

Young people have often been considered as vulnerable and with the potential of the future. There have been several arguments that young people are not just the leaders of tomorrow but also leaders of today as it is believed that leadership starts from our circle of influence. In Nigeria, the demographic statistics show that young people make up a huge part of the population. A number of them are without resources, have challenges getting good education and jobs, and are worst hit by conflicts, poverty and corruption. They are sometimes not taken seriously, and the right to speak is reserved for elderly people. However, it is arguably a fact that young Nigerians cannot be ignored or seen as the problem.

The future is already here, it's just not evenly distributed -William Gibson (author)

It is in the light of the foregoing that Youthful Vibes is given birth to so as to showcase the efforts of several young Nigerians making the difference in their own little corner and beyond. Some have been celebrated and are still being celebrated by the Media whilst there are others whom the Media is yet to spotlight. Therefore, the stories of young Nigerians making positive impact will be profiled, national issues and projects of interest to young people, collaborative efforts of youth organizations and Corporate bodies working on youth brands will be highlighted by Saturday Vanguard Youthful Vibes. Also, we shall highlight the powerful position and influence Young Nigerian Professionals have both inside corporations and through government to achieve change.

This edition will focus on a young man who is making the difference amongst several youths.

Growing up

I come from the Isoko speaking tribe of Delta State, the last child in a family of thirteen (13) children. I was born and raised in Warri and proudly raise the "Waffi" flag everywhere I go! Growing up was fun but not without its own challenges, but coming from a very closely knit and Godly minded family like mine made up for all the everyday challenges. At the age of seven (7), my older siblings started a family choir called "The Zion's Grace singers" and we would perform at our church events at the time. That was my first exposure to music and how I loved it! At the age of nine (9), my eldest brother taught almost all of us to play the guitar and he bought me one - which I treasured deeply. My dad, who is now eighty (81) and still sings baritone excellently, bought an organ in the 60's on one of his trips and he later introduced us to sight reading music scores. It was at that time I discovered I had a penchant for music and songwriting and realized that I could use music as a tool to send out a message.

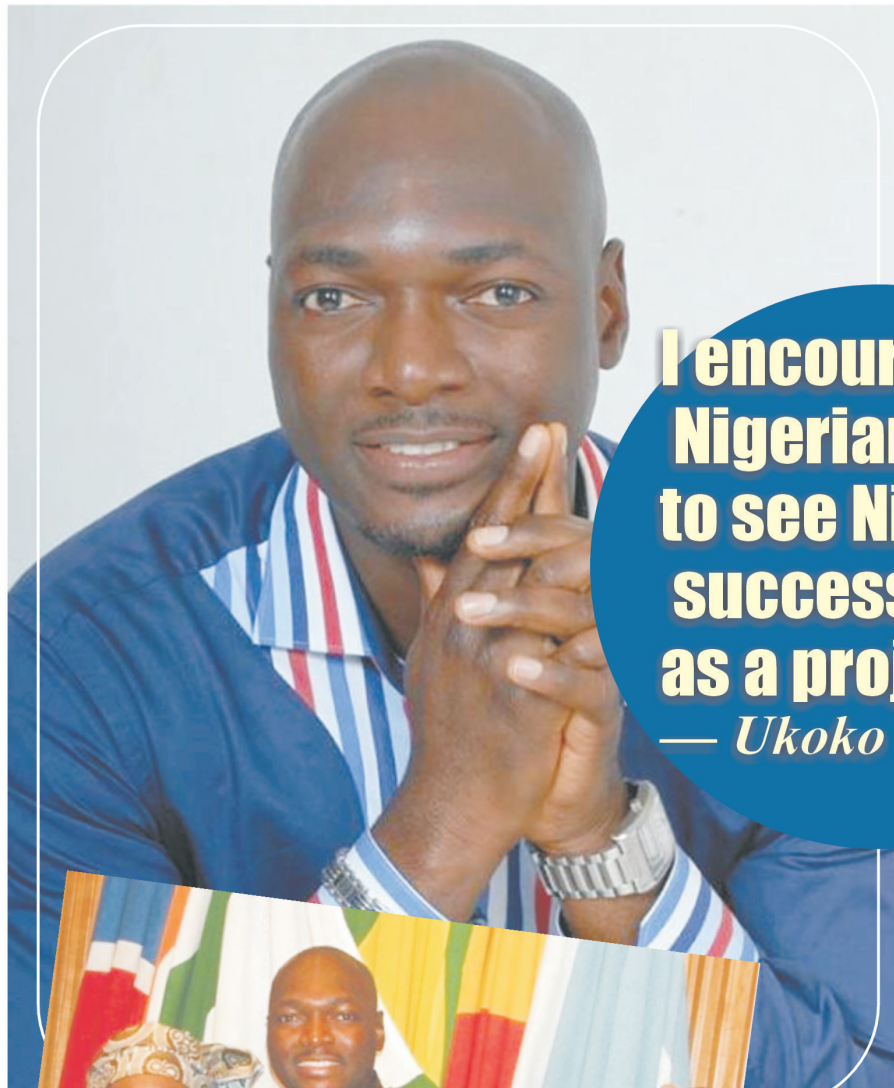
Patriotism

In 2005, I travelled to Switzerland to participate in a month long internship program organized by the Initiatives of Change International (IofC), formerly known as Moral Re-Armament (MRA) - an international NGO which believes that positive change can only come to the world when one dares to start with oneself. My interest in this rather unpopular ideology grew and it culminated into a 9 month long trip to four Asian countries including India, Malaysia, Cambodia and Indonesia in November that same year to participate in a leadership training Program organized by the same



Youthful Vibes

By Victor Gotevbe
Youthfulvibes@gmail.com



I encourage Nigerian youths to see Nigeria's success as a project — Ukoko

Ukoko Obas Michael, coordinator/Mentor of Harambee Africa Leadership Training Program which has taken place in South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Ethiopia and now Nigeria. A singer and songwriter, leadership and Conflict Resolution trainer.



• From (l), Amina Dikedi and Ukoko Obas Michael

always confronted by immigration officers in some of these countries for questioning. Whenever I asked why this was so, the immigration officials bluntly told me it was because I was a Nigerian passport holder. At that moment, I made up my mind to be a self-appointed ambassador of Nigeria to the world. I honestly do not seek for anyone's approval or any national recognition, as a matter of fact I see those as distractions capable of veering anyone off their God-given drive to make our society a better place. Rather my drive to continue being a change agent is further strengthened by the numerous non-Nigerians I have encountered abroad who tell me "thank you for making me see Nigerians differently". Such moments can never be described in monetary or material terms! Although my work with this organization which allows me to incorporate music into it, has taken me to over 10 countries, I'm grateful to God that every time I travel, I flaunt my "Nigerianess".

Giving back

Besides my work as a Leadership and Conflict Resolution trainer with IofC, I write gospel and inspirational songs and I volunteer as a counselor at a remand home in Abeokuta, once in a while. Here, I take my guitar along with goodies for the over 30 children there and I play and sing with them and encourage them as well as listen to them. These kids get to tell me things they won't even dare to tell their facility director. This is so because they found me trustworthy enough not to leak out our discussions to the director. It makes them believe that trust still exists and hasn't gone extinct! Each of these trips is self funded and you can't imagine how excited these kids get as soon as they see me coming through the gate! They thank me at the end of each visit but little do they know that I ought to be thanking them for bringing me joy and fulfillment and making me feel "human" each time I am with them. I don't believe one has to be wealthy to render such acts of service to humanity.

Young Nigerians Making The Difference

If you think you're too small to make a difference, you've obviously never been in bed with a mosquito -Michelle Walker

LAGOS

SOLANKE AKINOLA ADEBAYO (a.k.a. Akin Nigeria), National Coordinator, Building our National Image Flag Project

The building of our national image flag project (A.K.A BONI FLAG PROJECT) is a national transformation and revolutionary move/campaign which is being pioneered by Solanke Akinola Adebayo, (a.k.a Akin Nigeria), a young Nigerian with an extraordinary passion and insight into the significance and importance of the Nigerian flag. It is an initiative under the Freedom flags ventures, a registered business organization, registered with the corporate affairs commission.



Ambassador Olusegun Olusola, join in cutting of Independence cake

NORTH

Umar Abubakar Richard; Tree planting workshop and fieldwork

The project: Talba Forest workshop was on Sustainable Development (Forest Management) conceptualized by Federation of Nigeria Youth Greens in collaboration with an intern student from Department of Civil Engineering and the Environment of the University of Southampton UK and Niger State College of Education, Minna. The workshop took place at the College of Education, Minna and the practicals of tree planting and organic fertilizer application was done at Talba Forest on the 28/09/2011.

The schools present were: Police secondary school, MYPA Schools, Galaxy International School, Government Secondary School, Ideal Royal School, Government Secondary School Section B,



Umar Abubakar

Students of Department of Agriculture College of Education, Ministry of Environment and Solid Minerals development, Arati Biotech producers of OBD organic Fertilizers and Organo Mineral Fertilizer.

The project is geared towards engaging the students of the college of Education in the sustainability process, this would have them learn the processes involved in economical tree variation, tree planting, nurturing and the entire management of a forest.