

Issue 9.0 in the series: "My Ideas
for Making Nigeria Better"

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How Nigeria Can Manifest Real - & LASTING - Benefits of Independence

Hint: A Proven Zero Cost Strategy that INDIVIDUAL Nigerians Can use to Get Nigeria THERE!



For past issue(s), Google: "*My Ideas for Making Nigeria Better, tayo k. solagbade.*"

Why This Approach?

I'm trying to make it easier to refer people I engage with, to my thoughts and ideas. So I do NOT have to repeat myself each time. *More of us can do this!* At some point, I'm hopeful that we can COLLATE all our ideas, to develop - and IMPLEMENT! - useful actions plans that will change Nigeria for the better!

Why No Details (Even a By-Line!) About Me in this PDF?

Yes. Not even a by-line. This initiative is about Nigeria - not me. If you're keen, Google "*Tayo Solagbade*". *What you learn should make you take my ideas seriously* ☺

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Today, 1st October 2014, is Independence Day in my country – Nigeria.

In this special issue (No. 9) of “*My Ideas for Making Nigeria Better*”, I explain why I believe Nigeria’s ability to reap FULL benefits from her Independence from colonialists, will depend MAINLY on INDIVIDUAL Nigerians learning to THINK and ACT INDEPENDENTLY at ALL times.

Our country has come a long way since 1960. And WE – Nigerians - are mostly GREAT people who can hold our own before people from other countries.

No doubt in my mind about that.

I’ve seen evidence of that in my travels outside Nigeria.

You will find highly competent, Nigerians in top/leading positions across the world.

A one time lady minister, who visited the USA’s NASA was astonished to discover a considerable number of Nigerians playing crucially relevant roles there.

I have been based in Benin Republic now for 17 months, and the influence of Nigerians (especially my in-laws, the Igbos) cannot be discounted.

1. Each time I have needed to acquire PC/Mobile Phone resources crucial for my work, I’ve been told to go: **“where the Igbos are”**.

2. **But it’s not just IT equipment and PC consumables the Igbos are known for over here.**

They also dominate the market for “original” imported shoes, offering them in large, affordably priced volumes here in Cotonou.

One example: The shoes shown below are my favourite wears for moving around. Depending on who’s selling, - anywhere in Nigeria - those shoes cost 5 to 10 times MORE than I get them for in Cotonou.



And here’s the irony: I buy them from French speaking Nigerian Igbo traders in the market out here, while those selling them in Nigeria are also Igbos, who buy from the former!

Why the huge price disparity then you ask?

The guys in Nigeria explained to me that getting the goods across the border incurs all sorts of official and non-official “charges”, especially at the Nigerian end.

Naturally, the traders have to transfer the costs to the buyers to make profits.

As a result, I end up spending 5 to 10 times LESS to buy the SAME shoes, than someone in Lagos, who makes the SAME amount of money as I do.



I end up SAVING more, and feeling LESS financially pressured!

3. Since I began carefully exploring options for furnishing my new apartment - in between handling multiple client projects - I have learnt that getting quality furniture and fittings (mostly imported) will often require going to "where the Igbos are".

4. Listening to radio and TV programmes here, the average show's guest is unlikely to finish his/her contribution without making a reference - often directly - to Nigeria.

And quite often it is a positive reference too e.g. with regard to our entrepreneurship culture, creativity etc.

5. Same applies to our entertainment industry. Out here and across Africa, our music dominates. It is hard to move around in Cotonou without hearing some bar or restaurant playing music by a Nigerian

artiste - and the French speaking Beninese singing along.

Their radio and TV stations often play our music. Many cannot speak English, but they pay enough attention to learn to say the words in the song's lyrics.

These guys really LOVE our music! And they love our Nollywood movies (I still struggle to watch most, due to poor plot/story lines and acting) as well - which often get translated into French language for resale here.

NB: *Every once in a while, the naughty acts of some individual Nigerians does get mentioned, but I've not see much of that happen in these parts recently.*

The above prove that we have GREAT people...BUT we can be MUCH GREATER if we manage our country better!

You see, our potential for greatness is WAAAAAY above what we are currently achieving as a nation.

Think about it.

In their individual lives, Nigerians keep proving themselves – as individuals - to be powerful forces to be reckoned with, ACROSS the world, in any country they venture as individuals.

That is why it makes no sense that their country does NOT reflect that capability that they IMPRESS the world with as INDIVIDUALS. Look at America, then consider individual Americans. All sorts of individual achievers exist in that country – and their achievements reflect in the greatness that America displays!

For some strange reason, Nigeria is unable (or unwilling?) to let the GREATNESS of her individual citizens help it actualize its full potential for greatness!

The average Nigerian I know has a fiercely entrepreneurial spirit. I see it everywhere I go. We ARE survivors. Nothing gets us down. We never give in or give up. Whatever it takes we will do to keep going (though some of us choose to apply that positive attribute to negative purposes).

This is more than I can say for some people I've met from other African countries. Unlike Nigerians, they are basically strangers to HUSTLING.

And yet, sometimes life throws challenges at you that make HUSTLING necessary.

If truth be told however, hustling need not be a permanent feature of one's life. One should be able to work one's way out of the need to hustle.

I think that's what people from other countries – like Ghana, and Benin republic - who don't hustle so much (and who Nigerians accuse of being too laid back) have working for them.

Their countries work so well, that even if they do not hustle like Nigerians (are often forced by social realities to) do, they still get to live decent lives.

Take the example of Benin Republic.

Most people here – regardless of status or even age – have a fierce sense of INDEPENDENCE.

No matter how lowly placed they may seem in terms of what they own, they know their rights and expect them to be respected by others - including those in authority and/or influence.

That's why it's rare to find a police man working as orderly for some big shot or money bag.

It is also why if a big man driving a big car slaps a bike riding fellow citizen for scratching his car while driving past, he is likely to become a guest of the Gendarmes (Police).

But that's' not all. No one collects arbitrary taxes from transporters in Benin!

Area boys dare not operate in this country like they do in Nigeria. The people would teach them a lesson never to be forgotten.

To top it all, each person who is willing to put in a decent amount of work effort is able to feed his/her family.

Last year I lived in Calavi (just outside Cotonou) on the National University's campus, among students half my age, for 3 months after I arrived the country.

I had been unable to find rented accommodation on time. So a friend recommended I take up temporary hostel boarding till I could find a place.

During my time amongst the university students, I saw that with a little money they were able to meet their personal, individual needs.

They did not need to own generators and buy petrol to fuel them, in order to have electricity to study with.

Since moving to Cotonou I have seen the same thing. The cost of living is so low and the quality of life here is so good that even those who have little still get on fairly well.

You don't see people constantly trying to shake themselves down to get money.

For instance, when I visit the bank here, security guards do NOT pester me for tips. Not even once has it happened.

Yet, there is almost no time I walk into a bank's premises in Nigeria, even at the SEME BORDER, that the guards on duty do not ask me "Oga find something for us now" - just after I get money from the ATM or the banking hall.

Indeed, the security guards at the banks here in Cotonou often shock me with their seeming air of aloofness.

They greet you politely with a "Bonjour monsieur" and let you in.

Ask them a question they answer or direct you to someone who can. Often with a professional air. And yet when you look them over, in terms of what they wear, they are not paid millions.

Here's my conclusion: They have been raised in their culture, to be INDEPENDENT

That was what one of the first members of the gendarmerie, I ever spoke with here in Cotonou told me back in April 2013.

He said:

"Here in Benin, everyone lives within his/her means. Generally, you do not venture into activity that you cannot afford to pay for. If you don't have enough, you wait until you do."

That sums it up really. A culture of contentment and self-discipline prevails in Benin Republic

No wonder it is more difficult to buy individuals over here, to do wrong.

No wonder they are able to operate an enduring democracy that works better than most!

I'll be the first to admit that these people are far from perfect. They certainly have their own shortcomings – and I've mentioned a few in past article on my blog.

However, I believe their culture of nurturing INDEPENDENCE in the INDIVIDUAL citizen overshadows most imperfections they have.

And it's helping them succeed as a truly independent nation – small as they are!

In contrast, too many people in Nigeria DEPEND on too many others to get what they need.

Few people are prepared to do anything by themselves. You are often told to find someone who knows someone.

Don't get more wrong. It happens everywhere - across their world.

But in Nigeria, it happens TOO often for anything good to come of it!

The above culture of patronage rewards people who do not wish to work, but wish to spend.

This is why we have so many ghost workers.

It is also why we have too many aides appointed to people in public office. Many people pester relatives in public office to give them contracts because of this problem.

Job seekers in Nigeria even give up part of their salaries upfront, to the guy in charge of recruitment – in order to a position with a new employer!

Contractors and other business owners give bribes to win new client projects. People PAY religious leaders to help them pray for answers from God - when THEY can as well pray for themselves.

*They even pay MONEY to buy holy handkerchief, holy water, and holy EVERYTHING from their pastors! **Come ON. How lazy can a person get? So lazy you cannot even spare the mental glucose to pray to YOUR creator for what you claim you DESIRE from Him???***

And that's the problem with Nigerians. Majority think and act as explained above. A privileged few then exploit them for personal gain.

It's a symbiotic relationship -in which the former are much more DEPENDENT on (even at the mercy of!) the latter.

But here's what makes it really bad...and why it hurts the Nigerian nation:

You see, an independent minded person – who refuses to do what the majority do above - stands little chance of surviving, talk less of succeeding, in Nigeria.

Why?

Well, because s/he would be in the UNWANTED, endangered microscopic minority.

The majority who prefer to be shamelessly DEPENDENT feel threatened by such people and use every resource at their disposal to STOP him/her from making useful progress.

If you have ever wondered why most of Nigeria's most brilliant minds (even Music!) are either based abroad, or earn their living by "selling" to foreign audiences, THE ABOVE is why.

I know we all celebrate our musicians for instance. But do we ever wonder about the QUALITY of what they produce compared to what the international market buys?

Our music has been so commoditized that traders control its marketing!! That makes no sense. And it is why the concept of copyright, and royalties have little or no real meaning in Nigeria.

As a result, our musicians have to make money, NOT from record sales, but from live shows.

But Fela's children (Femi and Seun Kuti), Lagbaja, Asa, are examples who show that they can deliver world class music. Before them Fela Anikulapo Kuti had led the way.

Those I've mentioned above are people with INDEPENDENT mindsets.

Tu Face Idibia also showed that rare streak, when he announced he would produce quality CDs of a new album and sell for about N1,000 in a market that comical CD packaging had become a norm, in order to discourage pirates.

Before Tu Face, Lagbaja had passed the same message with his well packaged and premium priced CDs, which I proudly bought and took with me as gift to family friends in Sheffield, England in 2000.

My Point is: You DO NOT adopt low standards to beat the opposition or competition.

You also do NOT let a poorly informed audience - no matter their numbers - force you to lower your standards!

Instead, you must remember that YOU have a responsibility to EDUCATE them on why they have to STEP UP their tastes, and learn to PAY for good VALUE! **Don't let them drag you down to their level. Instead, make them DESIRE to climb UP to your level!**

Too many people are afraid to do this, because they fear "losing" their audience. However the truth is that if they are acting like that, it means you NEVER had them!

What you therefore need to do it use your INDEPENDENT mindset to assert your INDEPENDENCE in finding the right audience to offer what you sell.

If you do that, you WILL be surprised to discover that those who really want what you offer exist in enough numbers to make it worth your while.

Here's what I always tell my kids:

"Make your standard an international one. Do everything you do to such a high level of quality and professionalism that will put you on equal – or even higher – footing with ANY persons who does what you ANYWHERE on the planet. Never, ever settle for less!" – Tayo K. Solagbade

In summary, my point is that too many individuals lack an INDEPENDENT mindset.

I do NOT mean becoming unwilling to work with or cooperate with others.

No. What I refer to here is the willingness to refuse to follow the crowd, if you see that what the crowd demands is NOT right for you.

The readiness to stand alone in your beliefs, if the need to do so arises. To be willing to get criticized and called names if that is what it will take to pass your message across. People willing to do the above are not many in Nigeria. *The majority of those willing to do so, have fled Nigeria in order to avoid extinction.*

For Nigeria to Succeed as a Nation, We Need to Nurture an Army of INDEPENDENT Individual Nigerians
One way to do this is what I call "Digital Multipreneuring™"

We must build a critical mass of people with the competence, and confidence to NOT feel a need to be subservient to earn a comfortable living.

To do the above, we must start by promoting adoption of a real entrepreneurship mindset by individual Nigerians. But just before anyone starts talking about capital or the lack of it, the kind of entrepreneurship I refer to, is the one you can do, with close to ZERO capital.

But more specifically, Digital Multipreneuring (DM)TM is what each Nigerian must learn to do.

*It is what I **USE** (NB: use of the present continuous tense here is deliberate) to succeed today. Google my name, and learn more about me, using the links that appear to understand what DM is about.*

That's what CAN KILL the harmful culture of patronage that's making Nigeria a crawling giant!

Having said the above, I know everyone cannot do it. The beauty of any economic revolution is that it always creates secondary opportunities.

For instance Digital MultipreneursTM will need to be served with products, services or resources they need, over time.

For instance, as a Location Independent Digital Multipreneur, I constantly have a need for Internet connectivity. And I am often willing to pay a premium to get it.

Anyone who can offer me reliable long term connectivity, and other PC related products and services will find me a good customer.

I do this as I travel to and from Nigeria/Benin Republic.

Here in Cotonou, 2 cafe owners know me WELL, because of the volume of purchases I have made with them, in a short period, compared to others.

We have gotten to the point that they asked to know what I do, and I confirmed it's ALL legit work e.g. my custom Excel-VB software products, my web marketing systems development service, freelance writing service, information products selling, domain name registration and hosting, business plan preparation and more.

This has earned me great respect – and they treat me accordingly.

Interestingly, a manger with one of the cafes recently asked my advice on how to quit paid employment to achieve his dream of running a software development business, like I do with Excel-VB Automation.

This was after I showed him my Excel-VB driven software. He studied IT but never knew MS Excel to be a reliable development platform for producing high end software solutions.

It goes without saying that if more Nigerians become like me – able to LEGITIMATE earn income via multiple channels, regardless of location, the culture of patronage will die a natural death!

Once people KNOW that they can do enough by themselves, to earn adequate income to meet their needs, AND they are willing to be PATIENT, and contented, they automatically become less prone to DEPENDING on others.

Right now in Nigeria, the culture of patronage makes too much UNEARNED income available. *That's causing those willing to give value in exchange for income to be sidelined, and frustrated.* It is also why people either choose to take up salaried employment for financial security - or they start a buying and selling business.

In fact, many people in Nigeria do both - just to make ends meet!

And yet, despite all the hustling, they still are unable to enjoy the stress free quality of life that someone with much less income out here in Benin Republic ENJOYS, with his/her family. *I will admit that people here in Benin also love salary jobs, and do not readily go into business.*

The truth however is that that the society they run makes it possible to do so - because it has MUCH fewer pocket-draining, and stress inducing elements. As a result, even after retirement, most people here are able to maintain a semblance of normalcy in their lifestyles long into their old age.

In contrast, retirement from paid employment can be a death sentence in Nigeria – which is why many people act so desperate, to avoid it, or cut corners to mitigate its painful effects.

My opinion is that the ONLY way out, especially in Nigeria, is:

a. For those in paid employment to boost their ability to be INDEPENDENT by engaging in part-time entrepreneurship well BEFORE they retire.

Here's an excerpt from an article I wrote years back on a similar theme:

"Endeavour to serve your employer well. But always remember that her obligation to you ends the day you are officially listed as retired, retrenched, redundant, rationalised - or if you're lucky to find the courage..."voluntarily resigned".

Begin today to think what you will do AFTER you leave that nice comfy job with the FREE medical benefits, pretty cars, free accommodation, and scholarship for your kids, free meals at work, sponsored holidays etc. Don't let those numerous nice things of life turn you into an invalid who does not know left from right by the time you get back into the UHK - University of Hard Knocks (aka the real-world)."

b. And if you are still in school, as a Nigerian in Nigeria, my advice to you is this:

Start a business today. Learn to create something that people will buy for a good price from you!

My kids are being taught to do just that already, because I want them to be able to celebrate THEIR OWN independence, every time they celebrate their country's Independence Day!



Cotonou, 1st October 2014 at 1.08p.m

NB: The article is titled "When I Quit My Job, They Called Me "Mad" - And I Felt So, So Sorry for Them!".
Google the title to read in full.

Chinua Achebe wrote...*

“Let me give one more dimension of what we were hoping to do in Biafra...”

See page 157 of his book titled “There Was A Country: A Personal History of Biafra”.*

Click below to purchase from Amazon.com!

www.amazon.com/There-Was-Country-Personal-History/dp/1594204829

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Read “Biafra-Born Micro-Refineries Operating in Nigeria? Lessons for Nigeria/Africa!” – click the link below...

<http://tinyurl.com/biafra-refineries-tks>



Tayo Solagbade

21 hours ago via BlackBerry



Facebook can be a powerful weapon for making positive change happen in society. However, historical evidence strongly indicates that happens in cases when most of those who use it in a particular society walk their ONLINE talk, in their daily, personal and work lives OFFLINE. Hmm...

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👍 Fred O Ehimika Jr, Abigail Olutusin and 2 others like this.



Edentu Oroso Food for thought there. I thought about this some time ago. If all the online preaching is anything to go by, Nigeria certainly will be a paradise. I share in your sentiment.

4 hours ago · Unlike · 🔄 1