

THE END OF YEAR DIGEST!

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**#ENDSARS:**  
THE IMAGES  
THAT CAPTURED  
HISTORY IN THE  
MAKING!

**BEAUTY:**  
CHRISTMAS  
GIFT IDEAS

**ENTERTAINMENT:**  
WHAT LIES AHEAD  
FOR AFRICAN  
POP CULTURE

*Plus*  
**TWO FRIENDS  
ONE BUSINESS:**  
BOLANLE OLUKANNI +  
ZAINAB BALOGUN-  
NWACHUKWU

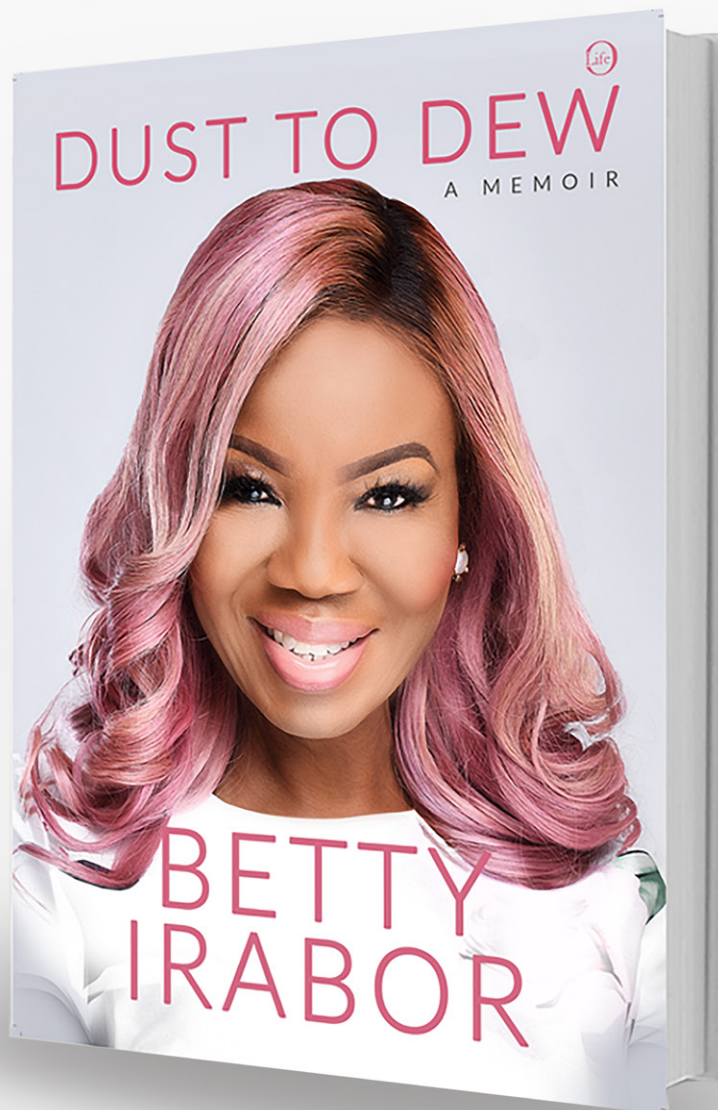
# NEENGI:

*"I always knew I'd be a star. My late mum planted this seed in my heart!"*





“THE HAND OF TRAUMA  
IS LONG BUT CAN BE BROKEN”



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# BETTER DAYS AHEAD STAY NOURISHED





# WHAT A DECADE THIS YEAR HAS BEEN!



**A**s we push ourselves towards the finish line of the cross-country marathon that was 2020; dredging up every last bit of strength, sanity and motivation we have left, and soundtracked by any number of great songs released this year, we may be tempted to take one final look at the mountain of chaos we're attempting to leave behind while remaining dubious of what lies ahead.

Whether or not I have successfully painted a picture that may somewhat summarise the last 10 years of 2020, one thing is for sure: we survived one hell of a year. And that alone is worth taking pride in and celebrating. There will be guilt, remorse, heaviness, doubt... but we must fight against this the same way we fought tirelessly to make it through. Just making it to this point is worthy of celebration, I assure you.

*It's not been an easy road for any business or industry. For us, it's been a forced time of reflection and re-valuation. It's been a time where panic seemed*

*the only logical gear we could shift into, but it also brought about an opportunity to view our work through a different, albeit far more limiting, lens. And what we discovered is this: we can exist in very many forms. In fact, in any form we so choose to. What a liberating discovery to make. It's that discovery that has led us here, to this "End of Year Digest": a 30-page edit that offers you, our readers, the very best of us, just in a more compact form.*

*Big Brother was one of the biggest highlights for its fans this year. Providing viewers with weeks of unfiltered entertainment. It became a source of solitude for many. That's why, for this special edit, we decided to make second runner-up, Nengi Hampson, our cover girl. In this digest, we tasked Nengi with telling her own story, in her own words and boy, did she deliver.*

*In a much different, but greatly, historically significant way, this year we saw a galvanised Nigerian youth, determined to fight for their rights. We experienced the best of the Youth and the worst of the nation, but one thing that remained clear and truly pivotal, was the way in which Community was built and celebrated. In this digest, we spotlight just four of the many photographers who documented the #EndSARS protests providing the world with proof and truth and protecting protesters against fabrications and false arrests.*

*A lot happened in 2020, but we kept our heads above water as best as we could. We can't be certain what lies in the year ahead but we go in knowing that we've been able to survive in incredibly treacherous waters.*

*We thank all of you who have stuck with us and supported us. We wish every single one of you love, strength, peace, joy and prosperity this season and far beyond.*

*Sending you off into the new year with positivity and kindness.*

*See you all soon.*

**Sonia Irabor**  
editor@genevievemagazineng.com



## CANTU TIPS

We've listed a few of the most common Afro hair issues, and some products that could help jumpstart your journey.

### Problems with dryness?

Cantu's Sulfate-Free Cleansing Cream Shampoo and Sulfate-Free Hydrating Cream Conditioner are designed to infuse your hair with moisture. The unique shea butter formula keeps your hair nourished and smooth reduces breakage and minimizes frizz.

### Bothered by breakage?

Cantu's Grow Strong Strengthening Treatment strengthens fragile, weak hair to stop breakage and encourage growth.

### Damaged hair?

Cantu's Intensive Repair Deep Treatment Masque penetrates deep into the hair shaft to repair and restore damaged hair.

Growing Afro hair is a process that requires time and care, be prepared to be in it for the long haul. If you're indoors for the duration make the most of your time and show your hair some much needed love. Your hair will thank you for it.

## 5 STEPS TO YOUR HEALTHY HAIR JOURNEY.

The art of caring for and growing healthy Afro hair is precisely that, an art, and like any form of art it requires time and dedication. Being quarantined at home is the perfect time to start your journey toward healthier hair. Because of its tight curl and tendency to dryness Afro hair requires just that little bit more attention, but proper care over time will result in stronger, longer hair, and being stuck indoors gives you the time you need.

Before starting your hair journey the first thing to do is take pictures from a few different angles. This is a great visual way to chart your progress and keep tabs on which products are giving you the luscious fro you deserve.

### KNOW YOUR HAIR TYPE

Did you know that all Afro hair is not the same? Depending on the look, feel and texture there are a few groupings your hair type could fall into.

Identifying your curl pattern can be mystifying, but it allows you to understand your hair's unique attributes, leading you to better product choices, the best ways to manage your hair and your styling do's and don'ts.

Afro hair generally falls into the type 4 or coily hair texture group, which is naturally very dry and spongy in texture, with super-tight curls prone to major shrinkage. The width of your coil pattern determining with sub-category (A-C) you fall into, though some people have more than one hair type or curl pattern.

The importance of knowing your hair type cannot be stressed enough, it is the key to building your healthy hair care regimen and selecting the right products to give you the results you desire.

### LIST YOUR TROUBLESHOOTERS

The first step on the road to hair nirvana is first identifying your hair challenges. Do you have a problem with dryness, lack of volume or is your hair prone to breakage? Or maybe you have thinning edges? Keeping a list of all your hair issues with some brief notes on each is recommended, and it comes in handy when researching the best ways/products to tackle them.

### SELECT THE RIGHT HAIRCARE PRODUCTS

Your chosen haircare products will be determined not only by your hair challenges but also by your curl type. Cantu has developed a wide range of tried and tested award-winning hair care products that will help you cover all the bases. Hair health, repair, strengthening and promoting growth are just some of the benefits you can achieve by incorporating Cantu into your hair regimen.

### DEVELOP A HAIRCARE REGIME

So, you've discovered your hair type, identified your issues and listed your hair goals. It's now time to put all that knowledge into practice by creating a personal haircare routine. The basics of any hair routine fall into the following categories: cleanse, moisturize,

want to add in some extra steps such as incorporating the use of oil in your routine. Cantu's Dry Deny Moisture Seal Gel Oil revitalizes dry, brittle hair and locks in vital moisture. When planning your regimen, it's always best to tackle your hair problems one at a time rather than all at once. You may find addressing one issue help alleviates the others.

Having a set washday routine as well as a deep conditioning routine tailored to your hair type is key, and Cantu's award-winning line includes products to add hydration to dry hair, reduce frizz, replace vital oils and promote a healthy scalp; all you need for the road to healthier hair.

### BE CONSISTENT, PERSISTENT AND PATIENT!

As with all things, consistency, persistence and patience are the key to healthier, stronger hair. Rome wasn't built in a day, so expecting a full afro after a month is not likely. Chart your progress by taking follow up pictures at set intervals at the same angles as the first batch. If you see improvement, then you are on the right track. If not, then try and figure out why and readjust your product selection. You have to be consistent in your approach, the more you stick to it, the quicker you get to see some results.

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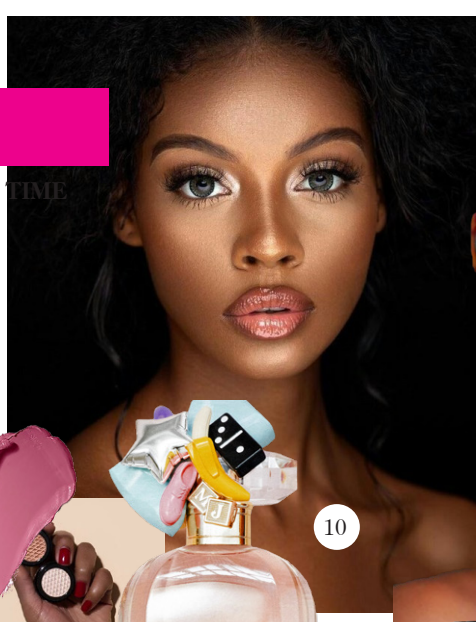


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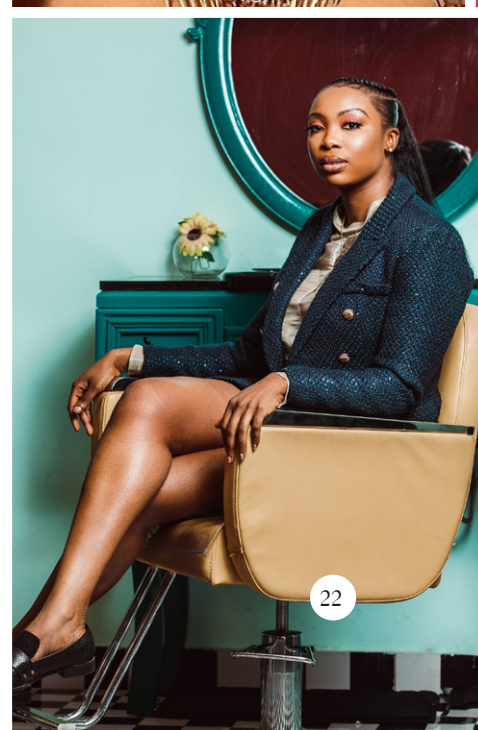
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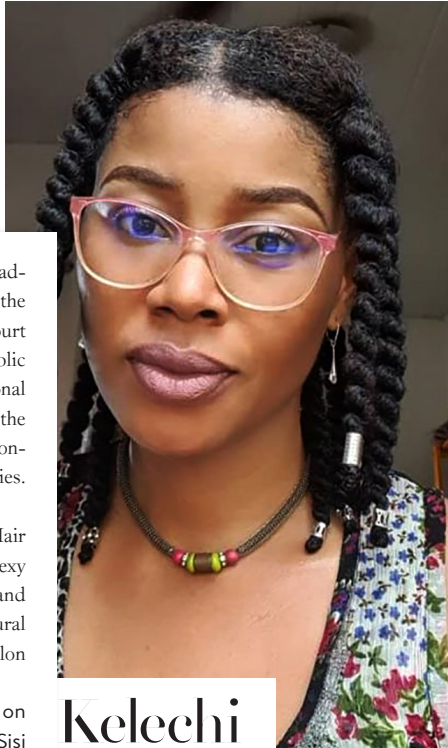
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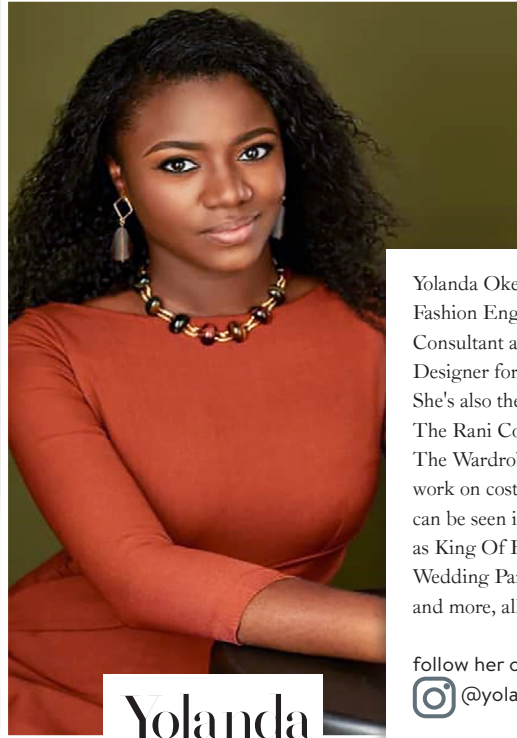


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Lika Ahonsi is the founder and creative director of Klikart Photography.

She is a mother to two lovely boys who have been my inspiration and muse since I started photography nine years ago.

Preserving memories has always been a thrill of Lika's since she was a little girl. She prides herself with capturing peculiar moments most people miss and will keep you smiling every time you look at that image.

follow her on  
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## OUR VISION

TO BE A COMPLETE LIFESTYLE GUIDE AND BEST  
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WOMEN GLOBALLY

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# BETTER DAYS AHEAD STAY NOURISHED





# Africa New Pop Culture & Beauty



Africa's culture is expressed in its arts and crafts, folklore and religion, clothing, cuisine, music and languages. And today, with the help of technology, it has put the power to define its beauty along with so many other things in the hands of the people.

"We're seeing the increasing fluidity of pop culture transfers between Africa and the diaspora. And then globally, there's a huge acceleration in the trend for natural ingredients, which gives the continent a unique

role in global sourcing and storytelling." It's been a seeping, decentralised thing. To call it a takeover would be hyperbole. But with the assertive and frenetic engine of creativity, Africa's global influence as of today cannot be denied, whether it's in literature, music, fashion, art, or with new talents appearing at a relentless pace. This is one of the reasons why the business of cosmetics, beauty and personal care products in Africa is booming.

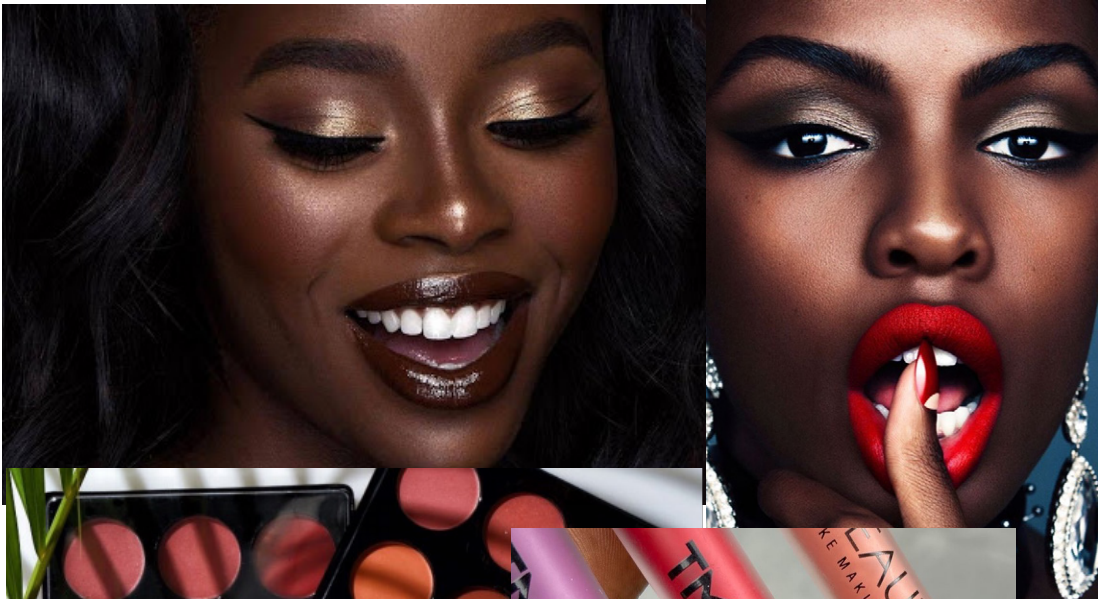
Africa's beauty market is one of the most lucrative businesses. "Young people are more brand conscious and trend driven, and they're likely to purchase products that reflect the right image." Social Media's influence on pop culture is the real change. Media defines popular culture (or pop culture) as what the latest trends are. *Read on...*



*The modernisation of many African countries has attracted the attention of big cosmetics groups, which are already moving in the direction of Africa.*







There is an increased interest among young consumers, urban and feminine, for products with higher added value in a number of categories, including oral care, skin care and cosmetics for makeup. The growing competition in the African market stimulates innovation. Companies will use more massive and aggressive marketing strategies. Social media is becoming increasingly important for young African consumers; their intelligent use in marketing campaigns is likely to become a crucial tool for companies.

"We are moving toward a culture of big-tent beauty. The spread of luxury brands into Africa... Beauty is, of course, cultural. What one community admires may leave another group of people cold or even repulsed. What one individual finds irresistible elicits a shrug from another. Beauty is personal. But it's also universal. There are international beauties—those people who have come to represent the standard."



The idea of beauty is always shifting.

Whom we deem 'beautiful' is a reflection of our values.

Today, it's more inclusive than ever.

Now, a more expansive world has arrived where we are all beautiful.



## Ask CLARA

*Here are some commonly asked questions answered...*

**Should I adjust my skincare routine and products while I'm staying in the house?**

If anything, adjust for lower maintenance. Keep it simple. "Stick to a simple skincare routine of protection in the morning and repair in the evening. Use a gentle skin cleanser followed by

an antioxidant serum and sunscreen. This is a great routine in the morning. In the evening after cleansing, apply a moisturizer followed by a collagen-stimulating ingredient like retinol."

You should always consult a dermatologist before making any significant changes or if you are treating a serious medical condition. While it may be hard to during self-isolation. Several dermatologists are taking virtual appointments.

**Should I be applying more lotion to my hands with all the washing?**

"The excessive use of hand washing and Purell-type solutions will eventually cause a hand eczema."

"Try to wash the hands with mild soap and, if possible, immediately moisturize right after." This is especially important if you're in a profession that requires you to wash your hands a lot, or you're exposed to chemicals on your hands in your line of work, such as at nail salons.

Use moisturizers that contain cosmetic-grade petrolatum, which forms a protective but breathable seal on the skin to keep hydration in and microorganisms out. Try Vaseline Intensive Care Advanced Repair Moisturizer

**I shouldn't be touching my face right now. How do I do my skincare routine?**

It's simple: Wash your hands first. "When you're applying products to the face, make sure you wash your hands first. Then it's fine to use your hands." "Refrain from touching the face during the day, picking at the skin, and rubbing it."



**Clara Gbadebo**  
Beauty Editor

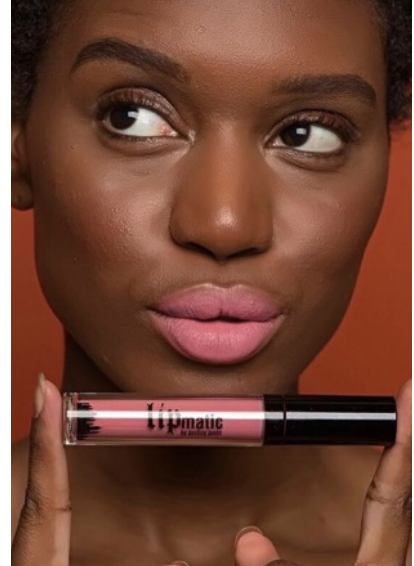
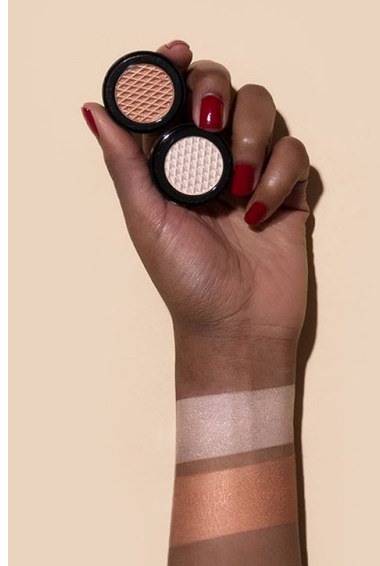
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# African Beauty Brands You Should Know

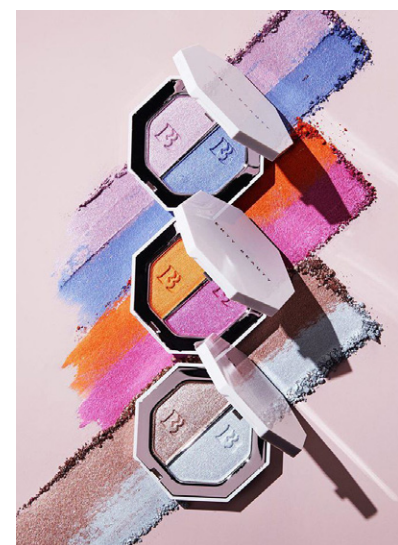






# Beauty Shift-Online... 'Hard to Ignore'

Coronavirus Pandemic Will Transform Beauty's Festive Season... 'A Christmas unlike any we've seen before' – 2020 will see a significant online rush. Beauty brands and retailers must build a strong online presence and smart digital engagement strategies to capture the rush of consumers favoring e-commerce this Christmas.



Fenty Beauty



Oh My Lash



Lashes by Joy



Oh Yours Beauty



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# Beautiful Christmas Gifts For Women



# For Men





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# ADVOCACY AND THE FIGHT AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ABUSE

## Ayodeji Osowobi

*After her own experience with sexual violence, gender equality advocate, AYODEJI OSOWOBI, made the life-changing decision to spearhead the fight against gender-based and sexual violence. Today, she is recognised as one of the foremost voices advocating for a safer society for women and girls. With the support of an equally passionate and dedicated team, she runs Stand To End Rape (STER), a not-for-profit organisation that provides support to survivors of sexual abuse while educating the country and its citizens on sexual assault, rape and gender-based violence.*

**\*Editor's note:** This interview was conducted before the #EndSARS protests in which Osowobi, alongside fellow members of the Feminist Coalition worked tirelessly to ensure the safety and comfort of protesters around the nation.

Interview – Mo Adefope

**Stand To End Rape is an organisation which you set up in 2014 to advocate against gender-based violence and provide support to survivors of sexual assault and rape. Would you say your organisation has impacted the lives of survivors in the way you hoped it would when you started it?**

Yes, because at the time we started it, [conversations about] sexual violence weren't really on the front burner. It wasn't something that survivors could easily speak about openly; there were still a lot of gaps in terms of the provision of services; the sort of support that was available for survivors, how the stories of survivors were told in the media and how survivors were represented, even in Nollywood and other informative platforms. I believe that we have indeed achieved our core goal for STER, which was to break the culture of silence towards sexual and gender-based violence, especially regarding rape, and to ensure that when survivors do break their silence, they actually have enough resources at their disposal to help them move from a place of rejection, self-blame and hopelessness to a place where they can adequately get support

without having to fear or be bothered about the costs of this support. Over the years we've really expanded our scope; we've been able to touch base on other issues like sexual harassment in tertiary institutions. If you look at social media now, it's easier for survivors to speak about their experiences and it's easier for those in local areas to actually talk to healthcare workers or their neighbours or whoever it is that can help them. With our awareness-raising campaigns, we've been able to change the mindset of a lot of people. We've sort of tried to shift that culture of blame away from the person who has experienced the violence and put it on the perpetrator. This has helped more people to seek help and speak about their experiences. We're beginning to change the culture and conversations around gender equality; everything is evolving and changing, but there's always more work to be done.

**Organisations such as yours have put certain systems in place to educate people on sexual assault, rape and gender-based violence. In your experience, would you**

**say that these have made a difference so far in the sense that people have become more knowledgeable about these offences and the actions that define them?**

Yes! I mean if you look as far back as seven years ago, it was a different conversation around what consent really is. Some women didn't even understand what consent was [or] how they could be groomed for [sexual] violence. But targeted changes [in] social behaviour, communication and awareness campaigns, have helped to change people's knowledge, attitude and practices around body autonomy, consent, violence and more. We've helped people to understand what a crime really is. There are still certain grey areas that need to be made clearer, which of course, STER and other organisations are working to provide more information on. I would say that we have moved from a place of total denial of rape or women's agency and body autonomy, to a place where more people are enlightened and are aware of their agency and are able to read signals and signs of violence. People can easily be assertive in saying no and meaning no. We're just generally enlightening people to



respect another person's no. Regardless of the situation or the context, once someone says, I do not want to be involved in this scenario or I do not want to engage in this activity with you, you need to respect that and that's what we continue to teach. Of course there are people who still [feign] ignorance or maybe some people need to understand better, but again, ongoing awareness activities are there to correct these wrong narratives and set the record straight on what is permissible and what isn't.

**There are quite a number of discrepancies in the statistics surrounding rape reports and convictions, but there seems to be one common theme: the numbers are very low. How do we improve the collating of information on rape reports, convictions and bringing clarity to the grey area?**

That's a great question. Last year, the National Sex Offenders Registry was launched. The essence of this registry is for us to have a coordinated database of cases that are reported and convicted across Nigeria and also to serve as a database for service providers to check against new employees. So if someone is applying to work with children or to lecture in a school or any job at all that has to do with vulnerable groups like those living with disabilities or people within the LGBTQ+ community, it's important that employers are able to check that list against the name of their proposed or prospective employee to ensure that they're not reported abusers or convicted offenders. I think we can also do more by ensuring that the police stop collecting data with paper. Having an online database is very useful as the police and every other government agency that deals with crime can actually compute their information and have a database that they can always check against. I know that the Nigerian Police Force and NAP TIP are currently working on something together. It's also important to note that it's not just about the numbers, it's also about the judicial process. For example, if a case is taking 3 or 4 years to get a conviction, we can't have a lot of numbers on that database. If a case does not have evidence or the evidence is ruined by different parties or the issue of out-of-court settlements is present, the number of reported cases will be very high but the number of convicted cases will be very low. This actually contributes to the major issues that we're having and I think one way to solve it is to ensure that we really tackle all these fall-out issues. Right now, several advocates are pushing for family courts so that we can easily prosecute cases of sexual and gender-based violence in these special courts. We need to have these courts and we also have to improve on how we collate our information.

**STER started out as a Twitter hashtag**

**in 2013 before it became a full-fledged organisation, yet many still argue that using social media channels such as Twitter or Instagram are futile towards achieving any "real" progress in the fight for justice for survivors of sexual abuse. What are your thoughts on this?**

I mean, you've literally said it. If there's any evidence that online advocacy can have an impact, even offline, then STER is that evidence. Because like you rightly said, we started out as a hashtag just to stir up conversations and help people to speak up about any sort of experience that they've had and even just to generally enlighten people, and now we're a full-fledged organisation that is known both nationally and globally. Online advocacy also helps to mobilise action for offline movements. So for example, if you want to organise a protest or you want to enlighten people in communities, you can actually generate interest from online advocacy. You know, if we put out that, this crime happened in this local government or these are the actions we want to take, we need [this and that], people will volunteer their time to join you offline to actually carry out these activities. Online advocacy is really just about putting issues in people's faces and ensuring that the conversation is ongoing and more people are seeing what is going on, while also ensuring that the offline activities are carried out and updates are provided online. The more you engage online, the more you put the information out there and the more it's in the public's consciousness, people will keep talking about it. If it's trending and international media is picking it up, the issue will escalate and it will get people's attention offline.

**With regards to the recent online activism and virtual protests, which were triggered by the cases of Uwaila Omozuwa, Barakat Bello, Farishina and many more young women and girls who have been sexually assaulted and raped, have you found that this online advocacy has played a direct and major role in the progression of some of these aforementioned cases or that any of sort of justice has been attained as a result of it?**

It has contributed to it. Like I [said], it helps to bring more awareness, it helps to put things in people's consciousness, it helps to create coordinated action online to ensure that people who need to be aware of these cases and take action actually see them. While CSOs on ground are engaging [people and institutions] offline, there's also pressure online and this really works because it translates to actions that happen offline. For example, STER is providing support on the Farishina case in Jigawa State, but we wouldn't have known

about that case if it wasn't shared online because we're not based there. We're based in Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, but take up cases across Nigeria. So someone bringing that case online helped to bring it to our attention which then helped us to mobilise resources offline, foot soldiers who physically provide support on the case.

**In highly publicised cases of rape and sexual violence, like the case against D'Banj, the credibility of survivors' stories is very much disputed, with a lot of people making no effort to believe their accounts of their traumatic experiences. In situations like this, how can we better protect the survivor from the noise, the ignorance and all other damaging aspects of bringing a case against a powerful figure?**

Support, basically. It's ensuring that survivors are able to take a step back from the online noise and just really focus and centre their attention on themselves, getting better and making an informed decision on how they want to proceed with their case. What we do at STER is to ensure that this happens; that due process is followed and survivors are able to establish their case wherever it needs to be done, either with the police or another government institution that we need to engage with. Evidence within our own disposal is then provided to such parties to help facilitate the investigation. In that regard, we do not influence any decision at all because we are here for justice. We do not try to help the survivor to settle out of court. And, as much as possible, we try to shield the survivor's identity and protect them because, for us, it's not just about bringing the case online, it's also about how the survivors are faring offline and what happens to them offline as well. Trying to discredit someone's story and trying to ruin their credibility... It's actually wrong because it's sort of a conspiracy to cause a public opinion around a case, that would either force the survivor to recant their statement or lose interest in [pursuing] their case. It's just a tool that is being used to further silence survivors, to further target women who are supporting other survivors, to further discredit the movement for survivors' rights and women's rights. At STER, we protect the image of the survivors and help them get support as much as they can or as much as is required for their case. We do not allow the noise or the lies or the targeted harassment to get to us, rather, we focus on the work.

**So with everything you've mentioned and all the work you've been doing so far, do you think we're any closer to reaching a time where this place might be a safer space for girls and women?**





I would say we are getting closer because if we look at the trajectory of women's rights in Nigeria, especially in regards to sexual and gender-based violence, we've come from a place where culture, social norms, traditions and religious beliefs really shaped how women and girls were treated, trained, harmed and just put in a place of danger, whether consciously or not. Over the space of, say, 10 to 15 years, there has been a bit of a change. We're at a phase now where we're gradually picking up the pace in changing the narrative of women and creating more safe spaces for us. So looking at eight to 10 years ago, again, cases of rape existed but the conversation around it was [almost] non-existent. I mean, even speaking from my experience, I hadn't heard anything [concerning] it. Looking at where we are right now, where we have more shelters, we have more civil society partners in the [advocacy] space, we have better laws in place, I would say that we are moving forward, we are making progress. Is it fast enough? Maybe not, but in a small number of states or communities, changes are occurring, more communities are aware about the dangers of and the practices that contribute to violence against women and girls and how everyone has a responsibility to change it.

**And what do you think we need to do more of right now, as individuals to realise this change?**

What we can do differently is to hold each other more accountable. As individuals, our mentality has actually created more problems because we do not hold each other accountable when we become aware of vices being committed either by our friends or relatives or our bosses or [whoever] it may be. Even moreso, the recent attacks on human rights defenders and sexual gender-based violence advocates have become a tool used by individuals to demean, belittle and undermine the work being done by advocates. What this does is to cast aspersions on the genuinity of the response process, which indirectly forces survivors to stay quiet about their own experiences. As individuals, we must halt practices that contribute to the rape culture including practices of promoting or facilitating out-of-court settlement on rape cases. While we hold the Government accountable for justice, we also must become responsible citizens who promote the law rather than take advantage of the weakness in the system.

**In the face of everything, what gives you that formidable strength to take up the**

**fight, day after day and keep pushing for survivors to be given the justice they deserve?**

Every survivor out there is me. I'm literally fighting for my sisters and fighting indirectly for myself because I didn't have someone to fight for me when I experienced my own violation. So this is my own way of fighting for my sisters and fighting for a better Nigeria so that more women and girls do not have to experience this violation. That's why I keep going, that's why I'm encouraged to keep doing more despite the attacks or the harassment that I receive. I just keep moving, because at the end of the day, we are not really measured by just how we live, we are also measured by how many lives we're able to impact and this is just my own way of ensuring that I'm contributing to a better society and a better Nigeria that I can look back on and say yes, we're in a better space for women and girls. I want to live in a better future for myself and I believe everyone else also wants that. And in terms of support, you know, support from my family and allies also help me to forge ahead and keep going.



# WHO GETS LEFT BEHIND?

The Future of the  
Consumption of  
African Culture







Today, Burna Boy has an album produced by African American producer, Diddy; Sho Majodzi is a guest on mainstream American daytime television; the Year of Return, spearheaded by Ghana, has become a melting point for Black diasporic creative persons and Beyoncé's Black is King was purported to be a love letter to Africa. The African continent as both hub and production centre for much of the art and culture consumed by the global market today is undeniable. So much that brands ranging from Boohoo to Gucci are aligning themselves with artists across fashion, music, film, literature and more, understanding that these faces will draw new audiences to their product and increase their profit margins.

Essentially, the profitability of African cultural contribution to the artistic space has become noticed on a global scale with clear signs of growing even more in the coming years. This has been fantastic, not just for the creators who deserve to see their work appreciated, particularly by a global Black audience in the same way that African American music has seen global acclaim, but also for Black diasporic persons, because the growing popularity and profitability of African cultural work to the global conversation means that corporations are doing more to improve accessibility for consumers.

However, the growth rate of consumption of African culture does not match the growth rate of production channels which means that only a small fraction of artists are profiting from the global popularity. A huge part of the reason for this is access, impaired by the lack of distribution of resources from major cities to rural areas. If we take Nigeria as an example, Lagos,

which hosts 10% of the entire population of the country contributes 30% to the annual GDP making it Africa's 7th largest economy. This means Lagos alone is generating income and thus receiving investment above every other city in Nigeria and most other nations in Africa.

The reason for this is in part due to the fact that resources like education, electricity, water, broadband and general infrastructure are disproportionately better in Lagos than in most other cities and towns in Nigeria. Without access to basic amenities like water and electricity, it is near impossible for people to have the space to think about much less produce creatively. Yes, we have seen examples of this being untrue in the case of internet sensations like The Critics Who Rule: the Northern based collective that produce sci-fi short films or the Ugandan dancers featured in French Montana's "Unforgettable" video. However, they are very clearly the exception and not the rule.

This is clear in the fact that the continued success of "The Critics" has been bolstered by donations from Western industry veterans like J.J. Abrams and Franklin Leonard and the dancers from the Montana video remain internet sensations with no real change to their living conditions. Reliance on Western benefactors to support and bolster home grown talent is not realistic or sustainable. This is because aside from requiring creatives to gain global notoriety to survive, it operates on the presumption that becoming social media famous always leads to wealth or opportunity.

Inequality of resource distribution is being made even more stark by the growing popularity of new city developments happening across the continent. New developments that are being financed by international bodies. A prime example is Eko Atlantic, which is being built and financed by China Communication Construction group and pegged as the Nigerian International Commerce City, created within the existing, over-populated Lagos. Further development like this,

which is specifically aimed at international commerce already shuts out native dwellers of Lagos because it seeks to enrich returnees or visitors rather than dwellers of the city. This means an increase in the cost of living for native dwellers but a lack of increase of income because they are shut out of new development.

The effect of this is that it not only limits freedom of expression for dwellers of major cities who now have to spend more time securing their survival, but also limits the migration opportunities for natives from other states or cities, because migration costs become more unattainable. With more time; an often under factored resource in the creation of art, being redirected to work that finances in the short-term, artists lose out on the opportunity to create art which often finances in the long-term. Also, artists creating outside of major cities lose the access to the creative hubs that exist within these cities because they cannot afford to exist within the cities.

Promotion of art and audience building is not solely about access to tech, but access to the resource of a network. Already infrastructurally disenfranchised communities lose twice because they cannot advocate for their work online or in person because their immediate spaces are not built to support them and the communities that are built to support this are out of reach to them because of money. This means that the global conversation around art and Africa will solely come from the perspective of those fortunate to create within a very limited number of cities.

Limited representation will therefore equal stunted stories that will continue to tell part rather than the whole of our stories. With the nature of Western consumption being driven by capitalism which seeks quick turnover of content for the sake of profit, the needed development across the continent will never happen quickly enough for the range of artists creating in the present landscape of the continent to get a chance at the global stage the African cultural sector is currently occupying.





# Bolanle Olukanni & Zainab Balogun- Nwachukwu

## **BANKING ON A SIMPLER HAIR SALON EXPERIENCE!**



*Motivated by the desire to make trips to the beauty salon more seamless for not only themselves, but other women and young girls, two great friends, Bolanle Olukanni and Zainab Balogun-Nwachukwu, took matters into their own hands and so, Wash and Go was born. The delightful duo had a sit down with **MO ADEFOPE** and talked about everything from the joys and challenges of running a business together, to their long-term goals and the necessity of making sacrifices in business.*







**Wash and Go's concept is very simple, which almost goes against the more complex ideas that are being presented to consumers in a bid to expand and capture evolving tastes. Why was its simplicity so important to its success?**

*Bolanle:* They say insanity is doing the same thing and expecting different results. I don't know if you've driven within Lekki and seen how many salons there are [but] almost every mall has a salon. We were having a conversation about things we were frustrated with. I'm permed and Zainab is natural; I'm a wig wearer and I want to go into a salon and I want to do my cornrows. I want them to comb my hair properly, with love and attention, but I also want to leave quickly and [not] have to deal with the fact that someone else is doing braids or getting permed. I just want to [get] in and out. In the same vein, natural-haired clients want a place where they have someone who's focused on their needs. The [belief] is that a lot of natural hair styles take time because of the techniques and the way hair is done. So when we were thinking about Wash and Go, we did a market research survey that showed that a lot of people would come to a place where all you get to do are specific, simple services. We wash, we treat, we steam and the techniques with which we do your hair ensure that we provide minimal hair loss. So that was the main reason why we decided to do it; it was [because] we were both frustrated with what was available for our specific needs.

**What's been the best part of running Wash and Go for the both of you?**

*Bolanle:* [It's] doing something that's so hard and challenging and realising that you have the ability to create something when you felt like you possibly couldn't. I love the fact that I've been able to prove myself wrong. I've been able to create a business when I [didn't think] I had the strongest business acumen. I like the fact that I am doing something that's very hard - there are some days where, honestly, I don't feel like getting up and coming to the salon. I like this idea of [committing] to something. A lot of times, when you're a freelancer and independent, you're only committed to yourself, so what you want to do is what you want to do. There have been times when I've gotten gigs and I'm like, "I don't feel like it". I can't say I don't feel like it when it comes to Wash and Go, so even on days when I don't want to, I have to come in. I think that creates different types of characteristics in me, so I become a more committed person, I'm more responsible, more diligent, more focused. I like what it's developed inside of me. Is it hard? It is the hardest thing I've ever done in my life and it's tiring and it's frustrating, but it's beautiful to know that it's working.

*Zainab:* It is quite special and it's a rollercoaster of emotions. It's been a blessing and like Bolanle said, it's very character-defining. I love being here. I haven't been on a set in like a year, and I haven't

missed it. But, I will wake up, I will come here; I love meeting the people here, I love talking to clients. I mean, we have off days where we're like, oh my God, I can't talk to anyone, but most of the time, we love being here. We love meeting people; we love seeing women transform, we love seeing a woman who doesn't really go out without her wig, come and get her hair done and say, "Okay, well, I think I'm going to try it this week without having my wig on". That's making change. We love when we see kids come in here and a mother says, "She's never been to a salon before" or "I've never seen her behave this way", but there's something happening here that's working.

**Besides being business partners, you're also quite good friends. Do you feel like it's much easier to work and run a business together because you already know and understand each other and there's a certain level of trust that exists in your relationship?**

*Zainab:* You know, some people say that sometimes it's easier for you to work with a partner or work with a friend in business. No, I don't think that's true. I think you just find people who have what it is that you're missing and if it works to a particular optimum, then you know that you have something. I've tried to run businesses with other friends and it just hasn't quite worked out because we were just not clicking in certain areas. I think with Bolanle, we've learnt to understand where we click and where we don't, and how we can fill in the gaps. We have our strengths and we have our weaknesses and we're very aware of what those strengths and weaknesses are. Bolanle knows that I have a slight OCD...

*Bolanle:* Slight is an understatement. (Laughs).

*Zainab:* I am very very finicky. Bolanle's the fluidness to my finicky, and I've had to learn how to be a little fluid. I'm not super fluid but I'm a bit fluid on some days. And we've put in some structure in her life as well.

*Bolanle:* It's good. It's definitely a situation of opposites attract and it works because what has happened is, I've learnt a lot of things in terms of being more organised and being more timely and Zainab has learnt to loosen up a little because if not... if you can't compromise on the ways where you're different, you're just going to continue bumping heads. I don't know how much friendship plays a role in us being able to work together; we disagree and we get annoyed with each other and then maybe we'll just be like, whatever. But it helps that there are days when you're tired and you can laugh, you know. We're also kind of intentional on being actual friends outside of here, so it really is like a marriage. So what you have to do is, you have to find a way to nurture the relationship so that when you're communicating about business stuff, you can hear each other; if that makes sense.

*Zainab:* But I don't think Wash and Go would have worked with anybody else in all honesty.

**You both have your individual careers and personal brands that are constantly evolving. In what ways has your journey with Wash and Go affected the existing demands of your careers? How have you been able to create space and time to include this?**

*Zainab:* You just don't. You have to sacrifice one for the other for a little while. In the last year, I haven't been on a set. I've been on this set of Wash and Go. (Laughs) With how hectic our lives are and our work is, it wouldn't be possible to juggle both at the same time. So even when we were working on this, we would have moments where we're like, "Bolanle, I haven't made any money this month, all I've done is spend money!" (Laughs). Or Bolanle would be like, "Oh gosh, I haven't hosted in a bit, in like 3 months"-

*Bolanle:* I mean... turning down events because you have to be here.

*Zainab:* Yeah. So you just have to make that decision and you have to give your all. We were giving our days and our nights, sacrificing friends, family, moments just so we could be here. And that's hard for the people around you because some people will just be like, "What are you doing that's so serious that requires all this energy?" [Some people] didn't get it until the launch day and they were like, Oh wow! Okay, now I get why I didn't see you. We [do] have a really good support system; our families have been absolutely amazing and our parents... moments when we were trying to figure [things] out, they were there and it's really nice to have that support system.

*Bolanle:* And I tell people that this concept of being able to multitask and being a jack of all trades... there are certain things that you can't multitask and I think there are certain things that you shouldn't multitask. We put this place together in six months, from inception to opening. There's no way we would have done that if we were multitasking. I feel like you have to learn what should be multitasked and what shouldn't be, and for detail and commitment, this wasn't one of them.

**What's your favourite thing to do as a form of self care?**

*Bolanle:* Sleep! No, I'm joking. Drink tea and just not do anything, not leave my house. I didn't leave my house last Friday for the first time this year and that was amazing. Yeah, definitely [that] for me.

*Zainab:* For me, I think it's just chilling and watching movies, being at home, being in [my] comfort [zone] with [my] people, that's my happy place.

**In the long run, what kind of impact do you hope Wash and Go makes in the beauty**







## services industry in Nigeria?

*Zainab:* I hope that we create a shift where women become really comfortable with who they are; [we want to see] women become comfortable, away from the norm. Like I mentioned, seeing women come in here, who maybe would never in their entire life, remove their wigs for anyone... they would typically have a home service because they just don't want anyone to see them. Or women who may have suffered from different types of hair loss or postpartum shedding and finally come back to the salon. A woman's crown and glory is in a lot of what she looks like, so us being a part of that process, where women become comfortable and that the type of woman I described can come in here and leave and maybe not carry the bags that they came in with, and not carry the insecurities that they came in with... That for me is where I want to hit. It's where I want to continue to go.

**It's quite commonplace for a lot of us to tie our confidence and self worth to our hair. You know, to the point where having a "bad hair day" has the power to throw us off balance and influence our mood. How do you navigate the mental impact of your personal bad hair days?**

*Zainab:* It's a lot of not caring that goes into it. I think it's different for us because we come from an entertainment background where we're dolled up all the time, where you have little downtime to yourself and when you do, people look at you like, "Ah! You look so different, I didn't know you looked like this", or stuff like that. It gets to a point where all of that just isn't important anymore. Where you really can leave your house without anything on your face or without your hair super done... We can show up here looking a mess and thankfully our clients- I think they just understand because nobody questions, nobody says anything ridiculous.

*Bolanle:* Yeah no one has ever said: "You look so different". That's true.

*Zainab:* People just see us and I think it just normalises things for them and makes us even more relatable because we're not the instagram people that they see. It's important to give that balance because, yeah, you're going to have bad times.

**In terms of hair and identity: what story does your hair tell about you?**

*Bolanle:* Versatile bih! (both laugh). No seriously, I love changing my hair. I will [have] my hair sleek one day and I'll do it in two little braids [another] day. I'm taking this hair out on Wednesday. I will put a wig on the next day.

*Zainab:* Bolanle has gotten a lot better now. I remember the days when I would see her in a week and maybe she's gone through like eight

different wigs; maybe a curly one in the morning, then she's Beyonce at night.

*Bolanle:* I think it's fun and that's the beauty about being a black woman. The versatility that we offer. So, that's my personality.

*Zainab:* What does my hair say about my personality? Just take your time, don't play with me, just take it easy... You know, I went almost 10 years without hair and now I'm so into it; it's like a baby. Don't play with it, don't detangle my hair, I like it a mess. You know, just take it easy! (Laughs). Yeah, that's me and my hair. It's just easy, breezy-

*Bolanle:* Do you know what I would say? Your hair describes you as loyal, which you are.

*Zainab:* I'm very dedicated, yeah.

**Bolanle, you've spent a lot of time working to empower women through your NGO, God's Wives Foundation. What influenced your desire to create this organisation?**

I don't want to say I don't have an emotional reason but nothing specific happened in my life. I don't have any family members that are widows or anything, but I think it's just the idea that I'm in a position of influence and for some reason, that is a group of people my spirit felt drawn to and I realised that they were marginalised and they go through a lot of issues and challenges when it comes to having financial sustainability. So I thought to myself, "Okay, how can I use the idea that I'm a popular person to bring attention to that?" That's what inspired it. After the NGO was [created], I kept hearing a lot of their stories, so I thought to myself, okay I can document what's happening and create some awareness on this. That's what led to the actual documentary. So the NGO existed before the documentary was created.

**Do you feel like you've achieved your goals for the foundation in terms of providing opportunities and better living standards for widows and single mothers?**

It's an ongoing process honestly. We know how much people are suffering but, until you go to a lot of their houses and you hear the stories, and the challenges... We've been able to help [some people become] financially independent and stable, but to what extent? Can they afford to send their kid to university? Probably not. Right now, they're able to provide food, they're able to provide petty cash, but the big things in life, like being free from poverty, those things we still haven't been able to accomplish or achieve. I think it'll take a lot of time. Literacy is also a major issue. A lot of them are not literate, which of course does not allow you to be able to advance and get certain types of jobs. So it's an ongoing process and that's what I hate about NGOs. People are like: Oh create an NGO, and I'm like,

Yeah that's great... but you want to get to the point where you get to close your NGO down because then it means you've achieved what it is that you wanted to achieve.

**And Zainab, last month, you got two AMVCA nominations for best actress in a drama for your roles in Sylvia and God Calling, in which you played two very different characters. Which role was more challenging to bring to life?**

They were both very challenging. They are probably two of my favourite projects that I've worked on. Sylvia was a complete flip for me in terms of the kind of roles that I had taken leading up to it. It required me to just bring a different type of strength and work on a lot of darkness, which I'm not really used to, but I had such a great time on that set. It was a really amazing project for me. God Calling was probably more mentally and physically tasking. Like, I remember going home every single day and seeing my security guards and they would just look at me and be like: "Madam looks like she's been crying, is she okay?" Or they would come and ask how I am and even I wouldn't know how I was. My husband would say that [during] the time that we were shooting God Calling, I was a completely different person. It was like sleeping next to a stranger. I didn't realise it but yeah, it was just an experience that I don't think I would trade for anything. So yeah, if I had to pick, which I don't really want to pick, I'd pick God Calling.

**There is a growing and expanding global interest in Nigerian pop culture, especially Nollywood. What are your thoughts on this investment in the industry?**

I think right now, we are extremely hot. What you're seeing is the rest of the world sort of catching up with who we are and we need to be careful because I don't know how well prepared we are for that, because you have people who were there before you, who sort of laid the foundation and I'm not quite sure if the baton was passed over in the best way. I think what you have is a lot of people trying to do great things but we just must not forget to build the infrastructure, we must not forget to build the systems that allow us to stand shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the world. We must not forget to treat our crews right, to pay our people right, to protect our talent. Not only those in front of the camera but those who are writing to protect our intellectual property. I think there's a lot of attention and I'm worried that we may not be as organised for it. Things are going to change really, really fast- it's already changing. The studios are already calling for our stories. The agencies are already snatching up our writers, our producers, our directors. Your video-on-demand platforms are already coming in [and] setting up offices here. We just need to be prepared because if not, it could go all the way left.





# Overcoming the jitters: A vital step in conquering fertility challenges

**S**ubfertility affects an estimated 10-15% of couples of reproductive age. Studies suggest that after 1 year of having unprotected sex, 12% to 15% of couples are unable to conceive, and after 2 years, 10% of couples still have not had a live birth baby. In couples younger than age 30 who are generally healthy, 40% to 60% are able to conceive in the first 3 months of trying.

Several studies have indicated that couples trying to conceive experience high levels of stress, depression, and anxiety. Emily et al., 2018 suggested that multiple risk factors for anxiety and depression during infertility treatment have been identified; these include being female, age over 30, lower level of education, lack of occupational activity, a male cause for infertility, and infertility for 3-6 years. In addition, studies have indicated that higher levels of depression and anxiety are associated with lower pregnancy rates among patients undergoing IVF. Patients who are struggling to conceive report feelings of depression, anxiety, isolation, and loss of control. It is estimated that 1 in 8 couples (or 12% of married women) have trouble getting pregnant or sustaining a pregnancy. Despite the prevalence of subfertility, most women struggle to conceive do not share their story with family or friends, thus increasing their psychological vulnerability. The inability to reproduce naturally can cause feelings of shame, guilt, and low self-esteem. These negative feelings may lead to varying degrees of depression, anxiety, distress, and a poor quality of life.

## Why does anxiety affect fertility?

Currently it is unclear why anxiety seems to have an effect on female fertility. It is also possible that anxiety and stress alter hormones and make it

much harder for the body to effectively function. We know that stress can cause women to stop having periods, and stress can lower sperm count in men. Perhaps hormones and the way they are altered by anxiety play a significant role. No matter the cause, it is clear that anxiety is problematic especially for female who constantly undergo stress and pressure.

## Reducing anxiety and improving the chances of conception

There is no magic formula for improving anxiety arising from fertility challenges.

Unfortunately, if you continue to put pressure on yourself, or you still deal with profound anxiety in the rest of your life, you may find that it affects your overall fertility levels. But there are some strategies that can be helpful. These include:

**I. Seeing a Doctor:** Make sure that you are at least seeing a doctor. The truth is that as much as people want to avoid finding out that they're infertile, the anxiety of thinking that you are can be just as problematic, if not more so. It is best to see a doctor, find out if everything is okay, and then do what the doctor recommends.

**II. Relaxation Months:** While you can always plan to continue to try to conceive, try taking a one month on, one month off approach to conception. Consider the month off a chance to relax, where you're not watching a calendar and you go in with no expectations. Obviously this can be easier said than done, so consider other relaxation strategies like massage, yoga, etc. so that your "months off" are as relaxing as possible. Consider adding exercise as well, which is known to reduce anxiety - but moderately since it may have an effect on fertility in extreme cases.

**III. Making Sex Fun:** It is also important that conception never feels like a chore. That means that you should have fun with it. You and your partner should find trying to conceive something you look forward to even if conception does not occur. That will reduce some of the stress of the entire situation. Anxiety can cause a range of side effects that can make it more difficult to conceive. When you are anxious or depressed it is common to have a lower sex drive, and to feel more tired, for example. This can lead to less frequent sex, making it harder to fall pregnant.

In summary, rates of anxiety and depression are high among couples undergoing infertility treatment. Several studies have demonstrated that these symptoms may diminish the chances of conception. Both medication and cognitive behavioural therapy can be helpful in alleviating these symptoms. In Bridge Clinic, all clients are availed the opportunity to get proper counselling from the care and support team and to seek a referral if they are experiencing symptoms of depression or anxiety during the course of treatment. Our free attendance welcome forums are a great opportunity to speak to our nurses and fertility specialists about general fertility concerns, the treatment options available to overcome conception challenges and to listen to and meet couples that have walked this journey too.

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PRESENTING...

# REBECCA “NENGI” HAMPSON IN HER OWN WORDS...

**KIMONO LOOK**  
Custom Kimono: Moofa  
@moofadesigns  
Black Dress, Shoes and Accessories:  
The Wardrobe Shack  
@thewardrobeshack

*There is a kind of gentle awkwardness that envelopes an individual who is newly acquainted with any level of fame. They are aware that their face is now recognisable within the circle (or circles) that have consumed and followed the thing for which they have now become known, but there is also trepidation about just how far such recognition spreads. It informs how, if humility is their default setting, they endeavour to break the ice by presenting themselves as they perhaps normally would have before their newly discovered star.*

*When Nengi Hampson, the second runner-up of Big Brother Nigeria’s Lockdown Edition, walked into the space for her Genevieve Magazine cover shoot, she did so with that very trepidation. It could also be that after spending hours at a shoot that ran until 4am, and then rushing to get to our shoot which started only a few hours after, at 8:30am, she was exhausted. That’s the other thing about being newly famous, the schedule is unrelenting because everyone wants a piece of you.*

*Another thing about being a person of interest for something as specific as Big Brother - similar to promoting a new film or album, one imagines - is that you’re getting the same kind of requests from different sources. You’re being asked a lot of the same questions and being tasked with having to find new ways to spin the same answer so you don’t come across as monotonous or boring. So we thought we’d try something a little different to break things up a bit and breathe new life into the usual format. For our End of Year Special, we invited Nengi to tell us her own story, in her own words. What we didn’t expect is how completely open and honest she was going to be about, well, everything.*

*Story has been edited for length and clarity*

**Story:** Nengi Hampson  
**Photography:** Lika Ahonsi for KlikArt Photography  
**Creative Director:** Sonia Irabor  
**Assistant:** Nefe  
**Styling:** Yolanda Okereke  
**Styling Assistant:** Oprah Okereke  
**Make-up:** Abiodun for House of Tara  
**Hair:** Yellow Sisi







## THE BEGINNING

"My late mum planted this seed in my heart. She'd always tell me, "You will be a star one day!" Mum made me know I was special and my daily actions were proof of that. I didn't know exactly how it was going to happen, but I knew I was going to be famous."

## MAMA'S GIRL:

They say when life gives you lemons make lemonade. Can I really say I had lemons? Well, maybe I did, because my childhood wasn't always the sweetest.

Growing up in Port Harcourt with my mum and sister, and a British father who wasn't always present, as he spent a lot of time outside the country working, was an experience that really shaped my life; I [basically] grew up in a single [parent] home. As a child, I wished my dad would come around more often and that I could meet my step-siblings. I wanted to get to know them and have that familial bond with them but it never happened. I ended up growing up alone, away from my father's other children. Growing up was really challenging for me, but all of the things I went through [made] me who I am today.

When my dad died, my mum had to bear all our responsibilities alone. She was strong, determined, and I have never witnessed a mother love so much that she wasn't lagging in any way. I had the best childhood because it was filled with love and care. My mum was my rock and a shoulder for me to lay on as a child [who was] faced with a lot.

She was really sweet, she did everything in her power to ensure we had the best experiences growing up even if she didn't have a lot.

I was an extremely playful child and I got into a lot of trouble because of this. I was that pupil that anticipated the sound of the bell for break-time in school, just to get the first slot on the swing in the playground.

Sometimes I get asked if as a child I knew I was going to be where I am today.

The truth is, I was trained to be different. Even as a child, I always knew I'd be a star. My late mum planted this seed in my heart. She'd always tell me, "You will be a star one day!" Mum made me know I was special and my daily actions were proof of that. I didn't know exactly how it was going to happen, but I knew I was going to be famous.

My mother was my everything. At 12 years old, while in secondary school, my cousin and I saved money and bought her a wrapper. I can still see her face now. She was very surprised. But like every good mum, she wanted to know exactly where we got the money to buy her the wrapper. We had saved our feeding and transport money for a few weeks and when she found out, she was so happy.

I can't forget when I won the Nigerian Queen pageantry. My mum ran to the stage, knelt down and was thanking God. I was so embarrassed then, but it was just one more way that I felt her love for me.

Situations got from bad to worse, when my mum died of kidney failure.

That was during my early University days and I had to rely on myself and my Aunt back in Bayelsa for support.

## LIFE BEFORE BIG BROTHER

*"I never wanted to work for anyone."*

As difficult as life was, I always knew I never wanted to work for anyone. I aspired to be my own boss, so I never even considered the 9-5 thing. I just wanted to build a brand for myself and capitalise on that basically. School was inevitable so [I did] my best to come out with good grades and that is why, despite the challenges, I made sure I finished school, and finished well with a 2nd Class Upper certificate in Linguistics and Communications Studies from the University of Port Harcourt.

Getting exposed to Big Brother at an early age was enough to motivate me to attempt the audition. I always watched the Big Brother Africa Sunday eviction show hosted by IK Osakioduwa with my family. I would see the drama unfold and it sparked something in my mind: I wanted to be there to create another impression in the minds of viewers; to prove to the world that you can be both beautiful and smart and rewrite that narrative. The narrative that most beautiful girls are not smart is something I felt I needed to prove wrong.

The pandemic was horrible and devastating. Businesses were down, and even the small one I was trying to start, Shoes by Flora, was down. I anticipated its end as I kept waking up every day expecting to hear that the vaccine had been discovered and everything would just miraculously disappear into thin air. I watched as my mental health deteriorated, my weight increased as I was just tied down to eating, sleeping, watching movies and reading. And then Big Brother Naija show came through.

Going into the house, my greatest fear was being judged by people who didn't know me, and it indeed played out in the house. I only had intentions to live my normal life, better myself and sell my brand as much as I could, but I knew people would stereotype me; they wouldn't want to see beyond what they already had in their minds and all I wanted was to prove people wrong.

My shoe line, ShoesByFlora, was named after my beloved mother of blessed memory. I wanted it to expand and become a brand; a household name in the shoe world. Big Brother is a platform that can't be measured from a distance, but coming close, you realise the immeasurable impact and opportunities one can benefit from it.

## A DIFFERENT KIND OF LOCKDOWN

*"I felt a lot of people would judge me at first glance and project their negative opinions; they would see me as someone who was rude and had nothing to offer except 'beauty'."*

Living under camera surveillance for over 70 days was such an experience for me. It was weird at first but it became normal with time. I was really conscious the very first week, I'm sure lots of the viewers noticed. I know most of the housemates felt the same way too.

The impression I thought people had about me wasn't really a good one. I felt a lot of people would judge me at first glance and project their negative opinions; they would see me as someone who was rude and had nothing to offer except 'beauty'. I also knew that the people who would love me would be willing to see the good in me, the amazing qualities I possess and support me till the end.

I had prepared myself to be judged by my looks. A lot of the things happening outside were what I already anticipated, I also knew that my friends and new friends were always going to stand by me. The truth is, everyone can't like you, and you can't please everyone, you're not jollof rice.





**ANKARA LOOK**

White Shirt, Shoes and Accessories:  
The Wardrobe Shack  
@thewardrobeshack.  
Pinafore: Christie Brown  
@christiebrowng





**SUIT LOOK**

Suit: She Is Deluxe @sheisdeluxe  
Shoes and Accessories: The  
Wardrobe Shack  
@thewardrobeshack





**SWEATER LOOK**

Sweater: The Wardrobe Shack  
[@thewardrobeshack](#)



That is why I am always so grateful for the fans I have. They've been so supportive from day one and I am so glad I have them.

I can't specifically tie my lowest moment in the house to any event that played out. I believe it's a game so every moment was 'good' for me. Prior to this time, I had been in a lot of competitions, but the dynamics of this one was quite different. Your life is out there and you're literally living your life for millions of people to watch. I would only say the eviction of the friends I made in the house got to me, I felt emotional but these things are all part of the game. It was pretty much expected.

I am usually disappointed when I don't do well, so the times I didn't win tasks or performed poorly at the HoH games could count as the bad times in the house. I always want to win, but you know, it's life, you win some, lose some.

### NAVIGATING BEAUTY EXPECTATIONS

*"I believe every human being should be able to do what makes them happy without fear of being judged."*

I have never felt bad about my surgery. The basic story is that no one had to know, so when people troll me I just get surprised. I was the same person that spilled the tea.

When I went for my surgery, I had intentions to vlog about it, but it wasn't really possible as I had no one to assist me with it. I didn't really know how bad the pain after surgery would be. It was a crazy experience for me as a first timer. I thought I would be able to keep up with vlogging my experience in that state. It has never been something I wanted to hide or lie about, so I came out openly to let everyone know.

I'm so grateful I did the surgery. I am so much more confident about my body now, I love my body and I can't stop admiring myself. I have no regrets at all. I believe every human being should be able to do what makes them happy without fear of being judged.

### LIFE AFTER BIG BROTHER:

*"I certainly do not have any fears; I am living my best life yet."*

I had always said I wanted to be a celebrity, but the truth is, you never plan for these things, and my case wasn't any different.

I didn't know what to expect from the outside world but Coming out and seeing the love people have for me really meant a lot to me and I appreciate it all. Embracing new fame is not easy, especially in a short span. It's like your life did a 180, from what it used to be. This level of fame is new for me but I am taking it one step at a time and the most important thing for me is to not lose myself in all of it.

My new life has been amazing, I am happy and adjusting pretty well to all it brings daily. Thankfully, I have supportive management to always navigate things for me and with great family and friends around, things are a lot easier.

I certainly do not have any fears; I am living my best life yet. Of course there's always room for improvement. I am a private person naturally so it didn't really take so much to fill in.

Right now I'm focused on expanding my business, building my brand, making money etc. so dating and relationships are really not top on the

list at the moment.

People have a way of mounting pressure on others and being expectant may help or mar people sometimes. Some expectations are legit concerns and I try as much as possible to not disappoint but for the other ones that are unnecessary and extreme, I don't live to impress anyone so I am always going to stay true to myself. My true supporters are not overly expectant and are always satisfied with me. I am hardworking and I give my 100% to anything I do. I expect so much for myself. The love from people everywhere makes me want to be the best version of myself and not disappoint those who truly and genuinely wish me well.

### NOUVEAU FAMOUS

*"Nengi you are a brand now."*

Prior to the house I lived a private life and that hasn't really changed, but how private is private with this new fame? It's like there is someone always out there waiting for you to leave your home or make a move so they can record you. I understand sometimes it's fan love but it can be overwhelming coming online and seeing yourself in videos or pictures you weren't aware of.

I am yet to fully understand this because I just want to do me. Nengi before the brand was just a simple girl who was trying to navigate life and make the best of opportunities she found herself in. But becoming a Big Brother celebrity I have learnt things have to be done differently. My team will always say, "Nengi you are a brand now; this is meant to be done this way..." It can be overwhelming to be honest but it has its own advantages as well.

### THE FUTURE

Brand representation and influencing is all new to me but learning is part of life and that's exactly what I am doing; Learning and putting in work where it matters is my focus.

I am so grateful for the opportunities to make my acting debut in Rattlesnake and then to follow it up with Jowo. I have always wanted to dive into acting, and those were great platforms and I'm really grateful.

Politics had not always been a thought, but they say opportunity meets preparedness, and this is just one of such instances. My appointment as the Senior Special Adviser for the Girl Child is one that really spoke to my heart. It has always been my dream to start a foundation that would project the girl child and having a big platform like this blew me away. It will be a great relief to me to see the girl child not live a life of fear, intimidation and abuse. That is my goal.

Talking about my future is a relatively complex issue. I want a whole lot, like getting a Masters' degree; getting more movie roles and expanding my business. These are basically my career goals and I really want to make it happen. I don't know what the future holds but I trust only in God.

I never had a normal teenage life as I had to grow up really fast, but if I were to tell myself something at 16, I would remind myself never to give up hope and to always trust God to come through for His own. Indeed, my journey is a tale of God's Grace and nothing more. I would tell her to remain courageous as well and take life as it comes not looking at the challenges it brings..

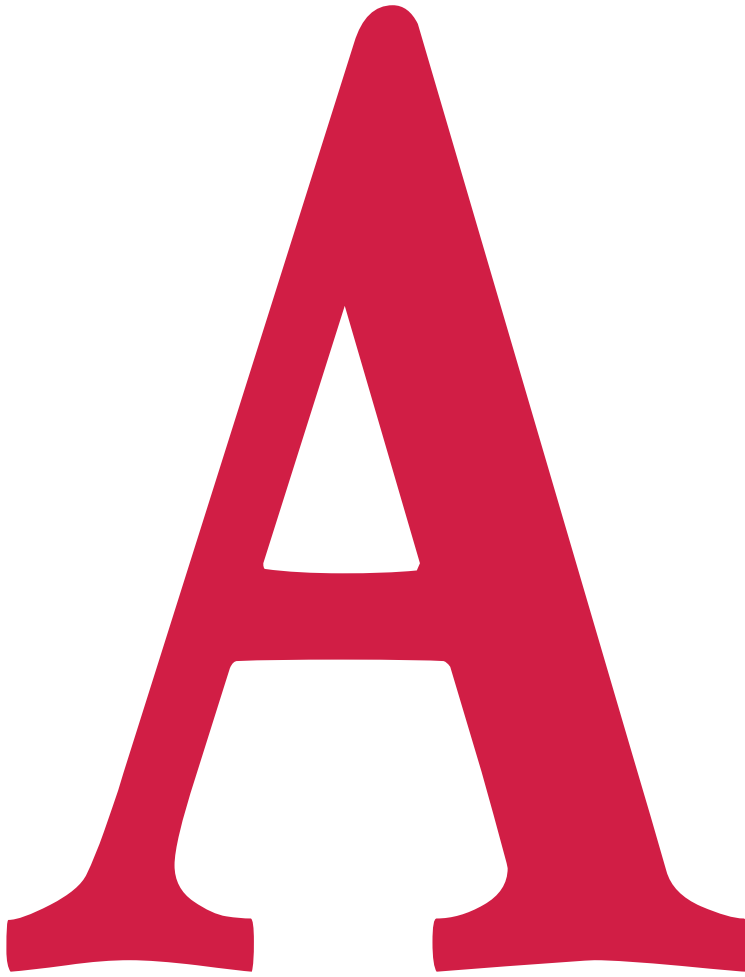


# The Straw That Broke Our Backs

*“If I look back, I am lost...” — Daenerys  
Targaryen; A Dance with Dragons*







ll around the world this year, there has been civil unrest. Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd's murders were the sparks that fired up protests as people marched for equality, accountability and justice.

Demonstrations occurred globally, organised by young people of every colour, gender, sexual orientation, religion and any other defining characteristic that previous generations have used to divide us. Today we are seeing the same thing occur in my home nation, Nigeria.

Nigerians are raised to be very patriotic. In schools, at the primary level, we sang the national anthem and recited the pledge at every assembly. Every Nigerian youth was raised hearing that we were the "Giants of Africa" yet with every passing day in that country, we were (and still are) met with reasons to doubt that mantra. The older

my generation got, the more our eyes were opened to the defective economic and political structures that have resulted in weak, ineffective systems and corrupt practices that have pervaded every nook and cranny of the country that I love. That awareness is what led to the righteous anger and frustration that resulted in the #ENDSARS movement that we saw take place on Nigerian soil and wherever else Nigerians congregate in the diaspora.

Nigerians have made one demand of their federal government with regards to the police. Stop killing your

people. There had been almost two weeks of daily protesting and marching across several states in the nation since the video of SARS (Special Anti-Robbery Squad) officers killing a civilian was released on social media. While the primary focus of the movement was initially centered around police brutality and reform, for many Nigerians that was just the starting point. Just like the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States was able to recognise; any government that is able to terrorise and murder its own constituents without indemnity is an abysmal government and is one that requires addressing. Especially after the tragedy that has been named the Lekki Tollgate Massacre.

In order to understand how we got here, one has to be aware of the complicated, colonial history of Nigeria. Our first

leaders were educated men, far from perfect, but grounded with a vision of what the newly born country could become. After the Biafran war, Nigeria found itself in the grips of military officials who were shortsighted in their vision for Nigeria. They lacked an understanding of how the world around them was evolving and they set in motion a decline that still persists today, driving us ever deeper into the dregs of degeneracy.

We believed in 1999 that democracy would be our saving grace. We allowed ourselves to be deceived by conmen. Former military officials masquerading as 'democratic leaders' traded in their uniforms for civilian clothes. By that point in our history, the issue of corruption and incompetence was now woven into the fabric of the nation. Since the birth of our nation, Nigeria has been led by mediocre men and their cult of corruption coming in many forms and shapes but having the same detrimental effect. A deeply corrupt clique that tied in the business elite of our country, turning them into patsies for foreign businesses while they lined their own personal pockets with stolen funds.

That lack of vision and the widespread selfishness proved costly for a fractured nation divided by tribal ties and religious beliefs. Chinua Achebe once said "a functioning, robust democracy requires a healthy educated, participatory followership, and an educated, morally grounded leadership". For a nation that has only been independent for 60 years, there is so much work left to be done. In our history, our reluctance to assemble and protest can be attributed to the fact that Nigeria is a complicated country with over 200 ethnic groups vying for different interests. Nigerians have never stood



together to fight for a common cause, barring the national football team playing or jollof rice wars — until the #EndSARS protests started on Oct. 8, 2020.

The Black Lives Matter protests that took place this summer were a sign of changing times. All across the country and in major cities around the globe, young people came out and marched for the goal of equality despite their different races, sexualities, genders, class, religious beliefs, etc. Because in the grand scheme of things, those things are inconsequential when it comes to human rights. The same has been seen in the streets of Lagos, Abuja, Benin, Port Harcourt and many other places across Nigeria. We have put aside all those "differences" with the hope that we can actually create the country that some of our parents envisioned for us. The #EndSARS protests may have been focused on accountability and justice for the brutality suffered at the hands of the police, but everyone is aware that this is just the beginning. It has to be because there is still much more work to be done.

The level of mobilisation and organising that we witnessed among the young people of Nigeria over those two weeks were unprecedented. Steadfast and united in their mission, young people took to the streets and the internet to spread awareness of the human rights violations occurring in their country. They made demands of their government that the men who committed the many atrocities that we heard about over the last few years, be held accountable. The Feminist Coalition organised with lightning speed and efficiency, raising over 70 million Naira in donations over two weeks, for people affected by SARS; legal aid, food, medical bills, etc. So many others on Twitter and social media have been the voices of the protests, directing lawyers and medical aid and supplies to those who were in need. The youth know that cleansing the rot of corruption and building a better Nigeria starts with justice and accountability. I have friends and family that were out in the streets or at the Lekki tollgates everyday. Their courage has been revolutionary. It's hard to watch them and not be inspired.

So where do we go from here? On October 20th, 2020, deliberately peaceful protesters were murdered at the hands of the Nigerian federal government. An impromptu curfew was put in place. The bright floodlights that illuminate the Lekki tollgates were turned off. Peaceful protestors were deliberately

ambushed and mowed down by cowardly military forces under the cover of darkness. Slaughtered because they dared to ask for the right to live. Even now, there is still no consensus on how many lives were lost. I have run out of tears.

We have wept and wept for the peaceful protesters who lost their lives, yet resolve has never been stronger. So again I ask where do we go from here? We can only push forward because if not, then we disrespect those who literally gave their lives for the cause of a better Nigeria like so many have before. Forward.

My heart weeps for Jimoh Isiaq, for Chijoke Iloanya, for Ifeoma Abugu, and so many others because you deserved so much more.

In the words of Daenerys Targaryen, "If I look back I am lost."

Our country needs restructuring. Not in the sense of altering our constitution or rebuilding our government; a cultural revolution is necessary. I'm not talking about just altering roles or tweaking the jobs and responsibilities of people in government. A nation where the majority of the

population is below the age of 30 cannot be run by the ignorance of generations past. When

our "president", *Mist* Muhammadu Buhari finally addressed the nation, he took it as an opportunity to scold and threaten his constituents. In Nigeria, we seem to have forgotten that leaders of a democracy are elected to serve its people, not extort them. Things cannot continue in this direction. We demand better. The authoritarian, corrupt politics that has been passed down from colonial leaders to military leaders must be uprooted and set ablaze. Burn it all to the ground because it's time to start rebuilding a new Nigeria.







# Passion Twist? Maybe. 4X Passion Twist? Oh Yes!

All my life (and I've been around for a while), I'm yet to see a woman who doesn't give a damn about her hair. No wonder even the Bible referred to the hair as "a crown of glory". Imagine then that there are various categories of love for your hair, let's say, from range 1X to 4X, which class will you choose?

For me, even though I pride myself as being moderately conservative by nature, when it comes to my hair, I'm sure I'll be gunning for the 4X range. Wait! Is that why I chose the X-Pression 4X Passion Twist over several others in the market? You bet it is.

But, the term "4X" in the X-Pression 4X Passion Twist is not just a nomenclature, it denotes the four cardinal areas of superiority of X-Pression 4X Passion Twist over all other "passion twist" in the market.

The first 'X' stands for the unique curl appearance of X-Pression 4X Passion Twist which stands you out in any crowd. Believe me, no other 'passion twist' has such full and beautiful curl appearance.

The second 'X' is for the volume (270g weight) which is twice the volume of any other passion Twist in the market. This simply means that for a full hairdo which requires only two packs of X-Pression 4X Passion Twist, you need at least 4 pack of any alternative brand in the market.

The third 'X' stands for convenience. This is because X-Pression 4X Passion Twist comes already twisted, and with a loop for fast and easy installation, unlike the other brands in the market which require a certain level of expertise in braiding and unnecessarily longer period of time to install.

The fourth 'X', perhaps the most important, stands for best quality. There is no disputing the fact that the quality of X-Pression 4X Passion Twist is way above that of many other brands' 'Passion Twist' in the market. This guarantees you a softer, smoother, and long-lasting result than any other similar product in the market can offer.

So, you see why my choice is the X-Pression 4X Passion Twist. What's yours?



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more styles



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# **Their Eyes Were Watching Us!**

**THE IMAGES THAT  
CAPTURED THE BIRTH OF A  
MOVEMENT**





n a year which saw the entire world grind to a halt, and months marred by a variety of losses, forced stillness, a heightened sense of insecurity and uncertainty; a seismic shift occurred.

Early in October, a group of young Nigerians gathered in, initially, small numbers to protest against the long-problematic police unit: Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). What followed were weeks of peaceful protests that stretched across the country, eventually making its way across the pond to major cities like New York, London, Toronto and more. In those three weeks, the numbers grew; the community multiplied but the message remained the same: Nigeria. Stop killing your young. The End SARS protests exposed the many crushing atrocities this police unit has been responsible for, with many sharing personal survival stories and, more heartbreakingly, relaying the traumas of family members and loved ones murdered and disposed of by senior officers of the units across the country. While the community celebrated the incredible humanity and unison that the protests brought, it appeared the government wasn't so moved or convinced to take useful steps to respond and rectify.

On the 20th of October, 2020, after a 4pm curfew was announced by the governor of Lagos State around 11am the morning of, protesters at Lekki toll gate in Lagos, Nigeria, remained at their posts, peacefully singing the national anthem. A few hours later, but before the curfew hit, the governor announced an adjusted curfew time. As the protesters sat peacefully, waving the Nigerian flag and singing the anthem, a group of men dressed in army gear opened fire on the peaceful and unarmed group. Killing many and injuring more.

The world watched as chaos unfolded; they saw the government do nothing. The trauma still lingers in the air, minds and hearts of the Nigerian youth and their allies. Now more than ever, in revisiting the physical part of the protests through images and videos, we rely on the works of photographers and smartphone users to remember the truth of what happened during that historic period of time. We spoke to four photographers whose images became amongst the most symbolic documents of the protests. We revisit the images that they took and hear them speak on their experiences being part of this moment in history.

-SONIA IRABOR-



# NORA AWOLOWO

**When you started photographing the protests, were you aware of what a monumental event in history you had become a part of?** I wasn't. I am sure many of us never knew it would last that long. I literally just went there on the first day, thinking that would probably be the last day of the protest. But alas, the government didn't budge, so there was a reason to keep the protest going.

**We are embattled in a dance of truth versus falsehood, and these images from each day at the protests, including 20.10 and the days that followed, are some of the strongest lines of defence against the latter. Would you agree with that?** Yes they are. I am glad the protest was well documented via photos and videos, by professionals and even smartphone users. We have seen the government deny a lot of things, but the evidence is clearly in our faces. And guess what? The evidence are the photos and videos shared with time stamps.

**At the peak of the protests, what would you say filled you most with hope, and why?** I kept telling people close to me and even my parents, I was doing my part to document history, and I will tell my kids I used my skills to play a good part in documenting the history in Nigeria.

**You captured the essence of the protests through aerial views, showing the impact and the mass. What's one thing you learnt - about yourself, the community, the country, or**

**your artistry - during your time documenting the protests.** At some point, I was literally at almost every protest ground in Lagos. From Ikorodu, Airport, Alausa, Lekki, Ajah. Taking pictures from the aerial point of view felt different; sometimes you are scared it doesn't become violent with the police shooting your drone down.

Also, Nigerians were really helpful, documenting the protest and the different [roles] everyone played. We had people who directed traffic, the medical services, the security services, those in charge of welfare; everyone being united for one cause! There was a glimpse of hope somewhere in me for the country. Now, I doubt there still is with the events that have happened after.

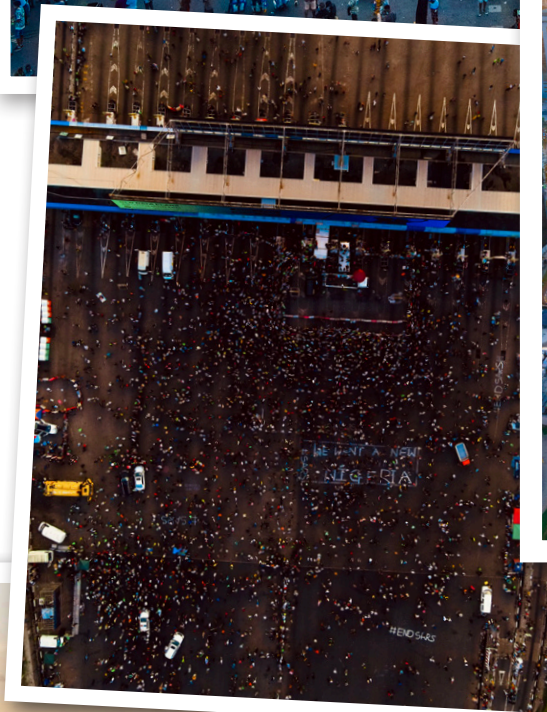
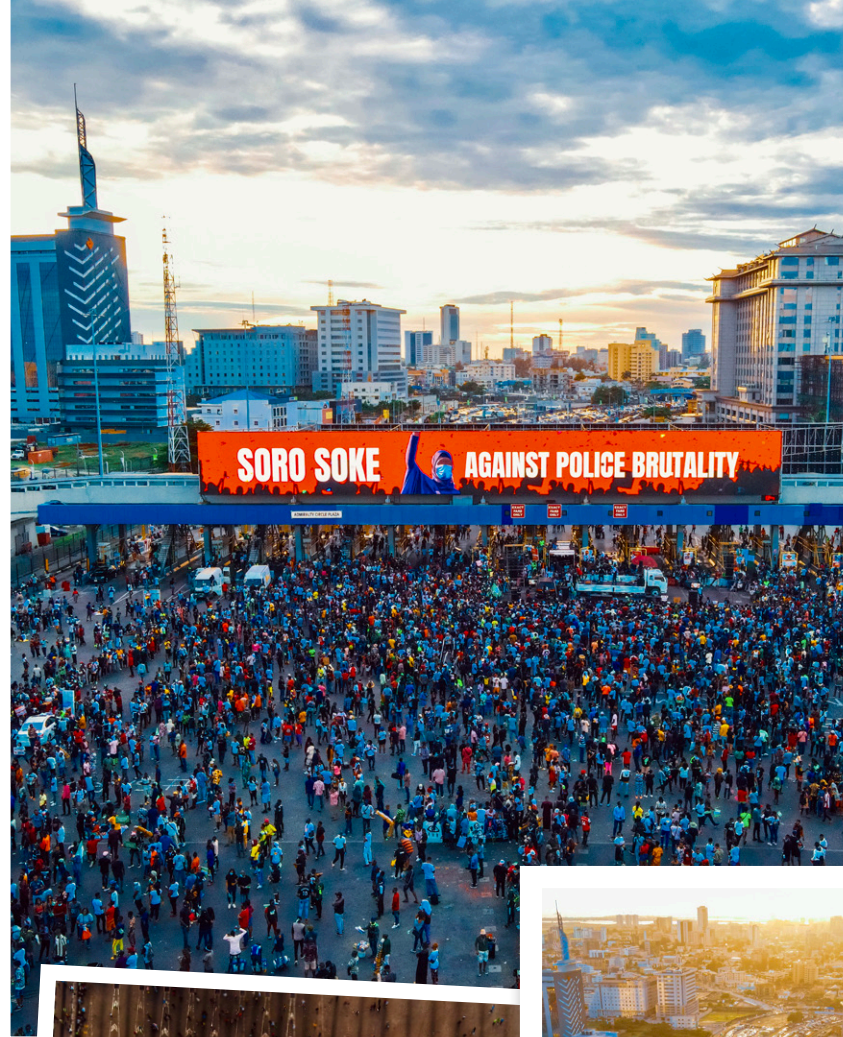
**When documenting situations as overwhelming as protests, navigating all the moving parts and attempting to capture as many moments as you can, are you able to experience it in real time, or do you revisit it once you are done?**

I was able to experience it in real time. Also, anytime I go through the pictures for selections, I always remember what was actually going on at that moment when I took the pictures. There was a point "Are we tired?" kept ringing in my ear. This was one of the chants at the protest and people would reply, "No, we are not!" Anytime it rings, I just remind myself I shouldn't be tired and that's all the ginger I needed for the next day.

**How did documenting the protests impact your mental health during and especially after the protests?** Documenting the protests had its own impact on my mental health; I couldn't and wasn't even granting interviews to talk about it. I was always on my feet, I was tired physically and mentally. I had jobs I had to postpone or some I had to cancel; I was supposed to be in Taraba [during] that period. The sad thing was even the fact [that] we kept going to protest and everything fell on the deaf ears of the government.

At some point, I had no idea when the protests would stop, but these people were not even ready to answer our requests. It was sickening. Now imagine those killed at Lekki toll gate, the events that happened after. The lies, the deliberate efforts to cover up things.

I have actually given up on this country.





# THE KASHOPE

**When you started photographing the protests, were you aware of what a monumental event in history you had become a part of?**  
I photographed the protests knowing fully well the power an image holds in its ability to provoke conversation, and tell the stories of events witnessed. These stories will be discussed for years and years and so it was imperative that we told it our way. If you don't tell your own stories someone else will.

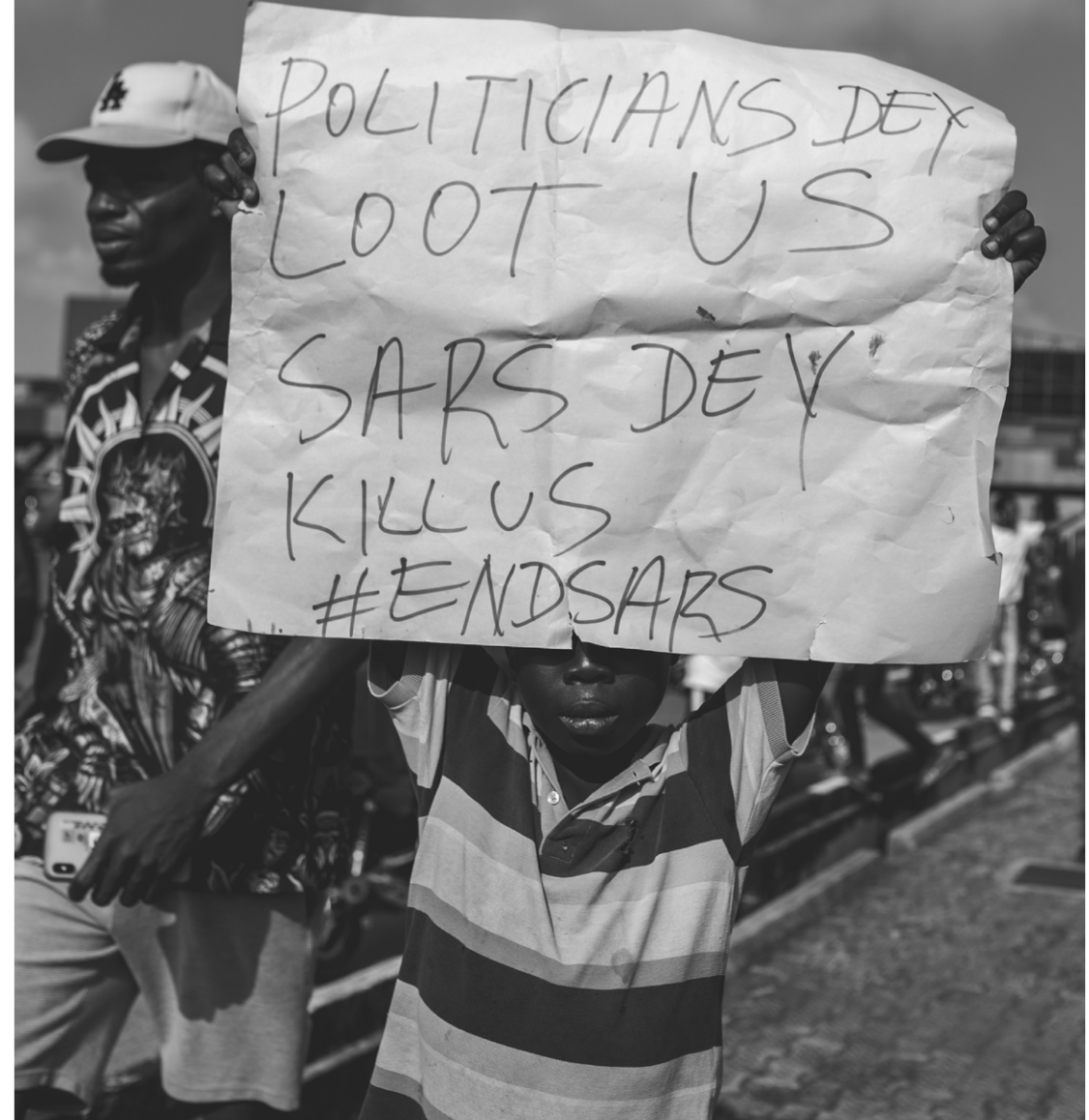
**At the peak of protests, what would you say filled you most with hope, and why?**  
It had to be seeing Nigerians everywhere in the world come together for a good cause. The unity and support we had for each other was amazing.

**How did documenting the protests, and being part of the movement impact your mental health; during the protests - and especially after the events and aftermath of 20.10.20?**

I've often said that when I look at a picture I'm able to instantly remember the events surrounding that image and this has made looking at the End SARS images I took very emotional for me.

**What's one thing you learned - about yourself, the community, the country, or your artistry - during your time documenting the protests?**

During the protests I learned that I wasn't the only Nigerian who was tired of police brutality and the numerous other failures in the country.





# UNEARTHICAL

**When did you begin to feel that the protests, and that moment in time, were different, if at all, from past events?**

I haven't witnessed a time like this in Nigeria, since I was born. But based on stories I was told about past wars, protests and campaigns, I was expecting more violence amongst ourselves; even judging from our day to day lives - how difficult it is sometimes for one to coexist in the [same] space with another. I wasn't really expecting the unity and peace I saw. It was at the point I felt peace and saw the love shown to one another, I saw a different Nigeria.

**Why was it important for you to document what was happening?**

I felt obligated to it. I saw Nigeria in a vulnerable state and for the first time in my life I badly yearned for a change more than I ever had; I knew there couldn't be a change if I didn't make a positive impact. I felt guilt each time I ignored the protest, or allowed fear swallow me up. So I picked up my camera to document as much as I could. If I had to support the movement, I had to lend my skill as well knowing the importance of documentation and serving as a witness at a crucial time like that.

**At the peak of protests, what would you say filled you most with hope, and why?**

Honestly the unison. Seeing people from different walks of life come together peacefully to educate, sensitise, and protest for the same cause. Even though Nigeria in general didn't feel like a safe space for its citizens, the protest grounds seemed safe for everyone. There was no stigma whatsoever between classes of people. We all protected, cared and looked out for one another, there was equality. There was no

violence of any sort except for the interference of the hoodlums sent in by the government and the police. People were getting more enlightened; the old, the young... There was that togetherness, orderliness and resilience I had never seen in Nigeria, irrespective of all the obstacles that came our way. At that point, I felt a bit of hope for a better Nigeria.

**How did documenting the protests and being part of the movement impact your mental health; during the protests - and particularly after the events of 20.10.20 and its aftermath?**

Documenting during the protest seemed like my new job. I was curious everyday to go out and do the needful. I felt it'd help proffer a solution. Taking photos and putting them out for the world to see what was going on, maybe it'd reach the right places and grant us the audience and positive feedback. So mentally it was just mixed feelings for me; happy-sad. But mostly happy based on the hope I had.

Post-protest has been a really horrible and traumatic [time]. I'm scared, confused, devastated. I don't feel safe in this country anymore; it's not like I ever was but a lot has been exposed about my government that I never knew and being a witness to a time like this and seeing their reaction really just gets to me. I'm not safe as a citizen nor a photographer. The killings, the lies and how they've tried to shun us just really hurts. Earlier I had been in and out horrible nightmares, I'm just glad it's better now. I still hope for a change, I'm not just sure when. We all have a lot of fixing to do.

**Did you have a specific idea of what you wanted to capture during the protests? Or was it**

**important for you to showcase the spectrum of emotions and energy on the streets?**

At first I was about the signs and inscriptions, especially those on the floor and walls but I got driven by the emotions and the energy of the people as well until it turned out to be something like a war.

**What's one thing you learnt - about yourself, the community, the country, or your artistry - during your time documenting the protests.**

There's power in unison. There's power in documentation. The Government doesn't care for its people. We are the change that we seek to see in the world, it all starts from us.





# ETINOSA YVONNE

**When you first started photographing the protests, did you envision how big and impactful the movement would be?**

Quite frankly, I did not know what to expect. Days before the protest, there had been agitations online, I wasn't sure if people would come out to protest.

**Why was it important for you to document this moment in history?**

As a concerned Nigerian who is constantly seeking ways to contribute my quota to fixing my society, it was necessary that I document such a historic and necessary movement. In a society where injustice reigns, I saw the #EndSARS protest as an avenue to bring to the fore one of several human rights challenges that Nigerians are confronted with.

**At the peak of protests, what would you say filled you most with hope, and why?**

I was born and brought up in Nigeria and while we have made some little progress in different aspects of our society, it appears that we are regressing. While documenting the #EndSARS protests, I realised that there is indeed a new generation of fearless Nigerians; the youth. It dawned on me that quite a number of Nigerian youths have been able to see past fear, sentiments and bigotry that our rulers and the older generation had used to keep us divided. The atmosphere during the protests were highly liberating and gave me hope. I had never imagined that Nigerians will be able to see past religion, ethnicity and social class and come together to march for a common cause. It

was heartwarming to see women organise and coordinate activities centered around the protest. It was inspiring to see men publicly protect women during the protest.

**How did documenting the protests and being part of the movement, impact your mental health during - and especially after - the protests?**

Days after the protest, I travelled for an assignment, it took awhile for me to process all that happened. One minute, we were marching peacefully, the next minute, unarmed protesters were killed by people that are supposed to protect them. It hurt me. I got so angry and all I wanted to do was vent. I began pouring my frustration on my family. It took a month for me to realise I was hurting those I love.







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