Duchess
INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE
. . . inspiring & showcasing women

ISSN 2632 - 4709

A Custodian Global Consult Publication

Duchess International Magazine Publisher,

Bolaji Odunuga

shares her adventure into the world of media, community engagement and business



IWD 2024 SPECIAL EDITION



THE EVOLUTION OF AFRICAN WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES: CHALLENGES, PROGRESS AND OPPORTUNITIES



KAFILAT ARAOYE:
The Architect of Change Transforming the Face of the Nigerian Banking System



RACHEL RUTO:
Redefining Leadership In Women's Empowerment, Environmental Advocacy & Financial Inclusion



HON. LAMI DANLADI OGENYI:
Benue State Assembly Deputy Speaker; Faith, Service And Community Development

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CONFERENCE ITINERARY

Date	Activity	Venue	Time
April 17	Registration | Meet & Greet	Weston Hotel, Langata Rd, Nairobi, Kenya.	7pm-9pm
April 18	Workshops	Weston Hotel, Langata Rd, Nairobi, Kenya.	10am-4pm
April 19	Sights and Sounds of Nairobi	(Nairobi Tours)	10am-5pm
April 20	Conference	Weston Hotel, Langata Rd, Nairobi, Kenya.	9am-5pm
April 20	Dinner & Awards	Weston Hotel, Langata Rd, Nairobi, Kenya.	8pm-11pm

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Duchess INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE ...inspiring & showcasing women

CUSTODIANNEWS



EDITOR IN CHIEF DESK

EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH THE POWER OF THE PEN:

A TRIBUTE TO DUCHESS INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE

Writing has always been a conduit for empowerment, a tool wielded by those seeking to uplift, inspire, and ignite change. In this special international edition, we celebrate women from every corner of the globe and express gratitude to all who champion their causes, agendas, and impacts worldwide.

Duchess International Magazine, a publication of Custodian Global Consult, stands at the forefront of this movement, tirelessly advocating for the voices and visions of women everywhere. My commitment at the helm of Duchess International Magazine is propelled by vision for excellence and innovation.

I am indeed thankful for my visionary leader, our Managing Partner, Yinka Odeajo whose commitment to excellence and innovation has propelled the publication to new heights. He plays a pivotal role in ensuring the magazine's success and reach.

As Chief Editor and Principal Partner of Custodian Global Consult Limited, my dedication to amplify the stories and successes of women is unparalleled.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all the media professionals who have contributed their time, talents, and insights to this publication. Their unwavering commitment to quality journalism and storytelling has helped Duchess International Magazine shine brightly on the global stage, showcasing the diverse experiences and achievements of women from all walks of life.

Despite the challenges and obstacles we have faced along the way, Duchess International Magazine has emerged triumphant, steadfast in its mission to celebrate, empower, and elevate women worldwide. Through its pages, we have witnessed stories of resilience, determination, and triumph, inspiring readers to pursue their dreams and embrace their true potential.

In addition to Duchess International Magazine, Custodian Global Consult Limited proudly owns other esteemed titles, including Custodian News, Bold and Beautiful International Magazine and Duke International Magazine. Together, these publications form a powerful platform for all voices to be heard, their stories to be shared, and their contributions to be recognized and celebrated on a global scale.

As we embark on this journey of empowerment and celebration, let us reaffirm our commitment to supporting and uplifting women in all their endeavors.

Through the power of the pen and the pages of Duchess International Magazine, may we continue to inspire, inform, and ignite positive change in the world, one story at a time.

Duchess Abolaji Odunuga
Chief Editor, Duchess International Magazine and Principal Partner, Custodian Global Consult

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CELEBRATING AND SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT ON AFRICA'S EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN



THE VIEW

Welcome to this special edition of Duchess International Magazine, which is all about the annual Duchess International Womens Conference 2024 in Nairobi, Kenya.

We celebrate women and girls in leadership, STEM, business, and talent development. With the theme, #InspireInclusion, we want to reiterate our commitment to creating a world where everyone is included and treated fairly.

We cannot deny the fact that African women have grown as leaders over time. In this issue, we take a look at the challenges they face, the progress they've made, and the exciting opportunities ahead.

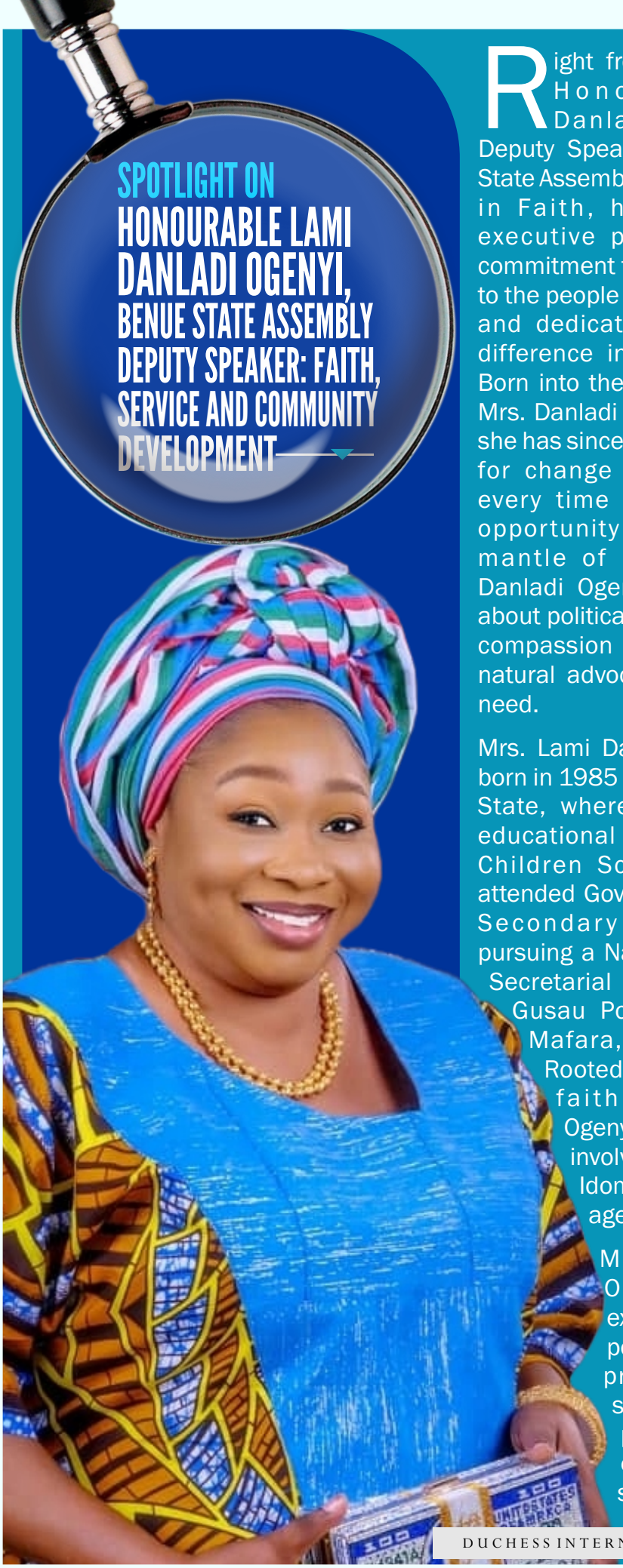
Join us as you read about the amazing women who are making a difference in their fields. People like the Visionary First Lady of Kenya, Rachel Ruto, Kafilat Araoye who is challenging the sterotypes in the Nigerian Banking System, Dr. Emmanuella Zamba, the Lagos Health Revolutionary and Bolaji Odunuga, our extraordinary founder leading the charge toward community engagement, empowering the girl-child and inspiring emerging African women leaders, are changing the game and pulling others along, to aim high. Their stories show us that with hard work, sheer determination and the power of 'a woman's mind', anything is possible!

We also celebrate the Nigerian Envoy, Amb. Amina Smaila, and other brave women who are reshaping Africa's image in foreign countries. Their leadership has had a huge impact on our communities and the world.

This edition is a reminder of the power of women's voices and the change they can bring when given the opportunity.

So, join us on this journey of empowerment and inspiration. Together, let's #InspireInclusion and work towards a brighter future for everyone.

SPOTLIGHT ON HONOURABLE LAMI DANLADI OGENYI, BENUE STATE ASSEMBLY DEPUTY SPEAKER: FAITH, SERVICE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Right from the age of 9, Honourable Lami Danladi Ogenyi, the Deputy Speaker of the Benue State Assembly, has been rooted in Faith, holding various executive positions as her commitment to God and service to the people shaped her values and dedication to making a difference in her community. Born into the family of Mr. and Mrs. Danladi Ogenyi Ochenoda, she has since become a catalyst for change everywhere and every time she's found the opportunity to take up the mantle of leadership. For Danladi Ogenyi, it is not just about political ambition, but her compassion has made her a natural advocate for people in need.

Mrs. Lami Danladi Ogenyi was born in 1985 in Gumel, Zamfara State, where she began her educational journey at Army Children School. She later attended Government Girls Day Secondary School before pursuing a National Diploma in Secretarial Studies at Abdul Gusau Polytechnic, Talata Mafara, Zamfara State. Rooted in her Christian faith, Mrs. Danladi Ogenyi has been actively involved in her church's Idoma choir since the age of 9.

Mrs. Danladi Ogenyi's impact extends beyond the political arena. As a private individual, she has been a philanthropist par excellence, supporting various causes in Ado LGA. From procuring job opportunities for youths to providing scholarships and support for widows, her contributions have touched many lives and inspired hope in her community.

Fascinated by the development in Northern States and driven by the need for progress in her constituency, Mrs. Danladi Ogenyi ventured into politics in 2018. Her mission is clear: to boost the economy through agriculture, empower youths and women in business, and create job opportunities for her constituents. She has received numerous awards and recognitions for her contributions, including the Most Influential Woman of the Year award by Igumale Unity Forum.

As Deputy Speaker, Mrs. Danladi Ogenyi has championed legislation to support the children of fallen heroes and advocated for peace in troubled border communities. Her commitment to gender equality and empowerment is remarkable, and she continues to be a voice for change and progress in her community.

Honourable Lami Danladi Ogenyi is a service leader, and empowerment is always at the core of her advocacy. She is a role model for girls and emerging women leaders and she is a practical example of what can be achieved through dedication and compassion.

2023 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CONFERENCE KIGALI, RWANDA

Duchess International Magazine 2023 International Women's Conference, Kigali, Rwanda Participants during photo session





Table Conversations at the Duchess International Magazine 2023 International Women's Conference, Kigali, Rwanda.



Duchess International Magazine 2023 International Women's Conference, Kigali, Rwanda Participants during photo session

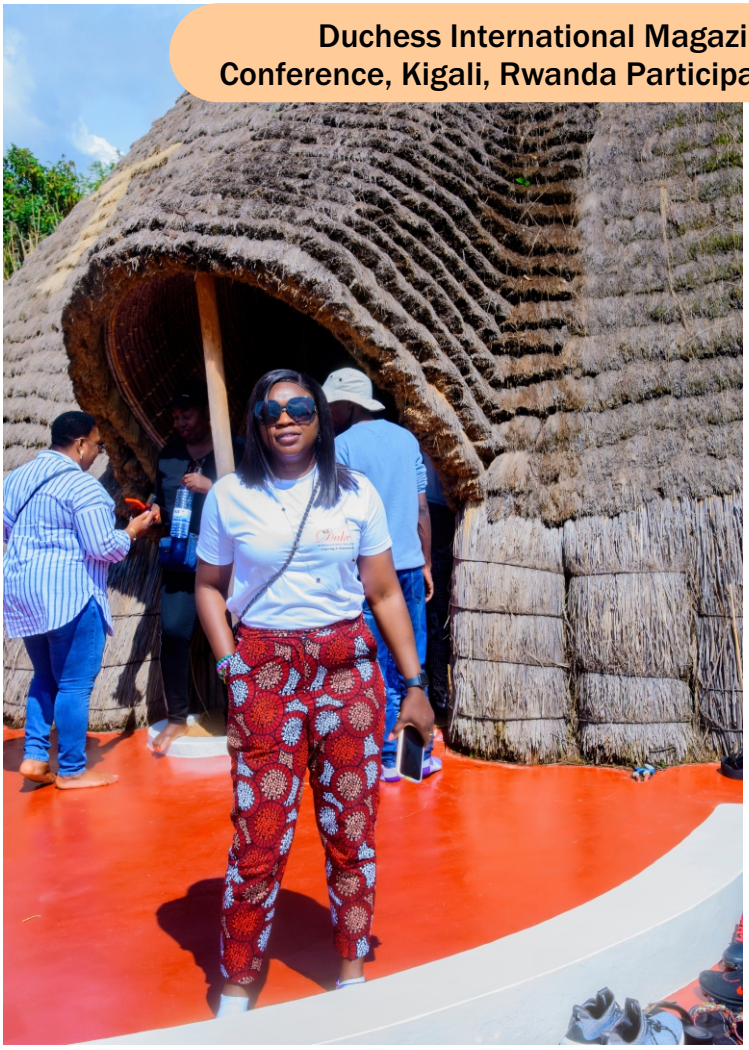








Duchess International Magazine 2023 International Women's Conference, Kigali, Rwanda Participants Visits To The Nyanza Cultural Trails













Duchess International Magazine IWD Conference, Rwanda 2023
Participants Visiting The Nyanza Genocide Museum









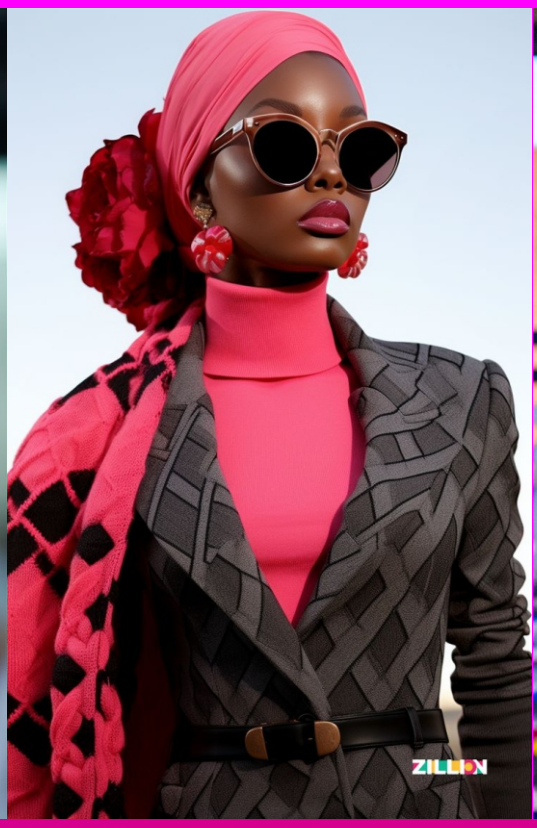




10 ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF A HIGH-VALUE & CLASSY WOMAN

Being a high-value and classy woman goes beyond appearances, especially in today's fast-paced world. It's about embodying qualities that resonate with elegance, poise, and integrity. Here are ten timeless traits that define a woman of class:







Curate a Timeless Wardrobe: A classy woman knows that her attire speaks volumes about her. She invests in quality pieces that are timeless, versatile, and reflect her personal style.

Take Care of Things: Whether it's her home, belongings, or relationships, a classy woman takes care of everything she values. She maintains her possessions with care and ensures they are always in top condition.

Practice a Self-Care Routine: Self-care is not just a trend; it's a lifestyle for a classy woman. She prioritizes her physical, mental, and emotional well-being, ensuring she is always at her best.

Serve Others: Classiness is also about how you treat others. A classy woman is generous with her time, resources, and kindness, always willing to lend a helping hand to those in need.

Invest in Your Education: Education is a lifelong journey, and a classy woman understands the importance of constantly learning and growing. She seeks out opportunities for personal and professional development.

Be Kind to Staff: How a person treats those in service roles says a lot about their character. A classy woman is respectful and kind to everyone, regardless of their position or status.

Exercise Regularly: Physical fitness is key to looking and feeling your best. A classy woman prioritizes her health and makes time for regular exercise to stay fit and energetic.

Be Impeccably Groomed: Personal grooming is a reflection of self-respect. A classy woman takes pride in her appearance, ensuring she is always well-groomed and presentable.

Cultivate Grace Under Pressure: Life is full of challenges, but a classy woman handles them with grace and composure. She remains calm and collected, even in the face of adversity.

Embrace Authenticity: Above all, a classy woman is true to herself. She embraces her uniqueness, quirks, and imperfections, knowing that they are what make her truly beautiful.

Being a high-value and classy woman is not about conforming to a certain stereotype but about embodying timeless qualities that reflect your true essence. It's about being confident, gracious, and kind, no matter the circumstances. So, embrace these qualities, and let your inner elegance shine bright!

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KENYA'S VISIONARY FIRST LADY,

RACHEL RUTO:

REDEFINING LEADERSHIP IN WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Rachel Ruto, the wife of Kenya's President William Samoei Ruto, is a remarkable figure in Kenyan politics and society. She is known for her dedication to women's rights and empowerment initiatives. While her husband often takes the spotlight, Rachel's tireless efforts to uplift women across the country have earned her widespread admiration and respect.

A Journey of Education and Entrepreneurship

Rachel was born on November 20th, 1968, in Kakamega, Western Kenya. She started from humble beginnings but worked hard to become a prominent figure in Kenya's political landscape. After completing her education at Lukuyani Primary School and Butere Girls High School, she pursued a Bachelor of Education degree at Kenyatta University. Later, she earned a Master of Arts degree at

the Catholic University of Eastern Africa in 2011.

Although Rachel excelled academically, she took a different path in her career. She ventured into the tour business, offering trips to popular destinations like Maasai Mara and Mombasa. It was during her university years that she met William Ruto, who was studying botany at the University of Nairobi. They got married in 1991 and have six children.

Empowering Women Across Kenya

Rachel's influence goes beyond being a supportive spouse. She recognized the challenges faced by women in rural areas, especially in accessing clean water. To address this issue, she initiated the Drops of Gold project, which aimed to provide women with access to clean water. Rachel partnered with the Kenyan government to make this project a reality.

Rachel is known for advocating table banking, also known as Chamas, which empowers women to save and invest through group-based financial schemes. Her efforts have helped countless women gain financial independence and entrepreneurial skills, contributing to economic growth at the grassroots level.

Under the Mama Cycling for Forests initiative, Rachel has played a crucial role in promoting green and sustainable road infrastructure. She advocates for the inclusion of cycling and walking lanes in the country's development plans. Rachel has also led cross-stitching initiatives for incarcerated women, providing them with skills training and income-generating opportunities upon their release from prison.

Furthermore, Rachel is committed to women's empowerment in agriculture. She initiated the poultry project, which provides affordable chicks to women across Kenya. This project enables women to engage in poultry farming and improve their livelihoods.

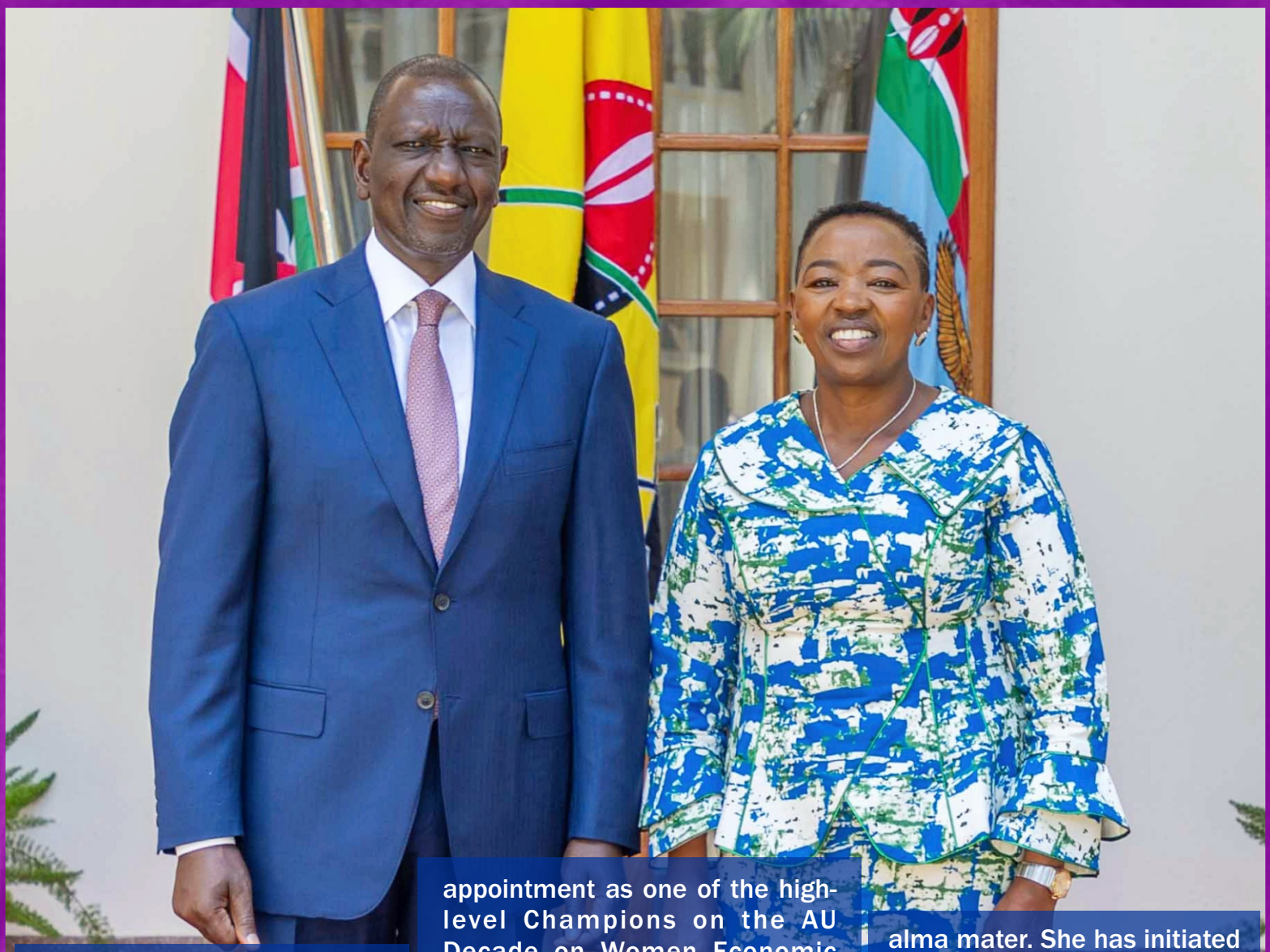
Carakana: Empowering Vulnerable Groups

Carakana is a social enterprise founded by Rachel Ruto. It focuses on transferring and preserving indigenous skills, particularly cross-stitching, to produce quality handmade items. The enterprise aims to create sustainable livelihoods and improve the well-being of vulnerable groups in Kenya.

A Role Model and Champion

Rachel Ruto is a thought





leader on financial inclusion and women's economic empowerment. Her leadership has made her a role model for women and a champion in various areas, including Faith Diplomacy, Food Systems Innovation, Nutrition, Mental Health and Wellness, Inclusivity, Climate Change, and Entrepreneurship.

In 2009, Rachel founded the Joyful Women Organization, which encompasses various initiatives to address the societal problems faced by marginalized women. Her dedication to women's empowerment and financial inclusion led to her appointment as one of the high-level Champions on the AU Decade on Women Economic Empowerment and Financial Inclusion by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2021.

A First Lady with Unchanging Virtues

Those who knew Rachel well before her ascendance to power believed she would make an excellent First Lady. Her village in Likuyani, Kakamega County, where she grew up, has always been proud of her. Her former classmates and head teacher from Likuyani Primary School remember her as a hardworking and devoted student.

Rachel has never forgotten her roots and continues to support her alma mater. She has initiated various projects at the school, including drilling a borehole, installing flush toilets, electricity, and tiled classrooms. Her acts of gratitude extend beyond her school, as she recently gifted her former teacher with a car to express her appreciation for his years of service.

Despite her rise to a prominent position, Rachel has remained humble and true to herself. Her childhood friends and village mates believe that she will continue to exemplify the virtues she possessed as a young girl, making them proud to see her become Kenya's First Lady.



Duchess International Magazine Publisher,

Bolaji Odunuga

shares her adventure into the world of media, community engagement and business

United Kingdom-based Bolaji Odunuga is a multi-talented entrepreneur, IT Security Analyst, and the CEO of Duchess and Duke International Magazines - two platforms dedicated to sharing stories of real-life men and women and celebrating their strength and resilience. Bolaji is also the Principal Partner of Custodian Global Consult and the Organisation Lead for Africa Community in Surrey & Sussex (ACISS), where she plays a crucial role in community engagement. In this exclusive interview, she shares insights into how her passion for community development and empowering women has driven her to make a positive impact through her various roles.

Can you share with us your journey into the world of media and publishing? What inspired you to start Duchess International Magazine?

My journey into the world of media and publishing was born out of a personal struggle. I found myself in a very dark place at some point in my life. I lost my self-esteem, and felt trapped, not knowing which direction to go. Writing became my therapy, my way of processing my emotions and finding my voice again. So, one day, I shared my story online and I was overwhelmed by the responses from people who could relate or found solace in my words. This inspired me to create Duchess International Magazine, a platform to share stories of real-life women from diverse spheres of life, inspire others, and celebrate the strength and resilience of women, especially African women. I realized that there are many women out there who have achieved quite a lot in their own relatively small corner and I decided I must blow their horns, not just as a way of celebrating and encouraging



them, but also to inspire the girl-child and the growing generation of super talented African women with raw and untapped potentials. That is why I keep imploring women from all walks of life to keep sharing their stories. We must share our stories so that the young generation of girls would understand that there is pride in whatever they choose to become, whether is a Bank CEO or a Serial Entrepreneur from Tanzania or anywhere in the world.

As the CEO/Publisher of Duchess International Magazine, what is your vision for the publication? How do you see it evolving in the future?

My vision for Duchess International Magazine is to continue being a centre of inspiration for women worldwide. I want to expand our reach, telling more diverse stories and highlighting the achievements of women from all walks of life. In the very near future, I see Duchess International evolving into a global multimedia platform, offering not just inspiring stories but also practical advice, resources, and opportunities for women to grow and thrive. We will have our own TV and radio platforms, resource and empowerment centres across the continent and beyond.

You are also the Principal Partner of Custodian Global Consult. How do you manage to balance your roles between publishing and consultancy?

Balancing my roles between publishing and consultancy is all about effective time management and prioritization. At Custodian Global Consult, I have a dedicated and pragmatic leader with dexterity in media and public relations, the person of Yinka Odeajo, popularly known as "Yinka Bold". He is an asset of a man! I draw strength from his extremely unique leadership qualities. His direction makes my work a bit easier. I also have a super talented, creative, and hardworking team who handle day-to-day operations, allowing me to focus on Duchess International Magazine. I also make sure to set aside specific



times for each role, ensuring that I give my full attention to both without neglecting either.

ACISS plays a crucial role in community engagement. What motivated you to become the Organisation Lead, and what impact do you hope to achieve through ACISS?

It's simple - My passion! My passion for community development and my desire to make a positive impact. ACISS provides a platform for ethnic minorities in Surrey and Sussex, U.K to come together, support each other, and celebrate our culture and heritage. Through ACISS, I hope to foster a sense of belonging, relationships, trust, support, and unity among ethnic minorities in Surrey and Sussex, U.K. I hope to also foster an empowering engagement that contributes positively to the community and society at large.

How do you see the intersection of media, community engagement, and business in today's world?

The intersection of media, community engagement, and business is more important than ever in today's world. Media has the power to amplify voices, raise awareness, and inspire action, making it a crucial tool for community engagement and business growth. By leveraging media platforms, businesses can connect with their audience, build trust, and drive meaningful change in their communities.

What are some of the challenges you've faced in your journey, especially gender-based, and how have you overcome them?

One of the challenges I've faced in my journey, especially as a woman, is the expectation to conform to traditional gender roles and stereotypes. I've overcome this by staying true to myself, believing in my abilities, and surrounding myself with supportive people who believe in me. I've also learned to embrace my femininity as a strength, rather than a limitation, and to use it to my advantage in male-dominated spaces.

What advice would you give to aspiring entrepreneurs looking to start their own media or community-focused ventures?

My advice to aspiring entrepreneurs looking to start their own media or community-focused ventures is to be authentic. Be passionate, and resilient. You see that resilience, you need it more than anything, especially when the wind begins to blow against you. Also, believe in your vision and don't be afraid to take risks. Focus on your internal fire, ensuring it burns brighter within you than the one around you. It's essential to cultivate a strong sense of purpose and passion for your venture, as this inner drive will sustain you through the challenges and uncertainties of entrepreneurship. When your fire burns brightly from within, it illuminates your path, guiding you toward success and fulfillment. So, nurture your inner flame, let it fuel your ambition, and let it be the driving force behind everything you do. In addition, surround yourself with a strong support system and be open to learning from others. Also importantly, never give up, even in the face of challenges. Success often comes to those who are willing to persevere.



DR. EMMANUELLA ZAMBA: TRANSFORMING HEALTHCARE IN LAGOS, NIGERIA

In the heart of the Economic Capital of Nigeria, Lagos, Dr. Emmanuella Zamba is making big changes to the healthcare system. Her hard work has helped transform Lagos State's healthcare in terms of innovation and inclusivity.

Dr. Zamba who began her journey in the Lagos State public service in 2005, has over the years, held important positions in various units and organizations within the Lagos State Health Ministry. This experience had set her up for a deep understanding of healthcare management.

Pioneering Telemedicine in Nigeria

As the Permanent Secretary of the Lagos State Health Management Agency (LASHMA), Dr. Zamba has led groundbreaking initiatives. One of her biggest achievements is the establishment of Ekotelemed, which is Nigeria's first state-owned Telemedicine platform. This platform had been crucial during the COVID- 19 pandemic. It allows people to have virtual medical consultations from the comfort of their homes.

EkoTelemed: A Lifeline During COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Zamba's leadership at LASHMA led to





the creation of the EKOTelemed project. This project has been a lifeline for non-emergency primary care and has made healthcare more accessible to residents whereby/in that people can consult with physicians in English, Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo – the four major languages of the state.

Revolutionizing Health Insurance

Under Dr. Zamba's leadership, the Lagos State Health Scheme (LSHS) has seen incredible growth. In fact, it has been recognized as the best State Health Insurance scheme in Nigeria for 2023. Dr. Zamba has made important changes to make the scheme more inclusive and accessible to everyone. She has also expanded its presence in local communities.

Eko Social Health Alliance

Dr. Zamba understands the importance of social welfare. That's why she created the Eko Social Health Alliance (EKOSHA), which helps vulnerable members of the state access healthcare services. This initiative ensures that the vulnerable are enrolled in the Lagos State Health Scheme.

Service Charter Champion

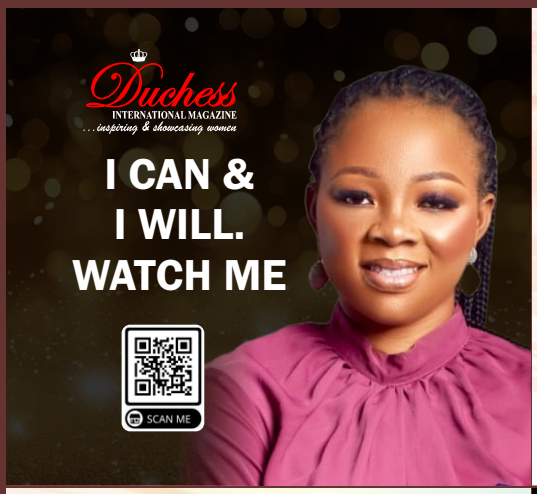
Dr. Zamba is committed to excellence and has advocated for transparency and accountability in healthcare. She has implemented the Health Service Charter and has received four awards for her outstanding contribution to healthcare.

Grassroot Outreach and Visionary Goals

Dr. Zamba is determined to make healthcare accessible to as many people as possible. She has set a goal to enroll three million residents in the Lagos State Health Insurance Scheme. Her grassroots outreach program, Ilera Eko, is working to bridge the healthcare accessibility gap in all 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs) and 37 Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs).

Dr. Emmanuella Zamba's dedication, strategic thinking, and innovative spirit has transformed Lagos State's healthcare system. She is an inspiration in public service as she continues to make a difference and build a healthier and more resilient society for all.

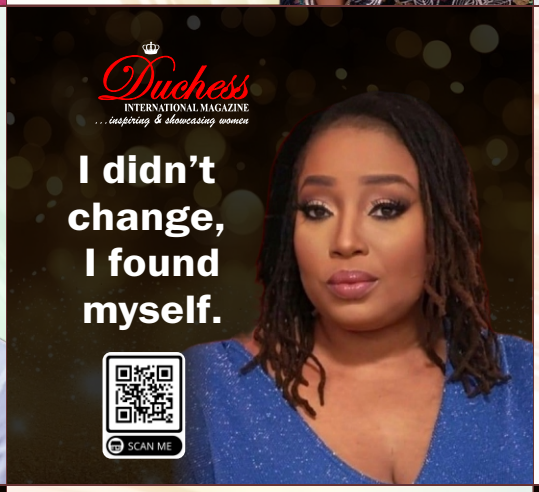
MAGNIFICENT WOMAN'S GALLERY



















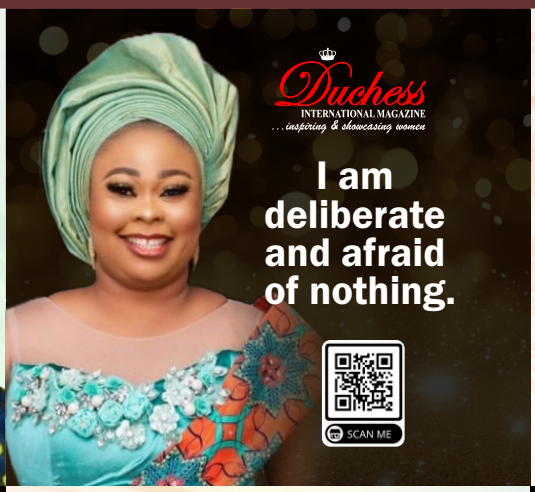






MAGNIFICENT WOMAN'S GALLERY





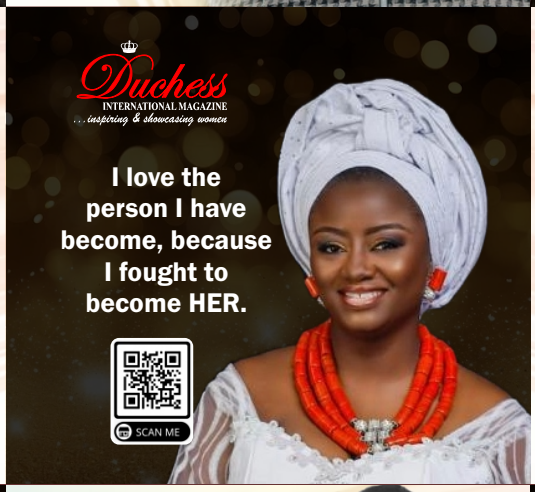








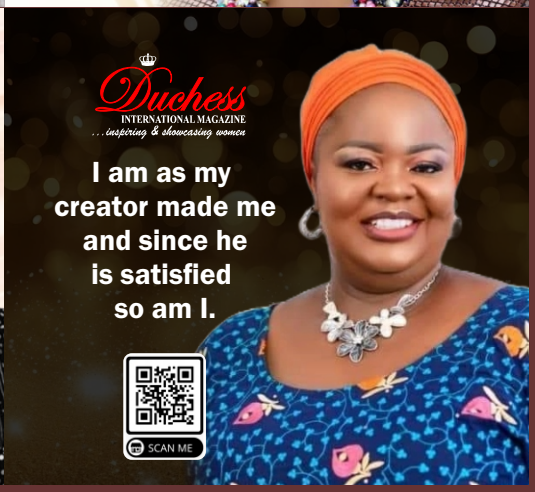












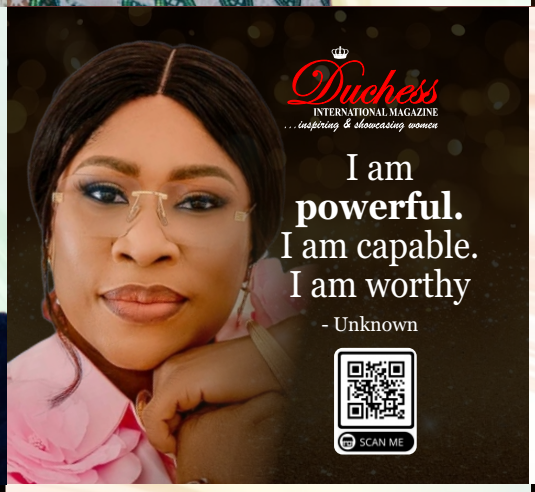
Magnificent Woman's Gallery











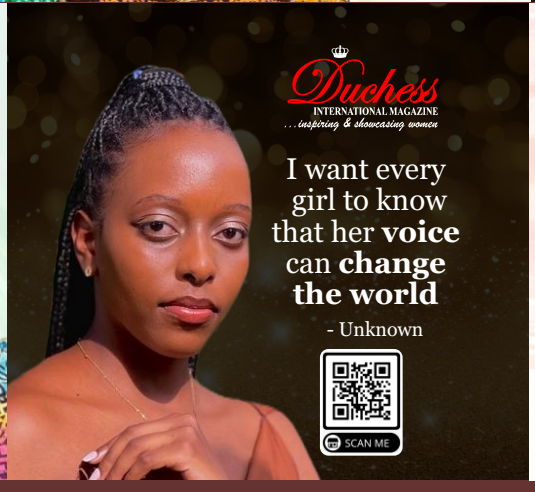














Magnificent Woman's Gallery







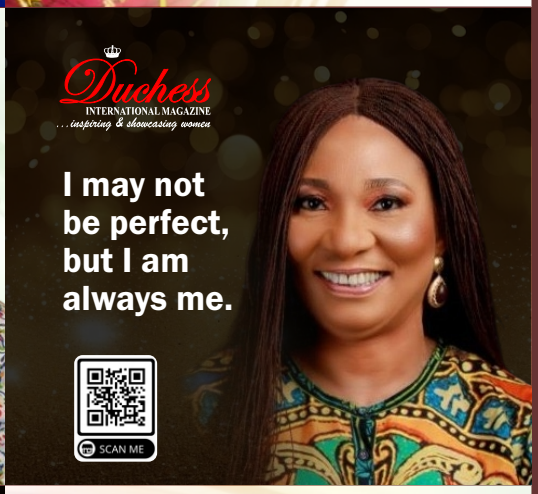




















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THE EVOLUTION OF AFRICAN WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES:

CHALLENGES, PROGRESS AND OPPORTUNITIES





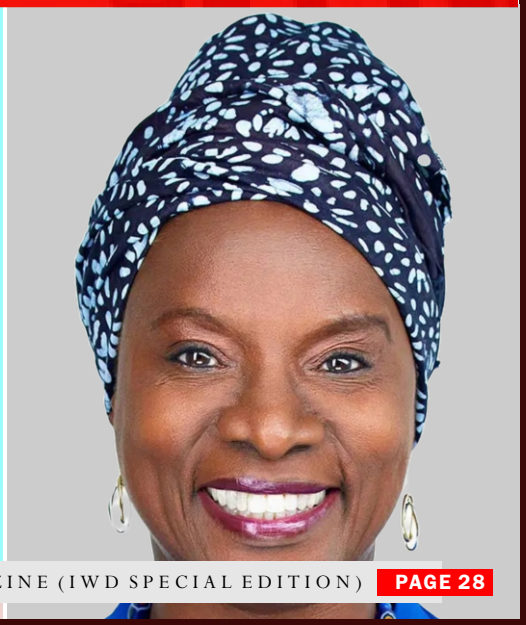


Women in leadership encounter significant challenges, frequently relegated to domestic roles and forfeiting other career aspirations. Deep-rooted attitudes and beliefs that women are inferior to men persist in many cultures. The burden of managing both professional and domestic responsibilities puts women at a disadvantage compared to their male counterparts.

Cultural stereotypes, deeply entrenched in today's society, hinder gender equality in politics. Religion and patriarchal norms reinforce this divide, making it arduous for women to ascend to influential governmental roles. Despite calls for change from every quarters, societal barriers persist, impeding women's advancement in leadership. Overcoming these challenges requires concerted efforts to challenge stereotypes, dismantle patriarchal structures, and promote inclusive policies that empower women in governance.













Nevertheless, African women have shattered barriers, ascending to prominent roles within organizations like the World Trade Organization (WTO), African Union (AU), and various United Nations (UN) entities. These achievements underscore the increasing influence and effectiveness of African women in shaping global discourse and policy.

Women in professional environments often face more scrutiny than men. Globally, women only make up 25.7% of parliamentary positions. Women in Africa occupy about 24 percent of parliamentary seats, which is not too far off. But here's the catch - most of these women are concentrated in just two subregions: Southern Africa and East Africa.

Recent years have witnessed remarkable strides in countries such as Liberia, Rwanda, and South Africa, where women have assumed key leadership positions. Across Africa, women are making impactful contributions to critical issues including peace, climate change and technology.







PROGRESS IN AFRICA

So, while there is still work to be done, African women are making strides in leadership. Globally, women only make up 25.7 percent of parliamentary positions. That's not a lot, right? Well, in Africa, it's pretty close to the average. Women in Africa occupy about 24 percent of parliamentary seats, which is not too far off. But here's the catch - most of these women are concentrated in just two subregions: Southern Africa and East Africa. These two subregions have higher rates of women's representation, with 31 percent and 32.4 percent respectively. The other three subregions fall behind by more than 10 percentage points. So, while some African countries have made progress, most still have a long way to go to reach the goal of 50 percent women's representation set by the African Union Agenda 2063.

Africa is actually a global leader when it comes to women's public leadership. Five African countries are among the top 20 nations for women's parliamentary representation. And guess what? Rwanda is leading the world with an impressive 60 percent of women in parliament. That's amazing, right? Not only that, four African countries have over 45 percent women's representation in cabinets, putting them in the top 20 globally. So, African women are definitely making their mark in politics.

But it doesn't stop there. African women are not just leading in national institutions, they are also taking on leadership positions in international organizations like the World Trade Organization, African Union, and United Nations. They are making a difference in important issues like peace and security, gender justice, climate change, and technology and economic development. African women are stepping up and making their voices heard on a global scale.

In Southern Africa, the proportion of women in parliament is higher than the African average. Three countries in this region even selected female deputy speakers in the past decade. Mozambique appointed a woman prime minister, and Zimbabwe and South Africa named



women deputy presidents. Liberia had made history by electing Africa's first female leader, Ms. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf served as the President of Liberia from January 2006 to January 2018. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila has been the Prime Minister of Namibia since March 2015. Luísa Dias Diogo served as the Prime Minister of Mozambique from August 2004 to January 2010. Sahle-Work Zewde has been the President of Ethiopia since October 2018. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim served as the President of Mauritius from June 2015 to March 2018. Catherine Samba-Panza was the President of the Central African Republic from January 2014 to March 2016.

Joyce Hilda Banda served as the President of Malawi from April 2012 to May 2014. Maria das Neves Ceita Baptista de Sousa was the Prime Minister of São Tomé and Príncipe from October 2002 to September 2004. Mame Madior Boye served as the Prime Minister of Senegal from March 2001 to November 2002. Prime Minister Rose Christiane Ossouka Raponda, Gabon, July 2020 – present. Rose Christiane Ossouka Raponda has been the Prime Minister of Gabon since July 2020. Victoire Sidémého Dzidudu Dogbé Tomegah has been the Prime Minister of Togo since September 2020. Elizabeth Domitien was the Prime Minister of the Central African Republic from January 1975 to April 1976. Cissé Mariam Kaïdama Sidibé served as the Prime Minister of Mali from April 2011 to March 2012. Samia Suluhu Hassan has been the President of Tanzania since March 2021. Aminata Touré served as the Prime Minister of Senegal from September 2013 to July 2014. Maria do Carmo Trovoada Pires de Carvalho Silveira was the Prime Minister of São Tomé and Príncipe from June 2005 to April 2006. Agathe Uwilingiyimana was the Prime Minister of Rwanda from July 1993 to April 1994. She later became the President from October 1993 to February 1994. Robinah Nabbanja has been the Prime Minister of Uganda since June 2021. Sylvie Kinigi served as the Prime Minister of Burundi from July 1993 to October 1993. She later became the President from October 1993 to February 1994. Agnès Monique Ohsan Bellepeau was the President of Mauritius from March 2012 to July 2012 and again from May 2015 to June 2015. Najla Bouden Romdhane has been the Prime Minister of Tunisia since October 2021. Rose Francine Rogombé served...

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AFRICA'S POWERFUL WOMEN LEADERS

African women have played crucial roles as leaders, priestesses, traders, cultivators, oracles, wives, and mothers. Some of these remarkable women have been celebrated for their political skills and social vision. While their stories are often passed down through oral histories and artworks, documents from the turbulent years following Africa's contact with Europe also shed light on their achievements.

Women in Politics

In the past, women were not allowed to vote or run for political offices. However, over the years, the inclusion, representation, and participation of women in national politics have increased. The first woman who was not from a monarchy to get involved in national politics was Sirimavo Bandaranaike, who became the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka in 1960. Since then, the number of women leaders in Africa has grown significantly.

The representation of women in politics in Africa has gradually increased, with women's representation in politics rising by fivefold to 22% between 1980 and 2015.

NOTABLE AFRICAN WOMEN LEADERS

ELISABETH DOMITIEN



Elisabeth Domitien, born around 1925, became the first Female Prime Minister in Sub-Saharan Africa, when she was appointed by President of Central African Republic, Jean-Bédel Bokassa.

MAME MADIOR BOYE



Mame Madior Boye, was born in 1940 in Saint-Louis, Senegal and in 2001, she made history as the first female prime minister of Senegal, serving until 2002. She was also the first female president of the FAL (Federation of African Lawyers).

AGATHE UWILINGIYIMA



Agathe Uwilingiyima, the first and only female Prime Minister of Rwanda, was born in 1953 to Juvénal Ntibashirakandi and Xaverine Nyirantibangwe. She excelled in her studies and became a prominent figure in Rwandan politics.

CARMEN MARIA DE ARAÚJO PEREIRA



Carmen Maria de Araújo Pereira, a revolutionary leader, was born on 22 September 1936, was a Bissau-Guinean politician who made history as the first woman to serve as Acting President in Africa. She only held this position for three days in 1984, but her impact was significant. Pereira passed away on 4 June 2016 in Bissau.

MARIA DAS NEVES



Maria das Neves made history as the first African woman to lead a government. Born in 1958, she served from 2002 to 2004 as the Prime Minister of São Tomé and Príncipe, breaking barriers as the first female to hold this position. She also held other key government roles, including Minister of Economics, Finance, and Trade, Industry, and Tourism.

JOYCE HILDA BANDA



Joyce Hilda Banda became the President of Malawi after the passing of the previous President. She was also the country's first female Vice President and was recognized as one of the most powerful women in Africa.

ROSE FRANCINE ROGOMBE



Rose Francine Rogombe became the interim President of Gabon in a time of transition. She stepped up to lead the country and showed her commitment to serving her people.

On February 16, 2009, she was elected as President of the Senate with the support of 90 out of 99 Senators.

As President of the Senate, Rogombé was next in line to become President of Gabon in case of a vacancy. After President Omar Bongo's passing in June 2009, she was sworn in as interim President.

SAHLE-WORK ZEWDE



Sahle-Work Zewde is the first elected female President of Ethiopia, though the role is ceremonial. She took office after being unanimously elected by members of the National Parliamentary Assembly in October 2018.

In 2019, she was named among the Inaugural List of 100 Most Influential African Women by Avance Media. Zewde is a trailblazer and an inspiration to women everywhere!

SAMIA SULUHU HASSA



N, PRESIDENT OF TANZANIA

Samia Suluhu Hassan became the first acting female President of Tanzania after the sudden passing of the former President. She was sworn into office and continues to lead the country.

In 2015, Hassan was selected as the running mate of Chama Cha Mapinduzi's (CCM) presidential candidate John Magufuli. They won the election, and she became the first woman to hold the position of vice president in Tanzania. After the death of President Magufuli in 2021, Samia Suluhu Hassan was sworn in as the president of Tanzania.

AMEENAH GURIB-FAKIM



Ameenah Gurib-Fakim became the first female President of Mauritius. Her election was a historic moment for the country, and she served with grace and dedication.

Ameenah Gurib-Fakim made history as the 6th and First Female President of the Republic of Mauritius from 2015 to 2018.

SLYVIE KININGI



Slyvie Kiningi was the first female President in Africa. She served as the acting President of Burundi after the incumbent President was tragically shot. Kiningi stepped up to lead the country during a challenging time.

Sylvie Kinigi was born around 1952 in Burundi. She went to the University of Burundi to study economics.

ELLEN JOHNSON SIRLEAF



Ellen Johnson Sirleaf made history as Africa's first elected female President. She served two consecutive terms and was also elected Chair of the Economic Community of West African States.

In 2005, she ran for president and won, becoming known as the "Iron Lady" for her strong leadership.

CATHERINE SAMBA



Catherine SAMBA-PANZA is not just any former woman president. She is a company lawyer, human rights activist, and a fierce advocate for women's rights. Throughout her career, she has been actively involved in promoting women's empowerment and fighting for gender equality.

In May 2013, she made history by becoming the Mayor of the city of Bangui. And just a few months later, in January 2014, she was elected as the Head of State for the Transition of the Central African Republic. During her time in office, she successfully led the country through a period of transition, culminating in free and fair elections in 2015 and 2016.

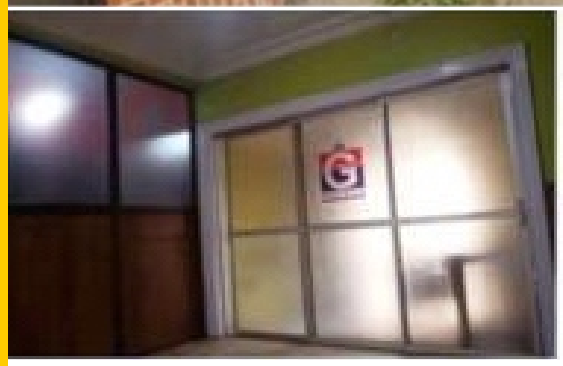
IVY MATSEPE-CASSABURI



Ivy Matsepe-Cassaburi also made history as an acting President of South Africa. She took on the role temporarily and showed her strength and dedication to serving her country. She was South Africa's Minister of Communications.

These African women leaders stand on the shoulders of many female giants who came before them. From the Dahomey Amazons of Benin to modern-day female military and law enforcement personnel, these women political leaders too, have paved the way for future generations of African leaders.







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KAFILAT ARAOYE:

THE ARCHITECT OF CHANGE TRANSFORMING THE FACE OF NIGERIAN BANKING SYSTEM

With a remarkable career spanning over three decades, Kafilat Araoye, an embodiment of knowledge, leadership, and innovation has not only navigated the intricacies of the banking sector but has also become a stalwart in shaping its future. Beyond her professional pursuits, Kafilat's influence extends to education and community service, making her a well-rounded personality worthy of admiration.

Kafilat's journey began at the prestigious University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University, where she earned her first degree in History in 1985. However, it was her pursuit of an M.Sc. in Industrial Relations & Personnel Management from the University of Lagos in 1987 that set the stage for her illustrious career. Graduating as the top student in her class foreshadowed the remarkable achievements that would follow.

Her commitment to continuous learning is evident in her numerous certifications in Islamic Finance from renowned institutions such as the





Ethica Institute of Islamic Finance and the Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment/Bahrain Institute of Banking & Finance. Kafilat has also honed her skills through executive management courses at globally acclaimed institutions, including Cranfield School of Management (UK), Lagos Business School, Institute of Management Development (Switzerland), and INSEAD (France). Her global perspective was further enriched by specialized banking courses and conferences in the USA and South Africa.

Kafilat Araoye's entry into the professional arena came in 1988 at the National Oil and Chemicals Marketing Company Plc, later known as Conoil Nigeria Plc. Her journey reached new heights in 1990 when she joined Guaranty Trust Bank Plc, becoming the pioneer Head of Human Resources. Her impactful tenure included international assignments, such as the implementation of core banking applications in Jordan. She left GTBank in 2015 with the distinguished title of General Manager, but her influence continued to reverberate through her consulting ventures until 2018.

In 2018, Kafilat accepted the mantle of Managing Director Designate for LOTUS Bank, contributing her wealth of experience to a financial institution in formation. With a career spanning over 25 years, Kafilat's expertise covers every facet of core banking, with a focus on international and domestic operations, payments, general management, business development, risk management, human resources, and strategy.

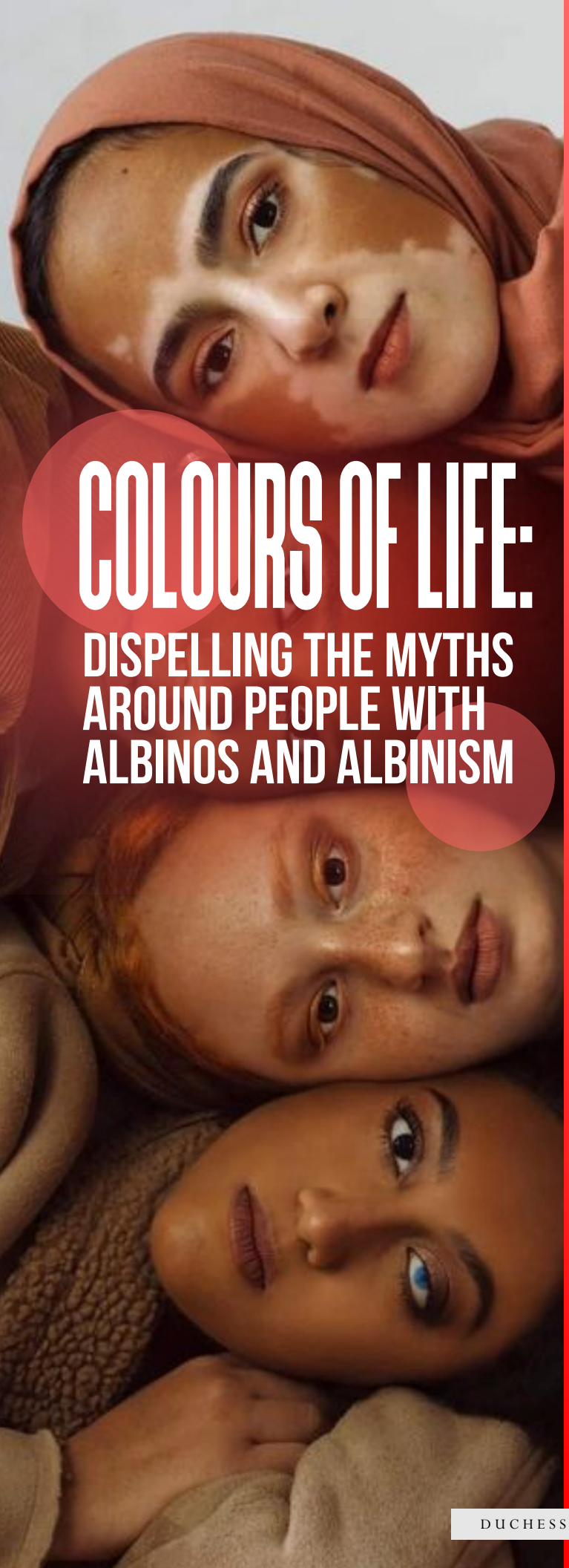
Kafilat's impact extends beyond boardrooms and financial institutions. She has served on the Governing Boards of various educational institutions, including Fountain University Oshogbo. Currently, she is a board member of Crescent Schools in Victoria Island and the City of Knowledge Academy.

Kafilat's influence isn't confined to the borders of Nigeria. She has actively participated in Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Implementation Committees, contributing to settlement and payment solutions from 2002 to 2007. Internationally, she represented Nigeria at the Banking Techniques and Practice Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce from 2006 to 2011.

Her commitment to professional development is underscored by her membership in the Chartered Institute of Bankers Committee on Capacity Building and Certification from 2014 to 2020. Currently, she serves as a member of the Advocacy & Strategy Committee of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria.

With the power of her wide knowledge, perseverance, and community engagement, Kafilat Araoye has etched her name in gold, in the banking sector, coupled with her commitment to education and community development, she is positioned as a role model for aspiring professionals.





COLOURS OF LIFE:

DISPELLING THE MYTHS AROUND PEOPLE WITH ALBINOS AND ALBINISM

There are many myths and stereotypes around people with albinism. On the African continent and in some other parts of the world, some people with albinism are stigmatized or shunned. The surrounding myths and superstitions are intense and deeply entrenched. The main one is that their body parts possess magical powers capable of bringing riches, power, success, intelligence, or sexual conquest. As a result, many are hunted and killed or dismembered. We need to address the medical and genetic causes of albinism, and to get the facts out about the abilities and inabilities of people with albinism. It is also important to examine where and how these myths originated, and why they are so widespread. The aim is however not to ridicule anyone's beliefs, but rather to help people make more informed decisions. We believe that the facts speak for themselves.

One of the most chilling myths surrounding albinos is the belief that their body parts possess magical powers capable of bringing riches, power, success, intelligence, or even sexual conquest. This belief has fueled a horrific trade in body parts, leading to the hunting and killing of albinos in several African countries. In Tanzania, for instance, reports have surfaced of people with albinism being attacked, unalived, and dismembered, their body parts sold to witch doctors for use in rituals believed to bring good fortune.

The origins of these myths are complex and multifaceted. Some trace them back to traditional African folklore, where albinos were often regarded as harbingers of bad luck or even as ghosts. The lack of understanding about the medical and genetic causes of albinism has further perpetuated these misconceptions.

Albinism is a genetic condition characterized by a lack of melanin - the pigment that gives color to hair, skin, and eyes. It is caused by a genetic mutation that affects melanin production, resulting in a lack of pigment in the skin, hair, and eyes. People with albinism have lighter skin, hair, and eyes than the rest of the population. It requires both parents to carry it and it is not contagious. Contrary to the myths, people with albinism do not possess any magical powers or abilities.

Another common misconception is that individuals with albinism



have poor eyesight or are mentally impaired. While it is true that some individuals with albinism may experience vision difficulties, it is important to note that this is not a characteristic that applies to all individuals with the condition.

Education and awareness are crucial in dispelling these myths and combating the discrimination faced by individuals with albinism. Organizations like the Under the Same Sun foundation and the Albinism Foundation in Nigeria are working tirelessly to raise awareness about albinism and advocate for the rights of people with albinism. Their efforts are crucial in challenging the deeply entrenched beliefs that perpetuate violence and discrimination against albinos.

It is important to challenge the myths and stereotypes surrounding albinism and to promote inclusion and acceptance of people with the condition. This can be done through education and awareness-raising campaigns that highlight the abilities and achievements of people with albinism. By challenging these myths, we can create a more inclusive and accepting society for all.

It is essential to recognize that people with albinism are just like everyone else, with their own unique talents, abilities, and contributions to society.

Albinism affects people globally, regardless of gender, race, or ethnicity. Using the term "person with albinism" is preferred over "albino." Unfortunately, reports have it that, in Malawi, individuals with albinism are still facing the horrifying reality of being targeted and killed for their body parts, with almost 140,000 people in the country living with albinism, and 85% of them in poor rural areas.

Peter Kalaya, national spokesperson for Malawi Police Service said, the police are, however, working with various interventions to end the attacks, including a program that empowers members of the community to detect and report suspected incidents aimed at people with albinism.

NIGERIAN ENVOY, AMINA SMAILA:

FIRST AFRICAN DIPLOMAT HONORED BY U.S CONGRESS

Nigeria's Consul-General in Atlanta, Georgia, Amina Smaila, made history as the first African diplomat to be honored by the U.S Congress. The House of Representatives of the State of Georgia recognized and commended Smaila, marking a significant milestone in its 247-year history.

Smaila, known for her exceptional service and deep concern for her fellow citizens, has had an illustrious career in the Nigerian foreign service, spanning over two decades. Her recognition by the Georgia House of Representatives underscores her outstanding and intelligent public service.

The recognition came through Resolution 647, moved by Rep. Okoye of the 102nd district, who praised Smaila for her efficient, effective, unselfish, and dedicated public service. The resolution also extended the most sincere best wishes for her continued health and happiness.

The recognition ceremony, held in the parliament, was attended by Amb. Smaila and all Nigerian-American State Representatives, highlighting the significance of her achievement and the respect she commands in diplomatic circles.

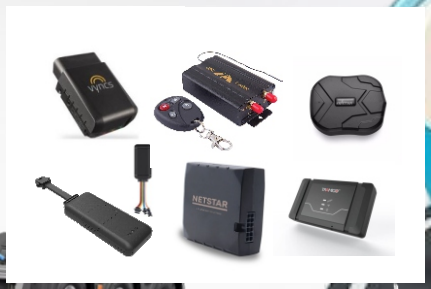


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