

OGANIRU

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13th Annual
National Convention

Umu Igbo Unite Writers



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A special thank you to all the Igbo
Contributors that made this
magazine a success. **Daalu Nu!!**



A Message From the Founders

Ndewo! Nnool Welcome to the 13th Annual Umu Igbo Unite Convention! We thank God for His continued guidance in our mission to Unite and Connect Igbo professionals in the diaspora, keep the Igbo culture and language alive, and to instill a sense of pride to be Igbo. Our goals to promote personal, cultural and professional growth among Igbo professionals have been met with much success over the years.

Last year's convention was victorious! The stories shared with us about UIU's impact on your lives, keeps us inspired to continue to do this year after year. From the career moves, the connections, the engagements and marriages, we are forever motivated in our efforts to unite and connect "Umu Igbo."

We hope you all have signed up for your local and national chapter membership, which will ensure that this organization is equipped to continue providing enriching opportunities for Igbo professionals. Visit our website www.umuigbounite.com for more information. We also value your insight and opinions that are shared through our annual survey. Your feedback helps us provide better experiences and professional growth.

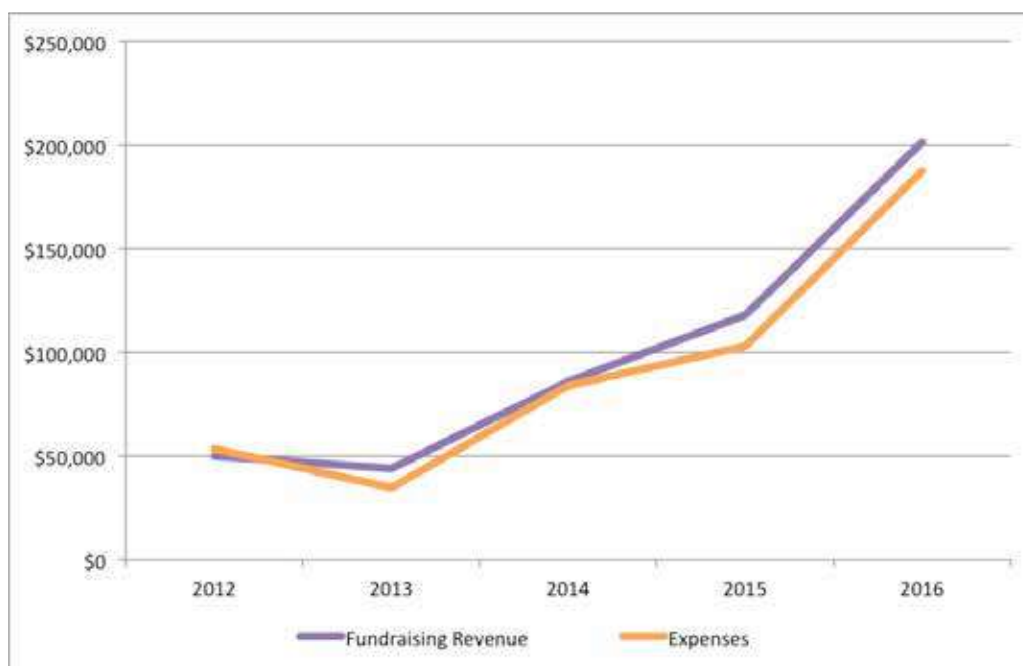
Umu Igbo Unite has formed many meaningful relationships over the years, especially through UIUCares. Thank you to all those that donated to the Bridges International Academies Scholarship last year. It has been life changing for the 21 students we were able to fund elementary education for. UIUCares was excited to join The Nigerian Healthcare Foundation Inc. (NHF) in their annual mission trip to Imo State, Nigeria. This past July 2017, a group of UIU members volunteered to join the group of NHF members. Through this program, donated medicines and medical supplies reach impoverished and isolated communities where even basic medical care is inaccessible to the poor or often non-existent. We were excited to lend a helping hand. Please do not forget to visit our website to donate and show support. Let us know if you will be visiting Nigeria in the next few months so you can be directly involved in the outreach with NHF and other organizations we partner with.

We would like to express our profound and heartfelt gratitude to our parents, Dr. & Dr. Mrs. D.I. Anadu and Reverend & Dr. Mrs. J.C. Okpukpara. We also appreciate all our supporters especially those who have been with us from the beginning. We hope you have the time of your life this weekend and make connections that will last a lifetime!

Sincerely,

The Founders of Umu Igbo Unite Corporation

Umu Igbo Unite 2016 Financial Report



2016 Financial Summary

Revenue

Convention Registration Revenue	\$183,834
National Membership Fee Revenue	\$1,423
Volunteer Refunds	\$(9,391)
Convention Vendor Table Revenue	\$1,200
Sponsorship Revenue	\$15,337
UIU Cares Donation Revenue	\$8,941
Interest Income	\$19

Total Revenue **\$201,363**

Expenses

Convention Expenses	\$(167,293)
Registration	\$(8,705)
Entertainment	\$(39,411)
Bank Fees (Paypal & Eventbrite)	\$(9,416)
UIUCares Expenses	\$2,705
Professional Services	\$(4,463)
Media Outreach & Marketing	\$(7,076)
Office Supplies	\$(1,522)

Total Expenses **\$(187,695)**

Net Surplus/Deficit **\$13,668**

\$3,600 was credited back into the UIUCares Expense account, due to unspent funds at the December 2015 Mission Trip hence the positive expense (Expense was \$1,525).

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UIUCares: Umu Igbo Unite's Community Service Initiative

By Calbeth Chika Alaribe



UIU Tri-State at the annual AIDS Walk in New York City

Umu Igbo Unite (UIU) Cares is the community service initiative dedicated to community engagement, empowerment, and activism in the United States and Igbo states of Nigeria. UIUCares strongly believes that it takes a “whole village to raise a child” and thus, is consistently seeking ways to serve their neighbor. It strives on the following three key elements: 1) providing relief to those in need, 2) assisting in the advancement of education, 3) developing service projects to lend a helping hand in our local communities in the diaspora and in Nigeria.

This past year, UIUCares leadership team took a proactive stance in becoming active in community service. They raised funds by hosting a Date Auction to donate proceeds to Bridge International Academies, to provide free education for 20 students attending primary school in various states in Nigeria. Additional funds were also raised to provide scholarships to seven exceptional international students attending a U.S. college or university. A cooperative effort was done to help with coordinating the Nigerian Healthcare Foundation, Inc.'s annual mission trip to Nigeria.

While the leadership team contributed to the mission of the organization, the state chapters also played a key role in supporting Igbos back home and in the U.S. Several individuals from the Atlanta chapter distributed supplies to orphanages in Abia, Delta, Rivers, Imo, and Anambra during the Christmas season of 2016.

Additionally, the chapter aided in improving the quality of life for many people in low-resource countries by packaging medical supplies at the Medshare Atlanta site. The Tristate Chapter created Valentine's Day cards and distributed them to various hospitals in the New Jersey area and the entire chapter attended the annual AIDS Walk in New York City and raised \$800 to support the cause!

The Dallas chapter's most memorable community service event this year was collaborating with the David Omenukor Foundation to raise awareness about the importance of health screenings, especially screenings for colorectal cancer, which is the "third leading cause of cancer-related deaths in women and the second leading cause of death in men in the United States" (American Cancer Society). Nduka Adaure, the fundraising chair for the chapter, states that "it is important as a community to educate others about getting health screenings for this monstrous disease especially our elders who still believe that "good sleep and a strong batch of pepper soup will cure anything."

UIUCares hopes to continue its mission for years to come and to help improve the lives of humankind.



UIU Atlanta distributing supplies to orphanages in Nigeria

UIU Dallas at the David Omenukor health screening event

A BIG Congratulations to: **UIU Atlanta** For Winning **UIU 2016 Chapter of the Year!**



Umu Igbo Unite, Atlanta Chapter, leads the pack in community service. Their frequent charitable involvements make UIU Atlanta the chapter for which all other chapters look up to. Some of their outreach included a feed the hungry event where UIU Atlanta members got together, bought groceries, made food bags for the homeless and distributed these items around the downtown Atlanta area. They partnered with the Books for Africa organization to package books that were sent back to Africa to help the less fortunate. UIU Atlanta also conducted a school supplies drive during their annual picnic and donated the supplies to Greater Tomorrow Children's Foundation (GTCF 501c). The organization gave these supplies to displaced kids who lost their parents from Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria.

UIU Atlanta's charitable efforts weren't based solely in the US. Using proceeds from their 2016 Gala night, UIU Atlanta chapter initiated a member driven program called UIU Atlanta ambassador program. This program took place in December where they donated food and provisions to at least one Motherless babies home in each of the 7 Igbo states in Nigeria – Imo, Abia, Rivers, Ebonyi, Delta, Anambra, and Enugu. These are just a few highlights of Atlanta's outreach and there's a lot more to come! No wonder they took home the title of UIU Chapter of the year. Job well done UIU Atlanta. Keep up the great work!



The Atlanta chapter team traveled to Nigeria to deliver food and provisions to a motherless babies homes

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School supplies donated during UIU Atlanta's annual picnic were donated to displaced kids from Nigerian Boko Haram attacks.



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LEADERSHIP

& The Unsolved Mystery

By Onyebuchi Okeke

Leadership is not easy. It takes guts, hard work, perseverance, determination and an unbridled focus. That's why there are a handful of leaders and a sea full of followers. Being a follower doesn't require much effort, it's easy to drop a resume and go work in a world full of employees, but it's a challenge to start a vision and see it through both in bad times and good times. My vision in life is to see that everyone I come across fulfills his or her leadership potential. You may ask "why?" The answer is simple; the world is in dire need of leaders. They are crucial in solving the crises plaguing the world today.

According to the International Labor Organization-World Employment and Social Outlook, it is estimated that in 2017 over 200 million people will be jobless globally. It will take dedicated leaders to tackle important issues such as unemployment. Leaders are also crucial in solving the spiritual problem that bedevils the world. The world is anticipating your arrival to become the solution to a problem and not a problem yourself!

Everyone is born with a 'leadership spirit.' No one will ever know you possess these traits if you don't discover and develop them. Imagine if Martin Luther King Jr. never discovered his spirit of leadership, America today wouldn't have made great strides towards civil rights. Therefore to become a leader you must continuously fight against the spirit of comfort and ask yourself what can I do to make my world a better place. To develop your spirit of leadership there are a few things you have to consciously do:

1

Change the perception of how you see yourself.

How you see yourself determines how the world will see you. If you see yourself as a failure, you will be a failure. As you think in your heart, so you are. Reconfigure your mind to think healthy and self-uplifting thoughts. This is crucial in developing yourself as a leader.

2

Change your perception of why you think you exist.

We have all been conditioned from school to think like a follower. It is rare to see schools that prepare their graduates to be 'Shepherd's' most times they only prepare them to think they exist just to get a job, a salary, a car, a house, etc. This is not the right way to condition your mind to think. You have to consciously decide and tell yourself that you exist on earth for much more than just to survive. You exist to change the world, to make that positive difference. Recondition your mind by telling yourself that no salary is enough to bury your childhood dreams. You must refuse to settle.

**Change your sense of significance:**

Refuse to be called names that you are not. Don't receive negative titles from people, even if it's a joke.

I believe there is power in our words and what we invariably say to ourselves is what will remain with us. To change your sense of significance, you must change your belief system. Belief is so powerful it can make an elephant act like a sheep in the presence of a lion. Lions are not concerned with the size of an elephant; they are more concerned about their attitude towards which they perceive a prey. The reason a lion makes such a decision in the presence of an elephant is based on its mindset. Your mindset makes all the difference. To be a leader you must think differently, act differently. The secret behind any successful leader starts with his or her belief system. Your life is what you think it should be. If you don't like what it, change it.

**Change and assess your environment:**

To be a leader you must associate with leaders. If you feel your friendships or associations are limiting, then change your environment. All associations are disposable. I

believe that for every level you wish to master, there are a new set of associations you must acquire. These associations should always increase your value and motivate you. Avoid environments that want to limit and criticize your vision. Remember that any negative association will corrupt the leader in you. Therefore ask yourself this question, "Are my friends rocks or fertilizer?" Nothing ever grows on a rock, a rock remains the same, but fertilizer assists in growth. Remember, people who aren't going anywhere, want you to go with them. Therefore I encourage you today to divorce yourself from any limiting associations. To be a leader you must stop waiting for everything to show up before you begin. Start small, but think big. Cut down on your personal expenses to save up for your vision. Change your location if necessary. Leadership is self-exposure. Don't bury your leadership in your room, or house. Most people never reach their full potential while alive, don't be like most people, instead be a leader!!!



Onyebuchi Okeke, LL.M (McGeorge) is a leadership expert and consultant business lawyer, entrepreneur and author.

Twitter: @buchilaws

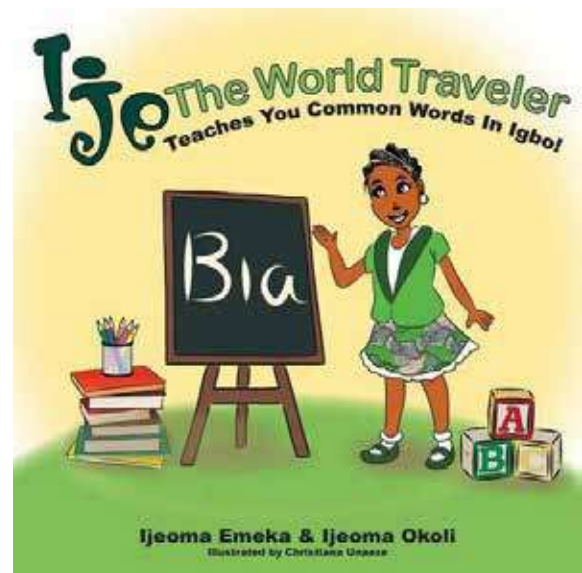
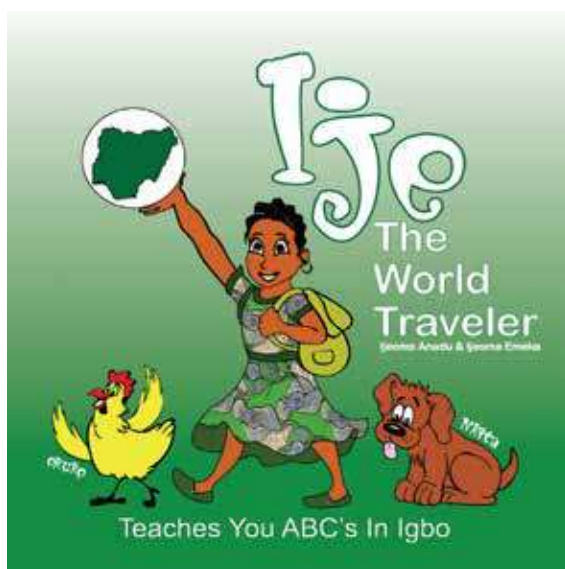
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Learning More About Your Culture: Where Do You Start?

By Kennedy C. Ezumah

As people, we are plural, multifaceted beings that express ourselves and our individuality through a variety of channels including our music, fashion, art, and work. Throughout our lives, we come to realize the interconnectedness of these various aspects of our humanity and grow to appreciate how they contribute to our overall human experience. Mindful of this truth, it is necessary to recognize that the pursuit of holistic self-discovery calls for a comprehensive approach and embrace of all aspects of our being, especially that which is understated in our fast-paced, 21st century world-culture.

For many of us, especially in the diaspora, culture is a sensitive topic. From birth, we are raised to understand that we are something more than just Black or African American, that we belong to an ethnic group of people renown for enjoying delicacies such as ofe egusi, isi ewu, and ukwa; a people who endure long car rides comforted by the tunes of maestros such as Osadebe, Oliver De Coque, and Dr. Sir Warrior; a people who wear red caps, isi agu, and george wrappers to functions and ascribe a somewhat confusing amount of value to seemingly ordinary kola nuts. If we are lucky, our parents teach us Igbo—that enigmatic language that's replete with hilarious insults, confusing proverbs and idioms involving animals and nature.

If we are even luckier, we may have even visited Nigeria—that distant country of unstable electricity and innumerable relatives, which we are constantly reminded, is “home.” But for others, due to no fault of their own, this may not be the case.

One thing many of us do share in common, is a longing for a deeper and more meaningful understanding of our culture, and by extension, ourselves. The old adage “ana esi ulo mara nma puwa ama” comes to mind. In English, this translates quite simply to “charity begins at home.” The question then becomes: How do we go about achieving this? From where do we embark on the journey of self-discovery? How do we start?

If these sentiments seem agreeable, then this is for you. The purpose of this article is to share direct insight on this personal journey, and offer meaningful advice to individuals of all ages who desire to build, develop, and maintain a lasting and enriching relationship with their Igbo culture. The following are a list of action points that are by no means a rigid how-to-manual or solution set, but a collection of soft suggestions meant to make this journey much more navigable. Ndeewonu!

1.

Develop a Support System!

Weave a network of supportive friends and family who are eager to see you meet your goals. Discuss and share why connecting to your cultural heritage is important to you. Keep them updated on your milestones and achievements, as they will prove to be an invaluable resource when things begin to seem challenging. Recognize that as much as this journey is personal, you don't have to do it alone.

2.

Start Small, Start Local.

The people around you are your greatest resource. Take advantage of the wealth of experiential knowledge and insight they have to offer. Speak to your parents, uncles, aunts, grandparents, or simply anyone else who grew up in Igboland. Ask them about their childhood. What was it like living through the Biafran War? What were their hometowns like? What festivals and special occasions did they enjoy growing up?

3.

Do Your Research.

Supplement this information with scholarly books and articles, in order to place things in the proper historical and social context. Check out the work of highly-acclaimed historians such as Adiele Afigbo or Elizabeth Isichei. You may also want to read an engaging Achebe or Nwapa novel set in 20th century Igboland, or even a riveting Adichie masterpiece that explores issues from a more modern perspective. The internet is also abound with free scholarly articles that explore a variety of cultural topics ranging from masquerading to basket weaving. The resources are out there!

4.

Get Involved.

Sniff out and find cultural gatherings, events, and conventions in your area. Attending Umu Igbo Unite is already a great first step. Find local town and village meetings or Igbo youth groups and connect with other like-minded individuals who might be making the same journey. Volunteer to play the ogele at your local Igbo church group on weekends. Join that traditional dance troupe you've always been fascinated by. Conquer your fear of masqueades and participate in a performance!

5.

Plan a Trip Home.

Every Igbo community is distinct. Travel to your village and experience the nuances of life in Igboland. Walk through your town and interact with locals. Follow your relatives to fetch water from the stream at the crack of dawn. Accompany your grandmother to her farm, and afterwards reward yourself with palm wine. Watch a soccer match at the local sports bar and practice gisting in Igbo. Build meaningful relationships with the people you meet and maintain these links even when you return to the States.

6.

Persist, Persist, Persist.

Lastly, setbacks and challenges are bound to occur. However, always have patience, remain eager to learn, and continue to fuel your ambition. Jisie ike!



Kennedy C. Ezumah is the Founder of the digital journal, Igbo History

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Founded in 2016 by Ifeanyi Oluoha, Igbo Masquerades is a Los Angeles based organization that strives to preserve and promote Igbo masquerade (Mmanwu) culture through the expression of visual arts, performing arts and literary arts. Our goal at Igbo Masquerades is to network and

collaborate with other Igbo organizations and masquerade groups around the world, while using our platform as a resource to showcase and celebrate Igbo masquerade culture as well as to educate and increase awareness of the many different masquerades from Igboland.

Gidi gidi bụ ugwu eze (unity is strength)



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Igbo Language and the Threat of Extinction

By Ifeanyi Nelson Obah

The fear that Igbo Language is facing a threat of extinction is not unfounded. If the status quo remains as it is, Igbo Language may not survive the next fifty years. "What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us," Ralph Waldo Emerson; This assertion is true of the uncanny situation the Igbo community is now facing. The threat of extinction all begins with the family structure, where the competition for academic prowess has led to the unfortunate dethronement of encouraging children to speak English regularly without consequence. The mastery of the English language has been placed in the front burner against the Igbo language. Could this be the effect of Neo-colonialism? That encourages inferiority complex and the total negation of one's true value and culture? Have you ever wondered how the Igbo man is easily Americanized and Europeanized?

A huge chunk of our history, culture and traditional practices has been lost over the years due to the impact of slavery, slave trade and subsequent colonization. It is pitiable and embarrassing to stumble on young boys and girls who grew up in the streets of Lagos and other states outside of Igbo land who will proudly say I can only understand Igbo when spoken but I cant speak Igbo fluently.

What could be the problem of the Igbo people? The Yoruba/Hausa Fulani man cannot be Americanized at the detriment of

their language, they put their language first before any other language.

There is a clarion call to re-dedicate ourselves to our roots. There is a great need to educate parents that Igbo as a language should not be seen as a second class language but should occupy a pride of place in their family and society, We can look to other cultural groups for examples. For instance, to ensure ample develop and spread of the language, the French established Alliance Francaise which is found in most countries that have diplomatic ties with France. This organization helps preserve and maintain the French language and culture.

The Family is an active player to remedy the situation. Parents should imbibe the love of the Igbo language to be spoken in the home before any other language. The south eastern part of Nigeria is known as the land of the rising sun (Biafra), wont it be a shame that the young generation are alien to their language, culture and tradition? The Igbo language is gradually going into extinction this is a problem that affects all Igbos. The umbilical cord that binds us to our forebears has grown weary. As custodians to all that they left behind, all seems to be lost. Our founding fathers left an asset, which has liquidated over the years. Charity they say begins at home, this includes the mastery of one's language, culture and tradition.

PERSPECTIVES on the Biafran Agitation

Ikeogu Oke^[1] Email: ikeogu.oke@gmail.com; Tel: +234-803-453-1501

The resurgence of the Biafran agitation led by Nnamdi Kanu's IPOB is a galling issue in contemporary Nigeria. Few would argue that it rivals Boko Haram in its capacity to frighten the Nigerian government with its threat to the touted indissolubility of the Nigerian state.

And there is a similarity of goals: Boko Haram, inspired by its antipathy to Western education, wants to carve out an Islamic caliphate out of Nigeria and had hoisted its flag in parts of the country it took control of but lost to Nigerian troops. IPOB, whose Biafran flags are ubiquitous in its spheres of influence, has secessionist goals inspired by what it perceives as entrenched and apparently irreversible systemic injustices by the Nigerian state against the Igbo whom it purports to represent. In effect, both groups seek the dismemberment of the country for different reasons. Kanu recently upped the ante by calling on his teeming supporters to boycott the gubernatorial elections in the south-eastern Nigerian state of Anambra slated for November 18, 2017. He is also quoted as having said that "Rivers State will be the capital" of the new Biafra, after calling for a referendum in place of the elections.

But there is also a critical

difference in the methods both groups have adopted to realize their goals. While Boko Haram professes violence and deploys it in pursuit of its cause, IPOB projects its struggle as nonviolent and has lived up to this credo even with the infamous vitriol of its leader, dating back to his days as director of Radio Biafra. And yet there is the irony that the Nigerian state has hammered IPOB with violent suppression, resulting in the killing of many of its members



at peaceful rallies to draw attention to its cause.

Of course one may look at the response of the Chinese government to the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy protests of 1989, apparently perceived by the status quo as a threat to its survival, and that of the US authorities in 1993 to the threat posed by David Koresh and his Branch Davidian sect, a religious group that could be ascribed with territorial ambitions, and wonder if the reaction of the Nigerian state to the IPOB

agitation, though undeniably highhanded, does not reflect a general, unpredictable and rather desperate tendency of states to stamp out any form of threat to their corporate existence or their existing socio-political order, regardless of their ideological leanings, and which could result in nonviolent threats attracting violent responses that might lead to the death of those behind the threat. 79 members of the Branch Davidian sect and 700 of the pro-democracy activists died in those confrontations with US and Chinese authorities respectively.

Nothing I say here is meant to justify the violent repression of any group that pursues any cause by nonviolent means. Rather, I intend to prompt a look at reality in relation the one-sided violent confrontations between the Nigerian state and the IPOB agitators, drawing parallels with events in two great nations generally regarded as a democracy and respecter of human rights (including the right to life) and the opposites respectively. Not to expect one's confrontation with armed state power to attract violence because one is not armed is idealism writ large; power games are hardly played on the turf of idealism.

¹ Oke, a poet and public affairs analyst, lives in Abuja



The types of death visited on Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., despite adopting a nonviolent approach to their struggles for socio-political change, are perhaps history's best proof that apostles of nonviolence could come to mortal grief in the arena of power struggles. And we know what values the countries and systems both titans of nonviolence stood up against supposedly stand for.

It is unfortunate that, about 50 years after the ghost of Biafra was supposedly laid to rest with the end of the Nigerian civil war and Gowon's declaration of "no victor, no vanquished," coupled with the Nigerian government's declaration of its intention to pursue the three R's of "Reconstruction, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation," that ghost has resurrected to harry the same state with the same secessionist threat.

In his surrender speech at the end of the Nigerian civil war Philip Effiong, the deputy to the Biafran Head of State, urged the Nigerian government to treat the defeated Biafrans well or risk their children rising up against the same system. His words seem prophetic in the light of the IPOB agitations, whose supporters blame

on successive Nigerian governments having kept the promise of the three R's in the breach. They allege the marginalization of Igbos from key government positions and the Nigerian government's plan to keep the Igbo states perennially underdeveloped by denying them quality infrastructure and its disinclination to cite federal institutions within its boundaries.

Recent appointments by the Buhari administration, generally perceived as lopsided and in disfavor of the Igbo, have aggravated this feeling of marginalization. And little wonder that the relatively quiet Biafran discontent would surge under the Buhari dispensation.

But the Igbos' claim to being marginalized is countered by those who say appointments by the Obasanjo and Jonathan governments favored them, and wonder why they did not complain during those dispensations, suggesting that the IPOB agitation is a mask for temporary disenchantment.

The Igbos' earlier unsuccessful attempt to secede, leading to a three-year civil war that cost over a million lives, many of them children who died of starvation, was partly due to their perception of

the Nigerian government's refusal to protect them from waves of pogroms in the northern part of the country in which thousands of Igbos were killed and no one was held accountable. The pogroms were perceived as a reaction to the 1966 coup, which some labeled an Igbo coup, in which leaders from northern Nigeria were killed.

Even in recent times the Nigerian government seems to have shown no real commitment to protecting the Igbo from attacks by alleged Fulani herdsmen resulting in many deaths, or fishing out the perpetrators. This has reinforced their feeling of vulnerability as in 1966 and fueled the IPOB call for a referendum which its members believe will deliver a safer, more just and prosperous nation.

All this has culminated in a call to restructure the country, which has the backing of some of its leaders like former Vice President Atiku Abubakar. But there is no blueprint to the proposed restructuring, and no guarantee that it will deliver a better system. And this is not unusual for a country that seems to run on the principle or "Err first, think later." A country where IPOB could ask Igbos, numbering millions, to return home from other parts of the country without providing a clue as to how they may cope with the attendant pressure of the returnees' resettlement on such basic necessities as food supply, schools, healthcare and housing.

The leaders of the aborted Biafra had a vision for building a new, just, great and prosperous nation articulated in "The Ahiara Declaration". IPOB seems not to think that not having such a blueprint should matter even to rational people whose support it seeks. And such, for me, makes a huge difference between the two Biafras.

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TechTalk with Nkem Nwankwo

By Nina Ngobidi

With the increasing use of technology in our every day lives, its safe to say its here to stay! The word technology has many different components. Which can lead to a vast array of career choices and opportunities. Nkem Nwanko was happy to share his insights and opinions regarding the field of technology.

Nina: What is your background and what do you currently do for a living?

Nkem: I am a Product Manager at BetterCloud. I do whatever it takes to get my product from a thought, into satisfied customer hands. A Product Manager goes through the following when creating a new product:

- Comes up with or is given an idea.
- Forms a hypothesis on that idea
- Tests that hypothesis out through a variety of methods including surveys, interviews, user studies and prototype testing
- Analyzes the business aspects of producing the idea
- Plans out the work needed
- Monitors progress
- Helps sales, marketing, customer success and customer support
- Helps with the launch of product
- Helps with the maintenance of the product

Nkem: In my adult life I have always been into tech, When I was younger I always tried to figure out how circuits actually translated onto a computer screen. When you take apart an electronic you have a circuit board and all the circuits that lead to the monitor. I would see that and want to know how it works. When I found out

there was something called engineering and they build things I thought it was cool. By 8th grade I discovered computer engineering and decided that's what I wanted to do in life. I took some coding classes in high school, which lead me to Georgia tech to pursue my bachelors in Computer Engineering. In college I had many experiences I was not prepared for. The biggest challenge was managing all the personalities needed to make a project successful. This directly relates to making

a good group project in school. Everyone has different goals. The trick is figuring out how to motivate people on your team to do what you'd like them to do without having direct authority over them. It was not an easy task but I'm happy I succeeded.

Nina: People don't realize how diverse the tech world is and the different fields that use technology can you elaborate on this?

Nkem: I feel people use this blanket terminology of "tech." Before this whole tech explosion happened in the last few years, people thought tech was anything engineering based which includes mechanical engineering, bio-medical engineering, civil engineering things like that. But its more than that. There are numerous avenues within the span of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) that people don't touch on. There are many ways to enter the field that can cater to your personality type.



Coding is usually the first step in the right direction because it will increase your skill as far as breaking down logical problems but it's certainly not the only way to get into the field of technology. You can get into IT, database management; there are parts of business that caters to tech like marketing, finance, customer service, and sales. All of these companies use tech products to function. Its not just coding,

Nina: So lets go over the basic building blocks of tech. Does it start with coding? Most people think of tech and they think of hacking. Can you elaborate?

Nkem: Software development is coding, being able to develop applications that improve people's lives or make things easier. Hacking spans many different things and is usually brought about due to human error. Some people do it socially, like figuring out someone's password, viruses etc. Hacking isn't just someone sitting behind a computer typing up books of code, most of the time its just about outsmarting someone who isn't as technologically savvy as you.

Nina: Do you feel emphasis should be placed more on practice, theory or both when it comes to maintaining technological skills?

Nkem: To be honest you have to get into the practice. NO shade to the PhDs out there. A lot of effort is placed in theory but you have to get things working. You have to practice and get familiar with whatever form of tech you are trying to master. You have to make money somehow and you can't do that without hands on experience. It allows you to acquire skills that you will need to propel you forward

whereas theory just gives you an idea on how different mechanisms and systems should work. I'm not saying research isn't applicable. Many things we use from a commercial standpoint today stems from research and theory, but everyone can benefit from putting theory into practice.

Nina: What do you think about the data portion of technology like data mining and is that something that requires you to have working knowledge of coding?

Nkem: A lot of that is math. What you will find is that a lot of Data Scientist are actually physics majors, or informatics graduate degree holders. Most people in the data field of technology start off with a math or science degree and pick up the coding skills later on to execute their equations.

Nina: Do you feel the field of technology is diverse? Have you come across many Igbo's in your field?

Nkem: Absolutely not. No diversity at all. It's diverse in the sense of White, Asian and Indian males but its rare to see Igbo people in the field of technology, Information Technology to be specific. I've never worked with another Igbo person. In my career, seeing a black person other than myself is rare. Statistically speaking black people make up 1-2% of tech companies as a whole. If you narrow that down to just Igbos you're unlikely to find any. It's not that Igbo people don't have the skills to do it. They are just funneled into the standard careers of doctors, lawyers etc.

Nina: How do you think the tech industry in Nigeria is doing?

Nkem: The state of tech in Nigeria

is really interesting. There are a lot of startups that are happening. What I find fascinating about tech in other countries that don't have the same advances that you see in the US is they are able to leap past some of the things that are holding 1st world countries like America back.

For example, banking institution. Brick and Mortar have been holding back the progression of how money is transferred from person to person due to regulations and restrictions. If you bring the same money transfer concept to another country that doesn't have such guidelines, you will find new ways to improve an already restricted concept.

Nina: What kind of encouraging advice can you give the younger generation that is considering studying a tech related field?

Nkem: I think a great motivator is knowing there are still more tech jobs than America can currently fill. Software Developers are in high demand and that is showing no signs of slowing down. The courses may be challenging. You'll need to focus on the fundamentals of tech, and practice coding, but once you build those basic skills, you can go on to learn anything regarding the advancement of technology.

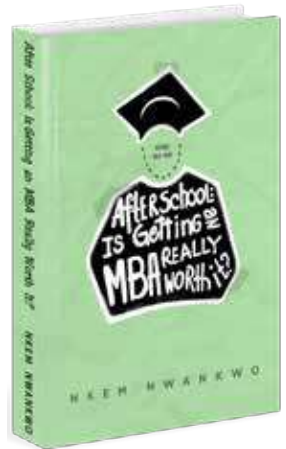
Technology is the future. It encompasses many fields. Artificial intelligence is a huge trend now, along with advanced machinery. Anything that is highly repeatable, anything that has a lot of input that can be computed and give you reliable output, can be done by a computer. Learning how a computer operates from any standpoint will give you an upper hand in dealing with every day occurrences. Without technology we wouldn't have medical breakthroughs and advancements in healthcare.

Nina: What is the latest piece of tech that's catching your eye?

Nkem: Well this may not be ground breaking or earthshaking but the most interesting thing to me right now are autonomous vehicles. Self-driving cars. I'm always going to be a tech advocate so I'm definitely here for this! I think driving is a very dangerous activity for humanity. SO many people die year after year due to car accidents. It's in people's best interest for automated cars to take over and reduce the fatalities. In America truck driving is in the top 5 jobs as far as population in this country. Its one of the easiest type of automation as far as vehicles go to implement. There will be a day, maybe

the next 10 years that we will have self-driving trucks. The biggest question after that will be what happen next?

The good thing about technology is its endless. There is a vast amount of information. The problem is we haven't found a way to utilize it all. There is so much we are learning about the human body, DNA to be specific. Once we gather all that data we will be able to make more technological advances to improve human life. For example, all the fitness trackers and personal body instruments that are on the market. People will live longer and the quality of life would improve. Technology is an assistant to many fields!



Check out more of Nkem's career advice in his latest book:
After School: Is Getting an MBA Really Worth It?

Visit:
www.lifeafterschool.co
for more resources!

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A full-length portrait of Barrister Allen Ifechukwu Onyema. He is a Black man with a shaved head, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. He is wearing a light blue button-down shirt under a brown and tan plaid blazer. His hands are in his pockets. The background is dark and out of focus.

UIU Spotlight: Barrister Allen Ifechukwu Onyema

By Nina Ngobidi

Barrister Allen Ifechukwu Onyema is a native of Mbosi town in Ihiala Local Government Area of Anambra State where he was recently honoured with the traditional title of Ide of Ihiala LGA of Anambra State for his continued contributions to the development of his town and neighboring communities.

Since 1992 Allen Onyema has had much success in law, business and real estate. He is a reputable entrepreneur with a compassion for humanity. By 1995 he already owned multiple properties in Lagos and throughout Nigeria. As a seeker of peace and unity he continues to explore and persevere in the avenue of Nonviolence Conflict Management. In 2011 he founded Foundation for Ethnic Harmony in Nigeria (FEHN), which is the fastest growing civil organization in Africa. They are involved in reducing the incidents of violence in Nigeria through nonviolence training and seminars. Allen believes in a peaceful approach to dealing with the multi cultural diversity of Nigeria and Africa has a whole. His compassion and experience has earned him the title of Conflict Resolution Expert.

On October 21st 2014, Allen Ifechukwu Onyema became the founder and CEO of Air Peace Limited. As a lawyer, he has no prior experience in aviation but Allen is determined to provide safe flights to Nigerians which in turn will help decrease the frustration among passengers and workers in the aviation industry. In an effort to assure safety, Air Peace has contracted BCT Aviation Maintenance Company of the United Kingdom, to oversee the maintenance of all Air Peace aircrafts. They have also teamed up with Canada's Flyth Solutions Inc and installed Automated Flight Information Report Systems (AFIRS) on all Air Peace aircrafts. This helps with the monitoring of all aircraft engines and assures that flights are on time.

Barrister Allen Ifechukwu Onyema continues to use his expertise in law, business and conflict management to create a peaceful Nigeria for generations to come.



The Silent Killer: Dangers of Generator Exhaust Fumes

By Chidinma Imediegwu

Have you ever experienced a power outage in your home? Maybe you go into the bathroom to brush your teeth and the light suddenly trips off. You either call your apartment management to take care of it or have it fixed yourself, if you own a home. In any case, unless it is the result of a natural disaster, your electricity should be back running within minutes- hours at most- and you can get back to streaming Game of Thrones on your large screen LCD TV. Now if you have lived in, visited or even heard about Nigeria, chances are you are aware of the incessant state of power deprivation in a majority of the country. A staggering 95 million Nigerians live without electricity in 2017 [Business Insider]. Some places go without electricity for 6 months (6 months!!) while still paying electricity bills. The light is so undependable that most families have one or two generators.

Energy.gov.ng reported that over 60 million people in Nigeria

own generators. Not only is that an expensive alternative, it is also a very inconvenient one, because the loud noise, quake-like vibrations, and exhaust smoke hardly make for a relaxing evening. The cost of fuel alone for a small 'gen,' as it is popularly called, exceeds the total feeding budget for a medium sized family.

Carbon monoxide (CO), the gas released from generators, is often referred to as the silent killer because it can fill up a room without people even perceiving it. It is a clear gas, so it has no color, odor or taste, and does not immediately cause an eye irritation, or trigger a cough so it very often goes undetected which makes it extremely deadly. The gas (CO) is in an unstable state which means it wants to combine with oxygen quickly to form CO₂ (carbon dioxide). In order to do that, when inhaled, it strips the lungs of all available oxygen causing the body's operating systems to shut down slowly. In closed spaces, this

process only takes a short time to occur.

Some signs of carbon monoxide poisoning include headaches, dizziness, nausea, drowsiness and more. However, these signs are only noticeable when the person experiencing them is alert. People who are already asleep may not notice any of the symptoms until all of their oxygen supply has been cut off. Sadly this occurrence is becoming increasingly common.

In May 2017, for instance, a group of young college-aged students were found lifeless in a home in Delta state, after the host had invited his classmates over for a get together. It was reported that the party ran on till late and the guests all fell asleep in the house leaving the generator running in a room. Generators are not the sole culprits responsible for producing carbon monoxide, however: cotton-wick lanterns, gas stoves, charcoal grills and vehicles all produce CO.



It is important to know and practice safe use of these systems to avoid sickness and premature death.

- Before running a generator, place the generator in an aerated space (preferably outdoors) with the exhaust facing away from any windows leading to the house.
- Fuel and other gasoline products are very flammable, so remove all combustible materials in the vicinity of the generator before turning it on.
- Make sure to turn the generator off before going to sleep as forgetting can have dire consequences.
- Install battery-powered smoke detectors in various areas of your house to monitor and alert you when smoke levels get dangerously high.
- Lastly, NEVER use a generator within your home or other enclosed areas, or run a war to warm it up inside a completely sealed garage. The fumes produced can be deadly!



Chidinma Imediegwu is a mechanical engineer and fashion designer currently working on her PhD in Mechanical Engineering at Georgia Tech. She enjoys writing, dancing, cooking and traveling. Her recently launched fashion label, Dinma Couture, features contemporary looks fusing African patterns with modern aesthetics.

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Fashion: @dinma.couture



By Nina Ngobidi

Mental health has long been looked at as a taboo, a plague that is rarely discussed in the Nigerian community. The belief that emotions and feelings are incapable of causing any detrimental issues, lead many Nigerians to cast it aside and label it as unimportant. Whether you grew up back home or abroad you were taught to be tough, to put your emotions aside and do what you have to do to survive and become successful. This avoidance alone has adverse affects including physical ailments, isolation and alienation. It is time to start discussing mental health and bring about healing to those affected. Talk Naija is here to empower and educate the Nigerian community. Through their campaigns and resources they want you to know that mental health matters and you are not alone.

Founder and co-founders, Chinomso D. Nwachuku, M.A., Mujidat Tutu Shotonwa M.A., Uche Ukuku Ph.D., and Joy Ukaigwe, M.S have teamed up to spotlight the perspectives of Nigerians from all over the world to share their mental health journey. By sharing experiences and providing resources for treatment, Talk Naija

is helping to reduce the stigma within the Nigerian community. Talk Naija's was launched in January 2017 with a goal of providing a safe haven for Nigerians affected by mental health. They are committed to spreading awareness and healing to common mental health issues that plague us all.

What is mental health and how do we start discussing such a controversial subject? Co-founder Uche Ukuku PhD explains mental health to be the culmination of our psychological, emotional and social well-being. It is the compass we use to navigate through grief, stress and connecting with others. If our mental health compass is imbalanced it can cause detrimental issues that not only affect us but those around us. The most important thing we can do as a community is break the silence! We must bridge the gap between what is taboo and what the Nigerian community considers an acceptable health issue.

Since its inception, Talk Naija has worked diligently to increase mental health awareness among the Nigerian community. Discussing mental health with parents or relations isn't an easy task.

The idea of speaking about such vulnerabilities, to a community where being tough is the only source of strength one can possess, is very challenging. Uche Ukuku PhD, shared some tips on how to discuss common mental health disorders. We must first find a common ground in understanding. For example discussing Anxiety. If a person were to tell their mother they are suffering from anxiety it may be frowned upon or may lead to further judgments. Instead approach the discussion from a relatable point of view.

Anxiety is based on fear and as Nigerians we know what fear is and what it is capable of doing. Connecting emotions to biological models will help to humanize mental ailments. Instead of telling your relative you are suffering from anxiety try saying "Mom/dad I've been experiencing chest pains and headaches from etc" Making the physical connections will help shed light on the severity of what you are dealing with. Those that care about us may

not understand what we are going through but that doesn't mean they want us to suffer either. Most people only have physical understanding. What most don't understand is mental illness can lead to many physical health issues. As a non profit, Talk Naija has plans to explore research opportunities regarding mental health in the Nigerian community to see what

the core issues are and figuring out ways to address them. They also plan on taking their discussions on the road by creating events and panel discussions. Talk naija is big on providing support and informative material. If you have a question or

concern you can visit their website and ask an expert. For those who are a bit shy you can submit your inquiries anonymously at:

<https://talknaija.org/ask-an-expert/ask-here/>

This is only the beginning but if we start shedding light on mental health with each generation that comes. There will be more acceptance and less shame. We are in this together!



**For more
mental health
stories, tips and
resources visit**

**[www.talknaija.
org](http://www.talknaija.org)**



The GEANCO Foundation congratulates Umu Igbo Unite on its 2017 National Convention in Los Angeles!

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Visit www.geanco.org to support our work!!

Feminism is Not Foreign

By Ijeoma Ejimadu

Joyce Banda, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Leymah Gbowee are household names used when we speak of African feminists. For some strange reason, when an African woman exercises her feminist views, it is perceived as something different. Something new. Unheard of. *Foreign*. There is a misconception that feminism is a westernized concept, like many things, copied and pasted to slowly rid us of our rich Igbo culture. On the contrary, feminism has always existed in Igbo land.

Before we go any further, let's define the modern day term "feminism". According to Merriam Webster dictionary, "feminism is the theory of the political, economic, and social *equality* of the sexes". While the word "feminism" was brought on by the western movement dating back to the 1960s, Igbo women desired to create a movement that embraced their culture and traditional backgrounds long before the Feminism Movement ever existed. Taking into account that the past generation may have not termed themselves as feminist, we can all agree that they practiced its core principles. These principles described the individual roles of *umu nwoke* and *umu nwanyi*, acknowledging the concept that *we can be equal but we are not the same*.

It is almost as if the word, *feminist*, makes these principles negative. When an African woman is well versed in capitalism, mental health, politics and foreign affairs – western topics – the first thing that comes to mind is that she is smart, and educated. But the moment she mentions women equality, she is automatically assumed to have western influence. She's an *Americanah*. She has been indoctrinated into the European or American way of life. African feminism has been going on for centuries. It is time we recognize we have a long history of feminist in our continent, especially Igbo culture.

Before the Aro Expedition in the early 1900's, things were *normal*. The war against the British and the people of Arochukwu rattled the norm of things and women (while did not fight in the actual war) were forced to help their husbands during the war. Women took on roles to care for the wounded, spy on the enemy, transport weapons and do other things that were not in the *umu nwanyi* handbook, so to speak. The disturb in this order kicked the *umuada* and *ndi-inyom* (lineage daughters and wives) organizations into action because the British colonization will lessen the influence the women had in their communities already. The

goal was not to fight for political positions in Arochukwu, but to preserve what is the basis of the female existence that included caring for her family and community. These organizations sought to create a sisterhood among the women in the villages and attended to feminine issues in Igboland. Even during the time of Okonkwo in the famous book, *Things Fall Apart*, it describes, "women had their own clubs and title associations that complemented those of men. [And] they controlled certain spheres of community life... and also gained status by amassing wealth through trading, farming or weaving."

In her article, Akachi Odoemene describes that "the advent of colonialism introduced some policies which put [Igbo] women and their activities down, and considerably diminished the women's status and agency in Igboland." In addition, the modern day *August Meeting* was created to serve for the same reason. While the other Igbo women organization were usually created for certain age groups or statuses, during the month of August, many villages witnessed the return of women to their matrimonial homes to partake in this annual assembly.

According to Akachi Odoemene's article, "the *August Meeting*" Igbo women have a critical mandate in the socio economical and political affairs of respective Igbo communities, which arguably, aligns with modern-day definition of feminism.

This and many other instances like "*Ogu Umunwanyi*" (The Women's War) in 1929, have proven that feminism existed long before the western feminism movement. With women organizations and retaliations, they sought to protect their culture and place in society. While they were not fighting to be the next *Eze* or *Obi*, they were essentially equals by contributing to their society in their own way. It is critical to understand that this movement recognizes that both genders are different and each play a critical

role in their society. With that being said, they both knew their places and it brings a whole different meaning to the word *equality*.

With examples from our history and the fight against colonization, it is very evident that feminism was practiced in our *own* way. If you made it to the end of this article, your perception of feminism should no longer be one that originated from the west, instead, a practice that has been in our history all along. Like I said, Feminism is not Foreign.



Ijeoma Ejimadu is a 21- year old igboti girl born in Houston and raised in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. From 9 – 5, she is a Production Management Engineer and

from 5 – 9, Ijeoma is the creator of Ivery Arie: The Contemporary African Woman blog. She has a passion for writing and women empowerment.

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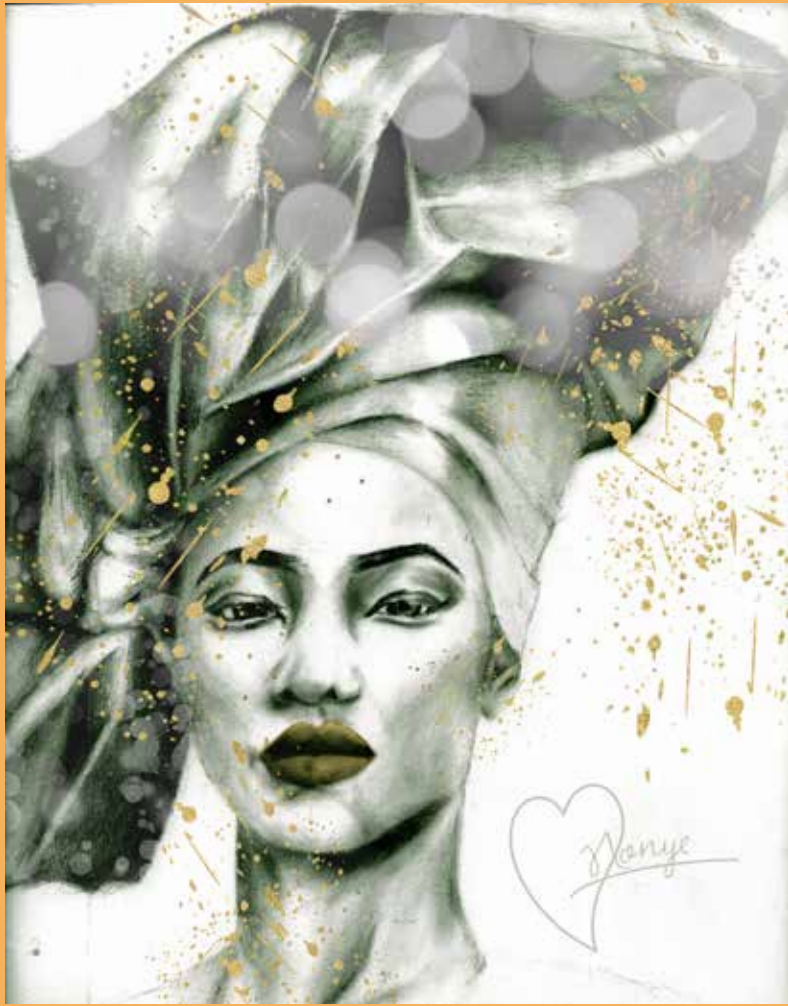


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Art By Nonye Okoye

Visual Artist

Art By Nonye

“Our ichafus are our crowns,
That remind us that we are queens.
Gidi gidi bu ugwu eze. Unity is strength Igbo
Kwenu!”

“Inspired by Nigeria’s Independence Day. I chose the “Ichafu” because it is a symbolic and recognizable item in Igbo culture. The headdress signifies strength, beauty, and power. They can be widely seen adorning the heads of women at places of praise and worship, celebrating the lives of loved ones at wakes, or witnessing beautiful unions at weddings. The touch of gold and sparkle are symbolic of royalty and the exuberance of our “Black Girl Magic”. Ichafus are just an extension of our bold and lively culture!”

Web: artbynonye.com

Tumblr: www.artbynonye.tumblr.com

Facebook: Art By Nonye

Instagram: @artbynonye

Ala Igbo

Aga eji maka mgbagbu hari ije ugu
My ancestors thought as
They charged to defend ala igbo
From every corner they were attacked
Left to wither away
They used ingenuity to
Keep them at bay
Maka na igbo nwere mmadu
Long live ala Igbo
Land of the rising sun.

Chidinma Obinnakwelu ©
Instagram @beutfull_

Nwa
by Okezie J.S. Nwoka

I. I.

nna bu nna.
nne bu nne.
nwa bu nwa onye?
site n'eebe?

site n'ochie.
site n'afo
o buro
o buro

maka afo aburo mkpuru obi
maka afo bu Afo bu Ugwu
n'aga n'lgwe.

a father is a father.
a mother is a mother.
a child is a child of whom?
coming from where?
coming from of old.
coming from the stomach
it is not
it is not
because the stomach is not
the soul
because stomach is Afo is
North going on to Heaven.

II.

onwu—onye ka i bu?
onwu—gini mere ka i ji na-eso m?
onwu—a buro m gi.
ndu bu ife.
nwa bu ife.
mana kedu nke o bu nkem?

II.

death—who are you?
death—what has happened that
you keep following me.
death—I am not you.
life is something.
a child is something.
but which one is my own?

III. III.

o bu mmadu
ka o bu mmuo?
gwa m ka ekwensu gbaa oso.
gwa m ka obi m to m utu.
gwa m ka Ndu bia ozu.

is (s)he a person,
or is (s)he a spirit?
tell me, so that the devil may flee quickly.
tell me, so that my heart may know pleasure.
tell me, so that Life may return again.

Ka Owu Anyi Dili

By Ifeanyi Nelson Obah

My nation of the sun
You who defy Gods
You who shakes the Iroko
And turn the gaze of the world.
It is you who supple the reins of fate.
Only you built empires with twenty pounds.
They thre you nuts but you prospered
Still in the deserts
Of the North and even beyond to uwa
Ohuru.
Onye ike ekelem gi

Ugo nke awu.
Ugo nem; ASiri adighi mma, eziokwu
Eziokwu, oku a taala mmiri
Chetakwa! Okwu anyi was our pride
It once glittered the sun
On our tongue
It was the language of Chukwu-okwu eligwe
Why does it fade slowly with the night like hidden shadows?

Eziokwu ihe emebiela!
Okwu anyi was once a song.
A gong, A melody that glistened.

Shy moons hiding behind clouds
One that clustered birds
Parted seas and made the gods dance

Ndi nkem
The sun
The rising, the risen
Glitters only on mamas tongue
I pray thee sun's sun keep it alive

Ka okwu anyi dili
Ise!!!



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