Company Limited (one of the largest insurance companies in Nigeria). Chairman of the Insurance Association of Nigeria. Recipient of a national honour – MFR.

17. **Adebayo O. Ogunlesi** – Chairman & Managing Partner, Global Infrastructure Partners. Former Executive Vice Chairman & Chief Client Officer of Credit Suisse, New York, USA. Ranked 7th in Fortune Magazine's list of Most Powerful Black Executives in the Americas.
18. **Professor Jacob K. Olupona** – Academic. Chair of the African Studies Committee and Academic Professor of African & African-American Studies and Religion, Harvard University Faculty of Arts and Harvard Divinity School, United States.
19. **Dele Olojede** – Journalist, Media Strategist & Consultant. Executive Chairman, Timbuktu Media, South Africa. First African to win the Pulitzer Prize – journalism's highest-regarded honour.
20. **Ayo Oke** – Diplomat, Civil Servant and Ambassador. Commonwealth Secretariat, London, United Kingdom – responsible for policy coordination and development.
21. **Bunmi Oni** – Fmr. Managing Director – Cadbury Nigeria Plc. Past Chairman of the Nigeria Economic Summit Group. Chairman, Steering Committee on Competition and Anti-Trust Reform. Recipient of a national honour – MON. Recipient of 2006 Best CEO of the Year award.
22. **Dr. Lola Oni, OBE** – Specialist Nurse Consultant/ Professional Services Director/ Lecturer, Brent Sickle Cell & Thalassaemia Centre, NW London Hospitals NHS Trust UK. Recipient of a British National Honour (OBE) for her outstanding contribution in the field of sickle cell and thalassaemia.
23. **Jim Ovia** – Co-founder and Fmr. Chief Executive Officer – Zenith Bank Plc (one of Nigeria's leading banks). Serves on the boards of many organisations including the Transnational Corporation of Nigeria and the Nigeria Investment Promotion Council. Recipient of a national honour – MFR.
24. **Professor Femi Oyebode** - Head of Department of Psychiatry at the University of Birmingham, Queen Elizabeth Psychiatry Hospital. Chief Examiner, Royal College of Psychiatrists and a Research Fellow at the Centre for West African Studies, Birmingham.
25. **Nuhu Ribadu** – Presidential Candidate and Fmr Executive Chairman, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) & Assistant Inspector General (AIG) of Police, Nigeria. Recipient of 2006 Silverbird Man of the Year Honour.
26. **Dr. Seyi Solebo** – Paediatrician, NHS Trust, United Kingdom. Member of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.
27. **Jide Zeitlin** – Private Investor. Founder, The Keffi Group. Previously a senior investment banker and Partner, Goldman Sachs & Co until December 2005. Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Amherst College, USA
28. **Dr. Reuben Abati** – Journalist. Chairman, Editorial Board, The Guardian Newspapers, Lagos, Nigeria. Recipient of the 2006 Freedom Peace Prize for Journalism Award.
29. **Jacobs Moyo Ajekigbe** – Banker. Fmr. Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, First Bank of Nigeria (FBN). Fmr. Chairman, Kakawa Discount House Limited and FBN Merchant Bankers Limited.
30. **Dr. Auwalu Anwar** – Public Servant. Former Secretary for Education, Federal Capital Territory Abuja (FCTA). Also previously served as the FCTA Secretary for Agriculture & Rural Development.
31. **Dr. Titilayo Banjoko** – Change Management Consultant. Managing Director, Africa Recruit & Find a Job in Africa, United Kingdom. Board Member, Commonwealth Business Women's Network and Senior Research Associate at UK's Foreign Policy Centre.

32. **Dr. Efunbo Dosekun** – Paediatrician. Joint Executive Director, Lifeline Children's Hospital and Healthcare Capacity Development Co. Ltd, Lagos, Nigeria.
33. **Bashir Yusuf Ibrahim** - President/CEO, Dirham Group, Abuja, Nigeria. Served as Special Assistant to the Vice President on National Assembly Matters.
34. **Dr. Olurinde Lafe** – Engineer. Chairman and CEO, Innovative Computing Group Inc. (LAFE Technologies) Ohio, United States. Served as consultant NASA, USDA, USAID, UNESCO, World Vision and Defense Advanced Research Program Agency (DARPA).
35. **Olatunji Lardner** – Journalist & Development Communications Consultant. CEO, West African NGO Network, Lagos, Nigeria. Served as consultant for the UNDP, UN, Ford Foundation, DFID and World Bank.
36. **Prof. Lawal Mohammed Marafa** – Academic. Professor, Department of Geography and Resource Management, Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). Recipient of 2005 Exemplary Teacher Award at CUHK.
37. **Oba Nsugbe, QC** – Legal Practitioner & Queens Counsel. Joint Head, Pump Court Chambers, United Kingdom. Member, Bar Council Committee and Former Member, Judicial Studies Board, UK.
38. **Dr. Abdul Raufu Mustapha** – Academic. University Lecturer and Kirk-Greene Fellow, University of Oxford, United Kingdom. Recipient of the British Academy Small Research Grant and Nuttfield Foundation Small Research Grant.
39. **Prof. Omolola Ogunyemi** – Director, Center for Biomedical Informatics, Charles Drew Univ of Medicine and Science, Los Angeles, CA.
40. **Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala** – Managing Director, World Bank, Washington D.C; Economist. Distinguished Fellow, Brookings Institution, United States. Served as the Head of the Nigerian Presidential Economic Team; Nigerian Minister of Finance, Minister of Foreign Affairs and as a Vice President, World Bank.
41. **Victor Gbolade Osibodu** – Entrepreneur and Management Consultant. Founder & CEO, Vigeo Holdings Limited, Lagos, Nigeria. Recipient of National Honour – MFR.
42. **Prof. Oluyemi Osinbajo** - Lawyer. Former Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Lagos State, Nigeria. Senior Partner, SimmonsCooper Partners. Founder & Director, the Convention on Business Integrity. Appointed a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) in 2004.
43. **Gbenga Oyebode** – Lawyer. Managing Partner, Aluko & Oyebode, Lagos, Nigeria. Chairman, Access Bank Nigeria Plc. Serves on the Board of Etisalat Nigeria and Crusader Insurance Plc. Recipient of National Honour – MFR.
44. **Folusho Phillips** – Management Consultant & Industrial Economist. Chairman & Founder, Phillips Consulting Group, Lagos, Nigeria. Active speaker on Human Resource Management at Key International Conferences.
45. **Sen. Udoma Udo Udoma** – Lawyer. Former Chief Whip of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Leader of the South-South Caucus. Managing Partner, Udoma & Bello-Osagie. Chairman, Securities & Exchange Commission, Nigeria. Served as Director of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG).
46. **Maryam Uwais** - Lawyer and Human Rights Activist. Principal Partner, Wali-Uwais & Co., Abuja, Nigeria.
47. **Kabiru Abdullahi Yusuf** – Journalist and Media Consultant- Editor-in-Chief/CEO of Media Trust Limited, Abuja, Nigeria.

NLI Associates

NLI currently has over 200 associates; emerging leaders and influencers in Nigeria and the Diaspora. This group is led by an 8-member Management Board.

Tunde Olanrewaju is a Partner in the London office of McKinsey & Company, a global management consulting firm. He works with Financial Institutions (in capital markets and retail banking), as well as social sector organisations, on issues including strategy, organization, operations and technology. He graduated with an MEng (First Class) in Electrical & Electronic Engineering from Imperial College, London and was a Lucent Technologies Global Science Scholar. Tunde is a co-chair of the NLI Associates Management Board.

Adesubomi Plumptre heads the Corporate Practice at Alder Consulting, a leading ideas and branding company. She is also on the firm's Executive Committee, where she oversees Knowledge & HR. With an academic background in analytical reasoning and practical research, Subomi has been a team lead for Alder on government and corporate projects including the development of the education sector transformation plan of the Federal Ministry of Education; development of brand policy for the Federal Ministries of Foreign Affairs & Solid Minerals Development, the implementation of acculturation programmes for First Bank and the development of ongoing brand strategy for Guaranty Trust Bank. Adesubomi is a co-chair of the NLI Associates Management Board.

Adaku Uche Ekpo heads up international business development at the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative. She was most recently an international development manager for Junior Achievement Worldwide, where she managed strategic relationships with multi-lateral and bi-lateral organizations including the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Department of State, foreign donors and international foundations. She has also worked for the Department of Commerce's U.S. Export Assistance Council in Columbus, Ohio, Ulmer & Berne, Fate Foundation in Nigeria and Junior Achievement Delaware. She holds an M.A. in government administration from the University of Pennsylvania and a J.D. from Ohio State University's Moritz College of Law.



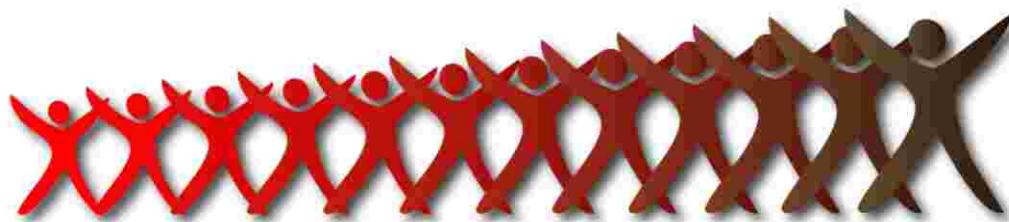
Ruona Agbroko Meyer is a reporter at NEXT newspapers, Nigeria. She has worked as a contributing writer, sub-editor, columnist and speech-writer for Thisday newspapers, The Mail & Guardian South Africa, Reuters and Guaranty Trust Bank Nigeria. Ms. Meyer was the 2010 winner of the Niall Fitzgerald Prize for a Young African Journalist sponsored by Thomson Reuters. She has a first degree in Microbiology from the University of Lagos, Nigeria and graduated with a distinction in Journalism and Media Studies from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Kemi Ajayi is the Practice Administrator of Banwo & Ighodalo, a multidisciplinary law firm with offices in Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria. Kemi has a degree in Accounting, and she is currently studying for an MBA at the University of Manchester. She is an Associate Chartered Accountant of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, an Associate of the Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria and Associate member of the Association of Legal Administrators, USA. She has extensive experience in Practice Development, Accounting and Management Reporting, Tax Planning and Office Administration.

Hauwa Magoro has a BSc (Hons) Pharmacology from the University of Portsmouth and an MSc, DIC in Health Management from Imperial College Management School. She is a member of the Association for Project Management, UK and a certified Prince2 Practitioner. Prior to joining QBE Insurance, Hauwa had 8 years of experience working in financial services, health, IT, telecommunications, broadcasting and property development. Some of her professional milestones include projects within the National Health Service (NHS) where she managed the implementation of the medical transcription services in over 20 hospitals and Primary Care Trusts. Hauwa was also part of the pioneering Olympic 2012 Virtual Visa Card Team.

Femi Omoluabi is the CEO of Aphobos Studios, an advertising and visual communications firm. He is an architect, animator and creative visionary. He has over a decade of world class advertising and brand work experience behind him. He has worked with notable Nigerian brands including MTN, Etisalat, UAC and Guaranty Trust Bank.

Abi Ajisafe has a BSc in Government from the London School of Economics. She started her career in equity sales trading at Goldman Sachs. She now works at Renaissance Capital, focusing on Sub-Saharan Africa sales to international clients. An avid writer, she is a regular contributor to lifestyle publications as well as a trainee toastmaster.



NOTES

Nigeria Leadership Initiative

www.nli-global.org

info@nli-global.org



Designed by **ennovateNIGERIA**