# Duchess

**INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE**

*. . . inspiring & showcasing women*



## DUCHESS INT'L MAGAZINE

# Leadership Summit 2026

WHERE **HERITAGE** INSPIRES VISION, PURPOSE DRIVES **LEADERSHIP,** AND **LEGACY** BEGINS TO TAKE SHAPE

**Honouring Our Communities:**
The Audacity to Lead - Redefining Power, Purpose and Legacy

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# PUBLISHER'S MESSAGE

## HONOURING THE JOURNEY, SHAPING THE FUTURE

It is a great honour to welcome you to the inaugural Duchess International Magazine Leadership Summit. As I reflect on this significant milestone, I am filled with gratitude for the journey that has brought us here. More than 12 years ago, a vision was born from lived experience in the United Kingdom and a commitment to creating meaningful and lasting impact. What began with a desire to make a difference has continued to evolve into platforms that empower people, strengthen communities and create opportunities for connection, leadership and positive change.

Our journey began with a strong commitment to empowering women, but our vision has continued to grow. We have come to understand that meaningful impact cannot be limited to one gender or one group. Our goal is not only to empower women, but also to extend our impact to African men, young people, families and communities across the diaspora, while creating opportunities for people from different backgrounds to come together. This summit is a reflection of that growth. What we are witnessing today is a vision that has expanded beyond its original boundaries into a broader conversation about leadership, community, purpose and legacy.

Through the Duchess Africa Empowerment Foundation and the Africa Community in Surrey & Sussex (ACISS), we have continued to translate this vision into action. These initiatives have created opportunities for empowerment, community engagement, cultural connection and development, reinforcing my belief that stronger communities are built when people are given the opportunity to participate, contribute and support one another. To see this vision represented in a gathering that brings together such diverse voices is, for me, a testimony of impact.

I am particularly proud that this inaugural summit brings together women and men, people from different generations and backgrounds, and members of the African diaspora. While our work is deeply rooted in the African and Black experience, we believe that meaningful conversations about leadership should create room for everyone. Our differences give us an opportunity to learn from one another, broaden our perspectives and build meaningful relationships. When people from different experiences come together around a shared commitment to positive change, the possibilities for impact become even greater.

Our theme, "Honouring Our Communities: The Audacity to Lead — Redefining Power, Purpose and Legacy," carries special significance as we mark Black History Month. We honour the exceptional Black men and women who came before us, whose courage, intelligence, resilience, sacrifice and hard work helped shape the opportunities available to us today. Many of them worked without knowing how far their efforts would reach, yet they continued to build, serve and create change. We are beneficiaries of their courage, and their legacy reminds us that what we do today can become the foundation upon which others build tomorrow.

It is in this spirit that we have created this summit. It is a space to connect, exchange ideas, recognise achievement and reflect on the kind of leadership our communities need. More importantly, it is an invitation to move from intention to action. Each of us has a sphere of influence, whether through our profession, business, community, family or personal relationships, and each of us has the capacity to use that influence to make a positive difference.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the University of Brighton for giving us the opportunity to use this wonderful venue and for providing the setting for this inaugural gathering. I am sincerely grateful to Lara Perry, Deputy Executive Dean, College of Creativity, Technology and Society, University of Brighton, for her support and encouragement, and for being part of this important occasion.

To our speakers, panelists and awardees, thank you for bringing your knowledge, experience and achievements to this summit. Your voices, insights and stories have enriched this gathering and reminded us that leadership takes many forms. I also extend my sincere gratitude to our supporters and sponsors, whose belief in this vision and willingness to support its growth have helped make this occasion possible.

To all our delegates, thank you for choosing to be part of this historic first edition. Your presence is more than attendance; it is a demonstration of your willingness to engage, connect and contribute to a conversation that matters. I hope you leave this summit inspired by the people you have met, the ideas you have encountered and, most importantly, encouraged to translate those ideas into meaningful action.

As I look at this gathering, I see more than the culmination of years of work. I see the continuation of a vision that has grown, expanded and found new expression. From a lived experience more than 12 years ago to this moment today, the journey has shown us that when purpose is nurtured with commitment, its impact can travel far beyond where it began.

May we continue to honour those who came before us by leading with courage, serving with integrity and building with purpose. May we create opportunities that extend beyond ourselves, strengthen the communities around us and open doors for those who will come after us.

The journey has brought us here. The vision continues to grow. And the legacy we build begins with what we choose to do today.



**Abolaji Odunuga**
**Publisher & Convener**
**Duchess International Magazine Leadership Summ t**

# EDITORIAL

## BEFORE THE APPLAUSE: WHAT ARE WE CHOOSING TO BUILD?

Meaningful leadership begins long before the applause. It begins with understanding why we step forward, who we are responsible to and what we intend to leave better than we found it. This edition invites us into a conversation about leadership, community, identity, purpose and legacy, each offering a different perspective on what it means to make an impact and, more importantly, to be accountable for that impact. As we open these pages, it feels fitting to begin with the question at the heart of this edition: where does leadership really begin?

Leadership does not always begin in the same way. For some, it is something they actively seek, willingly stepping into positions of responsibility. For others, it arrives unexpectedly, placing them in decisions they never anticipated and requiring them to carry people along. However we arrive at leadership, it is not the title that defines the role, but the responsibility that comes with it. What we do can shape the people around us, influence the spaces we occupy and affect what becomes possible for those who come after us.

That responsibility is also shaped by community. None of us arrives where we are alone. We are shaped by the people who raised us, the communities that formed us and those who came before us. We inherit stories, values, sacrifices, opportunities and unfinished work. To honour our communities is not simply to celebrate where we come from. It is to recognise what has been entrusted to us and decide what we will do with it. What deserves to be carried forward? What needs to change? What can we build that someone else will one day inherit from us?

Those questions sit at the heart of this year's Duchess International Magazine Leadership Summit, "Honouring Our Communities: The Audacity to Lead - Redefining Power, Purpose and Legacy." The theme invites us to look beyond leadership as position or recognition and towards the purpose behind our actions, the people connected to our work and the legacy taking shape through our decisions. That purpose can be seen in the person who found their voice because someone gave them an opportunity, the community that became stronger because someone chose to invest in it, or the door that remained open because someone decided not to close it behind them. The Summit will bring these questions into a shared space, but the answers will ultimately be found in what we choose to do beyond it.

As this edition opens, I am grateful to everyone whose dedication, collaboration, contribution and support have helped bring these pages and the Summit to life, including our Editorial and Graphics Teams, the University of Brighton, our contributors, partners, speakers, panellists, awardees and delegates. Above all, I acknowledge our Convener, Duchess Abolaji Odunuga, whose vision and leadership continue to give this platform its purpose and direction. And to you, our reader, thank you for opening these pages with us. I invite you to read not only for what these stories say about leadership, but for what they ask of each of us. Before the applause, before the recognition and before the legacy is written, what are we choosing to build?



**Ayomide Sunmola**
Head of Editorial Unit
Duchess International Magazine

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# DUCHESS INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE. LEADERSHIP SUMMIT 2026

14–16 OCTOBER 2026 | UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON, UNITED KINGDOM

# SUMMIT PROGRAMME

| Date | Activity | Venue | Time |
|---|---|---|---|
| 14 Oct | Arrival, Registration & Meet and Greet | University of Brighton/ Designated Venue | Arrival & Evening |
| 15 Oct | Discover the UK: Cultural & Sightseeing Experience | Selected UK Locations | Day Programme |
| 16 Oct | Duchess International Magazine Leadership Summit | ASA Briggs, University Of Brighton, United Kingdom | 9:00am – 4:00pm |
| 16 Oct | Leadership Excellence Awards Night | Cockcroft G50, University Of Brighton, United Kingdom | 7:00pm – 12:00am |

## SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS

9:00am - Registration & Arrival
10:00am - Opening Ceremony
10:30am - Opening Leadership Conversation
11:15am - Leadership Perspectives & Conversations
12:15pm - Interactive Panel Discussion
1:15pm - Networking Lunch
2:00pm - Leadership Exchange & Audience Engagement
3:00pm - Mentorship & Knowledge Exchange
3:45pm - Closing Reflections
4:00pm - End of Summit

**LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARDS NIGHT**
16 October 2026 | 7:00pm–12:00am

An evening celebrating leadership, excellence, impact and legacy.

# DUCHESS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CONFERENCE 2025: REVISITING THE SENEGAL CHAPTER

Every journey leaves behind moments that shape what comes next. In April 2025, the Duchess International Women's Day Conference took the Duchess experience to Dakar, Senegal, under the theme "Empowering Women: A Conference for Change." Held from 23 to 26 April, the four-day programme brought delegates together for connection, culture, conversation and celebration, creating an experience that extended well beyond the conference itself.

The Senegal programme opened on 23 April with Registration and Meet & Greet, setting the tone for days of interaction and connection. On 24 April, delegates took part in a Tree Planting activity, followed by Sightseeing on 25 April. The experience culminated on 26 April with the Conference and Awards, bringing together the formal programme and the relationships, conversations and shared experiences that had developed throughout the week.

Beyond the scheduled activities were the moments that gave the Senegal experience its character: greetings exchanged, conversations shared, laughter, new places discovered and people brought together. The photographs from Dakar capture these moments, offering a glimpse into a chapter defined not only by what happened on stage, but also by what happened between people.

Senegal reflected an approach to gathering that values the experience around the main event as much as the event itself. The programme created space to connect with people, experience a different culture, engage in meaningful conversations, celebrate achievement and contribute to something lasting through the tree planting activity. Each element became part of a wider experience shaped by community and shared purpose.

The journey was expected to continue in Cairo, Egypt, in 2026, with the next Duchess International Women's Day Conference planned for the Egyptian capital. As preparations progressed, however, the prevailing regional security situation raised concerns about the safety and wellbeing of organisers and delegates. The decision was therefore taken to postpone the Cairo edition, prioritising the safety of everyone involved.

The postponement created an opportunity to reflect on the direction of the journey and the possibilities for what could come next. The experiences of previous editions had demonstrated the value of bringing people together, but they also opened the door to a



broader conversation about leadership, responsibility, purpose and legacy. That reflection contributed to the development of the Duchess International Magazine Leadership Summit 2026, in collaboration with the University of Brighton.

While the Summit represents a new direction, its foundations can be traced through the experiences that came before it. Senegal remains an important part of that story: a chapter centred on empowerment, connection and shared experience, and one that helped create the foundation for the conversations now taking place around leadership, purpose and legacy.

Looking back at Dakar is therefore not simply an exercise in remembering an event. It is an opportunity to recognise the people, experiences and values that have shaped the Duchess journey so far. The photographs preserve the moments, the memories preserve the experience, and the journey continues with the lessons of each chapter carried forward.























# The VOICES BEHIND THE SUMMIT



Karen Dobres is a writer, author and gender equality advocate recognised for her work advancing inclusion and representation in football. As a former Director of Lewes FC, she helped champion the pioneering Equality FC initiative, positioning the club as a leading voice for equitable treatment in sport. Through her writing, public speaking and acclaimed book Pitch Invasion, Karen continues to inspire conversations around leadership, visibility and the courage to challenge established norms.

## Karen Dobres

Akila Monika Richards is an award-winning writer, poet, spoken-word artist and Founder of The Rest Experience CIC. Through her work, she brings together creativity, wellbeing and community engagement, encouraging individuals and communities to embrace rest as a tool for healing, reflection and transformation. Her creative practice spans writing, performance and facilitation, creating spaces where meaningful dialogue, connection and personal growth can flourish.



## Akila Monica Richards



Praise Agomuonso is a legal researcher and PhD candidate at the University of Salford whose work focuses on immigration law, inclusion and social justice. Through her research and public engagement, she explores the relationship between law, identity and opportunity, bringing thoughtful insight to conversations on leadership and community development. Her work reflects a commitment to understanding how institutions and policies shape people's lives and experiences.

## Praise Agomuonso

Professor Abubakar Olanrewaju Sulaiman is a distinguished scholar, public servant and Director-General of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), Nigeria. With more than three decades of experience in academia, governance and public policy, he has contributed significantly to democratic development and institutional strengthening. A former Minister of National Planning and accomplished author, he remains a respected voice in legislative education, leadership development and public service excellence.



## Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman



Hon. Barr. Sa'adat Yunusa Mohammed is a Nigerian lawyer, public policy professional and social development advocate with experience spanning law, governance, poverty reduction and emerging technology. Called to the Nigerian Bar in 2010, she holds an LLM from the University of East London and has undertaken executive education with Harvard Law School and Yale. She currently serves as Special Adviser on Poverty Reduction to the Governor of Sokoto State and is the Founder and CEO of Saar Mata Foundation, while pursuing doctoral research at the intersection of AI, financing, sustainable investment and legal reform.

## Hon. Barr. Sa'adat Yunusa Mohammed



Dr Jess Moriarty is a Principal Lecturer in Creative Writing at the University of Brighton and Co-director of the Centre for Arts and Wellbeing. An accomplished researcher, editor and creative practitioner, her work explores creativity, community engagement and social change. Through her teaching, research and publications, she champions the use of writing as a powerful tool for confidence-building, connection and meaningful dialogue across diverse communities.

## Dr Jess Moriarty



Tony Kalume is a cultural practitioner, curator, educator and community leader dedicated to preserving heritage and amplifying underrepresented voices. As Director of Culture Connect Project CIC and Chair of Diversity Lewes, he has spent decades fostering inclusion through culture, education and community engagement. His work across heritage, broadcasting and public programmes continues to demonstrate the power of culture to inspire dialogue, strengthen communities and drive positive social change.

## Tony Kalume



Dr. Safiya Stephanie Musa is a Nigerian banking professional and social entrepreneur with nearly 20 years of experience, including as FirstBank's Chief Representative Officer in Abu Dhabi. Currently an Executive Director at Zaihar Healthcare, she is also a philanthropist and founder of the EduShine Support Foundation and the Amazons for Change and Empowerment Initiative, while serving as Regional President for Northern Nigeria at the African Women Leaders Organisation.

## Dr. Safiya Stephanie Musa



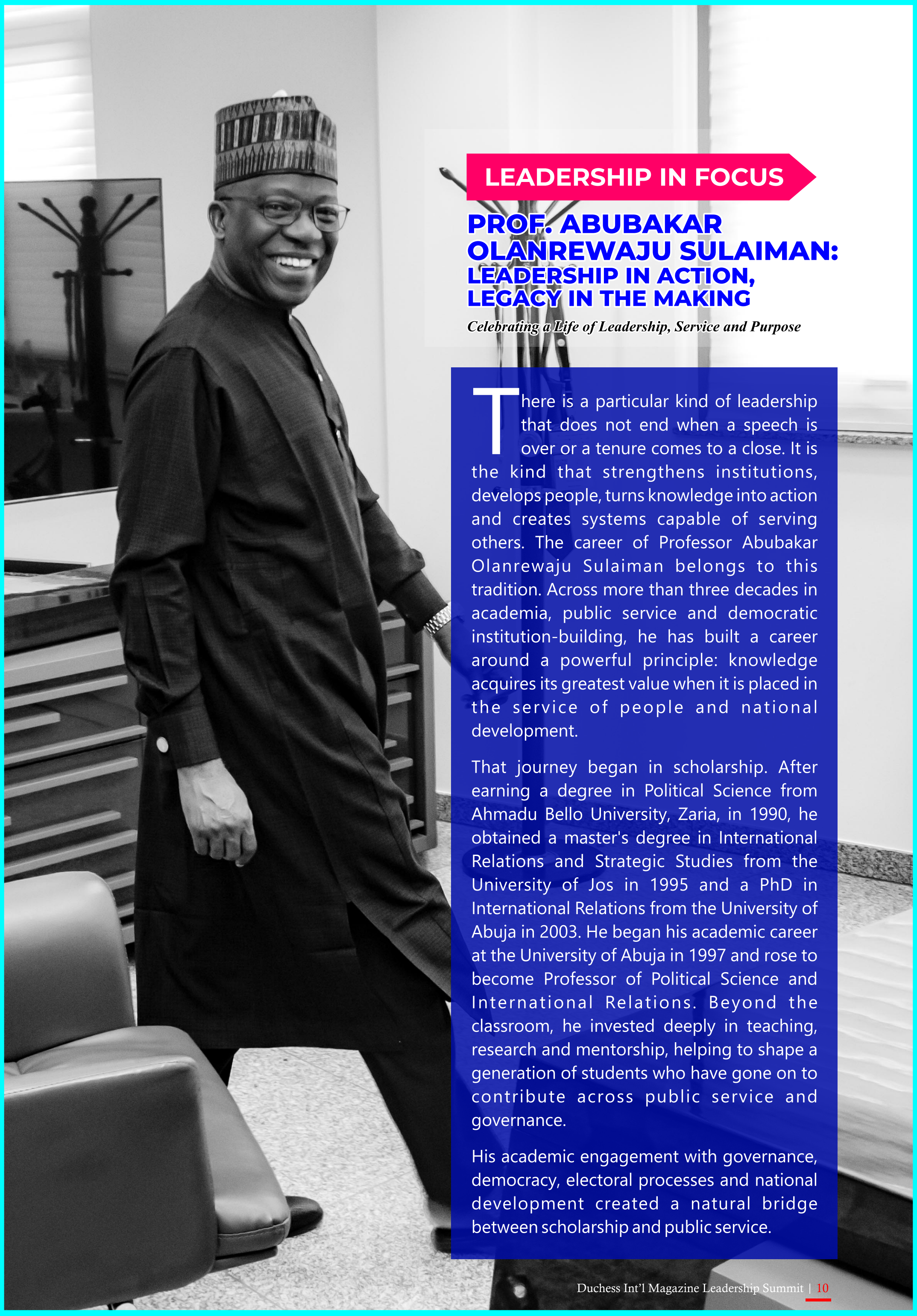
Hon. Abisola Ann Munis is a Nigerian public sector administrator with over 15 years of experience spanning public relations, protocol, event management, stakeholder engagement and legislative administration. She currently serves as Special Assistant on Public Hearing and Event Management to the President of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, following roles with the Lagos State House of Assembly and its Service Commission. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science from Olabisi Onabanjo University and has undertaken executive development programmes with the University of Cambridge and the University of North America.

## Hon. Abisola Ann Munis



Valdirene Amaral is a Brazilian-born transformational coach, facilitator and speaker whose work explores identity, belonging and embodied leadership. Drawing from her Indigenous, African and Portuguese heritage, as well as her experience living across four countries, she brings a unique multicultural perspective to personal growth and leadership. A former producer and presenter with the BBC World Service's Portuguese Service for Africa, she empowers women to lead with authenticity, courage and purpose while embracing the power of their stories, heritage and lived experiences.

## Valdirene Ruston



LEADERSHIP IN FOCUS

# PROF. ABUBAKAR OLANREWAJU SULAIMAN: LEADERSHIP IN ACTION, LEGACY IN THE MAKING

***Celebrating a Life of Leadership, Service and Purpose***

There is a particular kind of leadership that does not end when a speech is over or a tenure comes to a close. It is the kind that strengthens institutions, develops people, turns knowledge into action and creates systems capable of serving others. The career of Professor Abubakar Olanrewaju Sulaiman belongs to this tradition. Across more than three decades in academia, public service and democratic institution-building, he has built a career around a powerful principle: knowledge acquires its greatest value when it is placed in the service of people and national development.

That journey began in scholarship. After earning a degree in Political Science from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in 1990, he obtained a master's degree in International Relations and Strategic Studies from the University of Jos in 1995 and a PhD in International Relations from the University of Abuja in 2003. He began his academic career at the University of Abuja in 1997 and rose to become Professor of Political Science and International Relations. Beyond the classroom, he invested deeply in teaching, research and mentorship, helping to shape a generation of students who have gone on to contribute across public service and governance.

His academic engagement with governance, democracy, electoral processes and national development created a natural bridge between scholarship and public service.

In July 2014, Professor Sulaiman was appointed Minister of National Planning and Deputy Chairman of the National Planning Commission under the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan. His tenure placed him at the centre of national development planning, with responsibilities connected to long-term infrastructure planning and development policy. He also played a role in the 2015 transition process, bringing his experience in policy and public administration to a defining moment in Nigeria's democratic journey.

Public office gave practical expression to the value of his scholarship. It demanded more than the ability to understand complex national questions; it required judgement, responsibility and the capacity to translate ideas into action.
That blend of intellectual depth and practical leadership found a new institutional expression in 2019, when Professor Sulaiman became Director-General of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), a position he continues to hold.

At NILDS, his experience as an academic and former policymaker has converged with the responsibility of strengthening an institution dedicated to legislative learning, research and democratic capacity-building. Under his leadership, the Institute has expanded its training and academic programmes for legislators and parliamentary staff, while initiatives such as the Distinguished Parliamentarian Lecture Series, Democracy Radio 104.9 FM and the Legislative Centre for Security Analysis have broadened its platforms for knowledge, public engagement and institutional development.

Yet institution-building is ultimately about people. This has remained an important dimension of Professor Sulaiman's work, reflected in his emphasis on human capital development, professional training and exposure to international practices. His leadership at NILDS has also supported legislative diplomacy and engagements with parliamentary institutions and international partners, reinforcing the value of knowledge exchange in strengthening democratic institutions.

His professional interests extend beyond Nigeria's immediate policy environment. Over the course of his career, he has participated in international engagements involving major multilateral institutions and contributed to conversations around issues including democratic governance, security sector reform and climate change. Alongside these responsibilities, he has maintained his scholarly contribution through academic publications and six authored and co-authored books. His commitment to continuous learning is further reflected in his executive education at Harvard University, where he earned a






certificate in public leadership.

Recognition has followed a career marked by scholarship and public service. In 2023, Professor Sulaiman received a Federal Government recognition for public service, adding to a record that has placed both his academic and institutional contributions in the public spotlight. Yet recognition is only one measure of impact. The deeper measure lies in the people developed, the knowledge shared and the institutions strengthened through sustained service.

For a Summit centred on "Honouring Our Communities: The Audacity to Lead — Redefining Power, Purpose and Legacy," his journey offers a compelling reflection of leadership in practice. It demonstrates that influence carries responsibility, that expertise becomes more meaningful when it serves others, and that institutions become stronger when leaders invest in the people who sustain them.



Today, 16 October, Professor Sulaiman marks another year of a life devoted to knowledge, service and institution-building, on a day when leaders have gathered to reflect on the very ideas that have shaped his own journey: purpose, responsibility and legacy. There is a quiet symmetry in that moment. As the Summit honours leadership in action, it also provides a fitting setting to reflect on a career that has demonstrated how knowledge can be translated into service, how institutions can be strengthened through people, and how a life of purpose can leave something enduring behind.

This birthday is more than a marker of another year. On this special day, as the Leadership Summit brings together leaders to reflect on purpose, responsibility and legacy, we pause to honour his journey so far, the lives touched,

the institutions strengthened and the work that continues to unfold. Professor Sulaiman's story offers a fitting reminder that the most enduring legacies are built through knowledge shared, people developed and opportunities created for others to contribute beyond themselves. His legacy is still being written, shaped by each generation he teaches, each institution he strengthens and each possibility he creates for those who come after him.

May this new chapter bring renewed wisdom, fulfilment and purpose, and may the years ahead continue to expand the impact of a life devoted to creating lasting value.

Happy Birthday, Professor Abubakar Olanrewaju Sulaiman.

*We celebrate the life behind the leadership, the purpose behind the service and the legacy still in the making*.





# IN THEIR WORDS

## Reflections on
## Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman

### A CHAMPION FOR WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT

“Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman, Director-General of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), is one of the few Nigerian men who have consistently demonstrated a strong institutional commitment to advancing women's empowerment, political inclusion, and gender equity in Nigeria.

Under his leadership, NILDS has become a dependable institution of government which has actively partnered with civil society organizations, especially women's rights organisations; political stakeholders; and international bodies like UN Women to build capacity, host gender-focused governance conferences, and champion initiatives such as the State Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security; law reform through efforts to domesticate and implement the Maputo Protocol, among others.

By providing platforms to address the structural disparities facing female political aspirants and advocating for inclusive legislative frameworks, Professor Sulaiman has positioned himself as a champion for women's development, and the Institute as a key driver in mainstreaming women's rights and enhancing their active participation in the country's democratic process for the ultimate benefit of Nigeria.”

**Yèyé Bunmi Dipo-Salami**
Executive Director, BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights, Nigeria

### A LEGACY OF MENTORSHIP

Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman is a distinguished scholar, a great leader, a man of wisdom, humility, integrity and excellence. Your dedication to service and your positive impact on humanity continue to inspire many.

I sincerely use this medium to appreciate my amiable DG, NILDS, for the opportunity you gave me in 2015. It was a turning point in my life and has contributed greatly to my growth and development.»

Thank you, sir, for your kindness, trust, guidance and mentorship over the years. You have been a father figure and an inspiration to me and many others.

May God continue to bless you and your household and reward you abundantly. Cheers to many more opportunities and upliftment.”

**Taibat Toyin, ALARO**
Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning



# THE VISIONARY WHO BUILDS

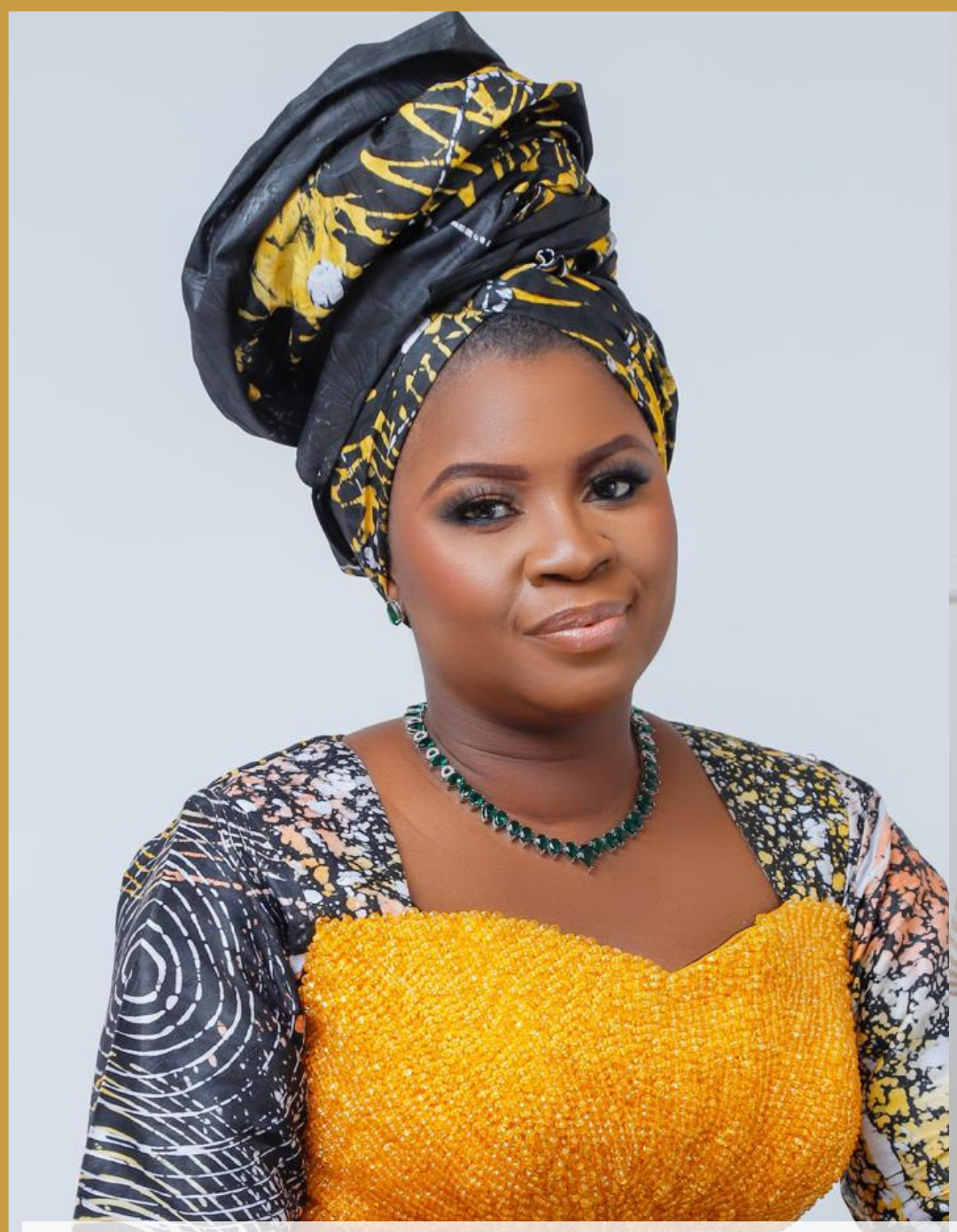
## Abolaji Odunuga: A Journey of Vision, Purpose and Legacy

Every platform we now recognise began as something someone had to build. For Abolaji Odunuga, the work has never been simply to imagine what could exist, but to accept the responsibility of bringing it into existence. It is an approach to leadership that has shaped the different chapters of her journey, influencing not only what she has pursued, but the spaces she has created for others along the way.

That instinct to build has taken many forms. In technology, it has meant understanding systems and solving problems. In media, it has meant creating platforms through which stories and perspectives can be shared. In community leadership, it has meant bringing people together and creating opportunities for participation. In research, philanthropy and service, it has meant using experience, knowledge and influence to contribute to something beyond the individual. Together, these strands have shaped Abolaji as a publisher, community advocate, technology professional, researcher and strategic leader.

Her professional journey began in information technology. Starting out as a Desktop Support Engineer, she developed an understanding of systems, problem-solving and the practical realities of supporting people through technology. She progressed into her current role as a Unit4 Customer Security Support Analyst at Surrey County Council, where she supports critical systems within social care. Her ITIL and Microsoft certifications complement a professional approach that combines technical expertise with an appreciation of the people and services behind the systems.

Her vision soon extended beyond technology. As Founder of Custodian Global Consult Ltd, Abolaji established a wider professional platform spanning media, communications, advocacy and community engagement. The company is the parent organisation of Duchess International Magazine, Duke International Magazine and Custodian News, bringing together platforms through which stories





are told, perspectives are shared and conversations that matter are given room to grow.

Duchess International Magazine became a particularly important expression of that vision. Through the magazine, Abolaji has created space for the achievements, experiences and perspectives of African women and women of African descent to be recognised and explored. The platform has grown beyond publishing into a wider programme of engagement, creating opportunities for dialogue around leadership, identity, purpose and progress.

That evolution is reflected in the Duchess International Magazine Leadership Summit 2026, convened in collaboration with the University of Brighton. Under the theme, “Honouring Our Communities: The Audacity to Lead - Redefining Power, Purpose and Legacy,” the Summit brings together leaders, professionals, changemakers and community voices to examine leadership not simply as position, but as responsibility, purpose and the capacity to create lasting value for others.

Community has remained equally central to Abolaji's work. As Organisational Lead of the African Community in Surrey and Sussex (ACISS), she has helped create spaces where African communities can celebrate their heritage, strengthen connections and participate more actively in civic and social life. Her approach to community leadership is grounded in collaboration and inclusion, recognising that stronger communities are built when people have meaningful opportunities to contribute.

Her commitment to creating opportunity also extends through Duchess Africa, her charitable initiative focused on education, skills development, mentorship and advocacy. Through partnerships and community-led programmes, the initiative seeks to create pathways through which African women and girls can develop confidence, practical skills and greater access to opportunity. It is another expression of a recurring principle in her work: that meaningful support should create possibilities that continue beyond the immediate intervention.

Abolaji's interest in people, systems and social impact has also taken her into research and public service. As a Researcher with the University of Kent, she contributes to work that places human experiences and community perspectives alongside academic inquiry. She also serves on the Police Race and Diversity Board, contributing to conversations around inclusion, representation and relationships between communities and public institutions.

Service has provided another important dimension to her leadership. Within Rotary International, Abolaji became the 70th President and the first Black President of the Rotary Club of Crawley, bringing her experience



in community engagement, communication and service into a longstanding international organisation. Her leadership and communications experience subsequently led to her appointment as District Public Image Lead for Rotary South District 1145 for the 2025–2027 Rotary years, where she supports strategic communication, storytelling and public image development across the district.

Across these different spheres, a clear pattern emerges. Abolaji does not simply identify opportunities; she works to create the structures through which those opportunities can become accessible to others. The platforms may differ, but the purpose remains connected: to give ideas form, give people space and create something that can serve beyond the moment in which it began.

This is what gives her role as Convener of the Duchess International Magazine Leadership Summit particular significance.
The Summit brings together many of the experiences that have shaped her own leadership: the discipline of systems, the influence of storytelling, the importance of community, the value of research and the responsibility of service. It is a space where those strands meet, creating an opportunity for people from different backgrounds and fields to share experience, challenge assumptions and consider what responsible leadership can make possible.

For Abolaji, the journey is ultimately not defined by the number of roles she has held, but by what those roles have enabled her to create. Her story is one of ideas given form, platforms given purpose and opportunities created for others to participate. It is a reminder that vision becomes meaningful when someone is willing to do the work required to bring it to life.

*The visionary sees what could be. The builder accepts the responsibility of making it possible. Abolaji Odunuga continues to do both.*

# THE POWER OF BEING AT THE TABLE

## Hon. Joyce Viyanto Antonza Ibrahim:

## A Journey into Public Influence

A seat at the table is never simply a seat. It is a place where perspectives meet, conversations shape direction and public priorities are translated into action. For Hon. Joyce Viyanto Antonza Ibrahim, the journey towards that table has been shaped by education, community service, diaspora leadership, political engagement, grassroots mobilisation and public administration. It is a journey that has unfolded across borders and institutions, steadily expanding from community engagement in Ireland to political participation and public service in Nigeria.

The foundations of that journey were laid through an education and professional path that brought together law, conflict resolution, health and mental health practice.

At the University of Jos, Joyce studied Law, Security and Conflict Resolution, building an early foundation in issues of governance, justice and social order. Her subsequent years in Ireland broadened her professional experience through training in IT, customer service and health service skills, before she pursued a BSc in Mental Health Practice for Children and Young People at South East Technological University. She later commenced an MSc in the same field, deepening an academic interest that would become closely connected to her advocacy and community work.



Ireland became an important chapter in her leadership story. Within the Nigerian diaspora, she became involved in political and community organisation, serving first as PDP Women Leader, Ireland Chapter, and later as APC Professional Women Leader, Ireland Chapter. These roles placed her at the intersection of diaspora engagement, political participation, stakeholder relations and community mobilisation. Over time, her experience abroad became more than an overseas chapter of her story. It became part of the perspective she carried into Nigeria, particularly her interest in creating stronger links between Nigerians in the diaspora and communities at home.

That transition into more direct grassroots engagement opened another dimension of her public service. As President and Founder of the Veeaya Women and Children Care Foundation, she became involved in humanitarian and community interventions supporting vulnerable children, internally displaced persons and communities in need. Her work has included attention to healthcare, education, welfare and mental health awareness.

Alongside this, she emerged as Convener of the Renewed Hope Women's Network, creating a platform centred on participation, empowerment, mentorship, civic engagement and grassroots mobilisation.

By 2026, her political engagement had moved into the arena of elective representation. She participated in the All Progressives Congress primary process as an aspirant for the House of Representatives seat representing the Sanga/Jema'a Federal Constituency. The experience brought her into closer contact with constituency-level politics, community outreach and grassroots mobilisation, adding another layer to the leadership experience she had developed through diaspora and community work.

Beyond her own electoral aspiration, Joyce's political responsibilities continued to broaden. Her involvement in political organisation led to her taking on the role of National Secretary of the Tinubu Torch Bearers, extending her experience into wider structures of mobilisation and coordination. At the same time, her work through the Renewed Hope Women's Network continued to focus on building participation at community level, reflecting a recurring feature of her public profile: the effort to connect organised leadership with people at the grassroots.

The next chapter brought her into government. In September 2026, she was appointed Senior Special Assistant on Inter-Agency Coordination in the Kaduna State Government. The role introduces a new institutional dimension to her career, placing her within a setting where communication, coordination and relationships between government structures are central. It is a different kind of responsibility from political mobilisation or community advocacy, yet it draws on many of the same skills developed over the years: bringing people together, engaging stakeholders, navigating different interests and working towards shared objectives.

Her journey has taken her through several distinct but connected spaces: from studying Law, Security and Conflict Resolution at the University of Jos, to building her professional and academic experience in Ireland; from diaspora political leadership to humanitarian and community service in Nigeria; from grassroots political engagement and an aspiration for elective office to wider political organisation; and now into the Kaduna State Government, where she serves as Senior Special Assistant on Inter-Agency Coordination. Each chapter has expanded the communities, institutions and responsibilities within her sphere of engagement.

A seat at the table is never simply a seat. It carries the weight of experience, the responsibility to listen, the opportunity to contribute and





the expectation to make one's presence count. For Hon. Joyce Viyanto Antonza Ibrahim, the table has changed throughout her journey, but so has the breadth of experience she brings to it. From Ireland to Nigeria, from diaspora leadership to grassroots engagement, from community service to political organisation and now public administration, her story continues to unfold around the spaces where people, institutions and ideas come together. The journey is no longer simply about finding a place at the table, but about what she brings when she gets there.




# TARGET SEARCH GLOBAL NIGERIA:

## A SECURITY PARTNER STRENGTHENING PREPAREDNESS, PROTECTION AND RESILIENCE

Security today demands more than protection. It requires intelligence, preparation, adaptability and the capacity to anticipate risk before it becomes a threat. Target Search Global Nigeria (TSG Nigeria) operates within this space, delivering intelligence-led security, risk management and professional training solutions designed to protect people, assets, organisations and operations.

The organisation's foundations were established in the United Kingdom in 2005, with its presence in Nigeria expanding from 2009. This international experience informs TSG Nigeria's approach to security, combining global best practices with an understanding of the realities of the local operating environment. Its services support government institutions, corporate organisations, private clients and community stakeholders navigating increasingly complex security challenges.

At the centre of the organisation's development is Dr. Femi Aratokun-Ale, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Target Search Global. With more than two decades of experience in international security operations, he brings expertise spanning executive protection, crisis management, intelligence-led risk consulting and protective security. His professional background combines academic achievement,



internationally recognised certifications and extensive frontline operational experience across Africa and Europe.

Dr. Aratokun-Ale holds a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Criminology and Psychology from Arden University and is a Certified Lead Auditor for ISO/IEC 27001:2022, with advanced expertise in Cybersecurity Governance, Risk and Compliance.

He has also been a licensed Close Protection Operative with the UK Security Industry Authority since 2011. His experience includes structured protective operations involving senior political leaders, corporate executives and internationally recognised public figures within government, diplomatic and elite corporate environments.

Under his strategic leadership, TSG Nigeria has developed a broad security capability covering strategic risk management, executive and close protection, corporate security, event security, CCTV surveillance, security coordination and specialist protective operations. The organisation's methodology is grounded in rigorous risk assessment, meticulous planning and disciplined execution, with each engagement shaped around the specific requirements of the client and operating environment.

Professional capacity development is equally central to the organisation's work. TSG Nigeria delivers specialist training programmes designed to develop competent security professionals, strengthen organisational preparedness and promote safer communities. Its portfolio includes Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT), Cyber Security Service Delivery, Security and Journey Management, Hostile Environment Close Protection Operations (HECPO), Weapon Competency and Safety Training, Defensive Driving and Secure Mobility, and Crowd Control and Event Security Management.

The organisation's wider training portfolio extends to Estate Security and Community Safety, Security Customer Service Excellence, Professional Security Coordination, Corporate Safety, Emergency Response and Workplace Wellness, Self-Defence and Personal Safety, Making Places Safe, and Citizenship and Leadership Development. Through these programmes, TSG Nigeria addresses security not only as a matter of protection, but as a broader discipline encompassing preparedness, professional competence, responsible leadership and institutional resilience.

Its contribution also extends into public discourse on security. Dr. Aratokun-Ale regularly provides expert analysis on the TVC Breakfast Programme on Television Continental (TVC), offering perspectives on national and international security developments and emerging risk trends. This engagement reflects a wider commitment to promoting informed understanding of the security issues shaping organisations, communities and society.

With an established international foundation and a growing Nigerian footprint, Target Search Global Nigeria continues to build its capabilities around a clear professional philosophy: effective security begins with intelligence and is strengthened by preparation, expertise and disciplined execution. Through its security operations, advisory services and professional training programmes, TSG Nigeria remains focused on protecting what matters, strengthening institutions and contributing to safer, more resilient communities.



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Surrey & Sussex C.I.C.

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THE ARCHITECTURE OF PUBLIC IMPACT

# HON. BARR. SA'ADAT YUNUSA MOHAMMED:

## LAW, LEADERSHIP AND PURPOSE

A career can begin with one discipline and still lead far beyond it. For Hon. Barr. Sa'adat Yunusa Mohammed, law was the beginning of a journey that has continued to expand across public policy, governance, poverty reduction, social development and emerging technology. Each chapter has added another dimension to her professional experience, bringing together legal knowledge, public service, advocacy and an interest in how institutions and ideas can translate into meaningful change.

The foundation was laid in law. Sa'adat earned her LLB and was called to the Nigerian Bar in 2010, qualifying as a Barrister and Solicitor before also becoming a Notary Public. Her legal training gave her an understanding of rights, regulation and the institutional frameworks through which society is governed, providing a professional foundation she would carry into increasingly diverse areas of work. It established the discipline from which her wider interests would develop.

Her pursuit of knowledge continued beyond professional qualification. She obtained an LLM from the University of East London and later undertook executive education with Harvard



Law School and Yale. These experiences broadened her perspective on law, leadership and governance, while strengthening an interest in the relationship between professional expertise, institutional responsibility and wider social outcomes.





As her interests evolved, Artificial Intelligence and digital transformation became an important part of her professional development. Sa'adat developed a growing specialisation in AI, law, digital governance and responsible technology, exploring the legal and institutional questions emerging alongside technological change. She is currently pursuing doctoral studies focused on AI, financing, sustainable investment and legal and regulatory reform in Nigeria, bringing together law, technology, finance and public policy in an increasingly important area of national development.

Public service has added another dimension to that journey. As Special Adviser on Poverty Reduction to the Governor of Sokoto State, Sa'adat contributes to initiatives focused on inclusive development, economic empowerment and social protection. Her work in this capacity places her within the practical space where policy meets everyday realities, with attention to the economic and social conditions that influence access to opportunity.

Her engagement with public affairs extends beyond government. As Zonal Legal Adviser, North-West, of the City Boy Movement, she contributes her legal and governance expertise to the movement's activities. Alongside her professional and public responsibilities, she is also the Founder and CEO of Saar Mata Foundation, through which she has supported initiatives focused on women, young people and vulnerable communities. Her work through the Foundation reflects a commitment to practical empowerment and to creating opportunities for people to strengthen their economic independence and participate more actively in development.

These experiences have shaped a professional outlook that now spans women's leadership, inclusive governance, legal innovation, AI ethics, digital transformation and sustainable development in Nigeria and Africa. While these areas are diverse, they converge around questions of how institutions respond to change, how innovation is governed and how development can remain inclusive and responsible. Her work has also received leadership and peace-building recognitions, while her traditional title, Gimbiyar Dange, forms another part of her public identity.

Seen chronologically, Sa'adat's career reveals a steady expansion of scope. Law provided the foundation; further education widened her perspective; technology introduced new questions around regulation and responsibility; public service brought policy closer to questions of poverty and development; and her foundation work created another avenue for community engagement. Each chapter has extended the reach of the one before it, allowing her to carry knowledge from one field into another rather than confining her experience to a single professional lane.

Today, Sa'adat's journey brings together several conversations that matter to Nigeria's future: responsible technological development, effective governance, inclusive economic opportunity, sustainable investment and legal reform. Her story is ultimately one of professional evolution, where expertise has continued to meet new challenges and purpose has provided continuity across different fields. Law gave her the foundation. Leadership broadened her responsibility. Purpose continues to shape the work ahead.



# TONY KALUME:

## A CULTURAL CUSTODIAN PRESERVING STORIES, RECLAIMING HERITAGE AND CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

***Exploring the intersections of cultural identity, community memory and the responsibility of carrying heritage forward.***

Heritage is not only found in museums, archives or historic collections. It lives in the stories people carry, the objects they preserve, the clothes they wear and the memories they pass from one generation to another. For Tony Kalume, these connections have shaped a career at the intersection of heritage, cultural identity, community engagement and education. His work has consistently explored how histories are collected and interpreted, how communities participate in telling their own stories, and how cultural heritage can remain meaningful in the present.

Kalume's professional journey spans community practice, curation, education and cultural advocacy. He has served as Chair of Diversity Lewes since 2010 and works with the University of Brighton, where he has been a Visiting Lecturer. He is also a graduate of the University's MA in Curating Collections and Heritage and has worked across museum and community projects, including as an Associate Curator at Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft and as a member of the permanent African Collection panel at the Royal Pavilion Museums. His work brings together academic knowledge and community experience, allowing him to approach heritage not simply as something to be preserved, but as something that is continually interpreted and experienced.

A significant part of Kalume's work has focused on African and Caribbean heritage and on bringing histories that may otherwise remain overlooked into wider cultural conversations. His involvement in Celebrating African Caribbeans in Sussex Past and Present provided an opportunity to document the lives and experiences of Black people connected to Sussex






through personal histories, photographs and archival material. The Heritage Lottery-funded project developed an exhibition intended to travel across East and West Sussex, while also training volunteers to undertake the research. For Kalume, projects of this nature form an important part of a wider practice centred on bringing community histories into heritage spaces and creating opportunities for those communities to participate in how their stories are researched, interpreted and remembered.

His interest in the stories carried by cultural objects is equally evident in The Clothes on Our Back, a collaborative project involving Kalume, Dr Jess Moriarty, Diversity Lewes, the University of Brighton and Brighton Museum. The project used clothing and textiles to explore identity and heritage, with particular attention to the African khanga and the stories, symbols and personal meanings associated with it. Participants worked with archival material and created poetry, textiles and prose, while the resulting work contributed to Black History Month exhibitions and wider conversations about diversity within higher education. Kalume and Moriarty subsequently developed the work into a published chapter in Socially Engaged Creative Practice: Contemporary Case Studies in 2024.

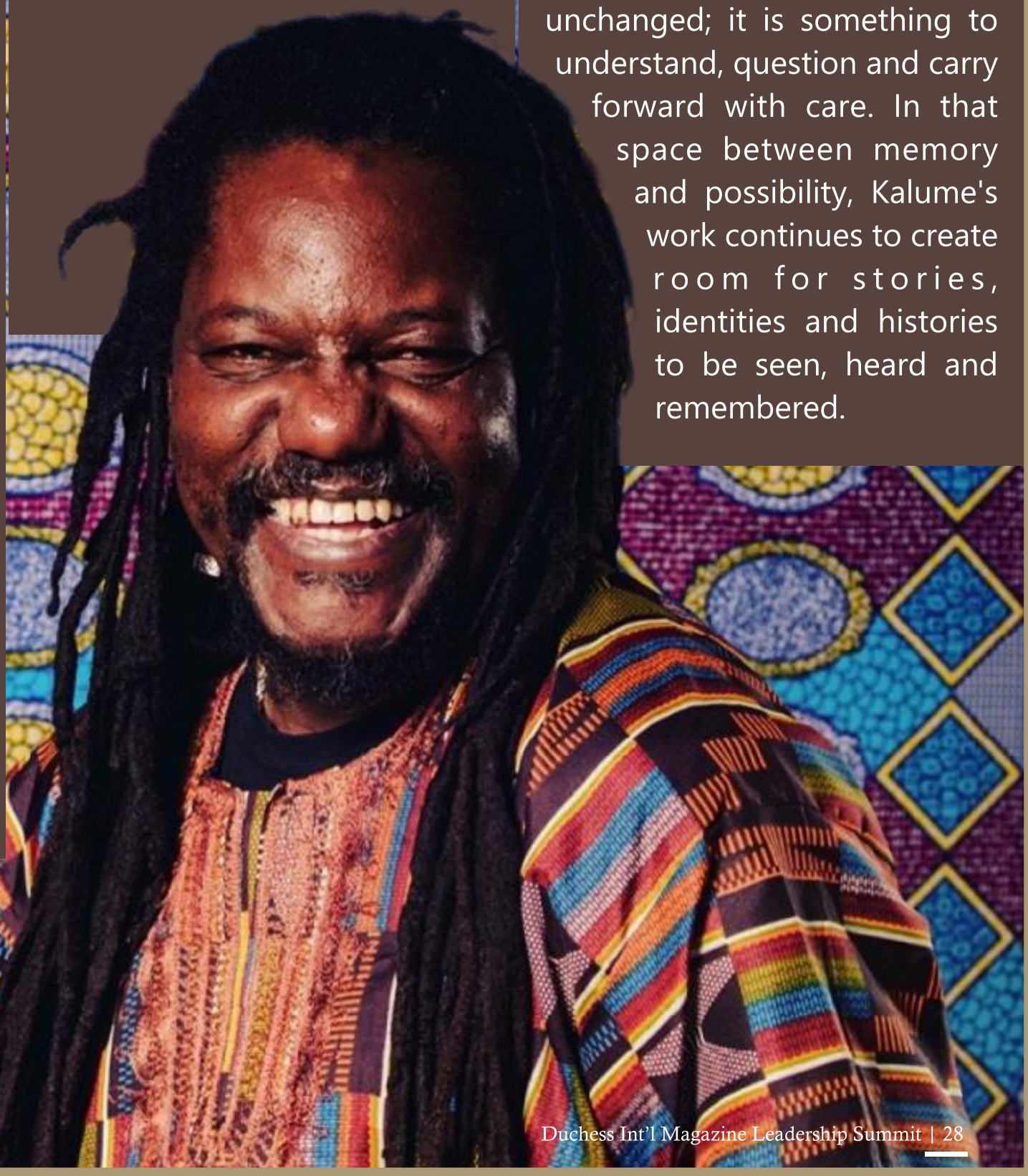
His curatorial practice also reaches into more complex questions about the ownership, interpretation and return of cultural heritage. Kalume's published profile identifies him as Chief Negotiator for the Mijikenda in relation to the return of Vigango, culturally significant memorial posts from Kenya. He has also presented

work on the Vigango Resting Place and on decolonising the interpretation of contested objects and their provenance. These areas of practice place cultural heritage within a wider conversation about historical context, community authority and the responsibilities attached to collections that have travelled far from the communities from which they originated.

His contribution to African collections extends beyond questions of repatriation. Kalume was part of the specialist panel for Fashion Cities Africa, an initiative through which Brighton Museum developed its collection of contemporary African fashion. The panel brought together people with both personal and academic knowledge of African fashion to identify objects for acquisition and contribute to their sourcing. Following the project, Kalume developed further work around the museum's African collections, including a Heritage Lottery-supported project focused on increasing access to its holdings of brass weights from Ghana. His involvement in these projects demonstrates how his curatorial practice extends from preserving existing heritage to helping institutions broaden the stories and perspectives represented within their collections.

Education has remained an important part of this practice. Through his work with the University of Brighton and his collaborations with students, academics, museums and community members, Kalume has contributed to conversations about representation, diversity and decolonising approaches to knowledge. His work demonstrates how cultural learning can move beyond conventional academic settings and into museums, community spaces, creative workshops and collaborative research. In doing so, it creates opportunities for different forms of knowledge and lived experience to enter conversations that have traditionally been shaped largely within formal institutions.

Across these different roles and projects, a consistent thread emerges in Tony Kalume's work: the belief that heritage is living, participatory and connected to identity. His career has brought community histories into cultural spaces, placed African material and contemporary culture within museum conversations, and explored what happens when communities have a stronger voice in interpreting the heritage connected to them. His work ultimately speaks to the meaning of legacy itself. What we inherit is not simply something to preserve unchanged; it is something to understand, question and carry forward with care. In that space between memory and possibility, Kalume's work continues to create room for stories, identities and histories to be seen, heard and remembered.





# HON. ABISOLA ANN MUNIS:

## THE ARCHITECTURE OF INSTITUTIONAL EXCELLENCE, THE FINESSE OF PROTOCOL AND THE DISCIPLINE OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Institutions are often remembered through the quality of the encounters they create. A public hearing, an official ceremony, a media engagement or a meeting with stakeholders may last only a few hours, yet the organisation behind it is experienced through every detail, from communication and coordination to protocol and the manner in which people are received. Working within this intricate space requires more than administrative ability. It calls for structure, discernment and an understanding of how institutions communicate with the people beyond their walls. These qualities have become central to the professional life of Abisola Ann Munis.

That foundation began with an education in Computer Science at Olabisi Onabanjo University, where she developed an analytical approach to systems, organisation and problem-solving. Her National Youth Service at the Ministry of Lands in Alausa, Ikeja, where she worked as a Public Relations Trainee, introduced another dimension to that foundation: communication. The combination of analytical thinking and public-facing communication proved valuable as her career moved into increasingly complex professional environments.

Her early corporate experience at Camac Nigeria Limited, Allied Energy Oil and Gas, placed those abilities within an executive setting. As Executive Assistant to the Chairman, she worked closely with senior management while contributing to publicity strategies, writing and presentations. The experience placed her closer to the realities of public engagement, where clarity, responsiveness and careful preparation are essential,



particularly in environments where professional interactions carry organisational significance. It was a foundation that prepared her for a broader understanding of how institutions manage both their internal priorities and their public presence.

That understanding deepened when she moved into public service at the Lagos State House of Assembly, beginning with Public Relations and Media. Her work involved press conferences, media engagements, tours and courtesy visits, alongside the monitoring and analysis of media coverage. Here, communication was no longer simply a corporate function. It became part of the relationship between a public institution and the wider society it serves. The experience placed her closer to the realities of public engagement, where clarity, responsiveness and careful coordination can shape how an institution is encountered.

From communication, her career progressed naturally into protocol and Foreign Affairs, where the quality of an engagement could depend on details that might otherwise go unnoticed. She was involved in planning and coordinating official events, managing guest lists and seating arrangements, developing event procedures and liaising with departments and stakeholders. Protocol, in this setting, extended beyond ceremony. It became an exercise in precision, cultural awareness, timing and respect, requiring her to anticipate needs while maintaining the order and dignity expected of formal institutional engagements.

Her professional scope expanded further through her



work with the Lagos State House of Assembly Service Commission, where she served in establishment and administrative capacities. The role brought her closer to the structures that sustain institutions beyond their public-facing activities. Strategic planning, administrative coordination, financial analysis and the implementation of establishment matters required a different form of precision, one concerned with systems, accountability and organisational effectiveness.

Her experience in protocol and public engagement therefore gained an important counterpart: an understanding of the internal architecture that enables institutions to function.

These strands now converge in her current role as Special Assistant on Public Hearing and Event Management to the President of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Since taking up the position, she has been involved in the organisation and coordination of official events, public hearings and stakeholder engagements, working across a landscape that includes lawmakers, government officials, traditional leaders, civil society representatives and other participants. The responsibilities draw together the disciplines developed throughout her career, requiring attention to protocol, logistics, communication, documentation, stakeholder welfare, security, budgeting and the many moving parts behind a successful public engagement.

Her professional development has continued alongside this experience. Training in Transformation Leadership at the University of Cambridge and further international exposure in leadership, government, negotiation, communication and fundraising have broadened the perspective she brings to institutional work. Rather than existing separately from her practical experience, these areas of learning complement it, reinforcing an approach grounded in structure, adaptability, communication and purposeful engagement.

Abisola Ann Munis' career therefore offers a study in the disciplines that allow institutions to function, communicate and engage effectively. From analytical training and corporate administration to public relations, protocol, institutional management and public hearings, each stage has added another layer to her professional practice. The architecture lies in the structures she helps organise; the finesse lies in the details through which people experience those structures; and the discipline lies in understanding that every institutional encounter carries responsibility. It is within that intersection of structure, protocol and public engagement that her professional identity has taken shape.



# CONTEMPORARY ICONS

## African Women Shaping Our Time

Some women make history by stepping into rooms where few women have stood before. Others build something where nothing existed, challenge an idea that has gone unquestioned, or become so accomplished in their field that the world has to pay attention. Across law, music, art, film, aviation, technology, finance, medicine, engineering and literature, African women and women of African descent are doing exactly that.

They are not all working in the same field, speaking to the same audience or pursuing the same kind of success. What connects them is that their work is not simply part of history. It is still unfolding. They are leading institutions, creating art, building businesses, shaping industries, advancing science and telling stories that continue to influence how Africa and its people are seen. Their paths are different, but together they offer a portrait of contemporary African womanhood that is ambitious, inventive, accomplished and unmistakably global.



**MO ABUDU**
Building the Room Africa Was Never Given

Mo Abudu is a Nigerian media entrepreneur, producer and executive whose career has reshaped how African stories are told and distributed to the world. A former human resources executive at ExxonMobil, she left the corporate world to build "Moments with Mo," the continent's first syndicated daily talk show, before founding EbonyLife in 2013 as the first pan-African entertainment network owned by an African woman. Often described as Africa's Oprah Winfrey, she has since produced and distributed African films and series through partnerships with Netflix, Disney and other major studios, placing Nigerian storytelling in front of audiences it had rarely reached before.

Her work also reflects a deliberate investment in what comes next. Through the EbonyLife Creative Academy, she is training the next generation of African filmmakers, writers and producers in the craft and business of the industry she helped build. Her story is about what happens when one woman's insistence on controlling the narrative becomes the infrastructure an entire industry builds on.



**REBECCA ENONCHONG**
Building the Infrastructure for Possibility

Rebecca Enonchong is a Cameroonian technology entrepreneur and the founder and CEO of AppsTech, a global enterprise software company. Her career has placed her at the intersection of technology, entrepreneurship and Africa's growing digital economy, while her work with African technology and business networks has helped create connections between entrepreneurs, investors and the wider technology ecosystem.

Her influence is particularly striking because she has spent years working on the infrastructure around entrepreneurship, not simply on her own company. Her story represents a form of leadership that is sometimes less visible than a headline-making product: creating the conditions in which other people can build.



**RUTH ZAIPUNA**
Leading Through the Numbers

Ruth Zaipuna is a Tanzanian banking executive and the Chief Executive Officer of NMB Bank. She became CEO in 2020 after a career spanning audit, finance and banking, including senior roles at PwC Tanzania and Standard Chartered Bank.

Her leadership has coincided with a period of digital innovation and financial inclusion at NMB. Her story offers a different picture of contemporary leadership: the ability to understand complex systems, make decisions through numbers and use institutional influence to shape how people and businesses participate in an economy.



**TSHIDI MNDZEBELE**
**Engineering What Comes Next**

Tshidi Mndzebele is a South African industrial engineer and the CEO of AvenirHoldings, an engineering, procurement and construction management company she co-founded. Her career has moved through engineering, banking, mining and infrastructure, giving her experience across industries that play a significant role in Africa's economic development.

Her work is also about opening the profession to others. Through mentoring and professional development, she has helped create pathways for emerging professionals, including women entering engineering and construction. Her story shows that engineering is not only about designing infrastructure. It is also about building the people and professional pathways that will shape what comes next.



**OYINKANSOLA BADEJO-OKUSANYA**
**Breaking New Legal Ground**

Oyinkansola Badejo-Okusanya is a Nigerian lawyer and Senior Advocate of Nigeria who became the 33rd President of the Nigerian Bar Association in 2026. She is the second woman to hold the office, following Dame Priscilla Kuye, who led the NBA in 1991. Her election brought a new chapter to a professional career spanning more than two decades, placing her at the head of one of Nigeria's most significant professional associations.

But her story is not simply about becoming the woman at the top. Her leadership has focused attention on professional development, technology, access to opportunities, welfare, transparency and accountability. Her story therefore sits firmly in the present: a lawyer taking on an institution and asking what its next chapter should look like.



**CAPT. MARY MUKULU KAI**
**Taking Her Place in the Skies**

Capt. Mary Mukulu Kai is a Kenyan aviator and aviation leader whose career has taken her from flight training to the cockpit of some of Kenya Airways' most significant aircraft. After earning a degree in Aeronautics and Aviation Management and qualifying as a commercial pilot, she flew the LET 410 before joining Kenya Airways, where she progressed from second officer to first officer and eventually became a Boeing 737 captain. She spent 13 years with the airline and later earned an MBA from the University of Leicester.

Her contribution to aviation extends beyond her own career. As President of the Women in Aviation International Kenya Chapter, she is part of a movement encouraging women and girls to consider aviation and helping create pathways into an industry where women remain underrepresented. Her story is therefore about more than reaching the cockpit. It is about making the journey visible to those who may never have imagined themselves there.



**ZANELE MUHOLI**
**Making Visibility an Art Form**

Zanele Muholi is a South African visual artist and activist whose photography explores Black identity, gender, sexuality and representation. Describing themself as a visual activist, Muholi has spent more than two decades documenting the lives and experiences of Black LGBTQ+ communities in South Africa and beyond, creating an extensive visual record of people whose stories have often been overlooked or misrepresented.

Their work has been exhibited internationally and is held in major collections including Tate, the Museum of Modern Art and the Art Institute of Chicago. Through photography, Muholi turns visibility into a form of storytelling, challenging viewers to reconsider who is seen, how people are represented and whose experiences become part of the historical record.



**DR DELESE MIMI DARKO**
Transforming Africa's Medicines Landscape

Dr Delese Mimi Darko is a Ghanaian pharmacist and health-sector leader whose career has taken her from medicines regulation in Ghana to the leadership of a continent-wide institution. She became the first woman appointed Chief Executive Officer of Ghana's Food and Drugs Authority and later became the inaugural Director-General of the African Medicines Agency.

Her work is directly connected to one of Africa's most important health challenges: strengthening the systems that determine whether medical products are safe, effective and accessible. Her story reminds us that some of the most consequential leadership happens beyond the spotlight, inside the systems that protect lives.



**LUPITA NYONG'O**
When Representation Becomes Personal

Lupita Nyong'o is a Kenyan-Mexican actress, filmmaker and author whose career has moved between African storytelling, Hollywood, theatre and international cinema. She won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress for 12 Years a Slave in 2014, becoming the first Kenyan and the first Black African actress to receive the honour.

Her career continues to evolve across screen and stage. Her journey demonstrates that representation is not a single achievement to be framed and preserved. It is an ongoing process of taking on new work, entering new spaces and continuing to expand what audiences expect from an African woman on an international stage.



**CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE**
Telling African Stories Without Permission

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a Nigerian novelist and essayist whose work has brought Nigerian experiences of war, migration, identity, gender and belonging to readers across the world. Her novels, including Half of a Yellow Sun and Americanah, established her as one of the most widely recognised contemporary African writers, while We Should All Be Feminists became a global cultural reference.

Her literary voice remains active and relevant. Her 2025 novel, Dream Count, returned her to fiction with a story centred on four women navigating love, ambition, friendship, migration and difficult choices. Adichie's work remains a reminder that African stories do not need to be simplified to travel. Sometimes their greatest power lies in their specificity.

## THE FORCE THAT CONNECTS THEM

Their fields could hardly be more different: a courtroom, a concert stage, an artist's studio, a film set, an aircraft cockpit, a technology company, a bank, a medicines agency, an engineering firm and a page of fiction. Yet each woman is doing something that reaches beyond her own achievement.

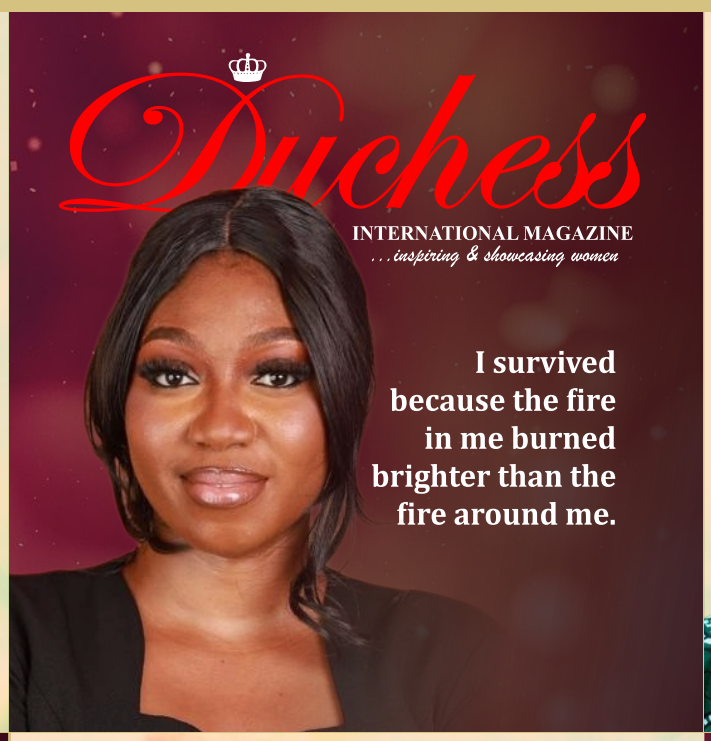
They are leading institutions, creating platforms, shaping industries, solving problems and opening possibilities for others. Some are carrying established professions into their next chapter. Others are changing the spaces they have entered. What connects them is not a single definition of success, but the fact that their stories are still being written.

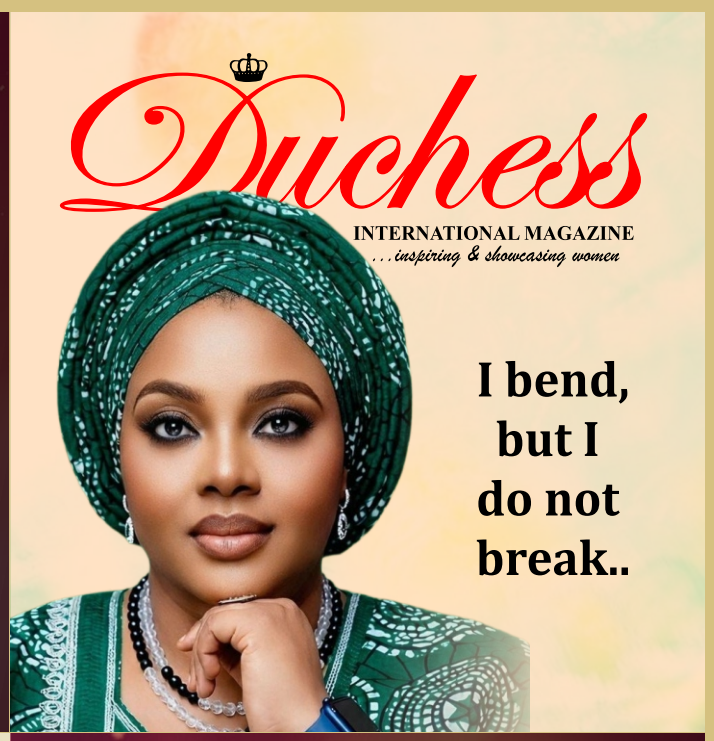
These are not women looking back on what they once achieved. They are women shaping what comes next.



# MAGNIFICENT WOMEN GALLERY

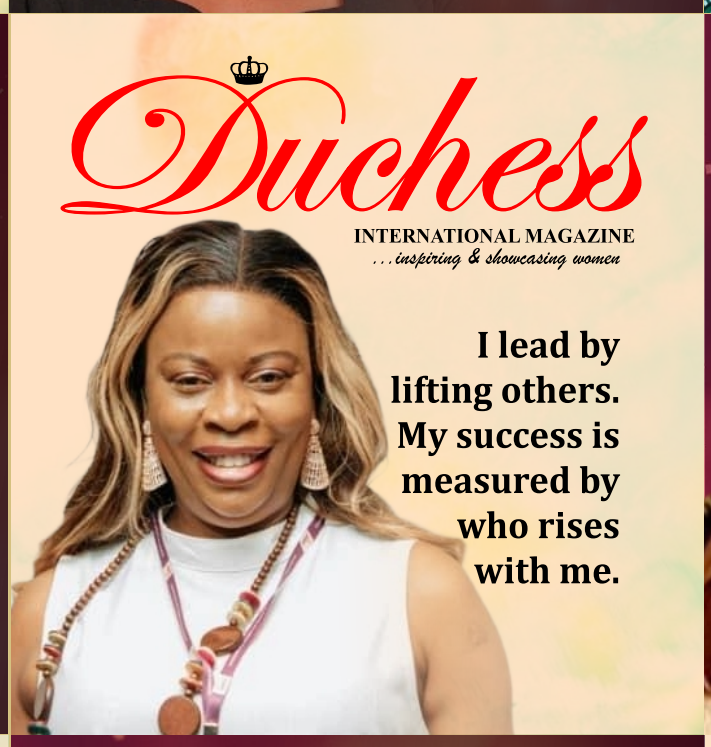


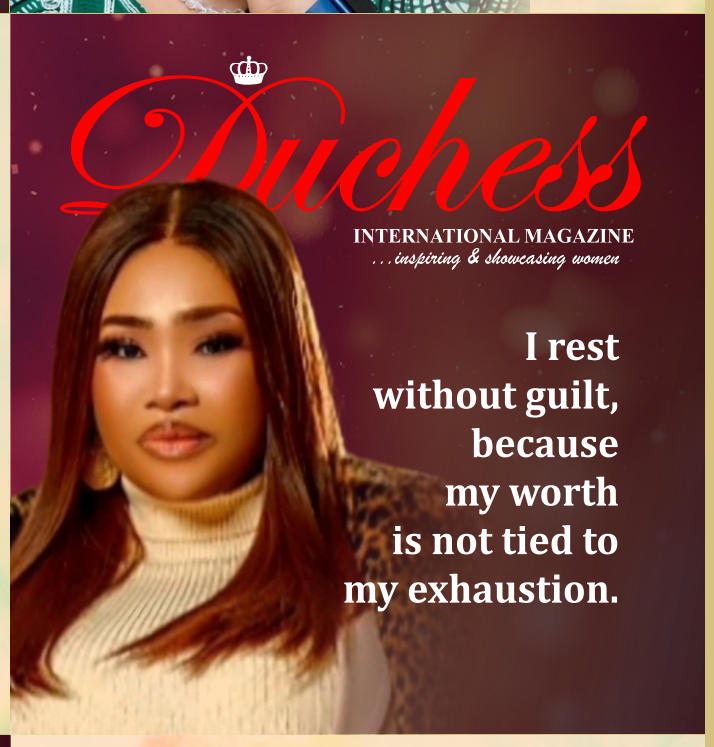



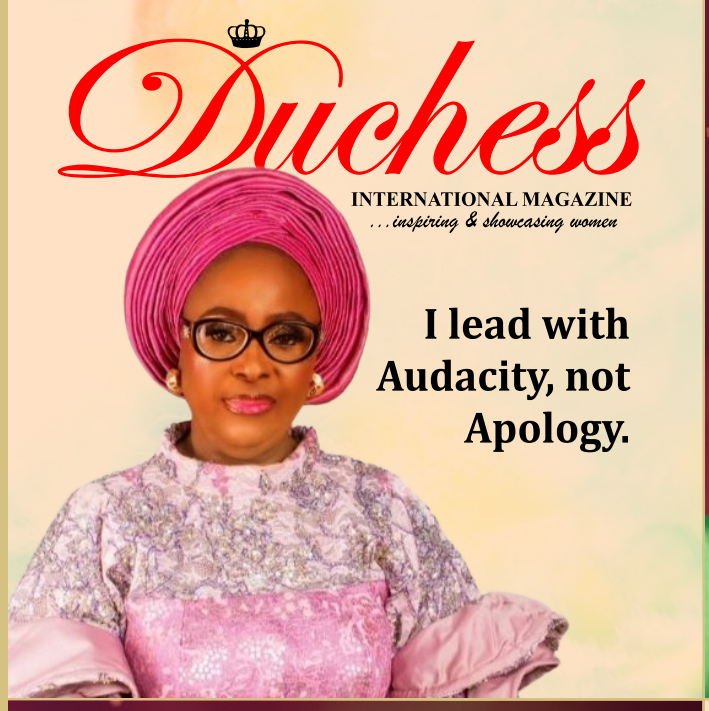



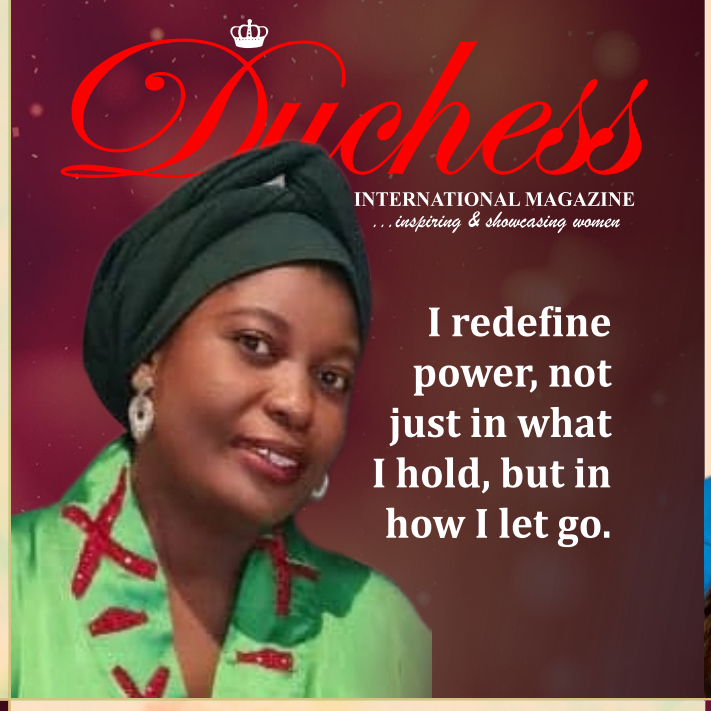


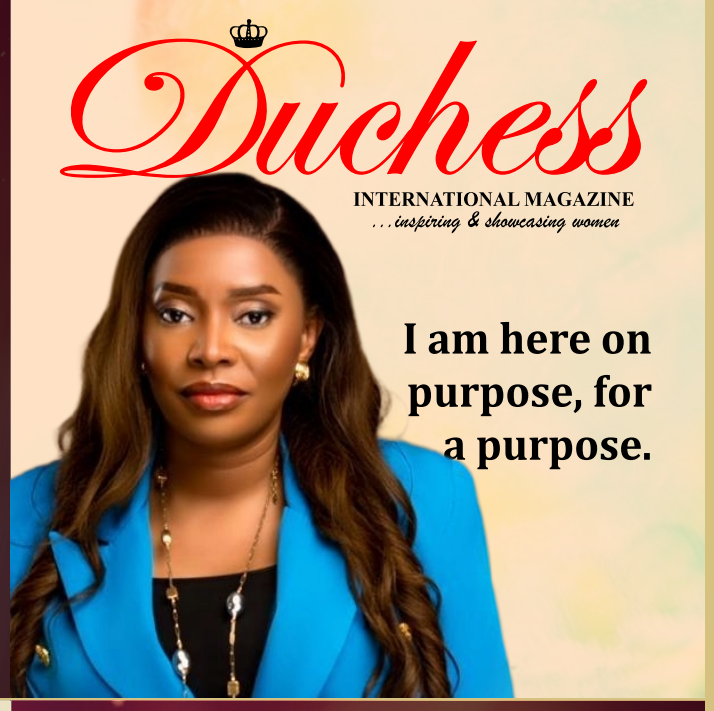




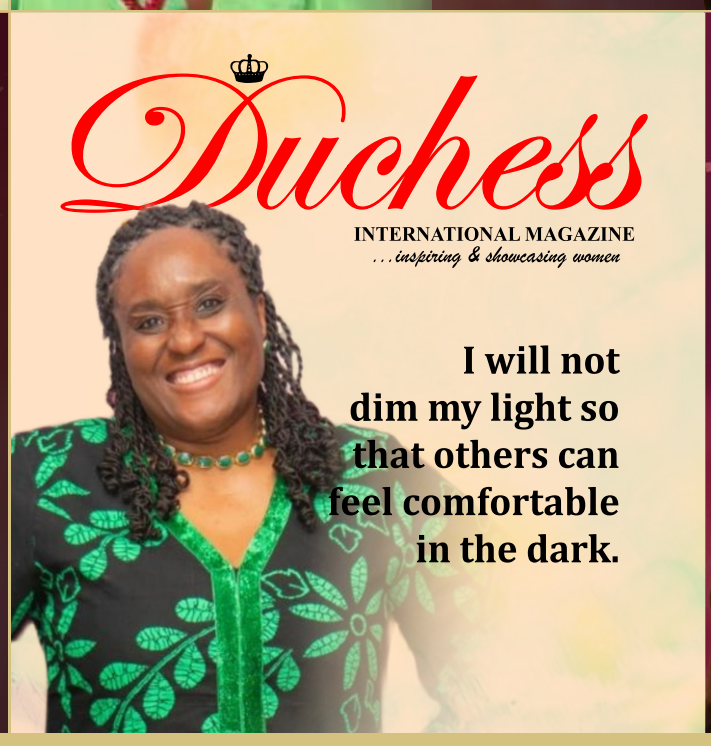



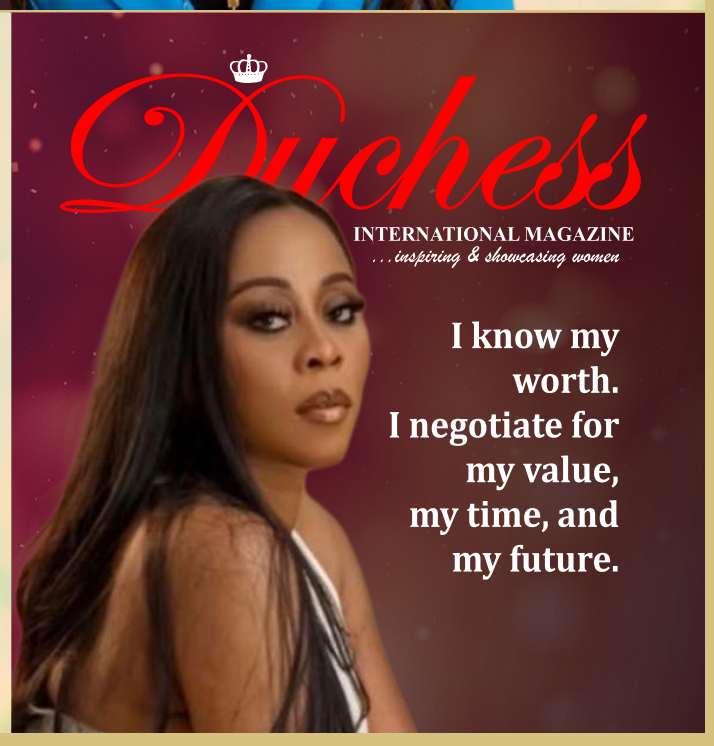



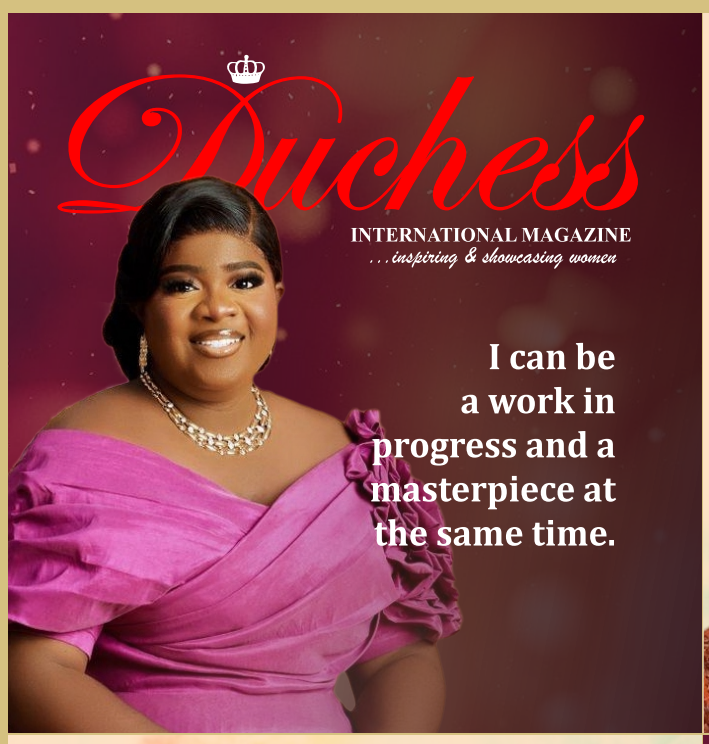


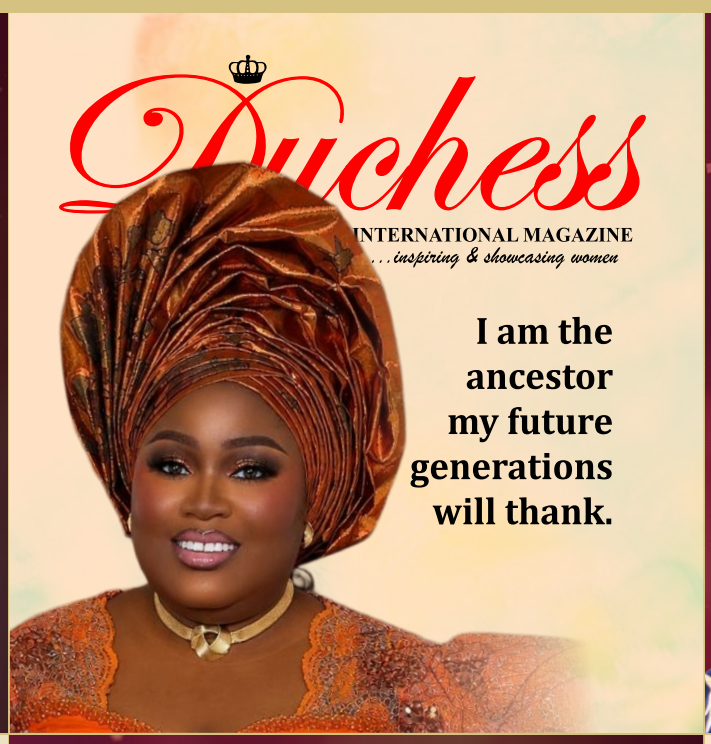




# MAGNIFICENT WOMEN GALLERY





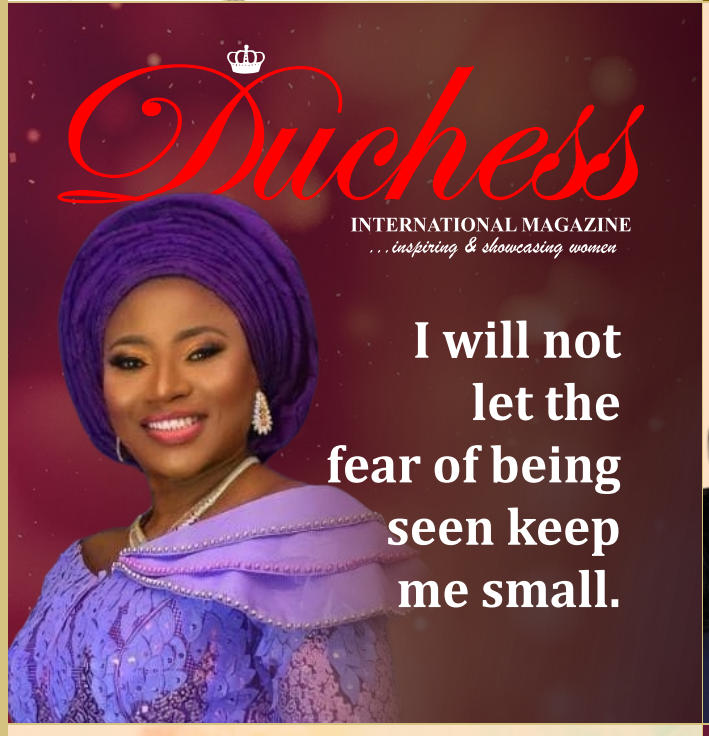






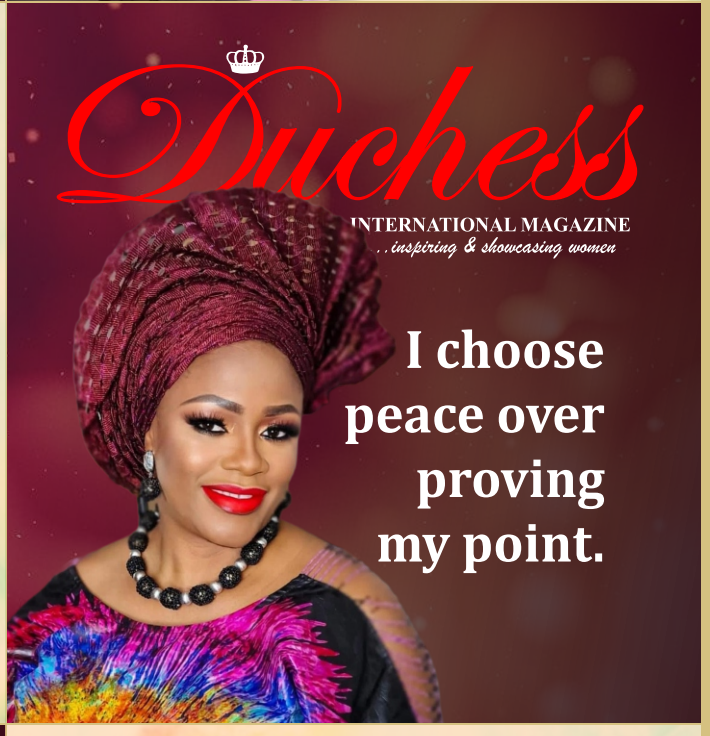




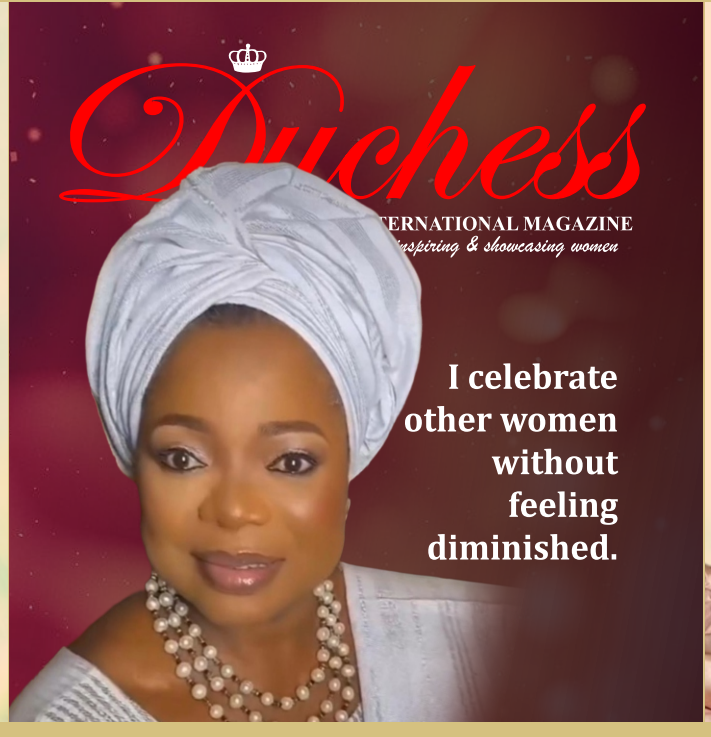


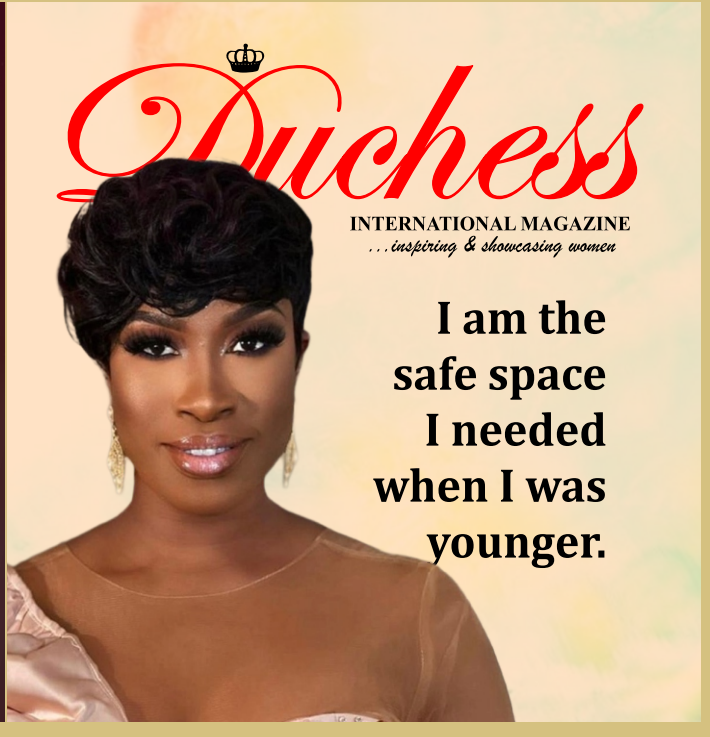










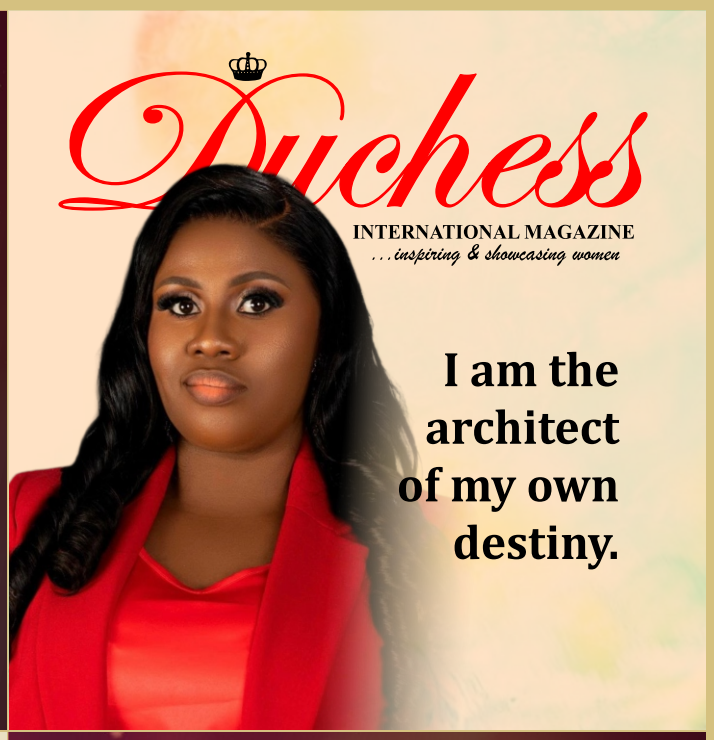



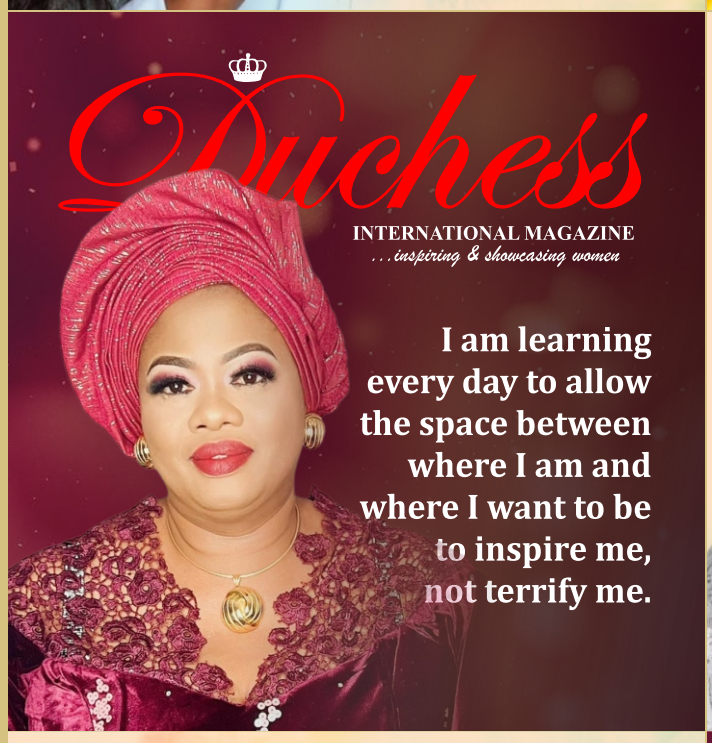
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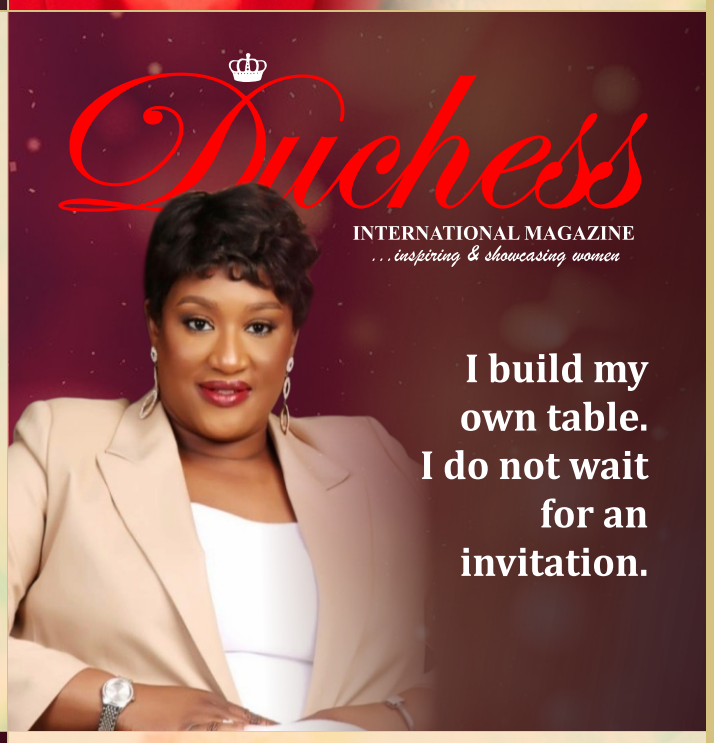




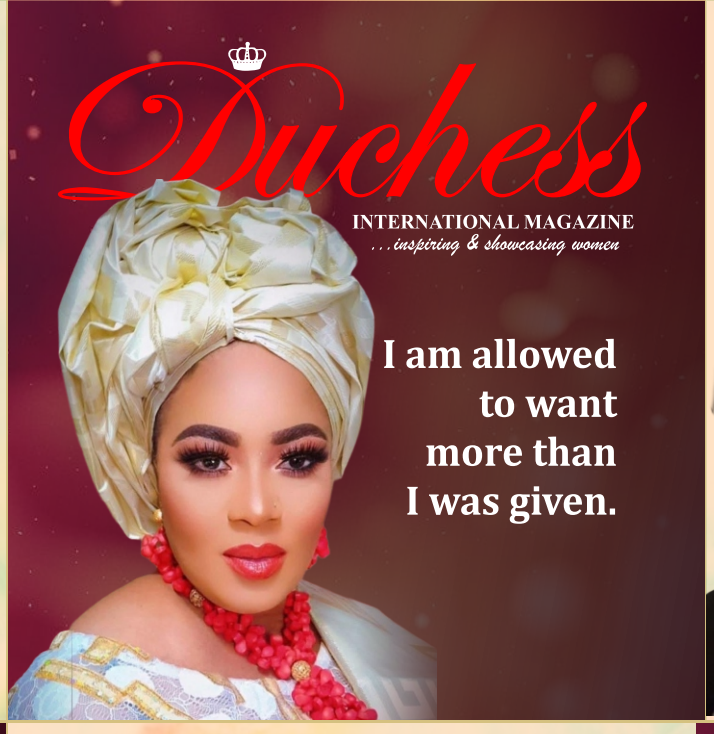






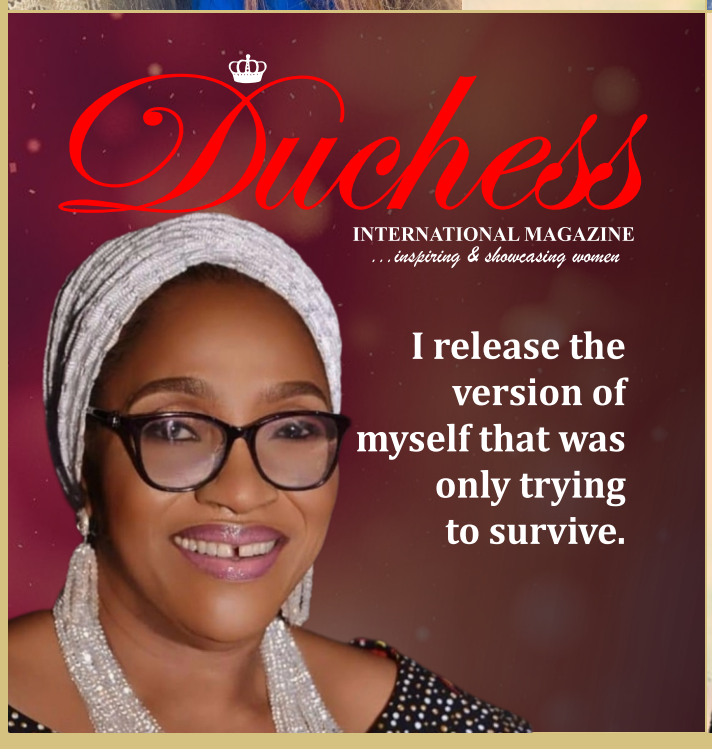


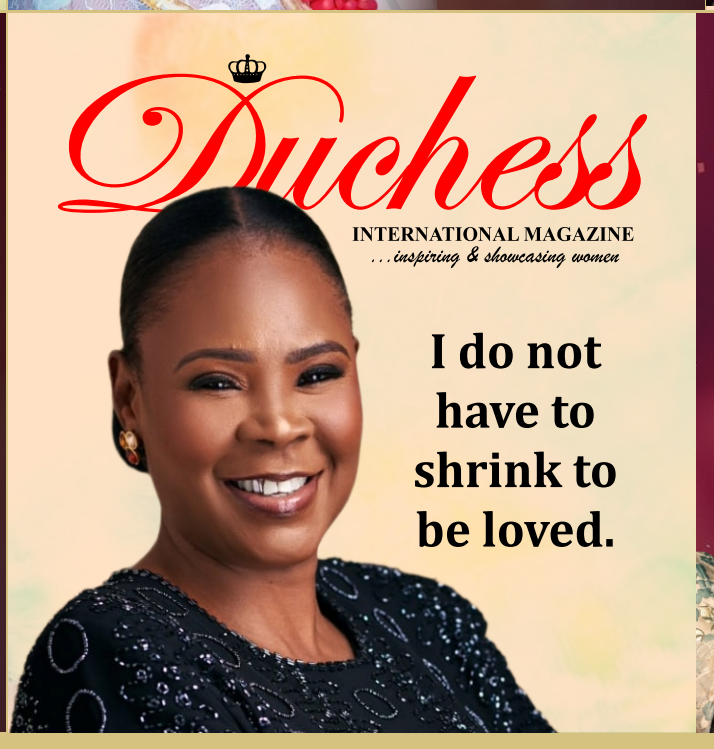


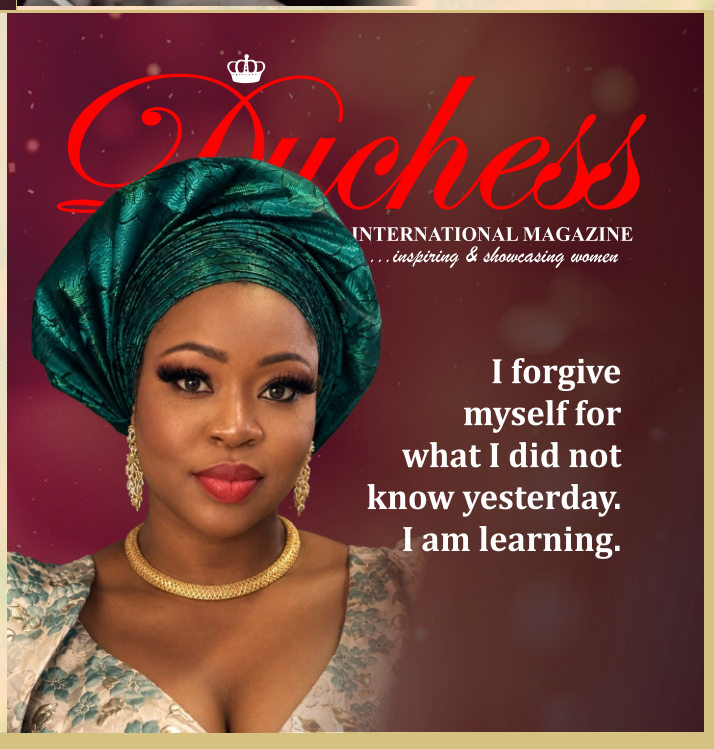






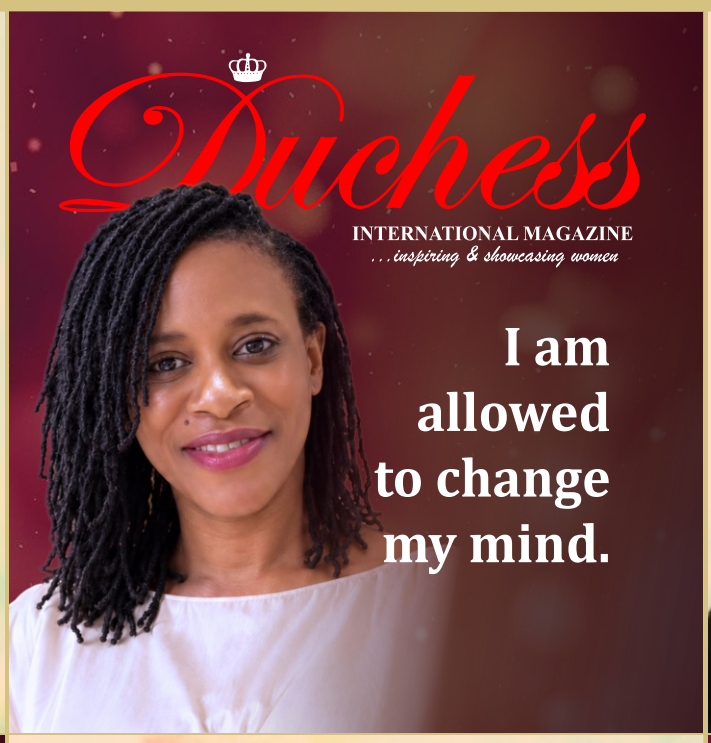


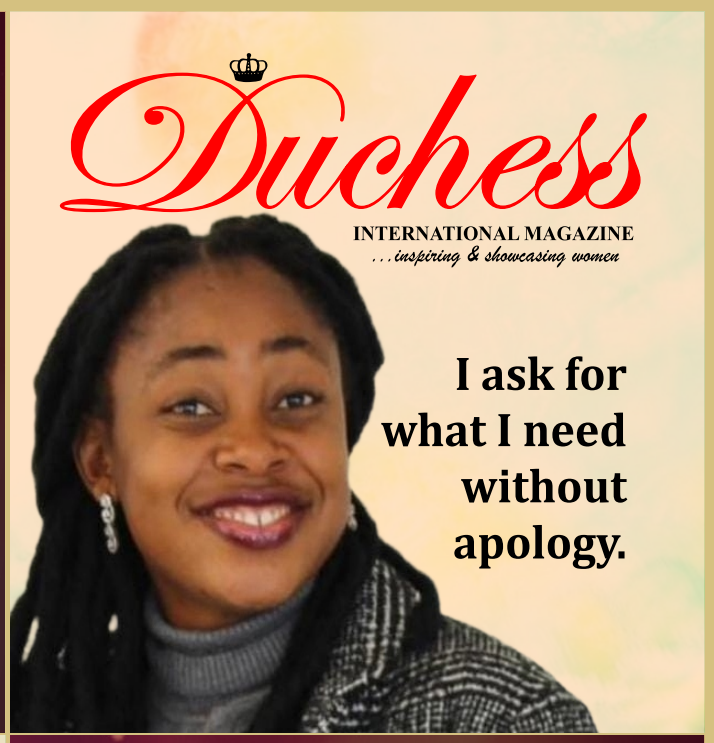



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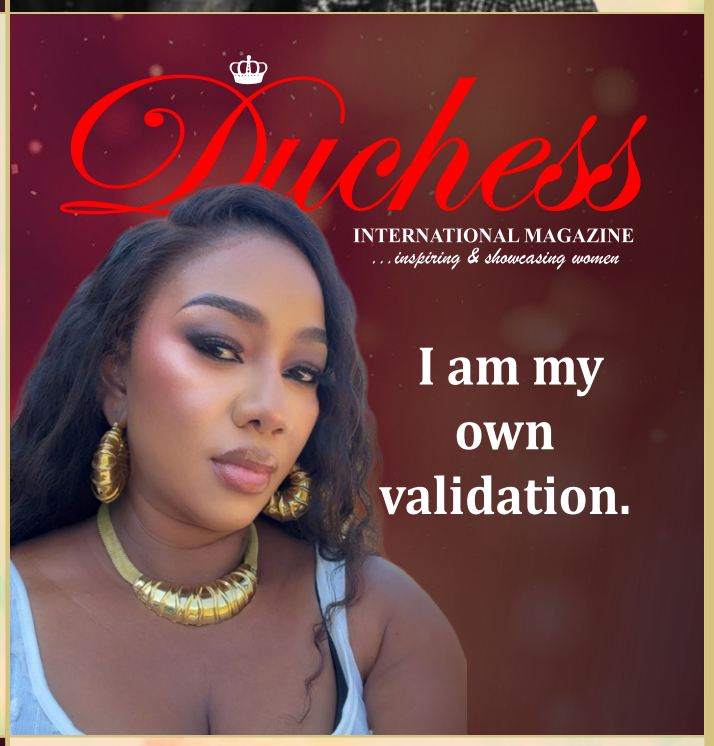



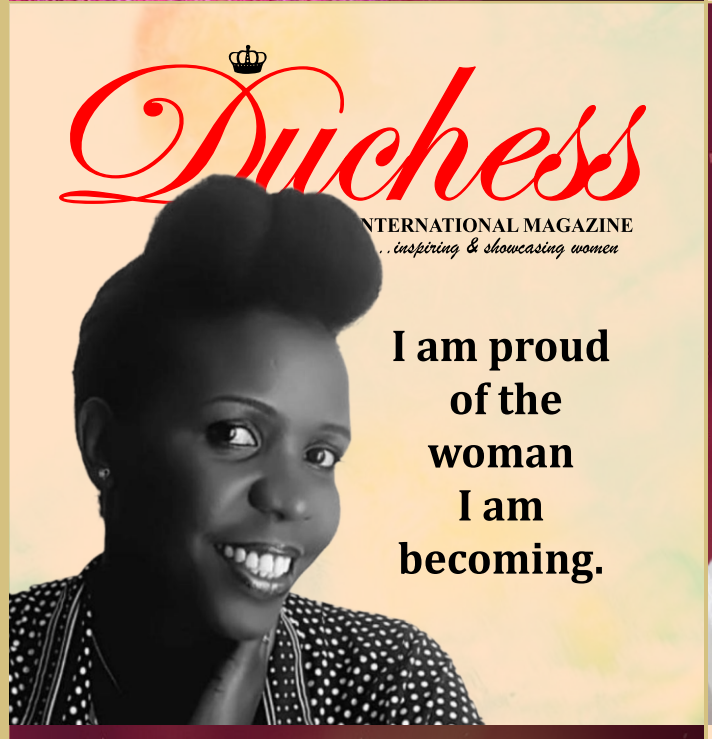







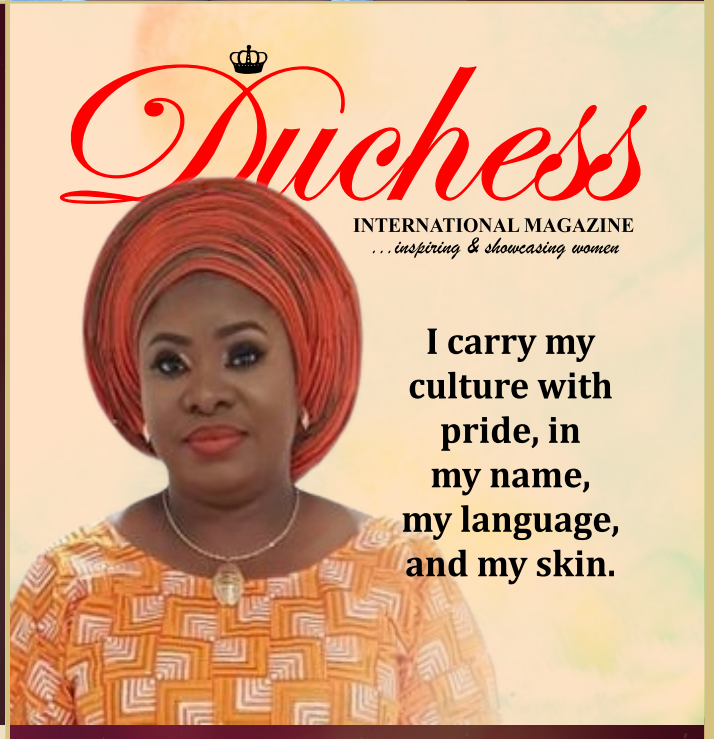




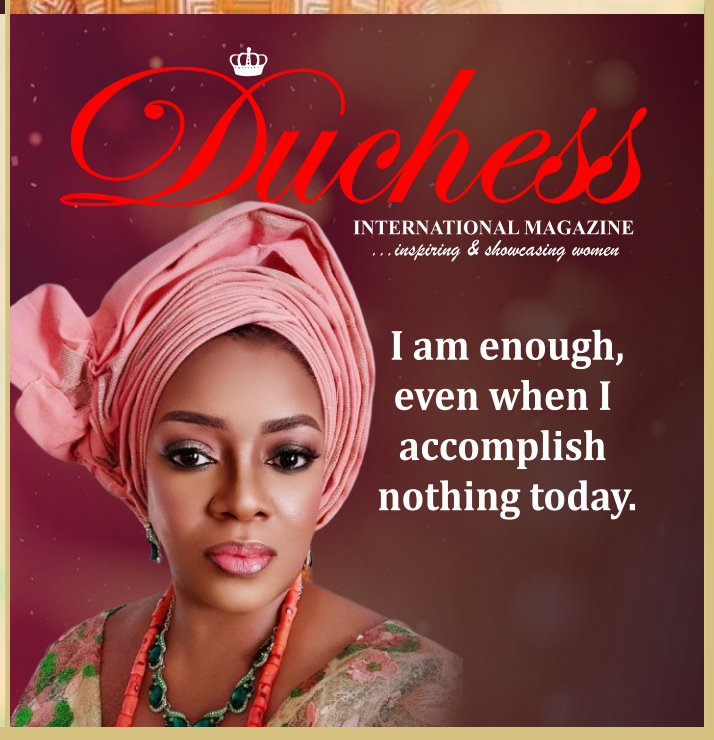










THE MANY LIVES OF LEADERSHIP

# DR SAFIYA STEPHANIE MUSA:

## A JOURNEY ACROSS ENTERPRISE, HEALTHCARE, PEACEBUILDING AND SOCIAL IMPACT

Leadership is rarely a straight line. For some, it is shaped in institutions; for others, it is discovered through service, community and the courage to move into unfamiliar territory. For Dr Safiya Stephanie Musa, it has been all of these things. An economist, healthcare executive, peacebuilder, social-impact leader and former international banking executive, she has spent more than two decades building experience across banking and financial services, healthcare, education, governance, peacebuilding and community development. What connects these seemingly different chapters is a clear conviction: that knowledge, influence and opportunity carry their greatest value when they are used to create impact beyond oneself.

That journey began with economics. A graduate of Economics from Bayero University, Kano, Dr Musa continued her professional development through executive education and advanced training at institutions including Yale University, The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, INSEAD, Makerere University and the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies. Her professional development spans economics, management, banking, healthcare administration, international affairs, peacebuilding and project management, complemented by professional fellowships, certifications and memberships across these fields. Together, these experiences gave her the breadth to build a career that reaches far beyond a single discipline.

The financial sector became her first major arena of professional leadership. Over more than two decades, Dr Musa developed extensive experience in banking and financial services, including an international chapter as Chief Representative Officer of First Bank of Nigeria in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. In that capacity, she led strategic engagements and business development initiatives across the Middle East region, gaining valuable exposure to international markets, institutional relationships and cross-border business. The experience broadened both her professional perspective and her understanding of what effective leadership requires. It also provided a foundation that she would later carry into a very different field, where strategy would meet one of life's most fundamental concerns: human well-being.



That next chapter unfolded in healthcare and strategic consulting. Dr Musa serves as Executive Director, Business Development at Zaihar Healthcare, owners of Kano NeuroSpine Hospital and Kano Serene Clinics, where she leads strategic growth, partnerships, stakeholder engagement and sustainability initiatives focused on expanding access to quality healthcare services in Nigeria. Alongside this role, she serves as Principal Consultant at Zaihar Consulting, providing advisory support in strategy, organisational development, stakeholder engagement and social-impact initiatives. Her transition into healthcare illustrates the versatility of her experience, bringing the discipline of enterprise and institutional leadership into a sector where organisational effectiveness can directly influence lives.

Beyond the corporate environment, her leadership took on an increasingly community-centred dimension. As Founder of The Amazons Initiative, a women-led, non-partisan organisation, Dr Musa works across women and youth empowerment, peacebuilding, social inclusion, community development and health interventions. Through Neuro-Health for Peace, she advances awareness of the relationship between neurological and mental well-being and sustainable peace, with community-based interventions that include medical outreach, health education, screenings and referrals. The work reflects her understanding that peaceful and resilient communities are shaped by more than conflict resolution; they also depend on health, inclusion, opportunity and the ability of people to participate meaningfully in their communities.

That commitment to creating opportunity naturally extends into education and professional development. Through EduShine Support Foundation, which she founded, Dr Musa promotes education, empowerment, youth development and community support, particularly among underserved populations. Her leadership in the Northern Professional Women Network, where she serves as Convener, carries the same emphasis on capacity and opportunity, with the platform promoting leadership, mentorship, economic empowerment, civic engagement, advocacy and professional networking. Across these initiatives, she has continued to create spaces where people can acquire knowledge, develop confidence and gain access to opportunities capable of shaping their futures.

As her professional journey expanded, so did her contribution to institutions and governance. Dr Musa has served in advisory, trustee and leadership capacities across professional associations, nonprofit organisations, alumni institutions and community initiatives, contributing to strategy, financial stewardship, institutional development, resource mobilisation and stakeholder management. She has served as National Vice President of the Institute of Chartered Economists of Nigeria and Trustee of Emerge Women. Her current responsibilities include serving as Financial Secretary of the Bayero University Alumni Association, Chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee of the Bayero University Endowment Fund, National Deputy Director of the Professional Women Council, and Chair of the North Central Resource Mobilization Committee of the Rotary Action Group for Peace-Nigeria. Across these roles, her contribution has remained anchored in stewardship, partnership and institutional growth.





The breadth of her professional affiliations and distinctions further reflects the range of expertise she has accumulated. Dr Musa is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Economists of Nigeria, Fellow of the Institute of Management Consultants and Fellow of the College of Healthcare Administrators of Nigeria. She is also a member of the Project Management Institute, Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs and the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution. Her distinctions include Rotary Peace Fellow, Certified Mediator, Certified Trainer in Nonviolent Communication and Servant Leadership, AU Agenda 2063 Ambassador and Institute for Economics and Peace Ambassador. Taken together, these experiences have strengthened a leadership philosophy that connects professional excellence with peace, inclusion, resilience and sustainable development.

For Dr Musa, the most meaningful measure of leadership appears to lie beyond the title attached to a role. It is found in the lives reached, the doors opened, the institutions strengthened and the possibilities created for others. That perspective continues to shape the work she takes on and the spaces in which she chooses to serve. As her journey continues to evolve, so



does the opportunity to turn experience into something that outlives the moment: a stronger institution, a more empowered community and a generation better equipped to lead.

*This is the story of a woman whose career kept expanding because her definition of leadership kept expanding.*

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# HON. DAN AMOS:

## A LEADER WHOSE STEWARDSHIP BRIDGES RESPONSIBILITY AND REPRESENTATION

Among the many responsibilities entrusted to elected representatives, few are more important than the duty to ensure that the needs, aspirations and concerns of their constituents are reflected in the decisions that shape national life. For Hon. Dan Amos, the member representing Jema'a/Sanga Federal Constituency in Kaduna State, this responsibility has become the defining thread of his public service journey. Through legislative engagement, constituency development initiatives and sustained community interaction, he has sought to build a model of representation that connects the realities of everyday life in Southern Kaduna with the policymaking processes of Nigeria's National Assembly.

For Amos, representation begins with understanding the people behind the statistics. Jema'a and Sanga are home to diverse communities, each with its own aspirations, challenges and priorities. Farmers concerned about productivity, students seeking educational opportunities, traders navigating economic uncertainty and families searching for access to healthcare all form part of the constituency's reality. Those realities have helped shape his approach to public service and informed many of the interventions associated with his tenure. Rather than viewing representation as a responsibility confined to Abuja, he has consistently emphasised the importance of maintaining close ties with the communities that entrusted him with their mandate.

Within the National Assembly, Amos serves as Chairman of the House Committee on House Services, a role that places him at the centre of key administrative responsibilities within the House of Representatives. Beyond committee leadership, his legislative work has included support for initiatives aimed at strengthening healthcare and education, including the co-sponsorship of bills establishing the Federal Medical Centre in Kafanchan and the Federal University of Applied Sciences in Kachia.

These efforts reflect an understanding that sustainable development often depends on strengthening institutions capable of serving future generations.

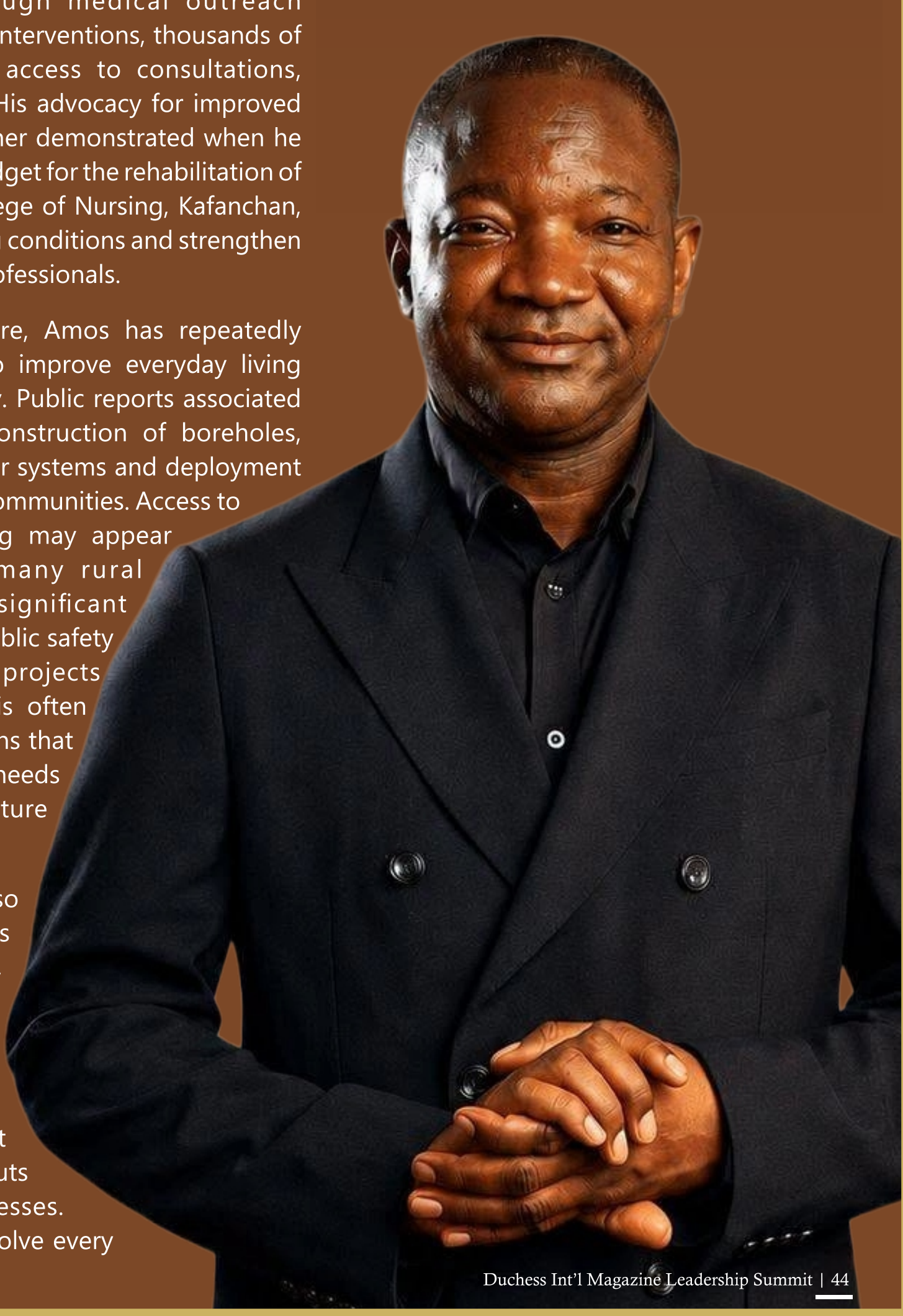
His commitment to education is also evident in projects associated with his constituency work. Reports from his stewardship presentations highlight scholarship support for hundreds of students in tertiary institutions, alongside interventions in schools and vocational education facilities. Such investments recognise a reality that many communities across Nigeria understand well: long-term development is difficult to achieve without expanding access to quality education and creating opportunities for young people to build meaningful futures.

Healthcare has emerged as another recurring theme throughout his tenure. Through medical outreach programmes and health-focused interventions, thousands of residents have benefited from access to consultations, treatments and specialised care. His advocacy for improved healthcare infrastructure was further demonstrated when he secured funding in the national budget for the rehabilitation of facilities at the Kaduna State College of Nursing, Kafanchan, citing the need to improve learning conditions and strengthen the training of future healthcare professionals.

Beyond education and healthcare, Amos has repeatedly focused on projects designed to improve everyday living conditions across his constituency. Public reports associated with his stewardship cite the construction of boreholes, installation of solar-powered water systems and deployment of solar streetlights in numerous communities. Access to clean water and reliable lighting may appear ordinary to some, but for many rural communities they represent significant improvements in quality of life, public safety and economic activity. These projects demonstrate how development is often built through practical interventions that address immediate community needs while laying foundations for future growth.

Economic empowerment has also been a prominent feature of his constituency initiatives. In 2025, thousands of constituents benefited from a large-scale empowerment programme valued at hundreds of millions of naira, alongside support that included grants, agricultural inputs and assistance for small businesses. While such programmes cannot solve every economic challenge facing communities, they reflect an effort to provide resources that enable individuals and families to improve their livelihoods and pursue greater financial stability.

Underpinning these various initiatives is a broader philosophy of public service that has shaped Amos's approach to leadership and representation. Whether discussing legislation, education, healthcare, infrastructure or empowerment, a common thread runs through his work: the belief that representation should be visible in the everyday lives of citizens.
In a political environment where trust is often tested, that principle remains one of the most



important measures by which elected officials are judged. For the people of Jema'a/Sanga, the value of representation is ultimately measured not by speeches delivered in parliament, but by opportunities created, services improved and lives impacted.

As Nigeria continues to confront complex social and economic challenges, the expectations placed on public office holders remain high. Citizens increasingly demand leaders who are not only present during campaigns but responsive throughout their time in office. The story of Hon. Dan Amos reflects that broader conversation about governance, accountability and service. While history will determine the lasting significance of any political career, his tenure offers an example of how legislative responsibility can extend beyond lawmaking into the practical work of community development. In the end, the true measure of representation lies not in political rhetoric but in whether people can point to tangible improvements in their communities and say that their voices have been heard.



# HON. TOMISIN EDU FALADE:

## A DISTINCTIVE VOICE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Public influence takes on a different meaning when it is measured not by prominence, but by consequence. In the life and work of Hon. Tomisin Edu Falade, that consequence can be seen in the opportunities created, communities reached and practical interventions that have shaped her growing profile in public life. Across education, humanitarian intervention, youth development, community infrastructure and political participation, her work reflects an engagement with people and the circumstances that shape their everyday lives.

Her formative years in Akure laid the foundation for an academic path spanning law, sociology, criminology and security studies. She studied at the University of Abuja, where she obtained a Diploma in Law and a Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology, before pursuing further professional studies in Criminology and Security Studies at MIVA University. This multidisciplinary background has given her a broad perspective on society, human behaviour, security and the structures that shape communities, informing the range of issues that have come to define her public engagement.

That academic foundation found expression in the establishment of the Tomisin Edu Falade Foundation, where her interest in human development has taken a more structured form. As Founder and Chief Executive Officer, she has positioned the Foundation around the principle, "Putting Smiles on Faces Through Several Life-Touching Programmes," with initiatives spanning education and community support across Akure North, Akure South and neighbouring communities. Its educational interventions have included scholarships, bursaries, school grants and learning materials, alongside direct assistance to more than 100 secondary-school students. Through these efforts, the Foundation has sought to broaden access to educational opportunities and provide practical support where financial circumstances might otherwise limit a young person's prospects.



has extended to the broader question of how individuals translate potential into sustainable opportunity. Through engagements involving institutions and agencies including Supertech, SUBEB, TESCOM, FIRS and higher-education institutions, Falade has facilitated employment and professional opportunities for young people and qualified individuals. Her interventions have also included support for students and high-achieving young people, reinforcing an emphasis on human capital development and the importance of creating pathways through which talent can flourish.

This focus on opportunity sits alongside a substantial humanitarian dimension to her work. Through the TEF Foundation, food assistance, financial support and livelihood interventions have reached families, women, widows, persons living with disabilities and other vulnerable members of society. At the same time, her community engagement has moved beyond immediate welfare to address elements of the wider environment in which people live. Support connected with transformer installation and electricity restoration has reached communities including Iju and the Iju/Itaogbolu axis, while healthcare and inclusion have also featured in her interventions, including assistance directed towards visually impaired persons.

As her community engagement developed, so too did her participation in the wider arena of public affairs. In 2026, Falade emerged as the All Progressives Congress candidate for the Ondo State House of Assembly, Akure North Constituency, following the party's primary process. She also serves as National Deputy Organising Secretary of the Tinubu Torch Bearers Movement. These roles have added a political dimension to a public profile already shaped by philanthropy, entrepreneurship, humanitarian activity and grassroots engagement, bringing her work into a broader sphere of political organisation and public participation.

Taken together, these different strands reveal a profile that cannot easily be confined to a single professional description. Education, humanitarian intervention, youth development, community infrastructure and political engagement may occupy distinct spaces, yet they converge around a recurring concern with people, access and possibility. Whether the focus is a student seeking educational support, a young person pursuing employment, a vulnerable family requiring assistance or a community seeking improved basic services, her interventions have consistently engaged with practical aspects of everyday life.

Across entrepreneurship, humanitarian engagement, community development and political participation, Hon. Tomisin Edu Falade's public profile continues to evolve. What connects these different spheres is a consistent interest in expanding opportunity, responding to community needs and creating avenues through which individuals can move forward. As Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the TEF Foundation, she remains guided by the principle, “Putting Smiles on Faces Through Several Life-Touching Programmes.” More than a statement of intent, it provides a defining thread through her work, linking compassion with action and purpose with a tangible commitment to the communities she serves.

# THE UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON

## A Legacy of Learning, Creativity and Impact

The story of the University of Brighton is one of evolution, rooted in a tradition of learning that began in 1859, when the Brighton School of Art opened in the kitchens of the Royal Pavilion. From those early beginnings, the institution has grown into a diverse and forward-looking university with around 17,000 students and 2,150 staff across three campuses, while maintaining a distinctive connection to the city from which its story began.

That history continues to shape the character of the University today. Its academic community spans disciplines including medicine, engineering, business, law, education, psychology, architecture, art, media, journalism, English literature and the creative arts. This breadth brings different forms of knowledge together, creating an environment where students and researchers can explore ideas from multiple perspectives and apply what they learn to the world around them.

Creativity remains an important part of that identity. What began as a school of art has developed into a wider culture of curiosity, innovation and independent thinking, supported by teaching and research across a broad range of disciplines. The University has continued to evolve with the changing needs of society, while maintaining a clear belief in the value of education, knowledge and the ability of individuals to contribute meaningfully to the world around them.

That belief extends beyond the classroom. The University maintains strong relationships with communities, schools, charities, businesses and other organisations, creating opportunities for knowledge and expertise to be shared beyond its campuses. Through these partnerships, students and staff engage with real-world challenges, gaining experiences that connect academic learning with practical impact and demonstrating how education can contribute to wider social progress.

This outward-looking approach is reflected in the University's values of equity, courage, creativity, partnership and sustainability. They speak to an institution that recognises the importance of creating opportunities, encouraging different perspectives and working collaboratively towards a more positive future. Its commitment to inclusion and equality further strengthens its role as a place where people from different backgrounds can learn, contribute and develop.

The University's character is also inseparable from its setting. Its City, Falmer and Moulsecoomb campuses each offer a different dimension of life in Brighton, from








the cultural energy of the city centre to the natural surroundings of the South Downs and the vibrant student community at Moulsecoomb. Together, they place learning within a city recognised for its creativity, diversity and distinctive sense of identity.

It is within this environment that Duchess International Magazine, in collaboration with the University of Brighton, will bring its Leadership Summit to the University on 16 October 2026. The setting is particularly fitting for a gathering centred on “Honouring Our Communities: The Audacity to Lead — Redefining Power, Purpose and Legacy,” because the University's own story reflects many of the principles at the heart of the conversation: learning, courage, creativity, community and the pursuit of meaningful impact.

Ultimately, the University of Brighton represents more than its history, campuses or academic disciplines. Its enduring story is about the possibilities that emerge when knowledge meets curiosity, when creativity meets purpose and when education extends beyond individual achievement to benefit the wider world. For more than a century and a half, Brighton has provided a space for people to learn, question, create and grow. On 16 October 2026, it will provide that space for a new generation of leadership conversations, bringing together ideas and people with the potential to shape what comes next.



# WHAT WE BUILD IN THE DARK

## Black Leadership, Community and the Legacy We Carry Forward



Every October, Black History Month offers Britain an opportunity to recognise Black presence, Black achievement, Black resilience and Black contribution. It is a time to remember the generations of Black people whose courage, creativity, service and leadership have helped shape British society, while also recognising the work being done today. In 2026, that reflection carries a particularly meaningful message through the theme “Honouring Our Communities”. It asks us to look beyond the most familiar names and moments of history and recognise the Black people whose everyday work has shaped, supported and sustained Black communities across Britain.

The story of Black Britain, however, did not begin with one month or one generation. Long before Black History Month became a recognised annual observance, Black people were establishing lives, contributing to British society and creating communities of their own. Their stories span generations and encompass education, healthcare, business, culture, faith, public service and activism. Some contributions became part of the national record; others remained within families and communities. Together, they form a history that is far richer than the moments most often remembered.

A defining chapter came in June 1948, when the Empire Windrush arrived at Tilbury. The arrival became a symbol of a significant period of Caribbean migration to Britain. Caribbean men and women contributed to Britain's post-war rebuilding, including through the NHS, transport and other essential services. Their contributions extended beyond the workplace. Black Caribbean communities established families, businesses, churches, cultural organisations and networks of support, creating spaces of belonging and laying foundations for generations of Black Britons. They were not simply responding to the needs of a changing Britain. They were building communities within it.

As those communities grew, so did their collective voice. Black people began organising not only to support one another but also to challenge systems that restricted their opportunities. The Bristol Bus Boycott of 1963 stands as a powerful example. Black activists and their allies challenged the refusal of the Bristol Omnibus Company to employ Black and Asian bus crews. After four months of sustained action, the company changed its discriminatory policy. The boycott became an important milestone in the wider struggle against racial discrimination in Britain and demonstrated the influence that organised Black communities could exercise when they turned shared experience into collective action.

Community influence, however, has never been limited to moments of protest. Across generations, Black people have built businesses, supplementary schools, youth initiatives, churches, cultural organisations, professional networks and community groups. They have mentored young people, preserved heritage, supported families, created opportunities and established spaces where Black people could find knowledge, connection and belonging. Much of this work happened away from the spotlight. Its impact can be seen in the confidence of a young person who found a mentor, the business that created its first opportunity for someone else, or the community institution that became a place of support for an entire generation. Some of the most important parts of Black history were built quietly.

The deeper meaning of "Honouring Our Communities" lies in recognising not only what Black communities have overcome, but what Black people have created. It honours the teacher, entrepreneur, healthcare professional, artist, parent, activist, volunteer, mentor and community leader whose influence reaches beyond their immediate role. It recognises that communities are strengthened by Black people who contribute their knowledge, time, resources, courage and vision. Most importantly, it reminds us that Black history is not finished. The work of building, influencing and strengthening Black communities continues.

That continuing work brings the conversation to Black leadership today. The question is no longer only what previous generations built, but what today's leaders are doing with the opportunities and influence they have inherited. For emerging leaders, it takes the audacity to step forward, use their voices and accept responsibility. For established leaders, influence carries another obligation: to make room, share knowledge, open doors and develop others. Leadership is not simply about occupying a position. It is about what becomes possible because you occupy it.



The measure of influence is often found in how many lives it helps move forward.

History therefore meets the present in the theme, “Honouring Our Communities: The Audacity to Lead - Redefining Power, Purpose and Legacy.” Honouring Our Communities asks us to recognise the Black people and generations whose work created the foundations we stand on. The Audacity to Lead challenges us to step forward and contribute to what comes next. Redefining Power asks us to see influence as responsibility rather than domination. Purpose asks who benefits from what we build. And Legacy asks what remains when our own moment has passed.

As the Duchess International Magazine Leadership Summit 2026 takes place at the University of Brighton during Black History Month, these questions become especially timely. Who built the communities we inherited? Whose quiet work made our opportunities possible? How are we using our influence today? Whose confidence are we strengthening? Which doors are we opening? What are we building that will still matter when we are no longer in the room?

Black History Month honours Black history.
“Honouring Our Communities” honours the Black people who have carried that history forward.
Leadership asks us to continue the work.
Legacy asks us to leave something worthy of being carried forward.

Black history lives in what we remember, what Black people have built, what Black communities continue to influence, and what we choose to build next.




LEADERSHIP & WELLBEING

### Leading well begins with caring for yourself.

# The Leader Needs Care Too

## Why Self-Care Is Essential to Living, Leading and Leaving a Legacy

There is a quiet cost to always being the strong one. Between work, family, business, leadership and the countless responsibilities of everyday life, it is easy to become so focused on taking care of everyone else that we forget to take care of ourselves. We keep showing up, providing, supporting and solving problems, often postponing our own needs until another day. Yet, even the person everyone depends on needs care, rest and renewal.

For many men and women, self-neglect has become an unintended consequence of responsibility. The man who works tirelessly to provide for his family may become so focused on everyone else's comfort that he forgets his own. The woman balancing family, career, business and leadership may become so accustomed to giving that she rarely stops to consider what she needs for herself. But leadership and responsibility should not require the complete sacrifice of the person carrying them. Self-care is not selfishness; it is part of sustaining the person you are and the life you are building.

Perhaps it is time to deliberately choose yourself. Book that spa appointment you have been postponing, enjoy a proper massage, manicure or pedicure, and give your body an opportunity to relax. Refresh your wardrobe and buy something new simply because you like it. Get new clothes, shoes or personal essentials, and stop waiting for a birthday, promotion or special occasion before you treat yourself. Sometimes, you are enough of a reason to celebrate.

Give your appearance some attention too. Visit the salon or barbershop and give yourself a fresh look. Get that haircut, hairstyle or grooming treatment you have been thinking about, then dress up and step outside. Have a beautiful meal, visit somewhere new, spend time with people who make you laugh, listen to good music and enjoy the moment. You do not always need a major celebration to experience joy. Sometimes, you simply need to give yourself permission to enjoy life beyond your responsibilities.

Self-care, however, is not defined by luxury or how much money you spend. It can be getting enough sleep, taking a quiet walk, reading a book, spending time in nature, disconnecting from your phone or simply allowing yourself to rest. It can also mean setting healthy boundaries, learning to say no without guilt and recognising when your energy needs to be protected.

Caring for yourself is ultimately about paying attention to what your mind, body and spirit need to remain well.

This is where self-care becomes a leadership principle. A person who is constantly depleted cannot continue giving at their highest capacity. Leadership requires clarity, patience, emotional strength and sound judgment, all of which become difficult to sustain when we continually operate from exhaustion. Taking care of yourself does not mean abandoning your responsibilities; it means preserving the capacity to fulfil them well and remain present for the people who depend on you.

There is also wisdom in understanding that not every battle deserves your energy, not every request requires a yes and not every problem is yours to solve. Protecting your peace and creating healthy boundaries are not signs of weakness. They are signs of maturity and self-awareness. A leader who understands how to manage personal energy is better positioned to manage responsibilities, relationships and the demands that come with influence.

When we speak about leadership, we often celebrate achievements, positions, influence and impact. We talk about what leaders build and the legacies they leave behind, but we should also consider the lives of the people building those legacies. A meaningful legacy should not be built on a lifetime of complete self-neglect. It should include not only what you accomplished for others, but also the life you allowed yourself to experience along the way. You cannot build a meaningful legacy by constantly losing yourself in the process.

So, this is your reminder to pause and choose yourself too. You have spent enough time being strong for everyone else. You have provided, supported, encouraged, sacrificed and carried responsibilities that many people may never fully see. You deserve the same kindness and consideration you so freely extend to others. Take care of yourself, invest in yourself and make room for joy. The world needs your leadership, but it also needs you to be healthy, fulfilled, confident and present enough to continue making an impact. After all, the leader needs care too.





# INTRIGUING THREADS OF AFRICAN HERITAGE

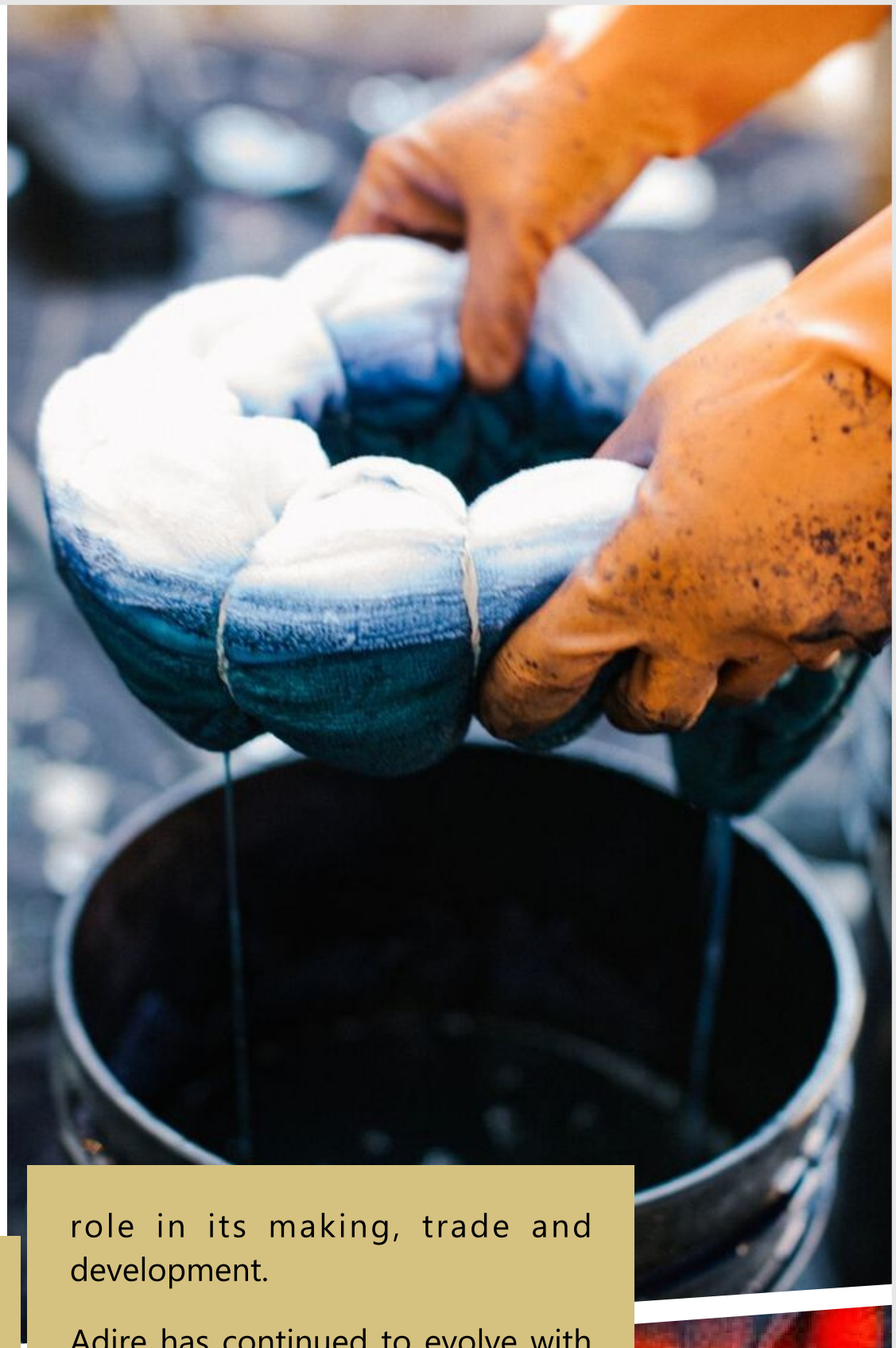
## Woven stories, living culture and the remarkable things Africa has carried through generations

Give Africa a piece of cloth, a string of beads and a little colour, and watch it tell a story.

Not just any story, but one that can take you from an artisan carefully creating something by hand to a family preparing for a celebration; from the deep indigo of Adire, a traditional Yoruba resist-dyed textile from southwestern Nigeria, to the intricate weaving of Aso Oke, a handwoven cloth associated with Yoruba ceremonial dress. It can lead us to the artistry of African beadwork and hairstyles, the familiar richness of shea butter and black soap, and the festivals and celebrations that bring communities together. These are beautiful things, but they are also expressions of creativity, identity, knowledge and belonging.

There are countless traditions across Africa, each with its own history, artistry and meaning. This feature offers only a glimpse: a journey through some of the fabrics, adornments, beauty practices and celebrations that have travelled through generations and continue to evolve today. Some may be familiar. Others may be new to you. Together, they reveal an Africa that is diverse, creative and very much alive.



# ADIRE

## The Blue That Remembers

Adire is a traditional Yoruba textile from southwestern Nigeria, recognised for its distinctive indigo designs created through resist-dyeing. Artisans use techniques such as tying, stitching, folding and other forms of resist to prevent parts of the fabric from absorbing the dye. The resulting patterns can be intricate and expressive, with designs inspired by nature, everyday life and the world around the maker. Abeokuta became particularly associated with Adire production, with women playing a significant role in its making, trade and development.

Adire has continued to evolve with changing tastes, materials and markets. Contemporary designers now use its distinctive patterns in dresses, shirts, accessories and interiors, bringing the textile into new settings while retaining its visual character. What makes it remarkable is not simply the beauty of the indigo, but the ingenuity behind it: a traditional craft continually finding new ways to speak to the present.

**LOOK CLOSER:** Some Adire patterns draw inspiration from familiar objects, places and scenes, turning the cloth into a visual record of the world around its maker.

# ASO OKE

## When Threads Come Together

Aso Oke is a handwoven Yoruba textile traditionally worn for important occasions in southwestern Nigeria. It is commonly woven in narrow strips that are joined to create a larger cloth, with skilled weaving, colour combinations and patterns contributing to its distinctive appearance. Iseyin in Oyo State is one of the places historically associated with its production. Weddings, festivals, naming ceremonies and other significant occasions have provided a natural home for the fabric, where its richness becomes part of the celebration.

Its story, however, has not remained in the past. Contemporary designers have reworked Aso Oke into dresses, jackets, bags, shoes and other modern pieces, introducing the handwoven textile to new audiences. There is a quiet beauty in the way it is made: separate strips, each carefully created, come together as one. It is craftsmanship made visible, and a tradition that continues to find room in contemporary fashion.



# AFRICAN BEADWORK

## When Beauty Speaks

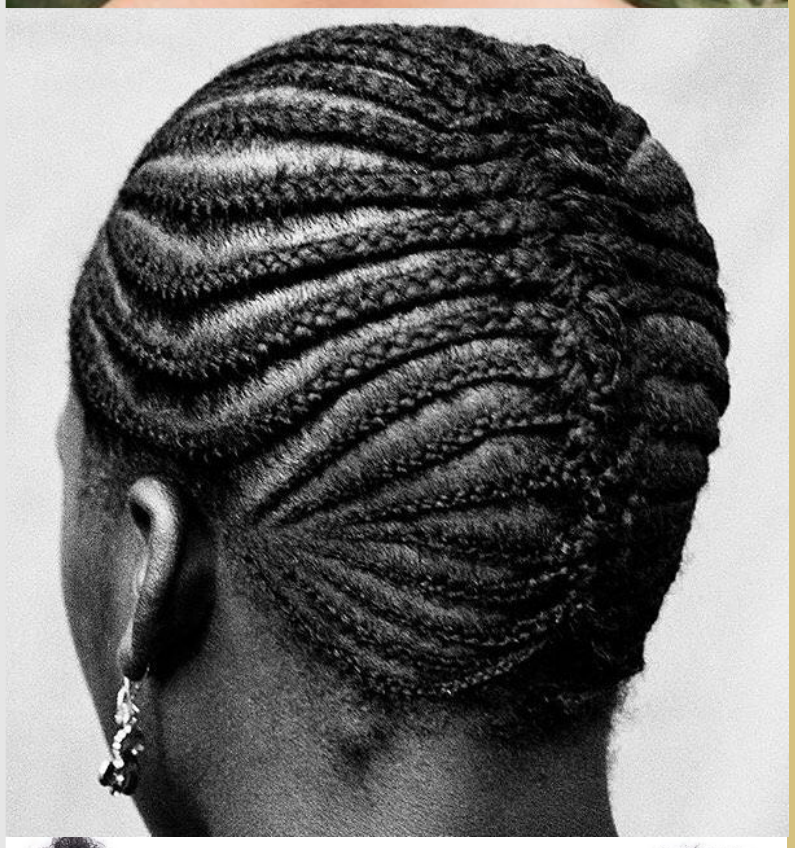
Across Africa, beads have been used to adorn the body, decorate ceremonial objects and express identity, status and spirituality. Different communities have worked with glass, coral, shell, stone and other materials, developing distinctive forms of beadwork over centuries. In Ile-Ife, an ancient Yoruba city in southwestern Nigeria, archaeological evidence points to local glass and glass-bead production dating back at least to the 11th century. In the former Benin Kingdom, coral beads became closely associated with royal regalia and kingship.

Their appeal lies in both their beauty and their meaning. Beads can mark important occasions, accompany religious and ceremonial practices, and form part of elaborate expressions of identity. A necklace may catch the eye because of its colour and craftsmanship, while a crown or garment can carry a much deeper significance for the community that created it. Across different African traditions, beads have become a remarkable meeting point between artistry, identity and memory.

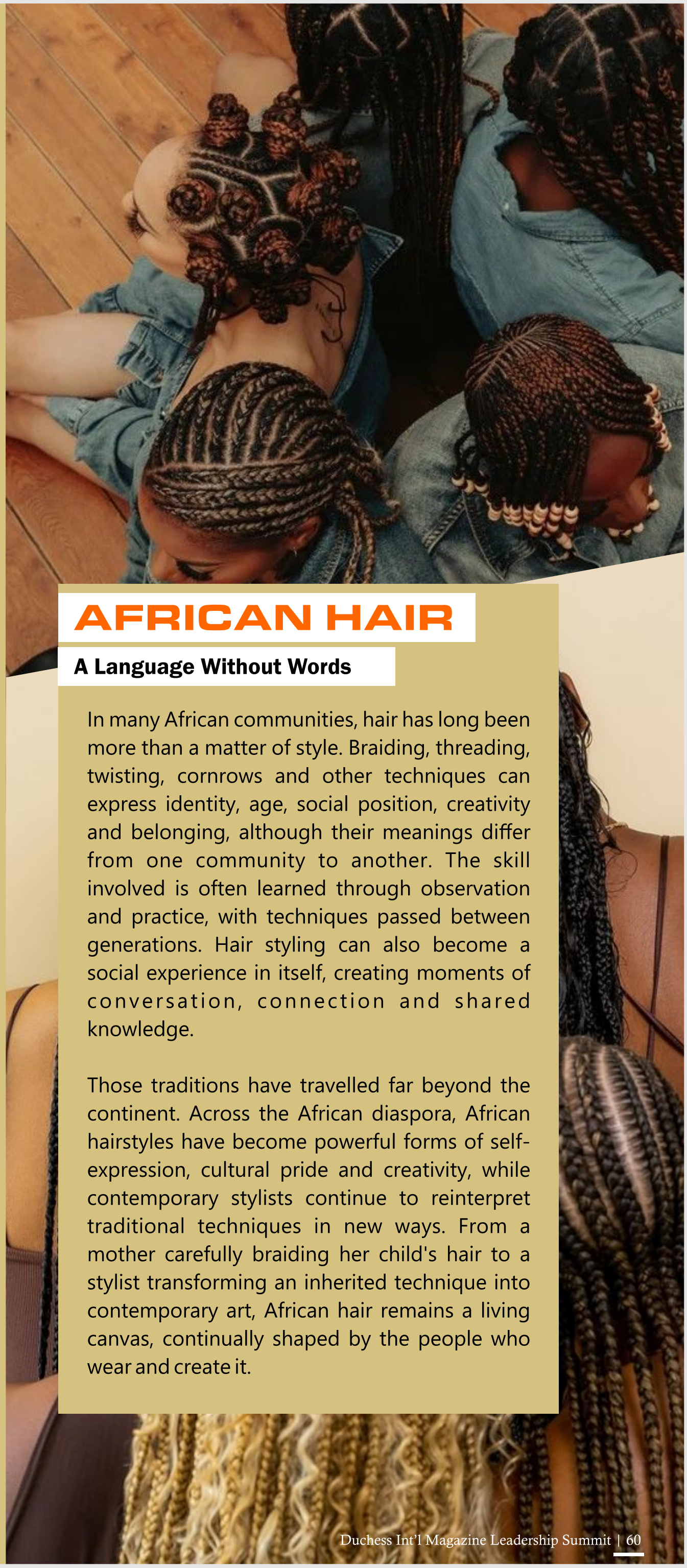
**DID YOU KNOW?** Archaeological evidence from Ile-Ife points to local glass and glass-bead production dating back at least to the 11th century.











# AFRICAN HAIR

## A Language Without Words

In many African communities, hair has long been more than a matter of style. Braiding, threading, twisting, cornrows and other techniques can express identity, age, social position, creativity and belonging, although their meanings differ from one community to another. The skill involved is often learned through observation and practice, with techniques passed between generations. Hair styling can also become a social experience in itself, creating moments of conversation, connection and shared knowledge.

Those traditions have travelled far beyond the continent. Across the African diaspora, African hairstyles have become powerful forms of self-expression, cultural pride and creativity, while contemporary stylists continue to reinterpret traditional techniques in new ways. From a mother carefully braiding her child's hair to a stylist transforming an inherited technique into contemporary art, African hair remains a living canvas, continually shaped by the people who wear and create it.

# SHEA BUTTER & BLACK SOAP

## Beauty Knowledge That Came From Home

Long before shea butter appeared on international beauty shelves, communities across West Africa had been harvesting and processing shea nuts for generations. The shea tree grows across a broad belt of the region, and women have traditionally played an important role in collecting and processing the nuts into butter. Used for generations to moisturise and protect the skin and care for hair, shea butter became part of everyday beauty and household knowledge, with its uses and preparation techniques passed through families.

Black soap carries its own tradition of plant-based beauty knowledge. Traditionally produced using ashes from materials such as plantain skins and combined with ingredients including shea butter or palm kernel oil, it has long been used for cleansing and bathing. Today, both shea butter and African black soap have found audiences around the world. Their journey from family and community practice to global beauty culture is another example of how African knowledge continues to travel, adapt and find new life.



# BLACK LEGACIES

## Two Lives That Changed Britain

Black history is carried not only in the names that became widely celebrated, but also in the lives of Black people who saw a need, stepped forward and created something that outlasted them. Their contributions have taken different forms, from healthcare and enterprise to sport, public service and the pursuit of racial equality. Across generations, Black people have served, created, challenged, represented and strengthened the communities around them, often leaving an impact that reached far beyond their own lifetime.

For this edition, Black Legacies brings together two remarkable figures whose lives form an important part of Britain's Black history: Mary Seacole and Sir Learie Constantine. Born almost a century apart, they entered very different chapters of history and made their mark in very different ways. Seacole built through service, healthcare and enterprise, while Constantine took the influence he gained through sport into advocacy, law and public life. Their journeys reveal two distinct expressions of Black leadership and remind us that legacy is not simply about what we achieve for ourselves. It is also about what we create, challenge, strengthen and leave behind for others.

## MARY SEACOLE

### The Woman Who Refused to Let Rejection Define Her Contribution

Mary Seacole's story begins in Jamaica in 1805, long before she became associated with Britain and the Crimean War. Born Mary Jane Grant, she grew up in a household where caring for the sick was part of everyday life. Her mother, who ran a lodging house in Kingston, was skilled in traditional Caribbean medicine and cared for sick and injured people. Mary learned from her and developed practical experience that became central to the work she undertook throughout her life.





Her knowledge grew through experience. Seacole cared for people during outbreaks of cholera and yellow fever and travelled to different parts of the Caribbean and Central America, combining healthcare with business enterprise. By the time the Crimean War began in 1853, she had already developed considerable experience caring for the sick. Her story was therefore not one of someone suddenly discovering a calling during wartime. It was the continuation of a life already shaped by service, resilience and enterprise.

When the war created an urgent need for medical care, Seacole travelled to Britain and offered her services. She was refused a place within the organised nursing effort. Rather than allowing that rejection to determine the limits of her contribution, she paid her own way to the Crimea. There, she worked close to the fighting, providing medicine, food and care to wounded soldiers. With her business partner, Thomas Day, she established the British Hotel near Balaklava, creating a place where soldiers could obtain supplies and receive care.

There is something particularly powerful about this part of Seacole's story. She did not wait for an institution to validate her ability to serve. She recognised a need and created a practical response using her own knowledge, resources and determination. Her work therefore belongs not only to the history of healthcare, but also to the history of Black enterprise and initiative. She demonstrated that leadership can begin with a simple but consequential decision: when something is needed and you have the capacity to provide it, step forward.

Her contribution was remembered by many of the soldiers she helped, and she published her autobiography, Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands, in 1857. Yet her place in mainstream historical memory became far less prominent after her death in 1881. For generations, accounts of nursing during the Crimean War focused overwhelmingly on Florence Nightingale, leaving Seacole's contribution comparatively overlooked.

Recognition eventually grew. In 2016, a statue of Mary Seacole was unveiled at St Thomas' Hospital in London following years of campaigning. More than a century after her death, the memorial represented a significant public acknowledgement of a Black woman whose contribution had not always received the prominence it deserved.

Mary Seacole's legacy reaches far beyond the battlefield. Her life represents service, courage, enterprise and self-determination. She showed that contribution does not always begin with a title, an appointment or an invitation. Sometimes, it begins with recognising what people need and having the courage to respond.



# SIR LEARIE CONSTANTINE

## The Man Who Took His Influence Beyond the Cricket Field

Nearly a century after Mary Seacole's birth, another Caribbean figure emerged on the British stage and challenged expectations of what a Black man could achieve. Learie Constantine was born in Trinidad in 1901 and first became known internationally as an exceptional cricketer. He represented the West Indies and, in 1929, moved to England to play professionally for Nelson in the Lancashire League. His sporting achievements brought him visibility, but it was what he did with that visibility that made his British legacy particularly significant.

Constantine quickly encountered the racial attitudes that shaped British society and the world of cricket. He used his position to challenge those attitudes, writing about racism in sport and becoming involved with the League of Coloured Peoples, a British civil rights organisation. His cricket career therefore became more than a story of sporting excellence. It became a platform from which he could question the inequalities surrounding him.

During the Second World War, Constantine's contribution moved further into public service. He worked for the Ministry of Labour and National Service as a welfare officer, supporting West Indian and West African workers employed in British factories. He also contributed to wartime broadcasting. Through this work, he encountered the discrimination faced by Black workers and servicemen, including barriers to accommodation and access to leisure spaces.

One incident became particularly significant. In 1943, Constantine and his family were refused accommodation at the Imperial Hotel in London despite having made a booking. He took legal action against the hotel and won damages. The case attracted public and parliamentary attention and became an important example of the racial discrimination Black people encountered in Britain.

Constantine continued to use his public profile to address racial inequality. In 1954, he published Colour Bar, examining racial prejudice and discrimination, before qualifying as a barrister. He later returned to Trinidad, entered political life and became a minister, before returning to Britain in 1962 as High Commissioner for Trinidad and Tobago. His career had moved remarkably far beyond the cricket field, spanning sport, law, politics, diplomacy, broadcasting and public service.

His contribution to Britain continued through several significant appointments. He served on the Race

Relations Board, became involved with the BBC and the Sports Council, and continued speaking and writing on issues affecting race and society. In 1969, he became a life peer, becoming the first person of non-European descent to be awarded a life peerage and the first Black person to sit in the House of Lords.

Constantine's journey was not without complexity. His approaches to racial equality and his relationship with the British establishment attracted different responses from Black activists and political figures. His story therefore should not be reduced to a simple narrative of achievement. It reflects the complexities of navigating race, identity, citizenship and public influence during a period of significant change.

When Sir Learie Constantine died in 1971, he had travelled an extraordinary distance: from Trinidadian cricket to British public life, from the sporting field to the courtroom, from campaigning against discrimination to sitting in the House of Lords. His life demonstrated that achievement becomes even more consequential when influence is used to engage with the circumstances of others.

His legacy is ultimately about influence used beyond oneself. Constantine could have allowed sporting success to be the full measure of his life. Instead, he used the visibility and opportunities that came with it to engage with questions of equality, representation and public responsibility. His life remains a reminder that the true reach of influence is measured not only by how far one rises, but by what becomes possible for others because one chose to use that influence.

THE LEADERSHIP & LEGACY

# WORD SEARCH

*Honouring our communities. Celebrating our history.*
*Shaping what comes next.*

**20 words. One grid. Look closely.**




Find the words hidden within the grid.
They may appear horizontally, vertically or diagonally forwards or backwards.

## THE WORDS

1. ACHIEVEMENT
2. BELONGING
3. COMMUNITY
4. CONTRIBUTION
5. COURAGE
6. CULTURE
7. EMPOWER
8. FREEDOM
9. HERITAGE
10. HISTORY
11. IDENTITY
12. IMPACT
13. INFLUENCE
14. LEADERSHIP
15. LEGACY
16. PROGRESS
17. PURPOSE
18. RESILIENCE
19. UNITY
20. VOICE

## THE GRID

I E F E Y X O M W H K B J Y B N A Z B B
B C B J R H E P Q C M O D E E R F Y L Y
M N O U S U J E M P O W E R L U A L H S
J E G H O B T G R T E I B T N L R F Y I
E I B G M E E L M O K C N O D E R S V N
S L V P O L R I U P A C I C D A F A N F
O I B L M O B A D C I T Q O S D Q V Q L
P S F D I N B U S E U N K K V E T L C U
R E B T X G N N R B N T E G A R U O C E
U R X K Y I I Z I Q M T T G O S J Q I N
P H Y P T N B R T Z L N I S Y H A Y L C
I C T Y V G T H M E E L Y T S I O Y W E
K H I R Q N J T G M S E H Y Y P O K K S
R I N D O C N A E S S Y T E U X L F F A
F N U C Q K C V T A E R C P R K F N J B
J J M W G Y E Y N H R O A S M I L V T C
Y Y M P D I K D U P G T P K W W T H J S
O D O B H Q P R B I O S M C J R Z A W W
T R C C Z Z B Z Z R R I I X H C Q V G P
Q U A D D C I N Y U P H H R A T S S E E

## A CLOSER LOOK

*Every word speaks to a story, a value or a legacy worth carrying forward.*



# THE THINKING ROOM



Before a decision is made, a direction is chosen or an idea takes shape, there is a moment of thought.

The ability to recognise patterns, question assumptions, connect ideas and look beyond the obvious can make all the difference.

Welcome to The Thinking Room, a space designed to test more than what you know. Some challenges require logic. Some require observation. Others ask you to find the right word for a situation or see a familiar idea from a different angle.

Read carefully. Take your time. And don't rush the obvious

***Look again. Think deeper.***

**Some answers are obvious. Some are earned.**
**Great leadership begins with good thinking.**

**01**

COMPLETE THE PATTERN
What number comes next?

2 | 6 | 12 | 20 | 30 | __

Your answer: _____

**02**

FOLLOW THE CLUES
Four houses stand side by side, numbered 1 to 4 from left to right.
Four different families live in them:
Ade, Bello, Chika and David.
Use the clues to determine who lives in each house:
* Ade lives immediately to the right of Bello.
* Chika lives somewhere to the right of David.
* David does not live in House 1 or House 4.
* Bello does not live in House 3 or House 4.

Who lives in each house?

House 1: _____ House 3: _____

House 2: _____ House 4: _____

**03**

CRACK THE WORD
Ten letters have been deliberately rearranged:

S H P E L A I D R E

Rearrange them to reveal a word associated with the ability to guide, influence and move people towards a shared purpose.

Your answer: _____

**04**

DECODE THE PHRASE
Two words are hidden in the sequence below.
The letters have been reversed, repositioned and separated. There are no spaces to guide you.

T I M M U S P H I S R E D A E L

Clue: The answer describes both what you are exploring here and the experience bringing this community together.

Your answer: _____

**05**

WHAT IS THE WORD?
A leader is presented with an idea that challenges the way things have always been done.
Instead of dismissing it, the leader asks questions, listens carefully, examines the evidence and considers whether a better approach is possible.

What single word best describes this quality?

Your answer: _____

**06**

READ THE SITUATION
A senior executive makes a decision that turns out to be wrong. Rather than blame the team, the executive openly acknowledges the mistake, accepts responsibility and focuses on what can be learned from it.

What leadership quality is being demonstrated?

Your answer: _____

**07**

ONE WORD, ONE SITUATION
A colleague receives difficult feedback.
Instead of becoming defensive, they listen, ask questions, reflect on what they have heard and make changes where necessary.

What quality does this demonstrate?

Your answer: _____

**08**

THE LEADER'S MOVE
A team is facing a difficult problem. Everyone looks to the leader for the answer.
The leader pauses and asks: "What are we missing?"
The question changes the conversation. People begin challenging assumptions, offering different perspectives and examining the problem from new angles.

What has the leader created?

Your answer: _____

**THINK AGAIN**

Duchess AFRICA
...Women on a Mission



# DUCHESS AFRICA: BRINGING LIFE-SAVING SKILLS, CONFIDENCE & OPPORTUNITY TO MORE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

## BE THE REASON A CHILD BELIEVES IN WHAT'S POSSIBLE

***A vision becomes more powerful when it moves beyond words.***

Duchess Africa is the charity arm of Duchess International Magazine, taking the magazine's vision beyond publishing and into meaningful community impact. Born from lived experience, it recognises that the right knowledge, encouragement, skills and opportunities can change how people see themselves and what they believe is possible.

Created to empower African women, celebrate sisterhood and inspire positive change, Duchess Africa creates platforms for learning, leadership development, mentorship, connection and community engagement. It also recognises African men as allies and partners in progress, because stronger communities are built when everyone has the opportunity to contribute.

At the heart of Duchess Africa is a simple belief: where you start should not determine how far you can go.

This belief is reflected in programmes and platforms that connect people with practical knowledge and meaningful opportunities. These include the annual Duchess International Women's Day Conference, CPR and lifesaving training for schools and hotels, and monthly virtual conversations exploring issues affecting individuals, families and communities.

That commitment to creating meaningful opportunities extends to the next generation, inspiring Give Them A Chance and its focus on helping children and young people build the knowledge, skills, confidence and opportunities they need to shape stronger futures.

### GIVE THEM A CHANCE

Give Them A Chance is an initiative created to help children and young people, both boys and girls, access knowledge, practical skills, guidance and opportunities that can help shape stronger futures.

Children do not all grow up with the same circumstances or access to opportunity. Give Them A Chance seeks to bridge that gap by taking practical learning and development into schools and communities, helping

young people build confidence, recognise opportunities, stay safe and make positive choices.

We cannot change every circumstance a child is born into. But together, we can help change what is possible for them.

## FOUR AREAS OF FOCUS

LIFE-SAVING SKILLS
CPR, basic first aid and emergency awareness.

SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT
Health, sanitation, waste management, water safety and environmental awareness.

EDUCATION, SKILLS & OPPORTUNITY
Education, mentoring, leadership, digital and practical skills, entrepreneurship and exposure to opportunities.

CONFIDENCE, IDENTITY & VOICE
Confidence-building, self-expression, resilience and positive decision-making.

TAKING THE VISION FURTHER
The Duchess International Leadership Summit is proud to support Give Them A Chance and help extend its reach into more schools and communities.

Individuals, businesses, organisations, trustees, foundations and philanthropic partners can become part of this work through sponsorship, strategic partnerships, programme support or donations.

## YOUR SUPPORT CAN GIVE A CHILD A CHANCE

Sponsor a programme. Partner with Duchess Africa. Help us reach another school. Give a child access to knowledge, skills and opportunities that can help shape their future.



## SCAN. DONATE. SUPPORT THE VISION.

Scan the QR code to support Give Them A Chance and help us reach more children and young people.

Together, we can turn lived experience into action, leadership into opportunity, and opportunity into a stronger future.

BECAUSE EVERY CHILD DESERVES A CHANCE.

Scan Me



VELVETY
HUB
*Where fabric meets expression*

# CRAFTED IN ADIRE. DEFINED BY INDIVIDUALITY

Discover distinctive African textiles where heritage meets contemporary expression.



Rooted in the artistry of Adire, Velvety Hub celebrates bold patterns, cultural identity and the beauty of wearing something uniquely yours.





Wear the heritage.
Own the expression.

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Duchess
INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE
. . . inspiring & showcasing women

# YOUR VOICE MATTERS



Tell us about your experience at the
Duchess International Magazine Leadership Summit 2026.

**What did you love? What can we improve?**

## SCAN. SHARE. SHAPE THE NEXT SUMMIT.

Scan the QR code to
share your feedback.

Your opinion helps
us do better.













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