

MovingWoman

THE EMPOWERED

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PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
AND HOW TO
BUILD A CAREER PATH

MOVING WOMEN
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Ireland's First Mayor of African Descent Paving a New Path for Migrants in Europe.



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“ BE EMPOWERED ”

Cover photo credit: Fianna Fáil



Editorial

Greetings

It is such an exciting period in our movement!

We are working on our goals and we are beginning to see prospects for what the future holds for women on the continent. The African woman's ascent in decision making spaces in their societies, communities and globally is inevitable. We keep hearing stories daily about sisters climbing the ladder of success, achieving their dreams and making it not only on the local stages but also on the world stage. From the woman who never had an opportunity to go to school but is still independent and successful to care for herself and family, to the highly educated in decision making positions, every woman on the continent needs to be celebrated!

That is what this magazine is about. It is to celebrate the personal, professional, and business achievements of the African women, women of African descent and women of colour on their way to the top. We will be using this bi-annual publication to share stories, ideas, tips and more from thought leaders in various industries that will enhance the lives of our women. I am personally honoured to be leading a team of dedicated and passionate men and women who are making this publication reach you.

In this issue, we share an up-close moment with a woman who against all odds has made history in Ireland. Cll Uruemu Adejinmi, Mayor of Longford District, Longford County is a strong role model for women and girls in the diaspora and on the continent to aspire for public office wherever they are. We share professional tips on career building, an article about women in stem and an interview with a lady in STEM who is making strides in her industry.

I do hope that you will find time to read through all the great and inspiring stories here and check our website www.moving-woman.com daily for continuous updates. You can also follow us on our platforms and join our private network. We appreciate the contributors, editors and creative team for a job well done.

One thing I know for sure. The women are ready to work to change the narratives and we need to support them to achieve that.

As we celebrate women in this month of march, let us not forget to #StopTheBias and support the advancement of women in our community and globally.

Looking forward to more issues and wishing you a great time.

Best wishes

Dr. des. Sarah Bomkapre Kerema

Editor-in-Chief

Contributors



Caroline Owashaba

is a Ugandan by nationality, who holds Master of Arts in Women, Leadership and Governance in Africa from University of Nairobi, a counselor psychologist by profession, a social and transformative leader who is very passionate on Children youth, women and community issues. Caroline is a Co-Founder of Action for Youth Development Uganda (ACoyDE) and Founder CHACHA Banana Fibre Social Enterprise. She currently serves as team leader of the ACoyDE and volunteers as a coordinator at Girls Not Brides Uganda Alliance where she oversees the western Chapter. She has a track record of project coordination and implementation of community development programs targeting children and women. She also has an extensive experience in gender mainstreaming, community development, climate change, organization, mobilization, guidance and counselling, and management of HIV/AIDS.



Dr. Nutifafa Y. Doumon

is a physicist and nanoscientist. He is currently a researcher jointly at INRS-EMT (Canada) and Jilin Normal University (China). His main research focuses on materials for solar technologies. He holds a PhD in Applied Physics and a MA in Leadership from the University of Groningen, The Netherlands. Nutifafa has more than ten years of experience and expertise in research, physics, nanoscience, materials science, energy, and leadership. He is an advocator for better education, women in STEM, global climate change, and sustainable energy transition and resources in Africa. He is passionate about the African youth and value-added transformation of the continent, leading him to co-found DAMINY EduNergy Ltd (DEL), a company aiming to serve four pillars of the African society: Leadership, Education, Energy (Science), and Research. Dr. Doumon also initiated and co-launched the DAMINY EduNergy Mentorship Program (DENMP) under the umbrella of DEL. The objective of DENMP is to shape the minds of the younger and future generation of African scholars in all areas, especially young ladies in STEM, through its platforms, programs, and mentors. It is his dream that DENMP permeates the continent and beyond with the sole purpose of making a difference.

Contributors



Dr. Ivy Mawusi Asuo

is a Material Scientist and has more than six years of research experience in materials science in various environments such as companies and research institutes. Her dream is to contribute her quota to better educational growth in STEM and the global quest for renewable energy resources. She recently completed her PhD degree at INRS-EMT, Canada, with her research work focusing on the synthesis of energy materials for electronic device applications. Her work involves the scientific development of low-cost materials for harvesting solar energy, for which she holds a patent. She recently co-founded DAMINY EduNergy Ltd. in Ghana (her home country), focusing on leadership, education, science (energy, etc.), and research. The objective is to transform the research culture and show the importance of scientists and their works in African society while shaping the next generation through different platforms such as mentorship programs for young ladies in STEM.



Ehila Noah

is a communications professional with over fifteen years' experience in developing and managing communication strategies for parastatals in Sierra Leone. She is a passionate writer and has contributed to many online platforms including LinkedIn where she has over 100 articles to her name. She has also served in various capacities in the media broadcasting and media relations. She is interested in children and women issues and has contributed to research, development, and training in Media Institutions. She holds master's degree in Mass Communication from the University of Sierra Leone, Fourah Bay College, a BA Hons First Class Degree in Mass Communication, a Diploma with Distinction in Journalism, London School of Journalism Currents works as Assistant Manager Public Relations & Marketing, National Insurance Company Ltd Sierra Leone. An accredited Freelance Writer on LinkedIn I'm a mother of three and bilingual (English and French). Multicultural disposition.

Contributors



Omotola Helen Abimbola

is a Nigerian by nationality. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Zoology from the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. She's a social media manager and an avid volunteer interested in the Sustainable Development Goals. With her interest in the Sustainable Development Goals, she's been a state chapter coordinator for two Non-Governmental organizations where she coordinated and collaborated with other Non Governmental Organizations on community outreaches. She currently works with Moving Women Empowerment Network as a Social Media Manager. Her interests are photography, touring and binge watching K-dramas.

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MOVING WOMEN EMPOWERMENT NETWORK

The Moving Women Empowerment Network supports African women and women of colour in Europe, Africa and globally to reach their potentials. It is a platform to share, educate and train women using evidenced based solutions to empower and support them for current and future roles in their societies.

We are presently, we are building a network of vibrant women of African origin and women of colour in Europe, on the African continent and globally. We offer trainings, mentorship, networking opportunities and consultancy services on women's empowerment topics both online and offline.

VISION

To empower African women and women of colour in Europe and worldwide. It aims to encourage, build and strengthen women to perform better using their full potential to make their homes, communities, countries and the world a better place. Our organization supports women to acquire the skills they need to become meaningful people both in leadership and in-service capacities.

MISSION

Our goal is to see women empowered, achieving their dreams and celebrating successes that will enhance their families and societies. We envision a world in which women are supported to become partners in contributing to the development of their communities.

Would you like to be a part? Contact Us

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SKILLS EVERY WOMAN SHOULD HAVE

By **Omotola Helen Abimbola**

Women are very powerful and they can navigate and stand tall through whatever life throws at them.

Here are five(5) skills every woman should have:

2. | **Goal-setting Skills**

Goal-setting skills are mandatory in the business world and life. You can't get what you want unless you envision it. Give yourself the space to dream and imagine what you want.

4. | **Communication Skills**

To build rapport and trust, you need to listen to what someone is not saying, as well as listening with your whole being. There is a science to learning body language and it can give you an advantage in your personal and business relationships - not to mention keeping you safe.

1. | **Financial Skills**

Learning the basics of math is essential. This will help you with all the financial skills you need to create a household budget and live within your means, manage your credit, and do your own taxes.

3. | **Time Management Skills**

Women tend to multitask as they have a lot of activities at hand so it's important that you know to manage time so as to get things done in time and also at the right time.

5. | **Body Awareness Skills**

In addition to learning to be in tune with what's important to them, every woman should learn to be in tune with their physical body. When you have changes in your body, such as lumps, bumps, pains, discharges, unusual bowel or urinary habits, or odd smells, you need to learn to notice these, too, and seek medical attention promptly to stay healthy.

BUILDING A NEW CAREER PATH: To the Sisterhood

By Ehila Noah



Building a successful career primarily unlocks doors to vast opportunities for jobs, offering enviable remunerations as a strategic top social persona, positioned in a cycle of professionals leading, directing or guiding change trends in diverse sectors. Practically, career growth and success serve as a springboard to launch 'starts ups' that become sure wins. Anyone passionate about career growth must develop a strategic plan of action and work towards sure wins. Anyone passionate about career growth must develop a strategic plan of action and work towards access to resources either virtual or in person mentoring from professionals willing to give tips, guidelines and advice to help others launch and build a successful career path.

From the 'Wall Street Journal', Indeed job site, 'Career.com Astridbaumgarder.com' et al, there are no shortage of articles on career development. Yet perhaps many sisters and friends are yet to look at the issue critically as they start to weigh their potentials and work towards becoming the career women they want to be. In this article, I will give a few pointers to support their quest to become the best they can be in or out of academia in future. Here are some few tips.

Passion

One of the fundamental building blocks to discovering one's talent or life purpose is passion. Sisters must recognize that many professions are grounded on our passions, though some find discovering what they are passionate about a huge headache. I have always been inquisitive and relied on my intuition to investigate by reading through volumes of publications available, be it a dictionaries, encyclopedia or online research. Such trends bring out the best in you and soon

you will find out that you're a scientist by nature. People already have passions that should direct them to their defined career pathway, and you might merely need a trick or a little thinking to spur out that bustling passionate, writer, researcher, computer scientist, motor mechanic, medical doctor, nurse or counselor in you.

We must nurture the desire to scale up, to grow intuitively, and embrace a passion for growth, which is most times the prop that leads us to make other key decisions,

directed at self-development.

Most decisions we take are derived from either 'need' or for just egoistic satisfaction, and the former 'need' is that ingredient that propels us towards added value, spurred by passion to develop oneself formally or informally. Hence the need for career growth ultimately drives one's passion to grow.

Today, women live out their challenges through self-empowerment and it is what drives our collective force towards the increasing capacity building trends and positioning of career women in all levels of societies. Invariably, as women we define our income generating pathways when we are very young and plan towards following paths of getting financial independence either through outside employment or self-employment. Both ways, we do need skills to perform tasks, and it gets much better if women already have a passion for some-



thing and are conscious of their chosen preferred career paths. This normally is not far from the individual's values, beliefs, lifestyle and personality in general; as these immensely contribute to one's choice of a job, and, with some amount of counseling your natural interests will be awakened and this will guide you to your career path.

Identifying what you are good at: is the next golden key

Most people tend to know what they are good at from a very young age, though, for some, it may be driven by lack of drive and they might need some mentoring to help them choose a career path. Today, women battle huge financial hurdles to meet even their basics, more so in Least Developed Countries. They barely have time for self-assessments and most times have to opt for what is available or some just use the option they have to sort out their personal issues. In Least Developed Countries (LDC) with minimal opportunities for us women, access to free quality learning opportunities especially, post-secondary education is limited; the options available are petty trading, underpaid skills learning opportunities such as tailoring, auto-mechanic or as a cub reporter.

Here home in Sierra Leone as an apt case study, scores could be found working as apprentices in tailoring shops, few women trainee auto-mechanics and in the media, many work as freelance reporters, others are house maids, bar and shop attendants etc. Having practiced journalism from a cub reporter, with minimal pay

and commissions on advertorials, I know how the scenario tends to be for the untrained, dropouts etc. Here is an example of someone who worked hard to develop a career for herself.

Mariama Sillah dropped out of school but molded her passion for catering through formal skills training, and now earns enough income to support her son as a single mother preparing high quality birthday cakes and other dishes as a self-employed persona.

In academia we know the routine, from getting the requisite grades to enter college / university, to ensuring you excel and are awarded an Honors Degree or at best a second-class honors degree, (especially if you set your goal for continued education through a PhD). This is sometimes not the case, and some sisters find themselves switching to other fields either out of passion or because they did not succeed getting the required grades to proceed to a master's degree due to the known funding lapses, and no access to funding opportunities to proceed through scholarships.

Indeed, sisters who set their goals and work towards them passionately, tend to search and find opportunities that in the long-term positions them to influence the change many sisters only dream of. This could be through supportive parents, extended family members, friends, or acquaintances who identify one's passion to learn, academic consistency, mastery and individual de-

termination to succeed against all odds. Such worthy support or investments made by one's parents, family or friends; backed by some institutional support, are grounded in one's identified passion and hard work. Many professional sisters do acknowledge their success to one of the above mentioned, and hence emphasis on the need for support.

Work towards improving your strengths

Though we know what we are passionate about, the tendency is that none will do any evaluation about themselves unless prompted by information sharing through education. As such, as we glance through the voluminous advice from online career mentorship sites, highlighting the need for SWOTs (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis; we must admit that in an African context, we only learn about SWOTs either just after secondary or high school, or when we are about to finish college. Yet recognizing that there are minimal out of school counselors, especially in Africa, the youth tend to follow their peers when selecting choice of high school department, or they get placed based on their performance in selected subjects.

The choice to select, may sometimes follow progress patterns or may be decided by parents. Irrespective of the fact that most schools even here in Sierra Leone have some school counselors, that could have helped chart students' future fields, the chances are, it is derived from the three earlier mentioned patterns.

- 1 Based on overall performance
- 2 Parental decision
- 3 Peer patterns.

Self-Evaluation can help one to automatically follow their passion. When we know what we are good at perhaps through some kind of SWOT analysis. This gives a direction to understand the areas one need to build on to succeed professionally. Middle level self-employed earners here at home, count on thrifts to grow their capital, academics count on value added skills in programs which could be beneficial in some sectors like Development Writing, Financial Reporting, Artificial Intelligence, Court Reporting, Social Media Management, Office Management, Computer software Engineering etc. Being passionate about something, and identifying what one is good at, is a good start. Self-capacity building efforts, will help make one multitask effectively, improve one's performance and one's competence and ample skillset to handle contemporary job challenges.

Self-evaluation can also awaken one's potentials as an entrepreneur on one hand and has a positive effect on one's strengths and weaknesses, that may inspire a medium term review of opportunities that one can make use of to move to higher heights.

Networking for current and future opportunities

As women, we need to recognize growth opportunities and identify groups, associations and other women led networks to work with if we

we dare to succeed. Within institutional frameworks, in college, universities and other formal skills training institutes, alumni bodies are formed, some with core gender

narratives e.g. Forum of African Women (Africa), 50/50 Group (Sierra Leone, advocating equal participation of women in governance position through the legislation of law), Moving Women Empowerment Network, etc. These are viable associations that sisters actively participate in. As a team, we tend to identify sisters with special skills, that cry out for recognition to be profiled, get recognized on a much larger scale and so influence change where needed. As a successful professional on the other hand, we must be 'the Change' that gives space for other sisters to thrive, and every positive action towards creating a forum for the growth of the womenfolk, is worth it.

With, passion, enhanced skill and apt networking, miles could be covered by a tip of a pen, the right recommendation, online referrals for trainings funding that we may access. With all these current availabilities, I believe women can lead their dreams. There are a host of sites I have been on, that provide good career building guides; though, every woman is an exceptional case study and individualities come at play, every woman can be intuitive to find out the method that works well for them.

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MARIAMA SILLAH

She dropped out of school delved into her passion-catering through skills training.

She earned her Diploma this year. Now catering is her main source income and she relies on her Facebook posts to boost her sales.

Pregnant in 2018 Mariama Sillah dropped out of school and could not take her final High school examinations, the West African Secondary School Examinations (WASCE).

After having her son, she ventured into her passion, catering.

"I have been doing that since I was in my teens, and I knew a certificate in catering would boost my skills and serve as my prime income generating activity" I graduated this year with a diploma in Catering. She has since taken her WASCE, and got some credits. I did make some of money baking birthday cakes before, now, it is my sole source of income that I use to sustain my son and myself". See; <https://www.facebook.com/Mariama-Sillah-cake-Baker-Designs-1024613053695>

ChaCha Banana Fiber Enterprise



ChaCha Banana Fibre Enterprise is a Social Venture that adds value to discarded banana stems and residues through extraction to produce banana fibre, which is later used to produce eco-friendly, biodegradable, and environmentally friendly products. These include fibre for sale, lampshades, doormats, pillows, Interior decorative items, wall hangers, photo frames, key holders, table mats and Costas, earrings, fibre, paper bags, etc. It creates a banana stem value chain and sustainable livelihood for women and youth in rural communities in Western Uganda by promoting community social inclusion, gender equality on climate change, and information dissemination on the production of eco-friendly. It is transformational project that is Business oriented, Entrepreneurial, and contributes to Sustainable Livelihoods, Community Education and Capacity Building, Waste Management and Circular Economy.



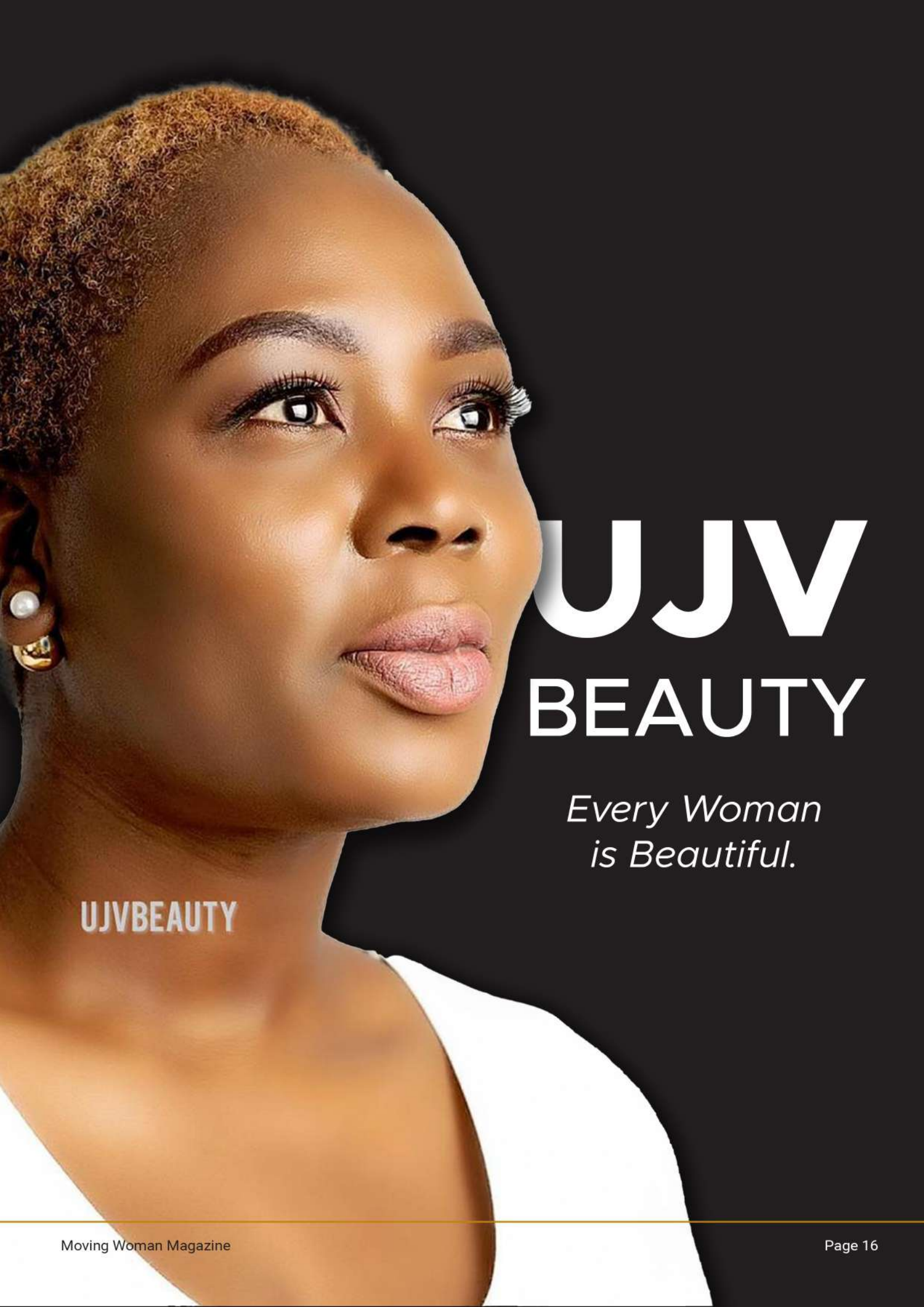
The banana stem waste generated is recycled to produce charcoal briquettes used as fuels increasing the household incomes. This leads to reduced carbon emissions, reduction in green gas emissions, banana wastes contributing to SDGs. The enterprise provides expertise production of environmental, eco-friendly, and biodegradable products that lead to mitigation and adaptation of climate change.



It enhances the livelihoods of girls and women through banana value chain to produce eco-friendly, environmental, and biodegradable products. It as well Promotes social cohesion, inclusion, entrepreneurship that contributes to climate change adaptation and mitigation. create employment opportunities mentoring. It engages young women between (18-35) of productive age in the production process, contribute to climate change action community initiative. It provides knowledge on eco-friendly, biodegradable production. Activities includ community dialogues, raw material sourcing, stem selection preparation.



Ms. Caroline Owashaba
Team Leader: Action for Youth Development Uganda



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POWER WOMEN

Mayor Uruemu Adejinmi

Ireland's first Mayor of African Descent
Paving a New Path for Migrants in Europe

A woman of many firsts, she made history by becoming the first woman, first person of African origin to become a Mayor of Longford Municipal District, Longford County Council. Cllr Uruemu Adejinmi migrated to Ireland from Nigeria in 2003, joined the Fianna Fáil party in 2016 and became a local Councilor in 2020. She previously served as Executive Officer at the Department of Health and holds an Executive Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) from Athlone Institute of Technology, Ireland and a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Industrial Mathematics from the University of Benin, Nigeria. She has worked in the private sector in both Nigeria and Ireland before holding public office. The wife and mother of three dedicated her victory to all migrants and all women and promised to continue the growth and development of the municipal area and county. Our Editor in Chief had the honour to get up close and speak with her on her life, work and future aspirations in this interview.



© Clare Frances

Interview by: Sarah Bomkapre Koroma (PhD)



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How can you describe yourself?

I am an individual, a mom, a wife, an educated woman. I am passionate about humanity, people having good standard of living, I am passionate about people having the opportunity to grow and thrive, and I am passionate about the welfare of everybody. I have always been very people driven, get on well with people, I like to interact, I like to engage. I remember when I was in University of Nigeria doing my first degree, my mom came to my college to visit and I was in the mathematics department in the faculty of science in the University of Benin. The faculty of science is a long building of different departments, we were walking from my department to my accommodation, and we had to walk right across the building, every minute or two of walking, I stopped and

said hello to somebody and introduce them to my mom. By the time we got to the end of the building my mom was exhausted and said Jezz you know too many people, because we stopped so many times. I had always been driven towards people, to get to know people. I think this worked well when I relocated to Ireland as I integrated very quickly, I settled in the community, I started to meet people again, getting to know them, establishing new relationships with Nigerians, with Africans, with Irish people, with Asians, different nationalities, in my local community as well. And I worked in a private sector for over 10 years then I got a job in a public sector. It was in 2016, 2017 that I started getting involved in politics, and even at that time I was just supporting candidates and supporting public representatives. I wasn't on the front line of politics. I was just working behind the scenes, you know where it really happens, where the bulk of work happens, and there are so many people that volunteer, that really don't get the limelight,

and they are the powerhouse behind the political figures and political parties. Most times they don't get credits, because a lot of work go into presenting these public officials, and the public officials get the media attention and get noticed. But there is a huge force working behind the scenes, I experienced that when I was running my campaign. I was a huge advocate in my community, volunteering in different groups, different community groups, again to support people in the local community, to support interaction, to support people getting access to services, people getting jobs, to have a good standard of living, so they can participate in socio-economic activities, which is the key for a thriving community. I am married with three children, my eldest is in the university going to his second year, my second child is in 5th year in secondary School, and my third child just started 1st year in secondary School today. It is a new chapter in the family. Our baby started the second level in the educational system.



© Joe Akude Photography

The Mayor, her husband and children.

Tell me, did you become a social and people's person when you got to the university or was it like that since your childhood? How was your childhood like growing up in Nigeria?

My childhood was a happy one and I am the second of seven children, so I think it started with growing up in a large family. The first child is like the baby, because that's the first child, everybody is always excited about having their first child, and then the second child comes along and the attention is divided and split between first and second and then by the time you get third, fourth, fifth and seventh it changes. The first child always has a special place, and everybody in between just must find a space for themselves. I think that's part of it, interacting with and having a big family was kind of like a starting point with me working with people, communicating, and engaging. So that's where it developed from. I am from a Catholic family, we had our godparents, and my mom would take us to our godparents to spend time with them. So that was an opportunity to meet all the children and have playmates at school, and as I went on to secondary School, I was in boarding school. In Nigeria they had a certain system where they took children from different parts of the country and put them together in a boarding school, so that we can integrate and interact. I became culturally sensitive at a young age because these were children from different ethnic backgrounds in my secondary School. I got to adjust to the different pronunciations of my name, to understanding what people were saying because of their accent. But it was very nice because again I was thrust in another environment. It was all girls school, so I had a lot of female friends, I was in boarding house, so we all had to live together and get along because there will be scraps here and there, and there will be lots of bonding taking place. I think that's when I really started developing my nature of working with people and being confident working around a lot of people, and then I went onto a third level, I went to University of Benin, a new environment and another opportunity again to meet people, I made a lot of friends. I had great experience in University as well, I

went to lectures and studied hard, then in the evenings I spent time with my friends and yeah it was a good experience in the third level as well and you know as a graduate, I had my first job in Nigeria, when I was doing my youth service. I worked in the bank, and again started my work life another opportunity to get to know and work with people. During our orientation at the start of our job, I didn't even know this was something they awarded someone for. At the end of the orientation, I got the award for the best team player, so they had an orientation for over 100 people, and I was singled out as a team player, the person that really gets on with everybody. I think that just pointed me in that direction, even though I did not know then that I will be a public representative in my life.

A people's person from the start and throughout your life, even when you started working in Nigeria. Then you decided to move over to Ireland for studies. What brought about that decision?

I got married in Nigeria, shortly after that I got a change in personal circumstances and decided to relocate from Nigeria to Ireland. I got to Ireland in 2003, and that's when I had my first child, so I took a break from work just to raise my kids. I had my eldest in 2003, and my second son shortly after 2004 and then in 2005 I went back to work and haven't looked back since. I took a break to raise my kids and to nurture them and still went back to work. I had my third baby in 2009, then I was a working and nursing mom. It wasn't easy, it was very tough, and being abroad as well. As Africans we have that in our community around as it is where we get the support in raising the kids, you have your relatives to lean on, you have somebody living in your house with you helping you out but none of that is out here, so you must do everything yourself. My children were in the Crèche and homework club, which is good because at least I had the community where I could get that support. I still managed to work and look after my children and I had the best of both worlds. A work life and a stable home life as well, thank God my children grew up with the care and

support from the teacher that the crèche crew hired. Just lovely my children went to little Angel Christ in Longford and it is always nice when they need them out

town, and then I can catch-up with them to see how that have progressed, they have all grown now and very independent.



© Joe Akude Photography

It must have been a challenging journey for you, raising kids and also being a career woman. There are lots of women in western countries especially from the African continent that always think that it is not really possible to blend both worlds, being a mum and a professional. What is your motivation, what's given you the strength to do both at a time?

I think part of it is my childhood experience, my parents worked while we went to school, even though we had the support of people living with us and looking after us while the parents were working. I still figured out I was able to have the best of both worlds. I did all I could to hold on to it, because I think it is important for women to have their identity to be able to sustain themselves and be independent. Because the children are going to grow, and we don't want to go through the process of finding yourself. I wanted to make sure as much as I am a mom and nurturing my children, guiding them, I want to set an example for them as well by being hard-working,

self-sufficient by taking on challenges and doing my best and for myself as well, so that when they leave home, I still have something to do, I still have a purpose in life. Being an individual, being self-sufficient and independent has always been very important to me. At a young age I decided, this is how I will live my life and I feel positive. I remember things happened and every Thursday something I said and the promise I made to myself growing up was, I am going to do this, or I won't do that, or I won't let this happen to me, or I would make sure I achieve this dream and it happened. It can take years, when it happens, you'll realize that okay I had this affirmation, I have this belief and it is very important to have belief as well, because we all have something to believe in and when you have a belief, things just happen organically and lead you to that direction. So, I just give my children that support and give myself that support as well as it is so important. It is also very important for me to have a purpose in life and very important to be an example to my children as well. So those are the main reasons why. I have a nature, I have that work life and home life and thank God I have been able to balance both.

What made you decide to run for public office?

It wasn't by choice, I got involved in a campaign in 2016. My friend who is a local resident in Longford was running for office and I joined his campaign but unfortunately, he didn't get elected. My neighbour approached me then to join his political party, that's how I joined the party in 2016 and again because I was a huge community activist and I take every opportunity to increase my network, I was happy enough to join and get involved, so again I was working behind the scenes supporting the party with fund raising, attending meetings, going to conventions, whatever the party is doing once I am asked to come along I do that, because I was so active. I put my body and soul into working in the party, and for the next couple of years what I didn't realize was that I have been assessed as well because I got the old question about my qualification, my professional experience, my family demographic, my family setup, my age, just random questions. I think these were just getting to know me sessions. Low and behold late in 2018, I was asked to run for office, and I thought oh my God, where did this come from? But again, because I have developed an attitude to life, so I never say never to anything. If it is nothing bad, I am ready to put in the effort to see where it leads. That has helped me gain a lot of successes in life to this point as well. I took it on and I said I am

going to get the support, and they said don't worry about it, we will do the x,y and z. I got training, support from my friends, we started the campaign and meeting people. It is a lengthy process and because it has such a huge community involvement, people have to meet members of the community, have to go door to door knocking, introducing the candidates, talking to them about parties, finding out the issues. I did all of that, got to learn how and in 2019 the election happened, I didn't get elected but like I said to myself, you are a success even if all you got was an experience. I had built my public profile, am going to keep working on it and I continued to be very active in the party. Then in 2020, one of our local representatives got elected in national government and then the local seat became vacant, and less than twelve months later I got a second chance again because I did not give up, I did not take it as a defeat, I took it as a learning curve and started building myself for my next election and I didn't know that shortly I will be getting another opportunity, and shortly after I joined the council, I was made the deputy chairperson for our municipal district. I served as deputy chairperson for a year and then this year I got selected earlier as a chairperson for my local district. The reaction was just amazing and going from not even knowing that I was going to be a politician, to fast forward to 2021 and mayor of Longford was just unbelievable.



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What went through your mind when you first got that office, when you got the news that you are going to take that seat?

I just thought that it would be such a proud moment for myself and family, and I felt that it was a kind of justification for having a good heart and it was the reward for excellence, because I put my heart and soul in what I do, I do my best in everything and make sure I give my all. I was just proof that having integrity and respect comes with reward it was a proof again that you can succeed wherever you are.



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What was your strength, what can you advise those that are afraid to take up such challenges or positions in their host countries?

If you think about it either when you are taking a decision to relocate, you are going out of your comfort zone, that in itself alone is powerful, and it shows that once you put your mind to it you can achieve anything. So, people that have managed to migrate or immigrate from their country of birth to another and have decided, that is where I am going to live that itself is powerful, that itself shows that people have the strength of purpose and once you make up your mind the next thing is how do I achieve this goal. Setting the goal is the first step and goals can be intimidating, but the more overwhelming the goals appear to be, the greater the rewards if you succeed, and the biggest thing we can do for ourselves is to try, as long as you are determined to try you either succeed or learn. I remember when I worked in a private sector and I was about to go for a management job which have been a promotion. And I spoke to the manager who was moving on from the role, he was taking another role, and his role was going to be vacant. Few other people and I were considering running for the position, so I asked him what he thought, he said the bottom line is if you don't get it, your circumstances haven't changed. I think that is something that a lot of people don't realize and the minute he said it, I got it and that has always been one of my phrases now, if something doesn't work, my circumstances haven't changed. If I don't get the promotion to become the manager, it does not mean I have lost, it means that I am still in the position I am, and I haven't gotten an opportunity to progress, but it doesn't mean I lost just that my circumstances haven't changed. The only thing that comes with it is when you start going for a goal you have the expectation of succeeding, so when you have that expectation, you build it up, but then if it doesn't happen it appears like you have lost, and if you succeed then you have that rush, that wow this has happened, you have that appreciation, that thankfulness, that urge of achieving and pressing. But if it doesn't happen people feel defeated and they feel that they have

lost, they are failures. But they are not actually, just that their circumstances haven't changed, they haven't gotten the opportunity to progress. Having a positive attitude is powerful because you can control your story, you can control the narratives, nobody gets the chance to dictate your life but yourself. Because you are in that headspace where you decide how you are going to feel, you decide your emotions. Life in the public service is that you are relying on a large extent on what the public is going to do, the public opinion and the public are going to elect you. Sometimes, it happens to me that I think oh my God, how is this going to happen? I have doubts but what I tend to do is when I have those doubts, I start to work out, how am I going to make sure whatever doubts am having don't happen? People worry about what people are going to say, if this doesn't happen to me. I said to myself, look, never mind what people say, they have their own lives to live, it is all about me, how am I going to cope. If this doesn't go according to plan and that's how you have the learning, and then you think okay, I am going to give it my best and that's what I say when I go for any opportunity, I am going to give it my best, and if it works out grace, if it doesn't, what have I learnt from that experience? When I did not get elected in 2019, I thought I have gotten to

know so many people, I have learnt about conversing and campaigning, I identified where my weaknesses were, and I started working to strengthen those weaknesses and then I was developing myself a lot more. So that was an opportunity for me to grow, made myself and then when I had the opportunity twelve months after, I was better, I was more ready to hit the ground running and I haven't looked back since. And that is why I got elevated to the position of mayor, just twelve months after. Life is a learning process, nobody has the formula, so in everything we do, give your best, that's the only thing you can do, give it your best shot, if it works great, if it doesn't learn and keep moving, and keep making other goals and people always have something to talk about. The story today, somebody will be the story tomorrow, so I don't worry about any of that. That is something that hold a lot of people back, what everyone is saying if they don't succeed. Another important thing for me is, when I was running for office, a lot of people, or some people did not believe in what I was saying, they felt why am I running, why does a migrant want to be in that space and it is not for us, and now in my work, I am helping a lot of people to get support that they need, to get access to services, to get involved in committees and people are now realising



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People have the strength of purpose and once you make up your mind the next thing is 'how do I achieve this goal?'

the benefits of having somebody with a migrant background in there. Because I have experienced what it is like being a migrant, I know where the pinches are, I know where the challenges are, I know what can be done to make life better for a migrant. Some of the recommendations I gave, I know straight way how it is going to benefit the community as a whole, and if I have doubted myself and suppressed this urge that I had to actually go for it, we wouldn't be where we are now, as Nigerians in Longford we wouldn't be where we are here as migrants in the community. Even the committee are so supportive and so engaged with me, they facilitate with me regularly and everybody is excited, you could feel the excitement from the entire community where it happened. And then the reaction by the other community was totally unexpected, I never thought I would make history in this way, it didn't even cross my mind. And again, that's the thing, when you make these decisions the benefits come from all over the place and if I could just give that as an encouragement to migrants. Even when I was running for elections, before the elections even happened, we got posters put up the poles where we were running for elections. A student in second level said to me that you don't know how incredibly proud I am just seeing someone the same colour of my skin on the posters running for elections, this is such a huge symbol for them that you can achieve anything. Even before I got a chance to become a mayor it was already a win, because wins can come from different places. It cannot be the win you seek, but there's a win, there's a benefit, there is somebody that is getting inspired, there is somebody being encouraged, there is somebody that is having challenges that seeing it live is telling them to be steadfast, it will happen, it can happen and please God people can achieve their dreams. I am so incredibly fortunate, I am so thankful because again I wouldn't have gotten this without the support of members of my community, the natives, the migrants. It takes a lot for people to get behind you, for people to support you, for people to vote for you to become somebody in this world. I cannot say it is by my power, by my might, but it takes dedication and support from the community.



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So, what would you say, because you already mentioned that to children, but more specifically to the girl child? There are a lot of children around Europe growing up in communities, where they think they are not represented enough if they don't see people in offices or in places where they can be inspired themselves, to say oh I can do this, and they don't think they can dream. What do you say to young girls?

I would say to young girls that you can be absolutely anything you want to be. Life is for everybody, life is for the living, we are all equal and we all have that talent, we all have that capability, we just need to identify what it is in us. And something I said to myself is another saying that I use to motivate myself is, if something needs doing, get in there and do it yourself. If somebody says not me, who is going to do it? If there is underrepresentation, if anybody has identified there is an under representation, and if anybody is concerned that there is an underrepresentation, then that means that they are the ones to change that narrative. Once you identify there is a gap, fill in that

What are your future aspirations, because you have achieved so much already, it could be for Longford, for your country, it can also be your personal aspirations for the future?

My aspirations are to continue to be a positive influence in my community, in the wider community, in the global community, because I have been celebrated globally. I feel like a global citizen. I think about my wider community, and that's why I was so excited when you got in touch and you wanted to do this interview. And I said wow, this is an opportunity to reach out to my global family, who joined in celebrating this great moment and am so thankful to yourself, to the Moving Women Empowerment Network and just for celebrating with me, it is greatly, greatly appreciated. I also want to continue to grow in my political career, to whatever height it gets me to. Because I feel that the higher, I climb the greater the opportunity I have to influence decision making, to influence legislature, for the collective benefits for everybody. Again, there are so many gaps in the political space, and I think political activities is very important and that is something that we don't really get conscious about early. And if you look at the global pandemic and making the decisions to bring us out of this problem that we have, and we can see how different countries and different continents are coming in and out of lockdown, and we see that we have to work together and make sure that we stamp down on this covid19 virus and eradicate it for the betterment of all. And we need to just be more sensitized that politics is very important in our everyday life and if you feel something is not working in the political space, then it means that again if you can identify that there is a problem, you should be part of the solution. I will encourage people to be more active, even if they don't want to be public representatives, you can still be active behind the scenes, supporting public representatives. You might have somebody in your community that is outspoken, people person that is passionate about service, that person is probably a migrant that can become a politician. They just need people to encourage them, maybe they just need a structure around them. You can support

someone else to become more politically active and you will benefit from the knowledge that you helped somebody to get to that position and you have a network and you have that influence on the person to be able to change things for the better and as long as we continue to try, continue to aspire, continue to work hard, we will continue to achieve these wins and this will help us to get stronger and successful, to have fulfilled life in the long run. These are my aspirations.



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Helping Black and Indigenous Women of Color (BIWoc) in their Pre- and Post-Natal Journey

N. A. Baryoh is a specialized gynaecologist and obstetrician, mother of 2, a poetess, passionate and intuitive singer.

Cucuteni

- ✓ A platform for women empowerment through knowledge and holistic wellness
- ✓ Sharing arts and poetry
- ✓ Pre and post natal courses for pregnant and just given birth BIWoc (black and indigenous women of color)

Courses coming soon!

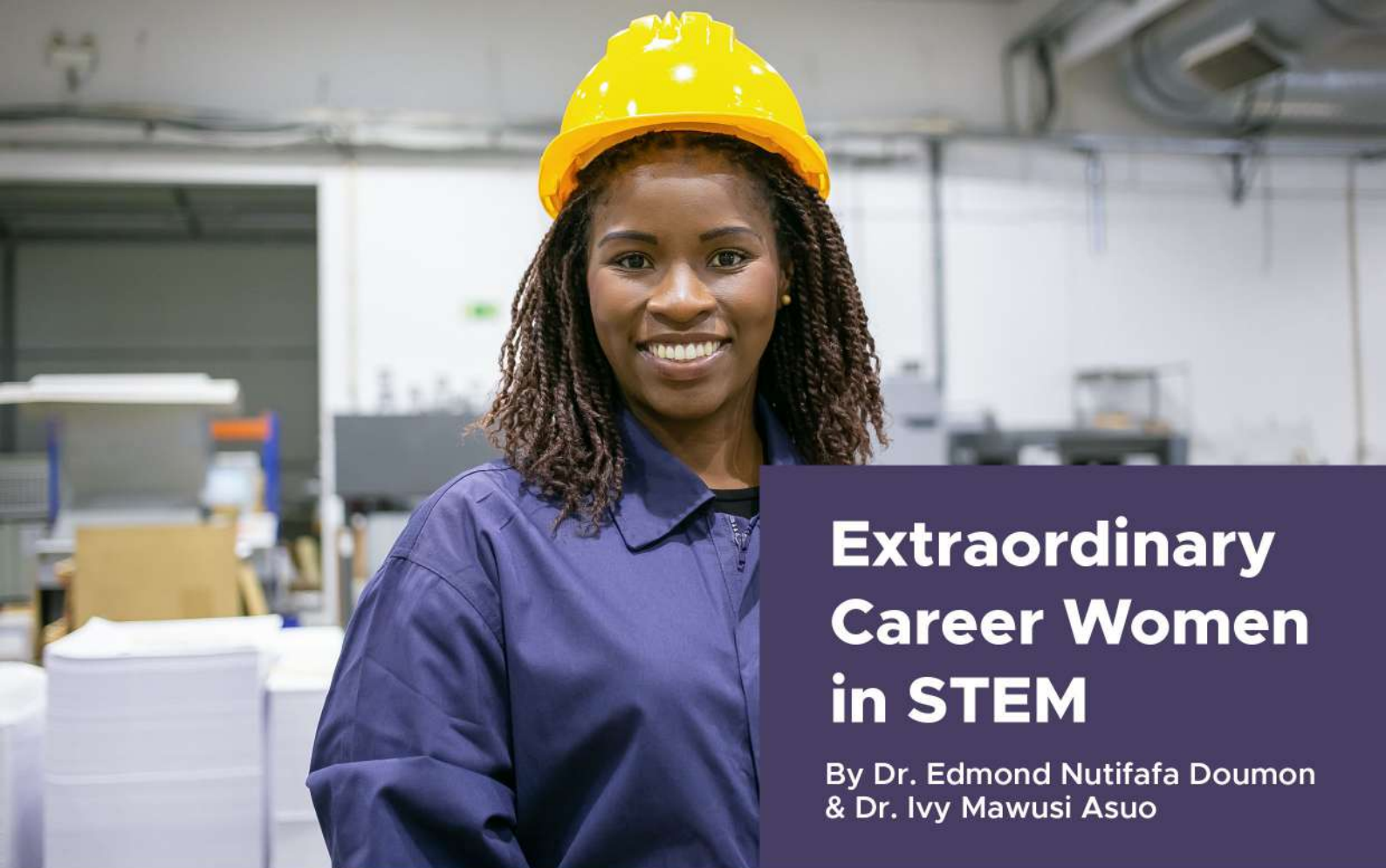
The aim of the courses is to educate and empower the women to help them have an autonomous, happy and moreover safe pregnancy, birthing and post partal experience.

Through training and strengthening them with guided breathing sessions, guided meditations, such as womb healing and yoni steam sessions, a stable maternal mental health should be established.

Also guided meditations for non pregnant women, especially with fibroids, menstrual pain or previous caesarean section being present, are planned.



CUCUTENI
ROUND ABOUT PREGNANT



Extraordinary Career Women in STEM

By Dr. Edmond Nutifafa Doumon & Dr. Ivy Mawusi Asuo

When one patters or rattles about extraordinary women in STEM, whether casually in a gabfest or a serious discussion such as a scientific debate or a conference, many of you would probably name Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin, Marie Curie, Rosalind Franklin, Mary Anning, Barbara McClintock, Dorothy Hodgkin, Alice Augusta Ball, Wally Funk, Mary Maynard Daly, Grace Hopper, Valentina Tereshkova, and Katherine Johnson, to mention a few.

You are probably right, as these names may have stuck in our memory and have certainly changed STEM forever with their undeniable excellent contributions and achievements. For instance, Franklin was known for her revolutionary work in discovering the structure of the deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), which could have won her a Noble Prize (NP) in Chemistry had she not passed away at the early age of 37. Hodgkin discovered the structure of insulin, ultimately winning her the NP in Chemistry in 1964, becoming together Marie Curie and daughter Irene Joliot-Curie the only women to win that prize. It is probably worth stating that Marie Curie remains the sole winner of two NP (Chemistry and Physics) in the history

of the awards.

In physiology, McClintock won the NP in Medicine in 1983 for her groundbreaking works on jumping genes and was the first scientist to suggest that genes alter their activity based on external factors. A concept which is known today as epigenetics.

Recently, we heard the news of the extraordinary efforts by billionaire Richard Branson and his team in traveling to space. According to CNN-Business, he became the first space. According to CNN-Business, he became the first person to ride into space aboard a rocket, which he helped fund. History and facts had it that Tereshkova was the first woman, the youngest woman, and the first civilian in space on June 16, 1963. I can continue on the new few pages highlighting these women and their extraordinary achievements.

However, history was already made, and information is readily accessible. As exemplified above, a career in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) can be hard-fought but sometimes very rewarding, even more so for a woman forging a STEM career path. But

the question is: "Who is an extraordinary woman in STEM?" Is it, or can it be determined by the NP one has won? Or is it determined by academic accolades, one's environments, origin, race, etc.? I think, and I must state here firmly, that this is a personal opinion, any woman who has:

(i) braced the challenges and obstacles on her way to achieving a doctorate (highest recognition in degree in academia) in a STEM field; and/or (ii) made impactful contributions in her field and on lives is an extraordinary woman in STEM. "Impactful contributions? How is it determined, one would ask?" These would be legitimate questions, but this topic would be a subject of an entirely different discussion as it is currently of hot debate in the scientific community. If a woman described above is an extraordinary woman in science, then one would assume that an African woman who achieved such a fit is a super-extraordinary woman in science. We then come to the realization that we do have them all around us, both the extraordinary and superextraordinary ones. The ridiculously super-extraordinary women in STEM are those who did (do) achieve that fit and combined it with raising a family of their own (not that I have anything against adoption or women who do not have children for one reason or the other) whether early or later in their life or career. It is clear that these women have not only contributed to life-changing and groundbreaking research works and theories in their respective fields and communities. They are also hopefully contributing to bringing up the next generation of scholars, athletes, musicians, clerks, in brief, the next generation of human resources that society would need.

In our present day, too, the world benefits enormously from these women who pursue a career in STEM. There may be obstacles. But there is no limit to how far a woman can go in achieving her dreams and impacting the world. Moreover, a STEM career is not innately gender biased. The fundamental factors that drove those renowned women are perseverance, passion, and opportunities. That said, I encourage any lady who has a passion for STEM to strive higher. The world needs you and awaits your remarkable contribution. Per my opined



definition of extraordinary career women in STEM, I will conclude this piece by listing some of the STEM career women I have encountered who have made some impressions on me. Serving as shout-outs to many that could have made this list, but for the lack of space or my knowledge of them, I hope that none of you hold me in contempt for missing out on your name:

Ing. Dorcas Annung Akrong, Dr. Juliet Sackey, Dr. Linda Boatemaa, Dr. Kakra Dankwa, Dr. Sarah Tete, Dr. Thomas Ann, Dr. Rima Mistry, Dr. Jin Xu, Dr. Silvana Della Penna, Dr. Anna Schueth, Prof. Ing. Elsie Effah Kaufmann, Prof. Adrienne Stiff-Roberts, Prof. dr. Beatriz Noheda, and Prof. dr. Maria Loi.

Ladies At Work - Women in STEM

Despite making strides in STEM industries in recent years, there is still much to be done to get more young women and girls into these professions. We are telling the incredible stories of women who have dared and are working towards achieving their dreams and those who have made it in industries in STEM that were once seen as male dominated.

Darshni Appalsamy the Mechanical Engineer innovating for a better future in South Africa is one of such incredible ladies who have dared and are making their mark. We share her perspectives through this interview which was partly published in our Ladies at work weekly series. Here we publish the full version.

A brief introduction?

My name is Darshni Appalsamy, I am a proud South African and a mechanical engineer by profession, dedicated towards engineering and innovating a better future. My country's history of discrimination and gross inequalities motivates me to achieve the opportunities that the majority of our citizens had been denied and to actively create more opportunities for those that are still stuck in the mires of poverty. I firmly believe that we, as developing countries, need to improve the technology and manufacturing sectors to create employment, reduce poverty and to grow in the competitive global landscape.

The current digital transformation that underpins the 4th Industrial Revolution, and which was accelerated during the current pandemic, has ushered in a new universal business model that is fast, open and responsive – presenting us with many opportunities, challenges and a complete exposé of the world's inequalities.

The future of work, especially in developing nations, relies on the current generation to promote a culture of innovation and to ensure that workers are up-skilled so that our industries can advance and emerge as global competitors whilst our population also thrives. I am passionate about cultivating and growing a society capable of sustaining itself and I believe that the only way



this can be achieved is through building more resilient infrastructure, focusing on industry development and innovation, all whilst promoting inclusivity and equal opportunity.



Why did you choose Engineering as a profession?

I have always been intrigued by all the amazing products, inventions and technologies that shape our world. Mechanical Engineering was my chosen career path because of my enthusiasm to be at the forefront of innovation and as a Formula One enthusiast, I have been passionate to learn more about motorsport engineering.

I am currently a Design and Development Engineer at one of South Africa's leading white goods manufacturers.

Previously, I worked as a Project Engineer in the construction sector. Whilst I love being an engineer and I have chosen to follow a traditional career path, I am equally devoted to my volunteer roles and broadening my impact in society.

I have been involved in STEM development programs with various organisations such as WomEng SA, Girls Fly Program Africa (GFPA) and Microsoft SA. In these programs, students participate in STEM activities and challenges where they are introduced to the working world and tangible skills needed in STEM careers. The theme surrounding these events is "The Future of Work"

emphasizing the importance of developing sustainable skills in the fast-paced world of technology and innovation.

In January of 2021, I was selected as one of the top 75 global youth changemakers by the New York based organisation, UNITE 2030, to attend the virtual Youth Delegate Program. Using the Unite 2030 platform, I was able to host and lead global conversations on achieving the various Sustainable Development Goals. I had the privilege of hosting an international Women In STEM networking and empowerment event, with a formula one motorsport engineer as my guest speaker.

What is your motivation for working in that field?

Growing up in a single income, lower middle-class family, with little access to technologies has helped me appreciate opportunities that I have achieved due to my studies in engineering. Education has always been at the forefront of my household, and this is a pertinent driving force for me to help future generations experience these opportunities. I appreciate the role self-development and education played in enhancing the quality of life, not only for myself but for my family too. I am currently

involved in organizations that work to achieve equality in careers and professional fields, especially in STEM. As a developing continent, Africa is in need of new, innovative methods in solving our current problems and the only way that this can be achieved is if men and women are equally skilled so that there is diversity in our solutions.

There have been many instances, during my working career, where I was the only female in boardroom meetings. These experiences have taught me, and my colleagues, that as a female engineer, I am able to bring a unique perspective to the table. Solutions become

more robust and sustaining if there are diverse perspectives contributing to the solution.

What are your aspirations?

South Africa is a melting pot of rich cultures and ethnicities which I am proud to embrace from dress to cuisine, language and culture. I embody the spirit and vibrancy of South Africa, The Rainbow Nation, and I aspire to make a positive impact in my country. Whilst there are many advantages of being a South African, there are also many citizens who are still plunged deep in the mires of poverty. In 2019, the World Bank recognised South Africa as the world's most unequal country, meaning that the economy does not benefit all citizens. I believe that I have the ability to reduce these social inequities through STEM development amongst the youth of South Africa, so that they may improve their employability and participate in the South African economy. The engineering and entrepreneurship sectors also result in job creation which is beneficial to all of society.

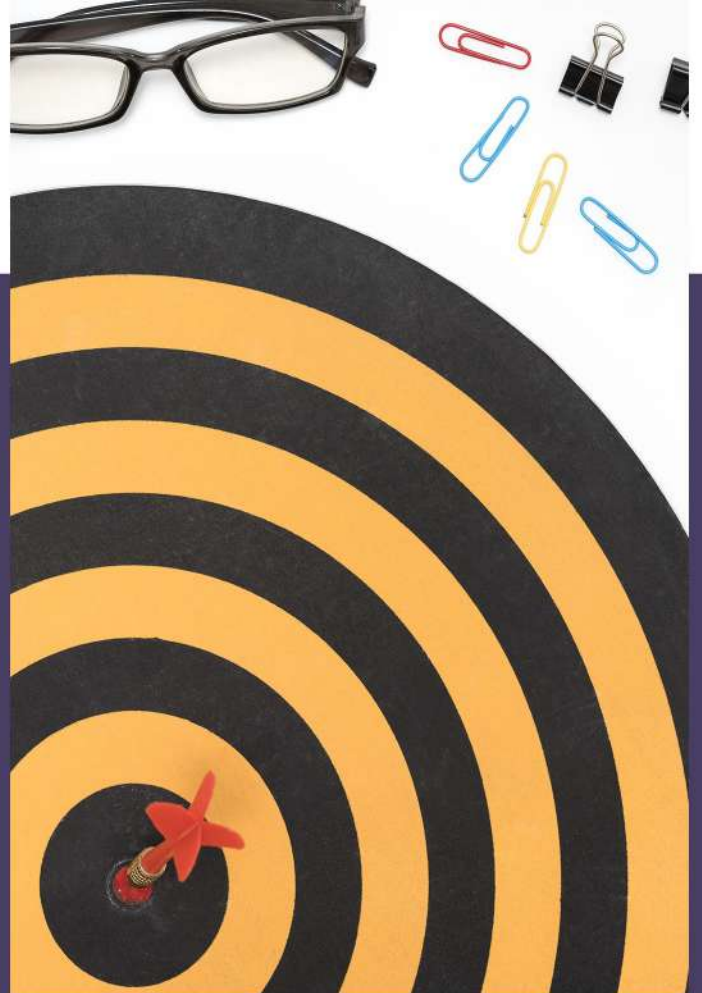
I am passionate about the advancement of my country, and I will continue to labour to achieve the country and world that I dream of.

What can you tell other women who think Engineering is a man's field?

Careers do not have a specific gender. Women, throughout history, have demonstrated their ability to shatter stereotypes and excel while at it.

My advice for any young girl that feels passionate about perusing a "male-dominated" career is: your options are limitless, the possibilities are endless. We live in such an exciting era of technology and innovation that not even the sky is your limit! Your future is yours to envision and to realise. Forbid yourself from thinking small and I assure you that no goal is out of your reach.





About

A full-service digital agency and IT Support Services that uses cutting edge innovations to help your productivity, building and maintaining your image both online and offline in a way that keeps you ahead of your competitors.

We effectively create and design content that will help you improve your business profiles and align you to the right audiences, in return for profits.

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Having a brand identity and a well-structured marketing platform is crucial to run a successful organization. We make you worry about one less thing. We create excellent materials that enhances your organization's presentation on every occasion. Our innovative, creative and curious experts will ensure that your organization gets the attention on digital platforms and local media that it deserves. Our experts will take care of your needs and project your organization with great effectiveness. Leave it to us and get people talking about your brand. We will help you with these and much more.

MOVING WOMAN

