

Edition 45

FBI 

AFRICA

FOR BUSINESS IN AFRICA



Marek Zmyslowski

Co-founder Sunroof, Jumia Travel, Hotelonline.ng

The Man that Changed **EVERYTHING**



Lolade (Akosile) Temitope-Ogungbe

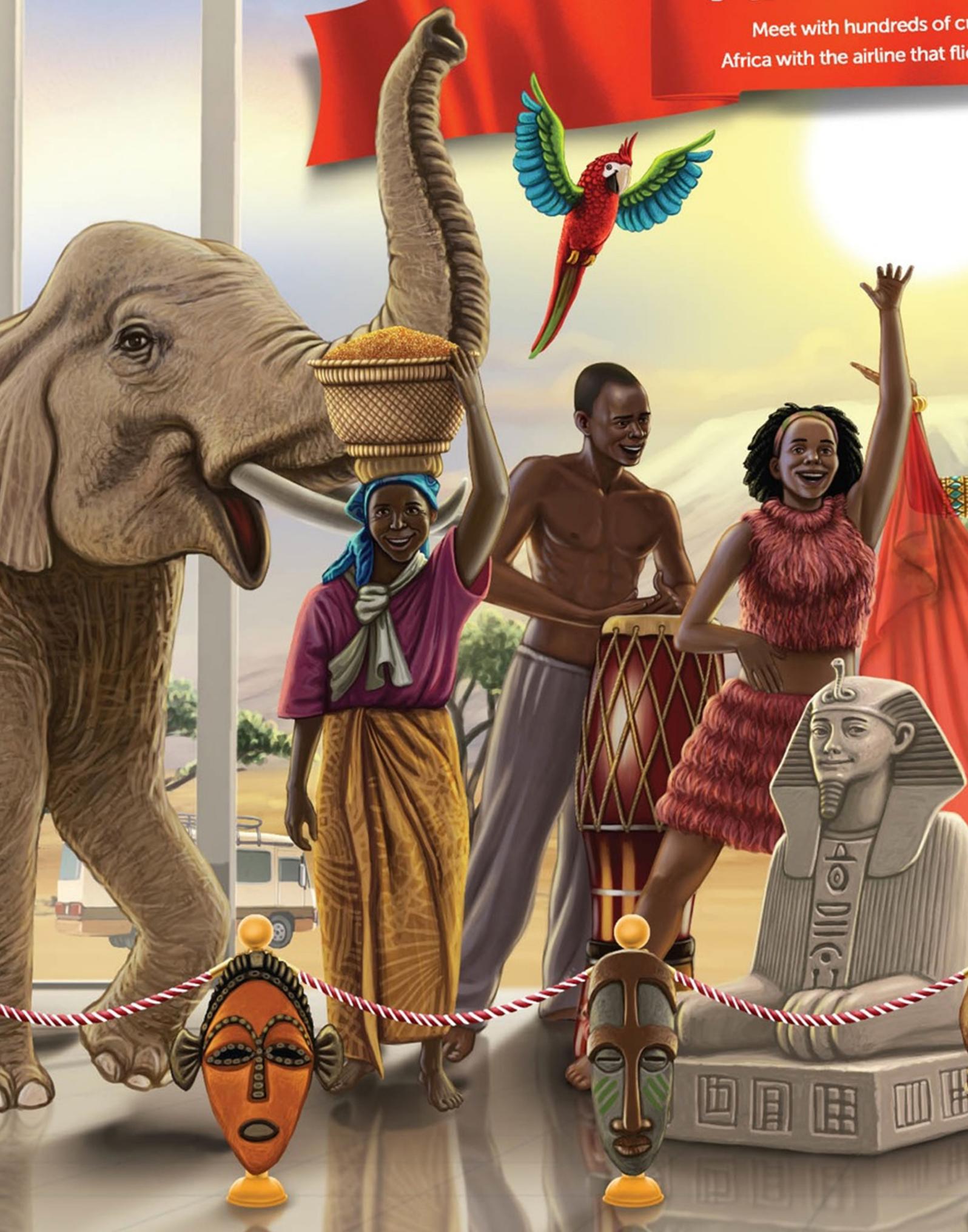
Redefining Standards in Nigeria's Hospitality Industry



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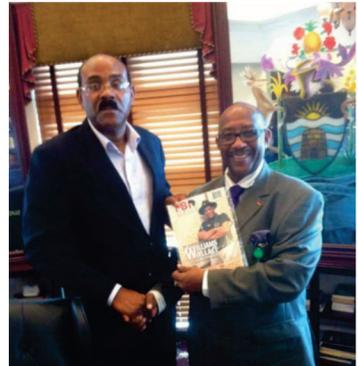
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LIFE IS SHORT, BREAK THE RULES

Life is too short to be wasted! Sometimes in life, you make good choices and sometimes not as good. Sometimes you have to step out of your comfort zones; you have to break the rules because most rules are made by people with no authority, people who want to control and limit you from reaching your true potential. Ignore them, break their rules, and wave at them as you soar past them to greatness. This edition is all about those who broke existing norms to set new pace. They did not see light at the end of their tunnels, so they consider it an opportunity to create an opening for themselves. They set new rules, their rules and guess what, it's working well for them!

Every hour you are not going after your passion, making your dreams a reality or defining your purpose is an hour you can't get back. Is what you're doing right now, this day, this moment getting you closer to where you want to be? If not, readjust your focus. It's your future. Go get it! I understand that at some point in the various journeys we embark on in our lives to creating a new path, we get to a part where we feel like giving up. Sometimes we give up before we even start and other times we give up just before we are about to make that



huge break-through that we have been putting so much efforts to achieve. Regardless of the past that hunt you, the mistakes that might have injured your confidence; press the reset button and forge ahead. We all face obstacles; how you deal with those obstacles defines who you are and determines how successful you will be. Confront your fears, face them, challenge them and dance with them till you overcome them. Think outside the box and be somebody no one thought you could be.

Time is an equal opportunity employer. Each human being has exactly the same number of hours and minutes every day. Rich people can't buy more hours. Scientists can't invent new minutes. And you can't save time to spend it on another day. Even so, time is amazingly fair and forgiving. No matter how much time you've wasted in the past, you may still have an entire tomorrow to redeem it. So my

message for you today is: Learn the rules carefully so you can break properly.

Life Is Short, Break The Rules!!!

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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Marek Zmyslowski

The Man that Changed Everything.
Co-founder Sunroof, Jumia Travel, Hotelonline.ng

FBI was privileged to catch-up with Mr. Marek Zmyslowski, famed author of the bestselling book, “Chasing Black Unicorns.” The Polish-born serial entrepreneur and CEO, adjudged among “The Ten Most Important People in Tech,” is currently focused on online business and renewable energy, with a keen passion for the Emerging Markets. Following his illustrious career with some of the most renowned tech organizations in the world including Google and Rocket Internet, Zmyslowski co-founded Sunroof, a 2-in-1 Solar Roofs producer; Hotelonline.co, a travel technology company and Jumia Travel, Africa’s biggest hotel booking portal, listed on the New York Stock Exchange. He still serves as a Lead Mentor with Google’s Launchpad and World Bank’s XL Africa Program.

The former Snowboard Instructor and Bartender is inspired by his humble beginnings to extend his love through uncommon acts of charity, to the poor and needy. A proponent of women and youth empowerment, especially in developing nations, Mr. Zmyslowski defines his life goal simply as the quest to leave the world in a slightly better shape than he met it. He, along with Yaritza, founded the MaYa Foundation in 2003; a charity organization with extensive operations in Nigeria and the Dominican Republic.

In this riveting interview, Mr. Zmyslowski, a captivating storyteller, shares the story of his success trajectory and offers useful insights to all current and prospective entrepreneurs.

FBI: From a snowboard instructor and bartender, to a bestselling author, serial entrepreneur and one of the Ten Most Important People in Tech in Africa. Do you mind leading us through the transitory period of your “Grass to Grace” story?

Born in a typical 2+1 post-Soviet Poland family, my mum was a teacher, my father, a soldier. When I was a kid, and compared myself to other children from my school, their clothes and toys, I thought that we are poor. But later I understood it was because my mum spent most of her money to always send me to good, private schools, where the “rich kids” used to go. We lived in a very small, poor Polish town, which was such a huge contrast to everything I could see on the TV, Hollywood movies and music clips. Since then, I had always felt how unfair life could be simply because of the place you were born in. This is why throughout the rest of my life, I always wanted to move around, see the world, achieve a lot. And not be the “victim” of the place I was born. Only after I moved to Nigeria, I realized how truly blessed I really was never to walk hungry, got always all the books I needed, etc. That trip totally changed my point of reference. But partially, I could also relate to many issues I found in Africa. But to be fair, what I mostly found in Nigeria, was an amazing opportunity to be a part of a growing nation, while building cool businesses and hopefully making some money and doing some good on the way.

FBI: You have worked for (or with) some of the most powerful tech organizations in the world; such as Google, Rocket Internet, OLX, Jumia, Glovo, Booking.com and many more. Kindly share your experiences at these places.

Peter Thiel, in his fantastic book, “Zero to One”, wrote: “All happy companies are different: each one earns a monopoly by solving a unique problem. All failed companies are the same: they failed to escape competition.” I could write or talk for hours about all these amazing companies I had the opportunity to work with, but if I had to sum it up somehow, that’s how I exactly see them. Each of these organizations is really different and unique in its own way. For example, I never met a Google employee who hadn’t been an extraordinarily smart and nice person, their company culture is just amazing. I also love their approach to solving problems. Their “Design Thinking” methodology is legendary, and I encourage everyone interested to do research about it. Many times when I approach a challenge, I ask myself, “What would Google do?”

FBI: You co-founded Sunroof.se – a 2-in-1 Solar Roofs producer, HotelOnline.co – a Travel Technology Company, and Jumia Travel – Africa’s Biggest Hotel Booking Portal; these are very successful businesses. However, we will like you to tell us some of the businesses that failed and how you handle(d) failure.

I had way, way more failures than successes! I think I can count just straight out of my head, close to a hundred projects I started, invested time and money, that failed. One of the most spectacular ones was a dating website - I think I wanted to solve my own problem back then. And a nationwide network of funeral services. Michael Jordan once said, “I’ve missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I’ve lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I’ve been trusted to take the game-winning shot and missed. I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.” I actually think that being able to handle failure is the single most important skill in business. By handling, I mean first surviving it. Secondly, learning from it. And at last, coming back stronger and smarter after it. Failure is many times related to some kind of rejection: by clients, by the market, by investors. Dealing with rejection, hence business, relationships, is so hard because the pain is in your body, not just your mind. Rejection from the tribe for hundreds of thousands of years meant death by predators. To “fit in” is a survival instinct we no longer need. Another thing is risk management, building a business is not a game, you don’t get many lives. Whatever you get yourself involved in, you need to calculate risk in such a way, so that failure will not destroy you financially to an extent that you won’t be able to get up and try again.

FBI: For successful businesses, what do you think has been the key to their successes?

Timing, luck and hard work. In that exact order. I



think we can't outwork bad timing, when the market is not ready for your product. Also, it's really hard to outwork a constant lack of luck. But if the timing is right, you have some luck, and you throw a lot of work and perseverance, success might just come around. It sounds easy, but it is very hard to execute. Because it requires quitting often, when there is lack of timing and luck, until finally, that one time you make a decision to never quit anymore until the success is there. That's the finesse in business thinking and strategy that separates the best entrepreneurs from the rest. Or at least that's what I believe in. Seth Godin summed it up perfectly in his book, "The Dip", that I highly recommend.

FBI: Expedia CEO, Peter Kern, is quoted as saying, "I think people are still not sure what it's going to take to go international and what they'll have to do and what will be allowed." In your opinion as Co-founder of Africa's biggest travel company, kindly paint a picture of what we should be expecting in the coming years in terms of international travels, COVID passports etc.?

I want to believe that what is awaiting us after the lockdown is over, is something similar to the post-WWI/Spanish Flu, "Roaring 20's", when society became more thrill-seeking and adventurous for a time. That may be true again, especially for young folks, especially the ones who think it's their last chance before the Climate Change Armageddon.

Long-distance travel may decline as people instinctively may wish to go places closer to home in the awful advent of another "out-of-the-blue" threat. Airlines will be mostly very well supported, just like they have been for years. Turkish Airlines, Ethiopian, Emirates, Qatar, Singapore Airlines and many, many other amazing airlines are considered a strategic asset for the governments of the country they come from. It's one of a few positive examples of asset nationalization.

Regional travel could get a huge increase in demand as a result of a "comfort zone" factor. People may want to stay away from big hotels with many people inside and lean

into a more home-like experience; renting out whole apartments, houses, or staying in more cozy and smaller environments.

FBI: Alibaba founder, Jack Ma, said that "47% of his employees are women and that has contributed to his company's success". What is your opinion on this, in relation to women empowerment in Africa?

I couldn't agree more. Women empowerment is the single biggest change-bringing-improvement in society I could think of. Empowered and educated women will:

1. Join companies; and it's already been proven all over the world that more women in companies mean more successful companies.

2. Have empowered and educated children; they will do everything so their kids become even better than them, as loving mothers usually do.

3. Have fewer babies in general; in poor societies with large infant mortality, it's almost a must to make a lot of babies, because only some of them will survive to later help the parents survive. It's a bad cycle that can be broken with empowering women. This issue is very important for me. I launched Maya-Foundation.com, a charity, where we address exactly that problem in Nigeria and Dominican Republic. This approach is also greatly explained in

Mellisa Gates's book, "Moment of Lift".

FBI: You are quoted as saying, "your real-life goal is simply to leave this world in slightly better shape than what it was when you arrived". Was that the motivation for the MaYa foundation? What impacts have you made with the foundation and what's the future like?

If you have food in your fridge, clothes on your back, a roof over your head, and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75% of the world. I consider myself extremely lucky in life. I had a careless childhood. My parents paid for my toys and education. I learned about brutal conflicts and child labour only from books and my grandparents' WWII stories. I learned what hunger feels like only after I discovered intermittent fasting. Let's put coaching lit-



erature aside. Hard work is not enough to be successful, period. There are millions of people in this world more talented and more hardworking than me. Most of them will never have even remotely comfortable life as I do, just because of where they were born. The location of their birth is not their fault, and I want to change that at least a bit. Not because I'm some kind of a high-spirited person, but because I simply feel uncomfortable to be that unfairly lucky in comparison to others. At some stage in life when you feel accomplished enough, you're mainly motivated by giving back. My life partner, Yaritza, had it much tougher than me, born into a big, humble family in the poor suburbs of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. She worked her head off in school, getting an education, learning foreign languages, getting a degree, and starting her career in a male-dominated



world. She had to earn everything by herself, but she still acknowledges there are people in the world that pray to God to be put in her childhood situation. This is why, together with Yaritza, we have decided to launch the MaYa Foundation. To redistribute “the luck” in life.

FBI: Africa is a continent of 1.3 billion people, with more than 30% of the world’s mineral suppliers and the biggest precious mineral reserve on earth, yet most countries within the continent are still battling with poverty and under-development. What are we missing?

It’s a trillion-dollar question, isn’t it? After living here for almost 10 years, what I can say is that it must be some kind of a very unfortunate mix of human flaws; greed, indifference, that lead to corruption and theft that can’t lift the nations out of poverty. The best book I read about what can be done about it was “Dead Aid” by Dambisa Moyo. I’m also very aware of the fact of how ineligible I am to speak on this matter. I am too young, too inexperienced, too foreign.

FBI: Let’s move to your recently published book entitled “Chasing Black Unicorns: How building the Amazon of Africa put me on Interpol’s Most Wanted list” The book is considered a fascinating tell-all about your triumphs and challenges in business abroad. What inspired the book and what key lesson can a foreign investor pick from the book?

When I was traveling to Nigeria for the very first time, sometime in 2021, I desperately looked for any relevant literature that could help me understand the business landscape of this fascinating country; I think by now, you know already I’m a book worm. I could only find books written by some university professors; too much theory without practice, or some travel books. I couldn’t find, back then, at least, anything contemporary about business. So I remember saying to myself that maybe I will be the first foreign investor/entrepreneur to write such a book. But of course, I had put this on my mental shelf with the name, “things to do when you’re closer to death than your birth date”. But later, the whole drama happened when my business partner decided to steal the company from me, by bribing the police to put me into jail, unless I gave him all the shares. It was a 2 year-long legal battle, and the thing that kept me motivated through all its craziness was that my supposed-to-be boring business book, could become way more interesting if I wrote about it, but I needed a happy ending. Eventually, I was able to win the battle and prove the illegality of Nigeria Police actions against me. I wouldn’t

call it a total win, because the fight hurt me financially and the company almost went bankrupt. But the happy ending allowed me to write the book. I wanted it to be a mix between a biography and a business book, so the book is really divided into many interesting, I hope; stories of my life, mainly in Nigeria, where each of the stories has a business lesson that it carries. My inspiration to use such a structure came from 2 sources. First, I read “Chaos Monkeys” by Antonio Garcia Martinez, an entrepreneur from Silicon Valley, who did the same mix, and I think the book was a great read. Secondly, I’m a huge fan of stand-up comedy. I consider this one of the most demanding forms of art. You get constant feedback literally every 30 seconds, it’s so dynamic. But the fact is that the jokes are not the most important thing in stand-up. Many comedians are extremely smart and wise people. They tell you jokes to make you feel comfortable, to make you listen, and when they have your attention - they usually tell you something very important. I wanted to do the same in my book. I’m not the one to judge whether I succeeded or not. The readers are.

FBI: Lots of people haven’t been most optimistic about the investment ecosystem in Africa. Why did you choose Africa?

I think my investment horizons are longer than those of other people. If you look at market changes in decades, not years, you are able to see more. But to be very honest, none of my commitment to Africa comes from the calculation. On the contrary, I proudly say that I’m allergic to Excel. I simply fell in love with the dynamism, nature, the people. The opportunities. I love chaos and adventure. And I believe Africa gives that great combination of “life and business” experience. And the risk size is balanced by the level of opportunity. What more to want?

FBI: What is the most misunderstood thing about you?

Many people in Nigeria still think, or rather want to believe against the facts, that I was the bad person in the whole drama of “me vs my old business partner and the Nigeria Police officers, who were bribed by him.” Many people didn’t like the fact that I attracted the attention of the international media to the corruption and fraud problems in Nigeria. They thought I was attacking Nigeria, and purposely damag-

ing its image. They felt that by attacking me back, they were defending the good name of Nigeria. But unfortunately, they were indirectly defending the real fraudsters instead. Also, for anyone that is familiar with my public work, it’s obvious that I couldn’t be more positive towards Nigeria, and Africa. Since 2013, I was featured in close to a thousand articles and videos, I gave hundreds of speeches. All of them to a total audience of over 5 million people, always preaching the Nigerian/African Tech Ecosystem. The fact that I went through some problems in Nigeria; you can’t solve a problem without exposing it first, only gives me the legitimacy to say good things, as they come, as a net result of my experience.

FBI: 2020 was not only the year of the pandemic, but a lot of things also became more obvious. What obvious thing did you take from 2020?

COVID and the incident on the Suez Canal, where one ship paralyzed Global Trade. It became obvious to me, how fragile our civilization is. It was a sad realization. The “butterfly effect” couldn’t be more real. I think I worry about safety in case of any type of disaster, much more than I used to. My business and life decisions are affected by it now too. I definitely keep more dry food, water, and toilet paper in the house than I used to.

FBI: If you could “trade shoes” for one month with anyone, who would it be and why?



If I could do it only once, I would have a hard choice between Mick Jagger and Jeff Bezos. I would probably go for Mick Jagger. I want to see if that rock-star life was really worth it. It seems becoming second Mick Jagger, in my case, is even less probable than becoming second Jeff Bezos (Laughs).



Lolade (Akosile) Temitope-Ogungbe

Redefining Standards in Nigeria's Hospitality Industry

Our main focus is for all of our guests to be satisfied at every sphere of contact within the hotel." ... Lolade Temitope-Ogungbe; CEO, H53 Suites & LOLLYTEE Catering Services

Lolade (Akosile) Temitope-Ogungbe is the Chief Executive Officer of H53 Suites, Ikeja. The consummate Office Administrator; who has acquired over twenty years' cognate experience working with a multinational company, of which she spent close to a decade serving with the top echelon of the Management, is however, innately passionate about cooking. Her passion led her to birth LOLLYTEE catering services, a unique, thriving catering service provider based in Lagos State, focused on outdoor catering and home delivery services.

LOLLYTEE catering services has the unique edge of being extremely health-focused and cooking to specifications, with due consideration of the health status, allergies and other peculiarities of clients. But with every good cuisine, follows the need for impeccable service. In fact, catering is largely considered to be an integral part of the hospitality industry. Hence,

Lolade's passion eventually ignited into the establishment of H53 Suites, Ikeja.

Bestriding the skylines of Ikeja GRA, the very heart of the nation's commercial epicentre, H53 Suites is hospitality on a whole new level! The hotel is by every comparable standard, the perfect choice for a weekend getaway; a vacation; family get-together; meetings, conferences and retreats, assorted cuisines/drinks and general relaxation. What's more? It is the idyllic destination for top celebrities and VIPs, who desire to recoil away from the prying eyes of the public and yet, feel very much comfortably at home. With its exquisite location, top-notch facilities and flawless services, H53 Suites is poised to exceed the expectations of all its esteemed guests. In this exclusive interview, the cheerful, witty and eloquent Lolade takes us on an exhilarating journey through her childhood, her motivation for establishing her string of businesses, her other interests and vision for the coming years. She also shares her thoughts on women empowerment, youth unemployment and other social malaises affecting Africa, amongst other salient issues. Excerpts:

FBI: What was it like for you growing up; and how did it influence who you are today?

Well, I grew up in a family of many children. My father was a polygamist and he had 13 kids. You just have to find ways to survive in such environment. We were not poor, as my dad was one of the richest men in town in his days. I mean, before you could count like the 10 richest men in my town, you would count my father, and he was a very successful man in his own lifetime. So, I wanted to be successful. Of course, life and chance happens and a lot of circumstances change as we grow up. I made up my mind at a very tender age of 14 years that I will do everything possible within moral and legal limits, to be successful. For some reasons, I just had that thing in mind that I had to be successful. I have uncles who were successful and I had aunties who were doing awesomely well, because my mother comes from a big family, I mean it. So, to be successful was a decision I took as a young child, and having to be the favourite of my dad, I was almost like the spoilt girl, but I moved from that zone of spoiling to the zone of strength, where I could easily put one plus one together and make three. I remember when I was 8 years old, my mum would say, “Oh if Lola is home, even if it is Forty Naira in this house, we would all eat,” and things like that. But they were simple comments that didn’t make any sense until I grew up and I saw how I could manage resources and all of that. So, growing up was fine in a family of 13. I was the 9th child and the 3rd girl. I survived among guys and it wasn’t easy, but you just had to struggle to survive.

FBI: So, what is genuinely unique about LOLLYTEE catering services?

Yeah, what is really unique about us is maybe because I worked in a multi-national company, I’m health-focused. For us at LOLLYTEE, we cook our food with the best of brands and these are brands that are focused on your health. We don’t use the regular oil, we tried to look

at it from the point of even if it is a day’s meal, it has to be healthy. Even if it is a party meal, it has to be healthy, it has to be cooked under the most hygienic conditions, and it has to be kept hot all through. Even for our home delivery services, we cook to specification. We try to look at the global trends like, “Oh, there is diabetes, there is hypertension”. So in fact, I call my company a non-sodium company because we don’t even cook with salt at all. We try as much as possible to keep the level of seasoning used very low and this is just so that we pay so much attention to the health of our clients. You can’t ever



accuse a meal from LOLLYTEE as salty, as oily and as sugary. I would never use sugar on my salad for instance; a lot of people do that but we will not. We want you to have your salad fresh, and I mean it is just to stay on the healthy lane. Also, we are very affordable, considering the quality of things we use in cooking, I can tell you that LOLLYTEE is affordable and that is why we have a slogan, “HOME COOKING LIKE NO OTHER”. And the difference is, we are affordable.

FBI: What inspired the establishment of H53?

Like I said earlier, I got inspired after visiting another hotel and seeing that they had a good facility, a good struc-

ture, but the service rendered was a little inadequate. So, I felt I could do something different and after being encouraged by my friend, I took the bull by the horns and set up H53, because I wanted to make a difference. I wanted to bring forth what I thought others should do through my business and this is what I preach. And about our four S, which stands for Standard, Serenity, Satisfaction and Safety, we wanted to create a standard in the industry, a standard for neatness. A standard that can't be matched. Apart from that, with our internal clients, I wanted my staff to be approachable by the kind of welfare package, the remuneration and all, so that is why I usually say the H53 Suite brand is a family house brand, because people don't change in families. You may go for hundred years and when you come back, your cousin still remains your cousin. And we have been lucky, no labour turnover since we started in 2018. Our staff have remained with us all through. So, for us, keeping the standard is important. Keeping the serenity, because our target is to have cooperative clients, being able to lodge there. We don't want riff-raffs in our hotel and we don't want people of questionable behavior and character. We want a place where a businessman would feel comfortable to stay. And when we talk about safety, the reason we are within a residential estate is also to ensure safety of our guests and clients. Amazingly, we don't even have a signpost, because we want you to feel that warmth of home, unlike the regular hotel. And we actually employed one of the topmost security agents in Nigeria today, to guard our premises. Talking about satisfaction, our main focus is for all of our guests to be satisfied at every sphere of contact within the hotel; from the reception to the room, from the room to the restaurant and to the security post. So, this is our goal and our focus.

FBI: You are the CEO of H53 and LOLLYTEE Catering Services. Please tell us about your journey to building the businesses.

For me, cooking has always been a passion from childhood, and I didn't set out to monetize the talent in any way, but life and chance happens, and I had to start catering. I started cooking for people for free, so it is always one thing I tell people that are about to start business; that you may need to do a lot of freebies for people to even know what you have to offer. So, I cooked a lot for free while I was living in Ireland and when I came back to Nigeria, I started with cooking for free for my friends, offering to make special meals at their parties for free. So, on this fateful day, a colleague approached me and told me that my driver said I was a caterer. I said, "Oh, really?" because I couldn't remember being a caterer, even though I knew I could cook well. So, after my colleague left, I asked my driver why he said I was a caterer. He



was like, "Aunty, the food that you prepared was enough, even some caterers are not doing as much as you do". I now said since this person has approached me to cater for the introduction of her niece, what do we do? He said "Aunty, we will look for people that will serve" and so on. There and then, I got my first official catering job. I did it well and it was nice, albeit at a loss. I got the wedding contract from there, an 800-guests' wedding that held at Bamora Hall in Ikeja, in December, 2013. I went headlong and catered for this event. Of course, at a loss again. Then I realized that I needed a business mentor. So, I sought out a caterer that I had known for a while and she taught me how to put my arithmetic together,



how to do my cost analysis and how to bill. Catering didn't get profitable to me until almost four years after I started. I was just rolling through the years. Yes, occasionally, big contracts come and we make huge money. But for the tiny contracts, I wasn't very good at costing. But by 2017, I was able to breakeven and it has been a jolly ride since then. For the H53 journey, it started like a joke. I visited a friend in one hotel and they had quite a good facility, but the service I didn't like, so I said to my friend, I would have loved to know the owner of this hotel, so I could help him manage it for like 30 days, so that he could see a difference. My friend said to me, "why would you help somebody else to manage his business? Why don't you get your own?" And I was like, this friend of mine must be joking. Does he know the capital involved in setting-up a hotel business? Well, I also didn't know. I never found out, so you don't know what you don't know. You don't know until you find out. My friend also said to me that, "You could do it in 60 days," and I was like, "Ok, you must think that I'm some kind of Dangote's daughter". But that was a challenge to me. As I was leaving, the same driver was the one that drove me, so it was easy. I started the conversation in the car, "Ha, Mr. Driver, do you think we can do hotel? He said, "yes,

Aunty of course, you can. You have what it takes, you are very good, your communication skills etc." I said I wasn't talking about my personal qualities, I was talking about money! But he said, "Aunty God will do it." Hence, we started looking for the space and lo and behold! we got the space for H53 Suites and we paid for it within 60 days from the date of the first discussion. And amazingly, we opened H53 Suites to business 60 days after payment. So, it took us four months from the first discussion on 13th August, 2018, to start H53 Suites and I never knew I had what it took to run a hotel business until I started H53 Suites. Of course, the journey wasn't a smooth one, because I had no single experience. What I did was to bring people with almost zero experience in hospitality, so we didn't have to unlearn anything back. We just ran with our own model and because we had a certain vision for the hospitality industry. Most importantly, we wanted to create a very neat environment for our guests, and we all started new, so we did our things the way we wanted to do them. And today, we are actually doing awesomely well in business and are hoping to open our second branch in August 2021.

FBI: So much is being said about the need for women

in Africa to innovate and start their businesses. Many, like you, now do that, but others face a lot of hurdles, especially access to finance remains a challenge towards achieving women economic empowerment. What should be done to close the gap?

I think the government should do a lot more to encourage women, because one thing I realized about women is that we can really multi-task; we can do a lot of things without losing focus and without being distracted. Women actually take everything to heart, whatsoever we set our heart to do, we do it and we do it very well. Unfortunately, we belong to the gender that doesn't have the financial capacity to actually follow a lot of our dreams. It even gets more difficult because sometimes at home, you want to start a business and you are discouraged even right from within your home and there is no government backing for female entrepreneurs, women in business. And even the bank, though there are a lot of facilities that are being said to be available to women, but how many women actually access them?. I haven't accessed any since I started my businesses. I have ran these businesses through loans from my current employment, through savings, through crowdfunding from friends etc. But I have not really had access to any government

program where women are encouraged. In fact, I think that women-owned businesses also should be allowed to pay certain discounts in tax, just to encourage us for actually be employers of labour, because whether we like it or not, establishing my hotel has taken about 40 people off the streets and that should be commendable. In fact, government should seek women own's businesses and give them a level of support, a level of encouragement, so that we will not be weary. I have had instances where I felt like packing it up and putting my money, just like any other women, in treasury bills, stress-free. But if we keep taking our money to treasury bills, putting it in the stock market etc., how then will our children get employed. So, I think a lot needs to be done really in terms of financing opportunities for women, so as to encourage more women in establishing businesses and growing their businesses. I mean, we don't want to be in the low-range business line. I remember someone saying, "What are you doing in hotel business? This is not a women's terrain." And I'm like, "Which one is women's terrain?" He said this is too capital intensive for a woman. I said, "well I'm here". So, a lot of women want to spread their wings, they want to grow, but when the capital is not there, they hover around petty trading. Women are not naturally



petty traders; women are better at managing businesses.

FBI: Microsoft founder, Bill Gates, said that he believes more than half of business travels and hospitality will disappear as a result of the pandemic. What is your reaction to this, and are you disappearing? If not, how did your organization handle the pandemic in terms of profit and employees' job security?

Well, my response to this is, half of business travels may actually disappear because people have learnt to do things better, more efficiently through other means. You know you would travel like 10 hours just for a 2 hours meeting, those things are gradually going, and they are replaced by Zoom, Skype and a lot more. The truth about it is we can't still avoid the physical meeting. As soon as people started taking the vaccines, the airports were opened just for the need for interaction and socialization. People are gradually going back to the old ways of doing things. It won't be 100%, because we have learnt more efficient ways of doing things, but definitely, business travel will not disappear completely. And when it comes to hospitality, hospitality is not all about business alone. We have travelled for pleasure and holidays. People will still want to go for holiday, they still want to have that breakaway from everything they are doing and

take a break away from home. With that in mind, hospitality, if well looked at, is not disappearing. During the pandemic, yes it was a total shut down. It was a real hard time for everybody in the hospitality industry. When the going really gets tough, it was the tough that got going during the pandemic. And for us at H53 Suites, NO! Our organization is not disappearing, we are even waxing stronger and stronger. In fact, the business was not as good as this before the pandemic, because we also had enough time during the pandemic to look at the ways we were doing things that we needed to change, to sustain and things we need to bring on etc. So, the lockdown period gave us enough opportunity to look at these areas and improve on our business. One good thing that we thrive on at H53 Suites is our internal staff. What we did was, none of our employee lost their job during the pandemic. We couldn't pay 100% salary, but we made sure that all staff got at least 50% salary throughout the pandemic, even though we were not operating. And that has really bought our employees' loyalty; everybody just wants to contribute their quota to see that the organization succeeds. So, for us, we made that promise that except for misconduct, no staff would be disengaged, and we kept our promise.



FBI: What are your thoughts on unemployment, especially among youths, and what is the way forward?

The problem of unemployment has always been there, but it is even more now with the pandemic. People have learnt to do more with lesser number of people, and with the growing population of Africa, it will be difficult to actually have our employable youths all getting jobs. This is the reality, and this is why I preach entrepreneurship. Just find something doing, find a business to do, this is the growing economy and any economy that is growing is a fertile ground for business. So, you don't wait for one uncle or godfather to fix you, you yourself have to start doing something. You can start small. You can dream big, but the most important thing is to start now, because unemployment will get even worse. An organization that has been using 20 people to carry out certain tasks now realizes that with 4 or 5 people, they can do the same. So, they are cutting down, every organization is cutting down and with our exploded population, we will need to begin to think entrepreneurship amongst the African youths.

FBI: Your website is quoted thus, "H53 suite is the perfect choice for a weekend getaway, a vacation, family get together, conferences and for celebrities or VIPs



who desire a relaxation spot far away from the prying eyes of the public". What really makes your hotel memorable and unforgettable?

Firstly, hotel, like I said earlier, is what we build as a family house brand, and the place where you feel so comfortable is your family house. We have various facilities on our premises to make you feel at home, so you don't really have to go out. Some boutique hotel like ours, only have breakfast service and are closed after breakfast. But we run a 24-hour, round the clock service in our restaurant. Also, we have our laundry, so our laundry is not just for the beddings, it is open for our guests. We have our gym for fitness, we have the swimming pool. We have our kids' club, where children can come and play and a lot of our guests have commended our kids' club, because they bring their kids to stay at our hotel and they end up having fun. The kids sometimes don't even go back to the rooms to check on their parents because they are engaged at the kids' club. And this is one of the facilities that we have in our hotel that is not common in hotels in Nigeria as a whole. We also offer nanny services, so it is easier for our guests when they have events to attend within Lagos, because we keep their children with

us and keep them safe while they are attending to whatever business they came for. This is usually a relief for most guests. So, for us, most of our guests will find the experience very unforgettable. Our chef cooks very well, in fact I thought I was the good cook until I met the chef. So now, it is a competition between me and him, because we really don't know who cooks better, but I think he does cook better than I do, and this is me admitting so. Every client who had visited H53 Suite liked it for the privacy, for the homeliness, food and for the amenities available.

FBI: What, in your opinion, is the most misunderstood thing about you

Everybody assumes because I'm quite friendly, I'm all out-going, a party rocker. The truth is, I love to dance and make friends, but there is this small part of me that likes to keep to myself. I wouldn't call myself an introvert, but I love my space. A lot of people don't even understand this about me. Yes, I am very friendly, I want a lot of people around me. I love people to be happy, but the truth is, I love my 'Me Time'. I like to be with me, I love my own company, I don't really miss anyone, to be honest, and I am used to being alone. So, for me, people just misunderstand my person and they assume they know me so well. But it takes you being very close to me, living around me, to know that yes, I would attend social engagements just because I'm reciprocating the same being done to me. It doesn't necessary mean I like to be at parties all the time. Yes, I cater. My business is all around parties, but I really, really, do not like partying. I love to dance, but I prefer to do it in the privacy of my home. I like to do it when I'm alone. I don't necessary love to go to parties, but a lot of friends will say, "Oh, you love partying, owambe". Well, it is a misconception, I don't.

FBI: If you could go back and tell yourself one thing before beginning your career, what would it be?

I think if I had the capital that I had to start my businesses, I wouldn't really have loved to work for any organization. I would have loved to start straightaway as an entrepreneur, and see where I would have been today, because what being employed does to you is tying you down and time is one thing that when lost, you can't gain it back. So, if I really could go back to the beginning of my career, I would have loved to have started my own business right from the beginning, immediately after my youth service. But hey, there is never a late time and the good time to start all the time is now.

FBI: So, do you think African governments are supportive enough of local entrepreneurs?



Talking about African governments, well using Nigeria as my own basis for this response, I don't think that we're getting enough support from government. I think rather than getting support from government, we get a lot of discouragement, sanctions, permits and the amazing thing is, even our ministries are not inter-connected. You get Ministry of Agriculture giving you a permit to farm and Ministry of Lands comes to tell you that they want to build a bridge there, when you have spent a lot of money on cultivation. So, these are things that we see in Africa. You get the Ministry of Tourism giving you a permit to operate a hotel business and you get the Ministry of Physical Planning saying that you are in a location where commercial activity is not allowed. So, these are things that needs to be corrected. We really need to encourage the few people who are going out of their ways, going the extra mile, to actually run their private businesses.

FBI: Through your involvement with the Rotary Club, you have positively impacted lot of communities; and of-



ferred a lot of educational scholarships. What drives you as a philanthropist?

Yes, this is the main topic that interests me. I started catering business as a child. I usually don't like anyone to suffer wherever I am. So, from the very tender age of 14, I joined the Family Life Educational club in school, and what we do then is to educate people on family life. We were sponsored by the Planned Parenting Federation of Nigeria in those days. And from there, I came in to interact and then intro-interact. And actually, I had always wanted to impact people. So, I went for my Mandatory National Youth Service, I saw a lot of Rotarians trying to do things in Abakaliki and Ebonyi, being a new state, and they were really doing a lot. So, I desired to be like them and I desired to be able to give. As I grew older, I made up my mind that once I had enough money, I was going to share part of the little that I had to make impact and especially because I have a father who is extremely philanthropic. I have never seen a man like him, my father would give his last card to an external person and

begin to appeal to his family. Those things used to be a real source of argument in my home as I grew up. So, for me, I just wanted to help, make impact and make a change. I don't want anybody to have an encounter with me without having an impact, because I was also impacted by some Rotarians as I grew as a young girl. Some I have helped maybe with jobs, some to get into leadership trainings, sponsorships into leadership trainings. These things were things that actually helped in building me up to be the woman that I am today. Because with Rotary, we learnt leadership skills from such a tender age that we could stand before kings, and not before mere men. So, this has always been my dream, to do good. When I joined Rotary, I made up my mind that I was going to do impactful projects and fortunately, when I served as President of Rotary, I was able to get a block of two classrooms built in a school within my community. After building those classrooms, the school was able to be gain accreditation to run WAEC (West Africa Examinations Council) Exams, because the way the classrooms were

built was such that they could also be converted to a hall, since they didn't have a hall in the school. I went for a project in the school, a sanitation project, and they told me that what they needed was a block of two classrooms that could be easily converted to a hall, and I told them that they would have the hall. With the use of personal funds and the support of my club members, I was able to do it when I was President of the Rotary Club. We got that done, and also there was young lady who had an accident in 2016, I had to help her to raise funds and within 24 hours, I was able to raise over 2.4 million Naira, instead of the 1.8 million Naira that she needed. She was able to travel to Germany for treatment. She's now happily married and has a child. So, for me, those are things that I remember and I feel happy within myself because life itself is not about you, but it is about people you meet and the impact you make in their lives.

In my view, entrepreneurs are made, that is the truth. You are born to be anything, but you have to make up your mind to move from the level that you are, to the level that you wish to get to. You may be born a child of a very rich man and all your life, you might not even know how to handle a business, because you never tried. Entrepreneurs are made, the people who take it upon themselves to do what others are not doing, they are the ones who dared to be the black swan. Entrepreneurs are those who dared the devil and decided to take a bold step. Entrepreneurs are generally people who are risk-takers, people who will damn all the consequences, people who are not afraid to fail. So, entrepreneurs are

made. I mean, it is not enough for you to say "I'm born to rule". No, if you are born to rule, you say that from now till Jesus comes, you rule. Some of us are made to rule, we actually got to the position where we began to rule. We rule by default, not because we were born to rule, but because we made up our minds that we wanted to rule, so leadership comes to us. I heard that somebody was born to be a leader. If you are born to be a leader, and you don't make any attempt to lead, then it is useless. When you are born to be a leader, then you make yourself a leader. You find yourself in that platform/area where you can actually become that which you want to be. So, I always tell people, to be an entrepreneur is not by mouth, it is not by talk, enough of talk shows. It is actually about doing; it is an action thing. You have to start, you have to move, you can't be afraid of failure and be an entrepreneur. You have to make up your mind to be successful, you have to be able to face criticism, and not everybody will applaud you. Don't look for applause. These are things that actually propel you, and anybody who is going to be a successful entrepreneur must focus on their focus. That is my slogan, "Focus on your focus". So, I focus on my focus and this is it.

FBI: The year 2020 was not only about the COVID-10 pandemic. What obvious things did you take from 2020? 2020 gave me an opportunity to relate with my children, because being a working-class mum, a business woman and you are just running through the doors, you really don't have the desired relationship with your kids. Yes, you provide their needs, you hug them but hey, you don't





really know them. But staying at home with them, being locked down together, I got the opportunity to cook for them, study each of them and know who exactly they were. I could tell what each one of them could do at different times. It also gave me an opportunity to spend time with my family. I would sit out with my mum during the lockdown for a certain number of hours per day, just to find out how she was doing, you know, those are things that were not there before the pandemic. Also, I realized that in times of need, the more you give, the more the Lord blesses you, because how I survived the pandemic is still a wonder. I had 31 people housed during the pandemic, 18 of my staffs were housed in the hotel and 13 were housed with me in my house. I fed them through the grace of God, and I discovered that even though it might look difficult, some people can't understand me. But I discovered that it helped me to buy loyalty, yes!

They empathize with me when things are not going well with the business because they have seen that I showed them a lot of empathy during the time that the world was letting its own go. You know I have a lot of friends who would say, "Oh, everybody go home, when things are better you can come back". Another thing is, I was able to focus on my weight and I lost a lot of weight in the pandemic, rather than gaining weight like most people did, because I pay attention to what I eat. I don't eat on the go. I eat healthy meals from my kitchen. So, all of these things were things that I gained during the pandemic. And one other thing was obvious was that I knew I wasn't handling my finances and my business well. So, I actually had a Finance Consultant who spoke with me and I spoke with the Finance Analyst. Today, the business is much better, because I now have a lot of financial discipline around running a cooperate organization, rather than mixing things up, both the personal funds and the business funds, without particular distinction to the way the monies were being spent. But during the pandemic, I was able to realize that I wasn't doing things right and I sought help; and today, we are doing awesomely. Even my staff, we had a lot of changed cultures. These are some of the things that 2020 have brought to us. And I want to say that, we all had the fear of COVID-19, but it also had its own advantages and these are just some of them.



Amb. Omotayo Salako

...how my platforms empowered over 5000 Youths

Amb. Omotayo Salako is an Entrepreneurship Enthusiast, Youth and Mental Health Ambassador, Brand and Event Consultant, Content Creator, Digital Media Manager, Youth Advocate, and a Global Influencer. He is the Regional Director Young Entrepreneurs International Summit (Organiser of Young Persons Award, 40 Under 40 CEO Nigeria), Convener eNGAGE Series, Senior Partner Unique Creative Foresight and International Liaison of the Pan African Youth Leadership Foundation. Omotayo has contributed directly to the empowerment and mentoring of over 5000 youths globally (Directly and indirectly) where he has developed various skills in Branding, business development, content creation, business growth, and business leadership. In this interview with the FBI Africa Magazine, Amb. Omotayo shares the drive behind his motivation.



FBI: Hi Mr. Omotayo, you currently hold a number of different roles such as Regional Director - Young Entrepreneurs International Summit; Convener - Engage; Senior Partner - UCF and International Liaison at the Pan African Youth Foundation. How has your background helped you in all these leadership roles?

My background helps a lot in enabling me to handle various leadership capacities over time. Born to a military father, and living on a military base for over 18 years, there is a level of discipline that is required of you, which ultimately influenced my ability to lead. My dad, who is one of my role models, is a man of virtue. He is honest and always says the truth as it is; he also encouraged us to be what we wanted to be, even if he had his reservations. Growing up, most things were clearly laid out. Your daily responsibilities and activities. That is why it was so easy for me to organize events and platforms, as I laid out what I would like to achieve after each engagement.

Also, each role I occupy has a level of commitment that I have to give; if I am unable to give my 100%, I would decline and move on. It is very important for me to be able to say “I was a part of that and we made an impact.” The impact is key for me, every event, activity, or engagement has to make an impact.

FBI: What inspired the story behind the Engage Project that has empowered more than 5000 young people?

My whole story started while I was studying at the Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun State. Prior to my Bachelor’s Degree program, I enrolled for a Diploma in Law, and that was when I was infused into social gatherings and events basically. Throughout my university days, I was either involved in one event in my department or the other. I was also organizing events alongside my brothers (Wale and Niyi). A mutual understanding and connection brought us together and we went ahead to conquer a lot of events, not only in our university but also partnered with the Ogun State Government on a pageant we were working on with Mr. Taylor. Gradually, we kept building our brands individually and collectively. It led to the birth of we organizing the University Pageant and being called upon to organize for other neighborhood schools. We also created the first fashion show in Nigeria, aimed at promoting and showcasing student fashion designers across Nigeria, called “Ewa Oge”, which later metamorphosized to the Nigerian Students Fashion Show.

During this process of our growth and discovering our potential, we never had the opportunity of being men-

tored or taught how to organise or manage an event. We all learned it as we proceeded. The letters we drafted, the proposals and plans for all our events, we sat down together, strategized, and created how to bring them to reality. During this same period, we faced a lot of challenges, but we never gave up.

After leaving the university and becoming vaster in the industry, I thought, how greater we would have been if there was a platform that could help teach, inspire, mentor, and empower young budding student entrepreneurs and enthusiasts from different industries. And that was how the Engage Series was created, an off-shoot of the Nigerian Entrepreneur Students' Summit. Our core values are Teach, Inspire, Mentor, and Empower (TIME). The TIME is now to lead the next set of business leaders. Since its inception almost seven years ago, we have empowered thousands of students through over 50 mentors and guest speakers across Nigeria.

FBI: As a key player in African youths' socio-economic development, one common complaint from start-ups in the continent is funding. What is your opinion on this?

Funding is a global problem. The UN, EU, and AU also face the same challenge. But as a young start-up, you can't let funding limit or deter you from achieving your desired result. When I coach young entrepreneurs, I always tell them, "Never relent, always remember to Start Small and Grow Big."

FBI: What excites you about what YEA is doing with the youth across the world?

Impact! The impact that YEA is making globally is exciting. In 2019, we had our international summit, with



participants from over 20 countries in Africa, Middle East, Europe and North/South America; and it was so exciting. Due to COVID-19, we couldn't host the 2020 edition in Kigali, Rwanda.

FBI: Africa has the youngest population in the world, and unemployment among the youth is high. How concerned are you about this, and what do you think is the way forward?

The level of unemployment amongst African youths is alarming. With such high numbers, we should be able to transform that into high productivity and economic growth. Personally, I am very concerned about the states, but I have also been able to conclude that the way forward is for the government to make the business environment more conducive for business owners and investors. For example, in Nigeria, most foreign business investors are moving their businesses away from Nigeria due to lack of suitable infrastructure; lack of power, as most businesses run on generators; lack of security and much more. Recently, Twitter opened its Africa Office in Ghana, why? They have a more stable economy, power and security. It's that simple! If the government can find suitable solutions to the problems, more businesses would be created and unemployment would drastically.

FBI: Like most young persons in Africa, you are very active on the social media. What would be your advice on the responsible use of the social media?

I believe the social media is a very important tool in globalization. With the help of social media, we have been able to connect and create opportunities that would have been harder to achieve. Social media should be used to Create, not Destroy.



FBI: What are the most important personal satisfactions and dissatisfactions connected with your occupation?

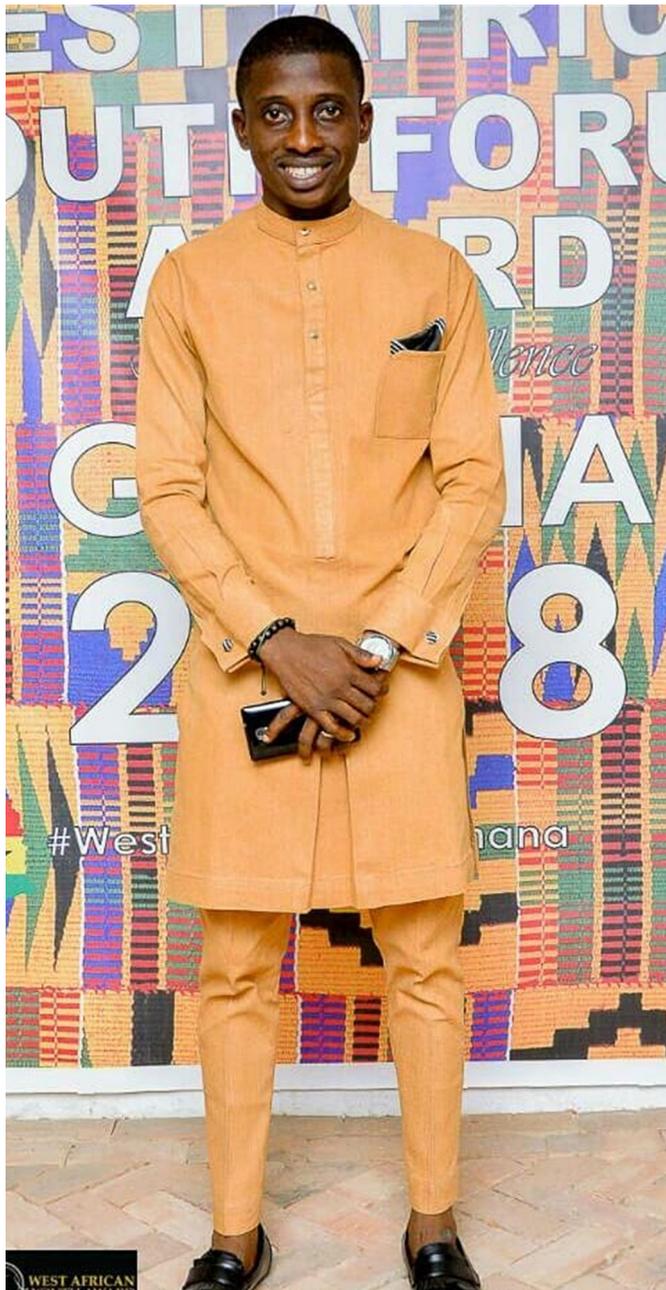
The most important personal satisfaction I derive from my occupation is the feedback. After every event or engagement, I receive lots of essays from participants, guests and even our Keynote Speakers on the level of impact we are making. They constantly motivate me to do more. And the only dissatisfaction I have is not being able to attain my desired level of impact, to do more than I had wished to.

FBI: In what ways has your modeling academy influenced and impacted young entrepreneurs across Nigeria?

We started the modeling academy in 2012, and I was at a point in my life that I needed a fresh beginning. The modeling academy was one of my projects that had the most impact before the other platforms were created. The rate at which it became successful was alarming, and that was because behind it, there was a huge passion to succeed and make a difference. Models came from across Nigeria, and even neighborhood countries, for the First

Edition. Since then, we have had 10 editions, and half of that was in partnership with the Local Governments in Lagos State, Nigeria. Some of the models that have gone through the academy were thought an array of curriculums, but theories and practice not only in modeling but about business and how to be successful. We have gotten feedbacks and most of our graduates have become successful entrepreneurs in various industries, including modeling. All these is as a result of the framework we created for the modeling academy. It was beyond just modeling. We infused a curriculum that creates other opportunities aside modeling. We brought in speakers and business leaders to talk about the business of modeling. We made them understand that even if they were not good or outstanding models, they could make more success from the business aspect of modeling. And most of the models were able to tap into that.





first step in entrepreneurship?

One of the major difficulties I faced was rejection. At most corners, and companies we approached for sponsorship or partnership, we received 70% rejection. And honestly, as an entrepreneur, you need all the support you can get; if not financially, the moral support goes a long way. It's heartbreaking when you request for financial support and you are rejected, and they also go the extra mile to kill your morale by telling you that you can never make it, that your proposal has no visible impact. That can be really difficult to hear.

Over the years, I have been able to transform these difficulties to become my motivation. I take all the rejection, and mold them up to become my greatest motivation.

In 2015, the Brand Manager of a beauty line told me, "You can never be Successful" and I stood up and told him off, and that motivated me to run one of the most sought-after student fashion shows in Nigeria.

FBI: If you could go back and tell yourself one thing before beginning your career, what would it be?

"Dream Bigger." That is what I would tell myself. At the initial stage of my career, my interest and desired impact revolved around my immediate community. If I had thought to widen my scope and intended impact area, we would have become a global brand to reckon with by now.

FBI: What's your message to young people around the world? What's the biggest piece of advice you can give to other young people?

My message to young people across the world is, "The Time is Now!" Don't procrastinate. Anything you want to engage yourself in, start now! Most of the world's most successful businesses were started by young individuals; and honestly, as a young person, your level of passion and desire to succeed is at the highest. Don't wait! Create now!

FBI: Thank you very much for your time and insights, Mr. Omotayo

You are welcome.

10

Personality Hacks That Can Change Your Life

Vincent Okeke

Technologist | Business Coach | Writer



If you build a powerful personality, it can go a long way to change your life and reposition you for good.

If you are among your friends and circle, don't be that friend who is known as a crook, a deceitful person, a liar, or a person with inconsistent character.

Your friends can tolerate it, and still, retain you as a friend, laugh over it, call you the "bad sharp crook", but they will NEVER put themselves in the line and recommend you for lucrative opportunities.

If you are in the workplace, don't be that person who is not always punctual, who does not keep to timelines, who does not contribute meaningfully in important meetings, who is known for reckless carelessness, who always have issues working with a team, or colleagues.

The company may tolerate and retain you because you are so good in the primary task which you do, but you will likely NEVER rise to the pinnacle of your career in such a workplace.

Here are 10 personality hacks that can change your life.

1. Pay attention when people are engaging you. Listen carefully. When you pay attention to people, you are naturally drawn close to their hearts. It shows a sign of concern and compassion. They will hold you in high esteem.

2. Be opinionated. Having strong convictions and opinions will distinguish you as someone able to think, and if you are right most often than not, this will make people sought after your opinion.

3. Be a person of positivity, who always bring good tidings or have a positive perspective towards every situation.

4. Be confident. This will scare certain categories of people away from you, but it will attract a calibre of

people to you who will hold you in high esteem and add value to your life. Even in your career, confidence is important quality recruiters look at.

5. Work on your body language and eye contact. Be firm, and stop looking at people with side-eyes. If you want to look at people, look at them directly and firmly. Looking at people with side-eyes is considered creepy and also an act of low self-esteem.

6. Try to keep to your words as much as possible, and in a situation where against all odds, you can't, give reasons before the deadline and show compassion for not being able to meet up.

7. Marry a spouse with similar traits, confidence and personality. Your spouse tells up to 50% of who you are, and can be used to form an opinion of you.

8. Always be courteous and avoid unnecessary reckless mistakes. No one is above mistake, but too many mistakes or certain fatal mistakes can make you be considered a reckless person who can't be entrusted with things of value.

9. Be approachable. Be a little fun and nice when people approach you. If you don't, then people will most likely avoid you, as a result, some opportunities may avoid you too.

10. Your dress code. How you look will go a long way to determine the perception people have of you and can tell important stories of who you are.

Those words are NOT meant for everyone, but for those specifically interested in building a POWERFUL personality and want to RISE to the top.





EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

His Excellency, Prof.

Manuel Freire-Garabal y Núñez

HOKC, LLB, MBA, PhDH, FRAS, FRSA, FRAI, MRSAL

H.E. Prof. Sir Manuel Freire-Garabal y Núñez HOKC, LLB, MBA, PhDH, FRAS, FRSA, FRAI, MRSAL (Santiago de Compostela, 1995) is a Spanish lawyer, diplomat and journalist. He holds a bachelor's degree in Law from A Coruña University, and graduated in Journalism from the National Journalists Association of Cuba in Exile. Prof. Sir Manuel also hold an MBA in "International Construction Management" from the European University, completed more than 300 courses and specializations in business, management, education, health, or security from IVY League Universities and top-ranked European Business Schools. He received two Doctor Honoris Causa Degrees in the field of diplomacy.

Currently, he is a professor and senior advisor at various universities in Asia-Pacific and North America. He lectured and participated in events at the Davos World Economic Forum and Universities such as MIT, Harvard, Oxford, or New York University. He has published nine books and

more than sixty professional and scientific articles. He is an elected fellow and member of several British and Irish Royal societies, and Spanish and American academies. He is a regular contributor to The Economic Times and The Times of India. His Higher Education efforts have been developed in his project, Al-Khalifa Business School (AKBS), considered by some media as one of the fastest-growing internationally accredited learning institutes of 2020. AKBS is supported by some of the most respected family offices and UHNWI with headquarters in the Middle East. Prof. Manuel officially works in the field of diplomacy. He holds various commitments such as Special Envoy of the Republic of Madagascar's Presidency, personal advisor of the former Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and former Prime Minister of Guinea (H.E. Lansana Kouyaté), or President of the Private Council of the Prince Mahmoud Salah Al-Din Assaf.

In this interview with FBI, Prof. Manuel ...



FBI: In a few weeks, you are going to publish your book, “The Business of the XXI Century.” But at the age of 26, you already published 9 books and was being featured as an author in reputable media like Forbes, Yahoo, Cosmo, CNBC, CBS, ABC and Fox News. What has been the secret behind all these achievements, and if you were to advice the youth, what would you say?

Our life is the fruit of our legacy. My key has always been to follow what my family did. It is crucial to learn from triumph, but it is more important to pay attention to the wrong steps. This is the basis of the best family advice, “Education is life, the only thing we get, and we take, when we leave.”

FBI: Al-Khalifa Business School is focused on e-learning, on technology and disruptive innovation. How is the business school adapting to the fourth industrial revolution, and what are you

doing to maintain that?

Our main goal is to bring innovation in business learning on different areas of business, such as Agriculture, Media, Health, Law, Music and Economy; with flexible programs, helping busy adults to study from anywhere. Our online study is about the kind of flexibility and support that can only come from a business school that has long understood the challenges faced by adults studying from home.

FBI: Almost two years into the COVID-19 pandemic, more than half the world’s students are still affected by partial or full school closures, and over 100 million additional children will fall below the minimum proficiency level in reading as a result of the health crisis. Prioritizing education recovery is crucial to avoid a generational catastrophe, as highlighted in a high-level minis-

terial meeting in March 2021. What do think can be done to avoid this?

Theory and practice must match in every field of every professional industry. The world is changing, and the circumstances can't be prevented. Because internet is at every time more accessible in the teen ages and after, even in the most difficult places, educational institutes must focus on distance education, with self-paced programs taken online.

Once the basis of education is defined in every structure of life, what is needed is to develop in the real work environment through practical experience, such as professional advices, learning from culture or coming to work with other leaders.

FBI: In one of your interviews with Forbes Magazine, you mentioned that online education is the future of education in a changing world, but currently, two-thirds of the world's school-age children have no internet access. In fact, close to 3.7 billion people cannot access education offline. How can this gap be bridged?

The most important thing is to always show to the world, how rich the continents are, like Africa. Partnering with other governments and industries will bring population and the world to take profit from

each other and develop new synergies to build a new society for the XXI century.

FBI: Permit us to use this medium to congratulate you on your recent appointment as Special Envoy to the President of Madagascar. What do you hope to achieve in this position, and what are your top priorities?

Thanks! It is important to work with the birthplace of every human being. I am always very happy to be deeply connected with Africa, from time ago. Because we are from where we've come, we have to be grateful and bring the needed projects to the countries that made Europe and America what they are today.

That is why now, I am very focused on my commitment as Special Envoy at the Direction of Presidential Projects of Madagascar, mainly from the point of view of education, according to the strategic movements defined in the Plan Emergence of Madagascar.

In fact, through Al-Khalifa Business School, we are proud to give free access in specialized business educational programs to different African countries.





We've already created a customized online campus, where the new 100,000 students from Madagascar can enjoy and develop their abilities in business.

FBI: From your unique vantage point as Advisor to the Former Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations, what do you see as the biggest challenges in ensuring that every child and young person has continued access to quality education; and what are the priorities to meet those challenges?

Everybody, even the humblest person, can contribute to our brothers' and sisters' education. Days ago, I read that 20 years ago, the actor, Denzel Washington, supported a young boy who wanted to make an Oxford arts program, but couldn't afford it. Finally, this man grew and became one of the best actors Hollywood had in the last couple of years, until he

passed away. His name was Chadwick Boseman.

The only thing we can do is to continue working every day; searching, and supporting the talents born everywhere. We never know if the person we support will be the one who ends hunger in the world, or discovers the cure for cancer.

FBI: "Today, about 264 million children and adolescents are not in school. And, with current trends, half the world's jobs — around 2 billion — could disappear because of automation by 2030, making education even more vital as its role in finding a job is set to rise." How do you react to this statement by Gordon Brown, United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education?

It is true that education is, and will be every day more useful and needed. Despite that, many agencies and governments are too much focused in giv-

ing high school learning or university learning theories than what is really needed. What really builds nations and helps cultures to grow is the professional education.

About that, COVID-19 crisis was one of the best examples. Let's see how the people who saved more lives in places where graduate and post graduate learning is more difficult to achieve, were the ones who were leaders in practical health professions like basic nursing; and have a common sense that they learnt from a young age.

If we ask first, and we give what is needed and not what we think others need, things work faster and better.

FBI: Noteworthy accomplishments: contributions to Kentucky Society; remarkable deeds and outstanding service to a community, state, or the nation. What do those mean to you?

It is always good to receive such great appointments, but papers mean nothing if we only keep them on our records after acquiring them, and doing nothing more. Honors like that are just a wet paper, if you don't work against the basic problems that life is faced with. It's not the first time that appointments like that are given to people who only are dedicated to demagoguery, or even when they never visited the United States. We must be different and work on a better life every day, we must be aware of politics and people who get much from the system even by doing nothing, because it happens. We have to make people's lives a bit better!

FBI: The Tourism Magazine of Peru named you the "Humanitarian of the Year". Tell us the services that led to that.

I consider myself a normal man of a big world, full of amazing people. I am very lucky to work with a great team of people who are always helping everybody they find. One of them is my dearest friend, brother and colleague, the Dr. Luis Suarez from Miami. All the little contributions I made to different countries like Peru are because he is doing the best job, something that the society can't pay to a great humanitarian leader like him.



Choukri Djibril

Saving Lives as a Life Coach

Choukri Djibril is a social-entrepreneur, philanthropist, author, Tv host, personal development trainer, success strategist, leadership and motivation expert. She trains her clients to calmly take the key steps to face life's difficulties. In addition to being the author of several books which currently sell on Amazon, as well as on all literary platforms, Choukri also hosts the Cjbril Show.

As a philanthropist, Choukri is highly committed to the empowerment of Young Africans, through her Foundation.

Enjoy her interview with the FBI Africa team.





FBI: Before we go deep into the interview, our readers would love to know you a bit better. Can you tell us a bit about your ‘backstory’ and what brought you to this particular career path as a life coach and youth mentor?

I was born in Djibouti, in a popular district called Einguela. After the retirement of my father from the military force called the gendarmery, we moved to District 7, where I grew up until my 20’s. I had a normal education and after high school, I had to move to Finland. I’ve lived here in Finland for ten

years with my husband and my three kids, before returning to the country of my birth. Growing up, I imagined myself in so many professions that I could do; for example, I wanted to be a sports journalist, a professional basketball player that could play in the USA, or being a photographer. I had all these aspirations, but didn’t have a mentor or a professional who could guide me. When I sought people’s advice, of course, they gave me their opinions. However, I realized after a few years that they had advised me ignorantly, as they did not know my dream professions. My parents tried to support me, but what they wanted to see was a medical doctor, which wasn’t what I wanted to be. Of course, I love to help and save lives, but it wasn’t my dream job. Some people think that the failures of others are general phenomena, that everyone should experience same, but that’s not true. We are individually responsible for our successes and failures. It is my job as a life coach to show people that we can succeed; to motivate them to find their potentials and not wait, because the reality in Africa and of course, the world, doesn’t allow you to wait.

FBI: The coaching industry is now tremendous. It is a 15 billion dollar industry. Many professionals have left their office jobs to become highly successful coaches. At the same time, not everyone who starts a coaching business achieves success. What does someone who is starting a career as a life coach, wellness coach, or business coach need to know, to turn it into a very successful and rewarding career?

Personal experience is an asset. If you don’t know anything about business, it’s gonna be difficult to help people; you can’t coach on it, at least, you have to be knowledgeable in the area you wish to mentor others. Be authentic, transparent; and showing a little part of yourself is important. People identify with what they see. Coaching is to support, to motivate and you have to know or have experienced what you are talking about. The difference is YOU. so be unique!

FBI: So, based on your experiences, how would you say life coaching helps individuals transform their lives?

Coaching, with its different approaches, removes the veil on a person’s potential. It helps you find the answers to all the questions that are spinning in your head. you can find answers to all those things that

stress you or cause you pain. Listening is the best way to know the client and what makes them think that they can't do anything. A life coach helps you to find your way, path and purpose. For example, how can I become a good entrepreneur or a good person? From this question, you can talk about your talents, what you can easily do. In perspective, we listen to what you have to say to get a lot of clarity on what is happening in your life, then we give you the resources to change things and it will help you unlock your meaningful purpose. I always tell people not to be afraid to try, because they have the keys to succeed in their hands.

FBI: You are a successful coach with 3 books to your name. Which three character traits do you think were most instrumental to your success?

Thirst for risk, or taking the risk to "try", because if I don't try, I will never know my capabilities. Kindness and humility are also some of my most vital traits. I come from a background where people are constantly thinking about what others think about them, if they do what they love. I always assume responsibility for what I do. My father always tells me that no one will help you as much as you help yourself. My mother encourages me to read since age 9. Each time I finished a book, I remember her saying, "...think like the world belongs to you. How will you live in it or protect it?" So, whatever I do, I always remember what she tells me, and then I do my best to always be kind to nature and people.

FBI: What are some of the most interesting or exciting projects you are working on now, and how do you think they might help young people in Africa?

Apart from my clients, my goal has always been to train more than 300 young people per year through my platform, for free. With the outbreak of COVID-19, it has not been possible for almost 2 years now. So, what I am working on now is to train 1000 people who can't afford my services. I'm also working on another initiative to create a platform that allows youth to exchange ideas, and also connect with people like them. I am working on it very seriously, and hoping it will be ready in 2022.

FBI: What do you think is the most important thing for people to know about life coaching?

Some people are afraid of change. They give themselves every excuse not to approach it because

when we want some change for our lives, we also go through the process of going back a little to try to understand what hinders us from moving forward. Coaching helps to clarify your goals. With coaching, you can identify what is always holding you back, and then you can find a strategy to go forward. It will help you to find your potential, which is important to succeed.





FBI: What inspired the story behind Hcharity?

Four things inspired Hcharity. I know it's a lot. Firstly, while growing up, my mother helped a lot of families who were in need. We were not rich, but she always told us to share what we had with the neighbours. She was concerned about her neighbours' welfare, in terms of food and clothing. I grew up like that, and even when I was in Europe, she would encourage me to help those in need back home in Djibouti. Whenever I see my mum's call, it's mostly about people who needed help. It was a pleasure to always "answer the call". She teaches me to think about people in need (thank you, Mama!). Secondly, I have a group of friends from Senegal and Cameroon who usually sent some clothes and money to help people in remote villages. I admired them and knew I had to do the same thing to help the needy in my country. So, in 2013-2014, I started to bring young people together via social media, to talk to them about supporting each other. This led to other discussions like patriotism, nationalism and the possibility of finding solutions to local problems such as access to potable water, qualitative education and unemployment.

This birthed the foundation, which aims to help people to see the future together in solidarity, and

connects hearts. This was my way of telling people not to get away from the essentials and the most important things in life.

Lastly, one day, I was talking to people to join us in making this beautiful project a reality. A young man told me that we could never do anything to help my country, not even solidarity. I felt so challenged, and since I love challenges, I decided to do everything possible to prove him wrong, and today, our success stories give me joy.

FBI: There is a lot of frustration amongst young people in Africa due to unemployment. What is the way forward, and what role does a life coach have in easing this pain?

Indeed, there is a lot of frustration, and frustration brings fear. It also gives a feeling of incapacity that makes you forget that you can be a thousand times better than what others expect from you. A life coach can show you techniques for boosting your confidence, and will also work with you to discover your hidden talents and how to utilize them. This world is a world of competition, waiting is unfortunately not an option. You must keep moving.

FBI: Do you feel African governments are supportive enough of local entrepreneurs and African businesses?

Yes, in some countries such as Rwanda, which is today the reference country. But a different story in most other countries. I feel sorry about that. The government needs to listen more to the youth. You can't promote entrepreneurship when questions like rent, electricity or taxes have no flexibility in Africa. There are a lot of challenges in Africa that need the support of the government. When the government supports entrepreneurs, unemployment will be reduced. It's a win-win situation. A supportive environment by the government will attract investors. I must add that everyone cannot be an entrepreneur. Some people like to have a nice job and go home, while others who like challenges will create businesses that will result in job availability for the youths.

FBI: Is there anything else you would like to tell our readers?

I have a lot of things to say, but I will end with this; "do not be afraid of challenges. Break the stereotype, tell yourself that you have the solution to one of all these challenges that aren't yet solved. Don't deprive us of your talent. Each person is unique. Put your potentials and your gifts at the service of the world, and believe in yourself! Our continent needs us...Africa needs us! Let's be the changemakers!



REKNOWNED TURKISH INVESTMENT CONSULTANT TO LEAD THE 6TH PAN AFRICAN HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT AS HOST COUNTRY DIRECTOR



With effect from September 1st, 2021, The Governing Council and Board of Directors of the Pan Africa Leadership and Entrepreneurship Development Centre (PALEDEC) excitedly appoint Focal Point International CEO, Mr. Mehmet Mesut YILDIRIM as the Country Director/Ambassador for the 6th Pan African Humanitarian Summit and Awards which is slated to hold in Istanbul, Turkey from November 25th to

November 28th, 2021. In a statement released to the press, Dr. Babalola Omoniyi, Project Manager, and Executive Director of PALEDEC said “Mehmet’s appointment is based on recommendation of his outstanding leadership qualities, persistent influence and commitment to facilitating international commerce which we find crucial to the success of this year’s edition that aims to discuss sustainable business opportunities to promote and facilitate in-

ternational trade and Foreign direct investment in Africa.”

Prior to his appointment, Mehmet Mesut YILDIRIM is a legal consultant, a certified Entrepreneur Trainer, and the Founder of Focal Point Interna-



tional, a consultancy firm servicing more than 22 top Turkish companies doing businesses in China, Russia, Ukraine, Libya and Tunisia.

He is also responsible for leading several negotiations with many local companies and high-level ministries to improve trade relations and develop businesses in several African countries such as Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo, Senegal. One of such

developments was solving energy and water issues in some African countries by constructing wells with solar energy thereby solving the water problem in the regions without electricity.

In addition, through the Company he established in Morocco, Mehmet introduced the Taxi application which is seen as the beginning of technology and artificial intelligence studies with the slogan “Smart Solution for Africa”

Also, between 2019-2021, he undertook the organization of the SOLAREX fair, the first and only fair organization of Europe in the Solar Energy sector, and continues to serve as the Dubai President of UTEKON Federation and the Middle East/Africa officer of the SİİRTLER Federation.

Today, Mehmet’s company, Focal Point continues its services with its local partners in Kuwait, Dubai and Uzbekistan with more than 8 lawyers who are well-versed in international law, 35 translators working as sworn translators in many languages, and 21 professional consultants from whom it has outsourced joint projects as a senior manager.

He also serves as the CEO of EkmekSepeti L.T.D



TRAJECTORY OF THE MIKE OMOTOSHO ANNUAL LECTURE...The conversation continues.

The Mike Omotosho Annual Lecture was birthed in 2016 out of a desire to see concrete change in the development of our great nation, Nigeria by proffering sustainable and effective solutions to the endemic problems plaguing the Nation and henceforth forwarding findings to appropriate authorities for implementation. This purpose driven Annual lecture is a forum for policy makers, professionals, developmental partners, corresponding agencies and leaders of thought to discuss and proffer efficient solutions and alternatives to pressing societal and developmental issues. The Annual Lecture is specifically designed to bring thinkers, scholars, leaders, politicians, academicians, students, youths and ordinary individuals together to rub minds, exchange ideas and find some common fronts in solutions to make our country a better place.

In 2016, the maiden edition themed “Making Poverty Eradication Our Collective Responsibility” with Mallam Nasir El-rufai as Keynote Speaker. The far-reaching success of this inaugural edition gave the much-needed boost and strengthened the resolve to achieve the set goals. In ensuring sustainability and continuity, the Mike Omotosho

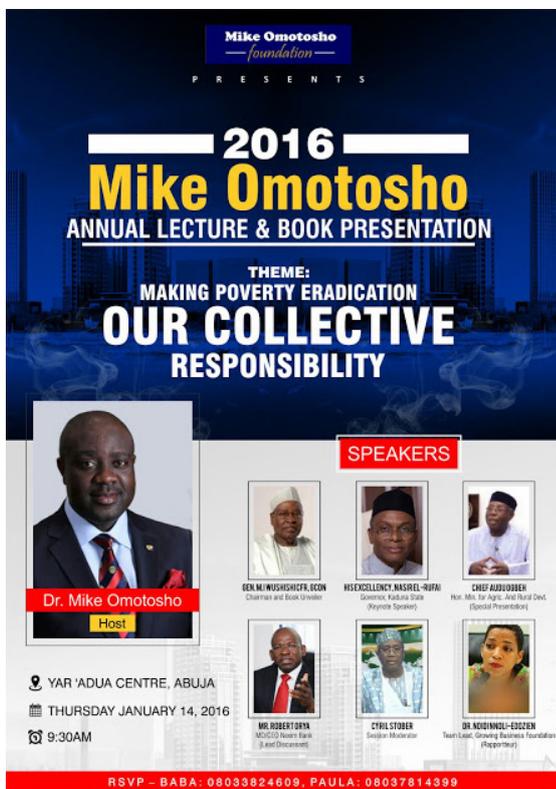


necessary support to young men and women in gaining primary and secondary educations respectively.

In 2017, the theme was “Increased Agricultural Productivity for Sustainable Economic Growth” with the Ooni of Ife, His Royal Majesty Enitan Adewusi as keynote speaker. This time, the stage had grown bigger, so also had the outcome. It was applauded both locally and internationally as some country representatives at the event delightfully wrote the foundation to express their unreserved approvals. Also, as evidence of our commitment to the development of Agriculture in Nigeria especially in oil palm production, the Mike Omotosho Farms; a social enterprise went on further in establishing an Agri Academy to train and empower young men and women on agro – entrepreneurship, crop and livestock based vocational enterprise.

In 2018, the theme was ‘Millennials as Protagonists in Nation Building’ with His Excellency, Donald Duke, the former governor of Cross River state as keynote speaker. This year’s event was deliberate in involving youths as major key players towards nation building. Without wasting any time, the foundation went all out in creating different platforms for Women, Youth and Members of the Media. These platforms succeeded in providing immense support and opportunities on which these categories of people were able to find expression. In all about 15 of these conferences held both in Lagos and Abuja.

In 2019, the theme was “Our Core Values: An invaluable springboard for National development.” with the venerable and most distinguished senior pastor of the Trinity Church, Pastor Ituah Ighodalo as Keynote speaker. The 4th Edition focused on the bedrock of the cultural identifica-



Foundation went on to provide economic empowerment to indigents cutting across different strata. Such interventions included Vocational Skill Acquisition, Business Plan Support Programs, and even provision of Micro Credit. The Street to School Initiative was not left out in providing

Mike Omotosho Foundation
Presents

3rd Mike Omotosho Annual Lecture

Theme:
MILLENNIALS AS PROTAGONIST IN NATION BUILDING

Keynote Speaker: His Excellency Donald Duke (former Governor of Cross River State)

Moderator: Osasu Igbiniedion

Lead Discussants: Japhet Omojuwa, Love Idoko, Ahmed Buhari, Aisha Augie-Kuta, Linus Okorie, Annie Essienette, Amina Bello

Convenor: Dr. Mike Omotosho

Media Partner: huve.ng

Time: 5:00-8:00pm
Date: Sunday 14th Jan 2018
Location: Yar Adua Centre Abuja.

#MOAL2020

Dr. Chizoba Wonodi
Country Director, International Vaccines Access Centre

Humberto Silva
President, World Hepatitis Eradication Project

Dr. Ibrahim Oloriegbe
Chair, Senate Committee on Health

LEAD DISCUSSANT **KEYNOTE SPEAKER** **SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

Get Talking, Get Tested, Get Vaccinated, Get Treated

tion of Nigeria, not just as a nation but as a people. The Foundation therefore made it a duty to form strong collaborations with relevant stakeholders in this space such as the National Orientation Agency and actively co-promoted the nation's core values with the creation of the NYSC Honour CDS, the Secondary Education Board enabled the Honour tour among secondary schools with the establishment of Honour Clubs in Schools, Honour corner within the National Library and other partnerships just to mention a few.

2020: The 5th Mike Omotosho Annual Lecture has been tagged "Achieving Zero Hepatitis – A National Subpoena". According to the WHO, over 27 million Nigerians are walking around with the Hepatitis virus and only about 5 Million know their status leaving 22

MOAL 2021
MIKE OMOTOSHO ANNUAL LECTURE
VIDEO VIRTUAL EVENT

Register for free at:
www.mikeomotosho.com

10AM - 12PM
Thursday 14.01.21

Prof. Kingsley Moghalu - Keynote Speaker

Dr. Mike Omotosho - Convenor

Alh. Bamanga Tukur - Chairman

Mrs. Ibim Semenitari - Panelist

Dr. Don Pedro Obaseki - Moderator

Dr. Mrs. Uyi Oduwa Malaka - Panelist

Atuyota Akpobome - Panelist

Alh. Ahmed Ibrahim Matane - Panelist

Million people ready to infect and already infecting others unknowingly. This is a potential disaster that cannot be allowed to happen.

The Mike Omotosho Foundation has therefore dedicated the 2020 Annual Lecture to Achieving Zero Hepatitis and is collaborating with the Hepatitis Zero Nigerian Commission to bring stakeholders and key players in the health space to tackle this impending biological crisis with just 10 years to the SDG 3.3 The Mike Omotosho Annual Lecture as a platform remains undaunted and result oriented, confident that once again, together we will proffer relevant and timely solutions to Achieving Zero Hepatitis.

2021: The Mike Omotosho Annual Lecture (#MOAL2021) 2021 edition focused on poverty reduction in Nigeria. Alh. Bamanga Tukur and Prof. Kingsley Moghalu among others spoke at the event which x-rayed salient indicators of poverty; and proffered solutions towards a sustainable development

Mike Omotosho Foundation
PRESENTS

4th Mike Omotosho Annual Lecture

Theme:
OUR CORE VALUES; AN INVALUABLE SPRINGBOARD FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Host: Dr. Mike Omotosho

Date: Monday 14th January, 2019
Location: Yar Adua Centre, Abuja
Time: 10:00AM

Enquiries: Ayo 08034011207



Private Sector Engagement: *A Critical Approach for Spearheading Africa's Development*

By Seleman Yusuph Kitenge

Resource mobilisation is a foundation for ensuring that all planned development projects are fully financed and implemented to fast-track Africa's development. Without requisite financial and non-financial resources, the vision to see 'the Africa we want' by 2063 will be unlikely. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda emphasised for all countries, public policies, and the mobilisation and effective use of domestic resources. It underscored by the principle of national ownership as central to the common pursuit of sustainable development, including achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

However, due to the challenges of Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs), our continent is annually losing about US\$88.6 billion, 3.7 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) as highlighted by UNCTAD's Economic Development in Africa Report of 2020. Such a huge amount of loss of resources creates a major financial gap for the African Union (AU) Member States to domestically mobilise resources to spearhead the continent's future. As a result, Africa has continued to lag in various socio-economic development sectors which are crucial for transforming the lives of about 1.4 billion Africans across the continent. Consequently, the public sector is overwhelmed by the weight of numerous challenges facing Africa especially the ongoing demographic crisis where a majority of the population are youth who are critically marginalised politically, socially, and economically. Therefore, to bridge such a resource gap to finance development in Africa, private sector engagement should be first and foremost in our short and long-term strategic resource mobilisation plans. This should cut across our national, regional, and continental bodies working to ensure that Africa realise its full potential and meet its commitment towards global and continental development agendas.

For instance, AUDA-NEPAD as a continental development agency is aware of the opportunity available from the private sector eco-system to ensure that strategic projects, programmes, and initiatives are financed and implemented on a win-win basis. In fact, it has developed a resource Mobilisation strategy that allows the Member States to benefit from 5 dollars for every 1 dollar mo-

bilised. This will allow to create impact directly through Strategic initiatives that touch upon areas such as human capital, health and infrastructure amongst others.

An initiative such as the 100,000 MSMEs Initiative which has now been expanded to reach over 1.5 million Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, in Africa by providing entrepreneurial and business skills training, improving their access to finance and new markets, establishing networks for support and incubation. It is a vivid example of how private sector should be engaged as an important partner towards a common development vision. In addition, it demonstrates how important it is for the private sector to be engaged and involved in addressing Africa's most pressing issues such as youth unemployment and the like. By including the private Sector to the stakeholders of AUDA-NEPAD, it is guaranteed that the Agency will uphold its role of technical interface of the African Union and create a complete ecosystem including all the major players in Africa including the MSMEs which constitute more than 70% of the source of employment in the Continent. Subsequently, ignoring the necessity and existence of the private sector in our approach to accelerate development will further impede our quest to achieve Agendas 2030 and 2063. Considering the budget deficit facing most of our African governments, regional bodies, and continental institutions particularly now that Africa is still slowly recovering from the shocks and repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, private sector close engagement will speed up the recovery process in both social and economic spectrum.

According to AfDB, Africa's private sector accounts for over four-fifths of total production, two-thirds of total investment, and three-fourths of total credit to the economy and employs 90% of the employed working-age population. Therefore, Africa which is a key global player and powerhouse is very possible, but the possibility to be so will be significantly slim if the private sector is overlooked in our strategies to mobilise resources as well as collaborations to move forward the aspirations and goals of Africans in our development frameworks.



MIKE OMOTOSHO ANNUAL LECTURE

VIDEO VIRTUAL EVENT

Register for free at:
www.mikeomotosho.com



Prof. Kingsley Moghalu
Keynote Speaker



Dr. Mike Omotosho
Convener



Alh. Bamanga Tukur
Chairman



Mrs. Ibim Semenitari
Panelist



Dr. Don Pedro Obaseki
Moderator



**Dr. Mrs. Uyi Oduwa
Malaka**
Panelist



Atuyota Akpobome
Panelist



Alh. Ahmed Ibrahim Matane
Panelist

10AM - 12PM

Thursday
14.01.21

5

Best Places To Visit In Zimbabwe





Mana Pools National Park

Regarded as being both Zimbabwe's best park and one of the finest wilderness areas in Africa, Mana Pools National Park is a superb safari destination. Situated at the northern most point of Zimbabwe straddling the Zambian border, Mana Pools is remarkably beautiful: a riverine wilderness on the Zambezi River of pools, floodplains, baobab trees and forests that feels totally remote and never gets crowded. The park is famous for its huge elephant herds and is known for great sightings of lion and leopard as well as being one of the best places in Africa to find endangered wild dogs.

Kariba

Lake Kariba is the world's largest man-made lake and reservoir by volume. It lies 1,300 kilometres (810 mi) upstream from the Indian Ocean, along the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe. Lake Kariba was filled between 1958 and 1963 following



the completion of the Kariba Dam at its north-eastern end, flooding the Kariba Gorge on the Zambezi River. It's also the place to come for hiking and outdoor explorations around the edges of the water, or to watch the red-pink African sunsets in the company of locals, as the evening hues descend over Antelope Island in the distance.

Victoria Falls

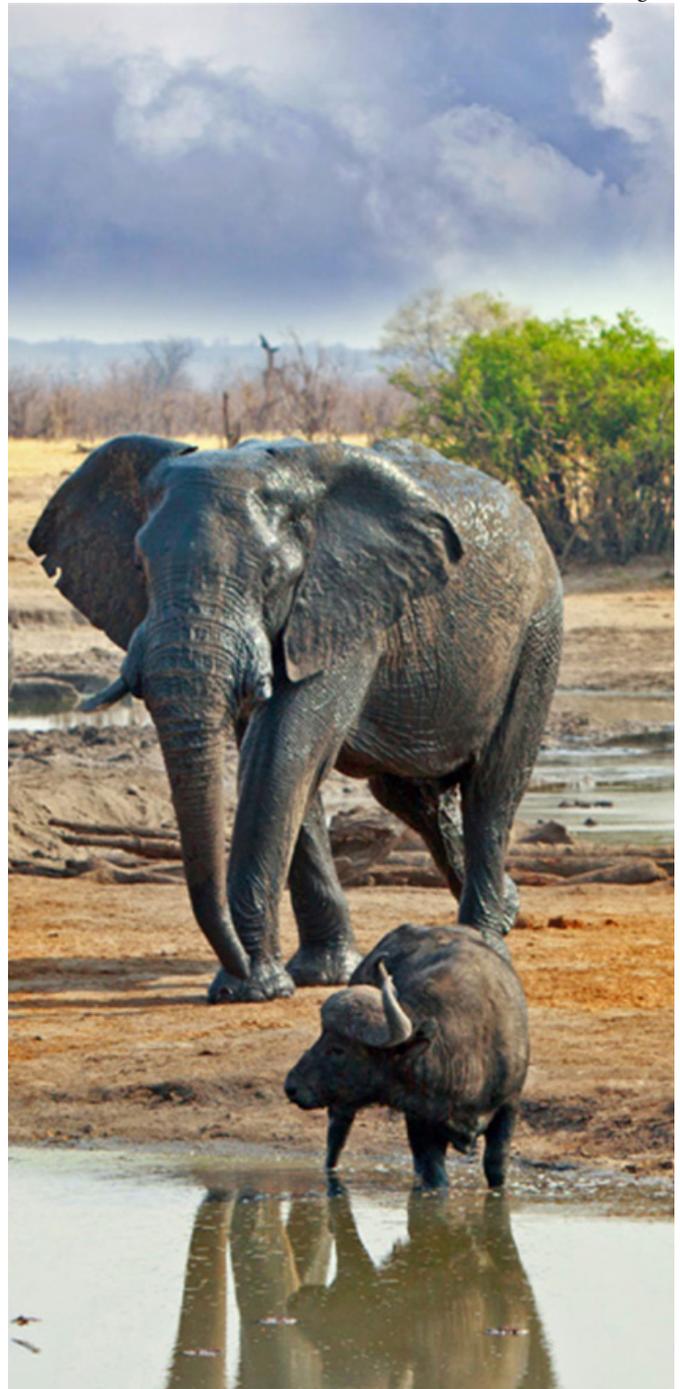
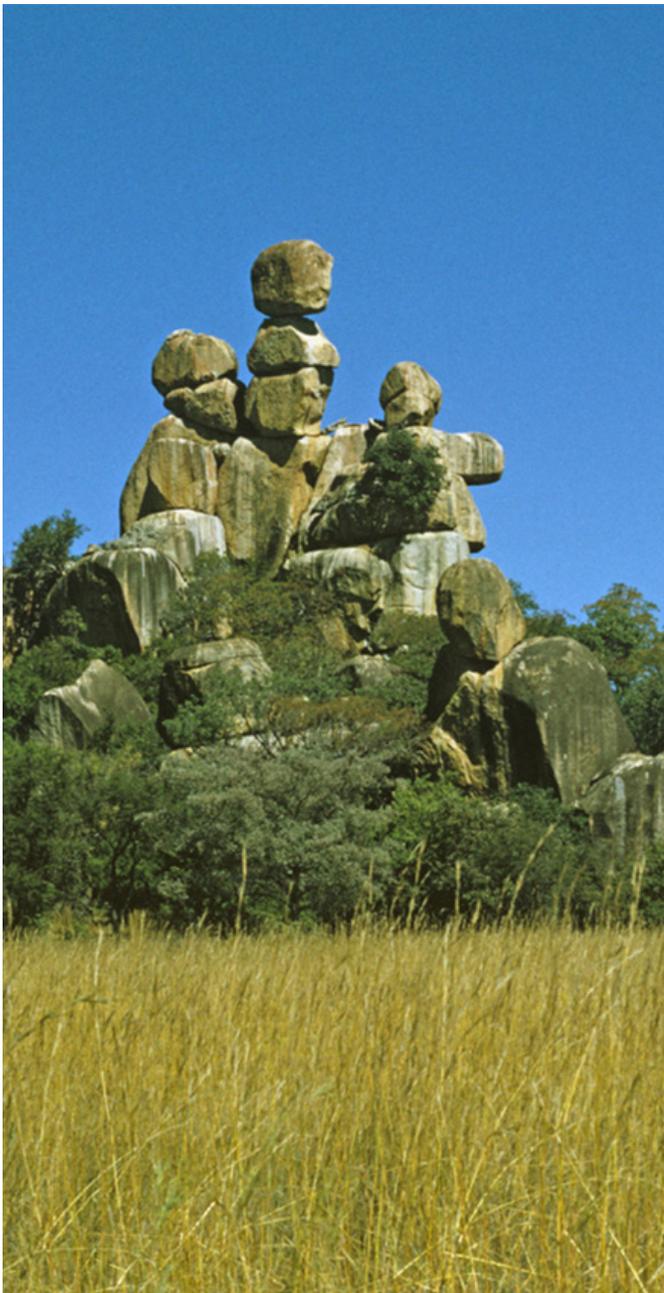
Victoria Falls, spectacular waterfall located about midway along the course of the Zambezi River, at the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe. Victoria Falls is the only waterfall in the world with a length of more than a kilometer and a height of more than hundred meters. It is also considered to be the largest fall in the world. The noise of Victoria Falls



can be heard from a distance of 40 kilometers, while the spray and mist from the falling water is rising to a height of over 400 meters and can be seen from a distance of 50 kilometers. No wonder that the local tribes used to call the waterfall Mosi-o-Tunya “The smoke that thunders”.

Matobo National Park

Home to some of the most majestic granite scenery in the world, the Matobo National Park is one of the unsung highlights of Zimbabwe. This Unesco World Heritage Site, which is also the oldest in Zimbabwe, established in 1926 as Rhodes Matopos National Park, is a stunning and otherworldly landscape of balancing rocks known as kopjes – giant boulders unfeasibly teetering on top of one another.



Hwange National Park

One of Africa’s top national parks, Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe’s northwest should be on any safari lover’s bucket list. Roaming Hwange’s savanna grasslands and woodlands are the Big Five and 100 other species of mammals – the park has the biggest diversity of mammals out of the world’s national parks. The Belgium-sized park is also home to some 50 000 elephants and is known for regular sightings of cheetah, leopard and lion, as well as one of Africa’s largest populations of the endangered wild dog and rare species such as roan and sable.

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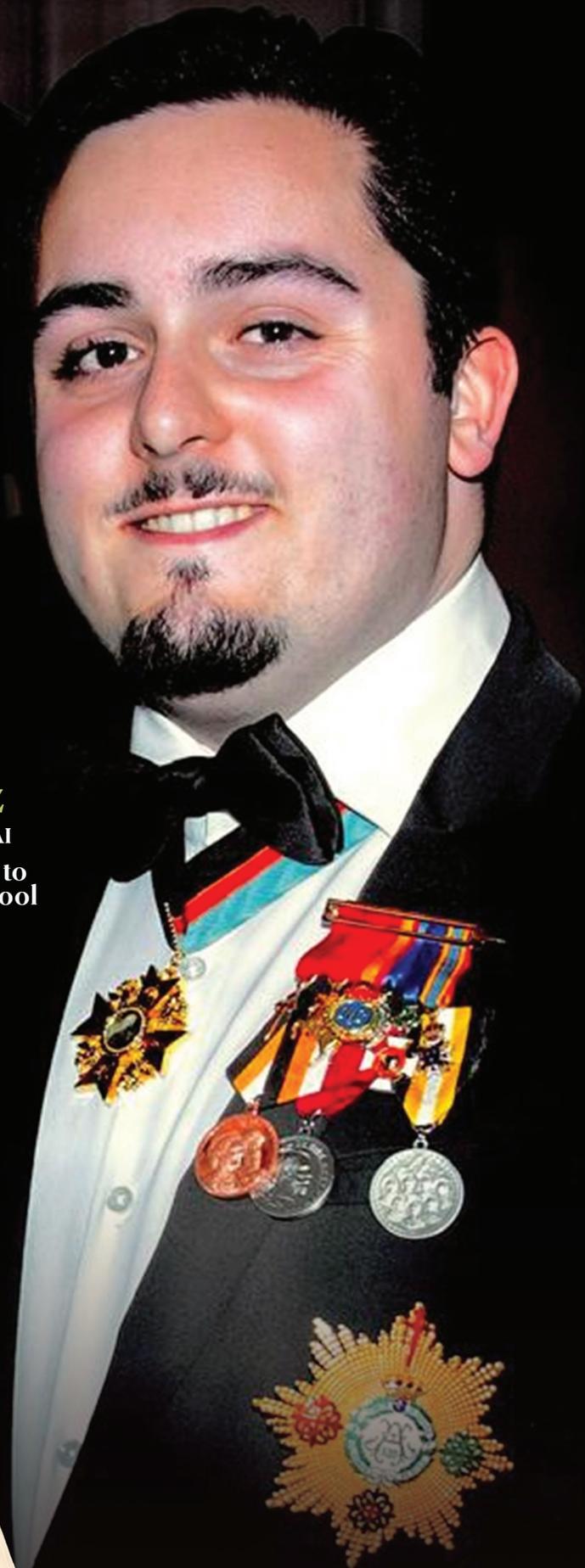
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Manuel

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