

**Out & About With:
Ambassador Symington**

January - March 2017



February 24, Lagos

HRM Oba Enitan Adeyeye Ogunwusi, the Ooni of Ife, presents Ambassador Symington with an Ife bronze head during a courtesy call



February 28, Sokoto

Ambassador Symington shakes hands with beneficiaries of USAID-supported Livelhood Program before addressing them during a visit to Sokoto



February 21, Kano

Ambassador Symington speaks to students of The Aminu Kano College of Islamic and Legal Studies while their provost (R) and the district head of Gwale (L) look on



February 24, Lagos

All smiles as Ambassador Symington presents the staff of Andela the 2016 Secretary of State's Award for Corporate Excellence



March 8, Jos

Roy Shekarri, Managing Director of the Integrated Dairies Limited, gives Ambassador Symington a tour of the grounds in Vom, Plateau



March 28, Abuja

Ambassador Symington speaks to the audience of mostly female high school students at the screening of Code Girl at the Genesis Cinemas, FCT Abuja



W. Stuart Symington
U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria

Dear CROSSROADS Readers,
As I travel around Nigeria, when I have the pleasure of meeting Nigerians from all

walks for life, I invariably ask each person I meet what do you like the most about your country? In almost every case, they say "the people." When I ask what do they like about the Nigerian people, they reply "their diversity." My experience – from Maidugiri to Lagos and from Calabar to Sokoto – is that like the United States – Nigeria is a wonderfully diverse nation whose people embrace each other's differences and strengths.

The Embassy recently concluded month long celebrations of African-American history in February as well as the contributions of women in March. This issue of CROSSROADS focuses on the Nigerian woman and how she has chosen to face her challenges. We will offer examples of how smart and energetic Nigerian women are making positive contributions to the development of

their homeland.

While I am proud of what the U.S. Mission does to support the Nigerian people, the most important efforts will always be those of Nigerian citizens themselves, positively affecting the lives of their fellow countrymen. Every person, Nigerian and American, has the same challenge ... to make this world we share better, one person at a time. And I am truly confident that the people of Nigeria, demonstrating great energy and determination, will lift Nigeria up and go forward one citizen at a time.

Finally, as I see and experience more of Nigeria, I hope to run into many of you and to learn how you are making a positive difference wherever you are.

W. Stuart Symington

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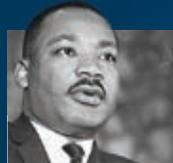
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Cover art - *Ori* (Head) - by Kenyatta Hinkle. Created in 2015 during Kenyatta's Fulbright fellowship at the Creative Arts Dept of the University of Lagos, she drew inspiration from the Yoruba culture to create a piece which pays homage to the journey she went through to discover her lineage of African-Americans dating as far back as 1827 and the rich heritage they passed down to her.

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY 2017

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

- Martin Luther King Jr.

January 17 | American Corners (Calabar, Port Harcourt, Enugu)

Martin Luther King Day Activities

Exchange alums Esther Eshiet (Calabar), Sika Baridorn (Port Harcourt), Gozie Udemezue (Enugu) Ifeoma Mighty-Chukwu (Enugu) facilitated training sessions at the American Corners in their respective communities on non-violent means of resolving conflicts in commemoration of Martin Luther King Day.



Esther Eshiet with participants in Calabar, Cross River

January 18 | Ekiti Hall, U.S. Embassy, Abuja

MLK's I Have A Dream speech competition

High school students were tasked with creatively interpreting Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech through any preferred visual or performance method. There were all kinds of dance, music, visual arts and poetry during the two hour event.



The 3rd place winning artwork in the contest

January 18 | Online and American Corners (Lagos, Calabar, Bauchi)

Google Hangout to mark Martin Luther King Day

Two alums of EducationUSA Lagos - Saheed Adepoju, a computer science graduate student at Prairie View A & M University, Texas and Chizzy Okoye, a chemical engineering major at Howard University, DC - participated in a Google Hangout. The topic of the Hangout was living and studying at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the United States.

Channels Television's Foreign Affairs Editor, Amarachi Ubani, moderated the Hangout. U.S. Consulate General Lagos EducationUSA Adviser Chinenye

Uwadileke, and Gloria Newsome - a graduate of Mississippi Valley State University (an HBCU), along with Adepoju and Okoye responded to questions from the public on how to apply to any of the 107 HBCUs. They also provided valuable information on the social, cultural, and economic aspects of studying in a typical HBCU. Watch parties were hosted in American Corners across the country, including Lagos, Calabar, and Bauchi.

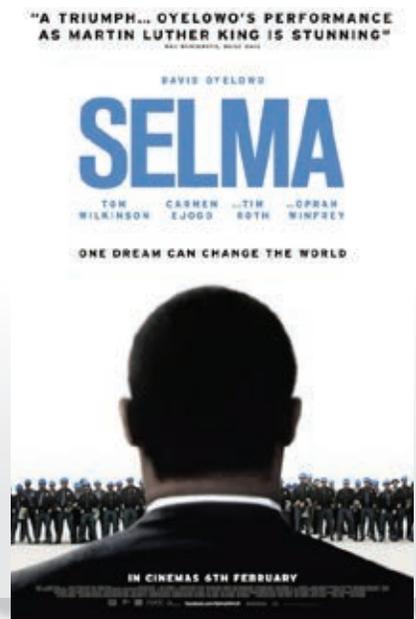


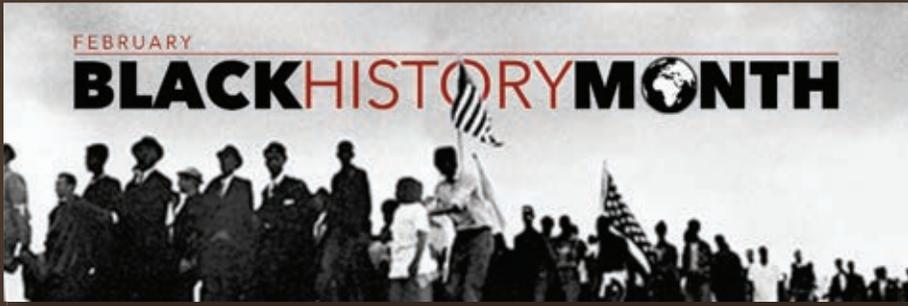
A Google Hangout Watch Party hosted in Bauchi American Corner

January 20 | Rosa Parks Center, Abuja

Movie Screening: Selma

The movie is a chronicle of Martin Luther King's campaign to secure equal voting rights via an epic march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama in 1965.





February 17 | Rosa Parks Center
Movie Screening of Dear White People

Screened before U.S. college-bound students, *Dear White People* is a social satire that follows the stories of four black students at a fictional Ivy League college where racial tensions erupt at a black-face party thrown by white students. The film explores racial identity in an acutely not post-racial America and addresses the general anxiety some college students face as they begin to forge their own path in the world.



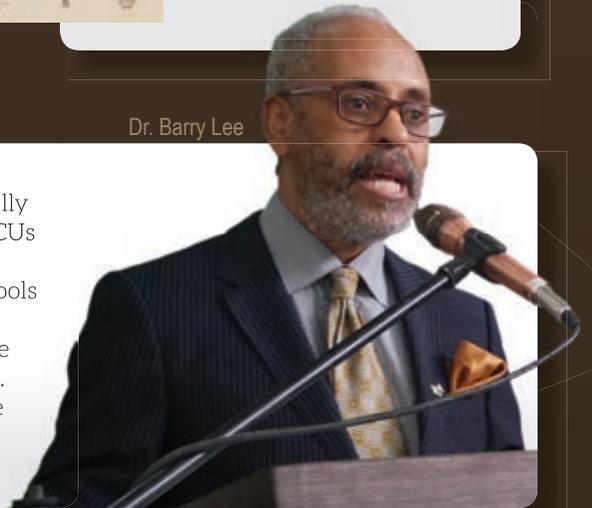
February 8 | Rosa Parks Center
Conversation Café: 13th Amendment - Abolishment of Slavery in USA

To mark Black History Month, the Information Resource Center screened *America Beyond the Color Line* - a documentary by Henry Louis Gates Jr., to create awareness about the contributions that people of African descent have made in the United States.

February 15 | Ekiti Hall
Movie Screening: March on Washington

Also to mark Black History Month, the Information Resource Center screened the documentary film, *March on Washington*, to explain the significance of one of the largest rallies during the American Civil Rights Movement.

Dr. Barry Lee



February 21-24 | Abuja & Kaduna
Black History Month Speaker Program with Dr. Barry Lee

Dr. Barry Lee, professor of History at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, challenged student audiences at four universities to be leaders mirroring the courage of students of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement. Dr. Lee spoke to audiences of 250-700 students in Zaria, Kaduna, and Abuja as part of

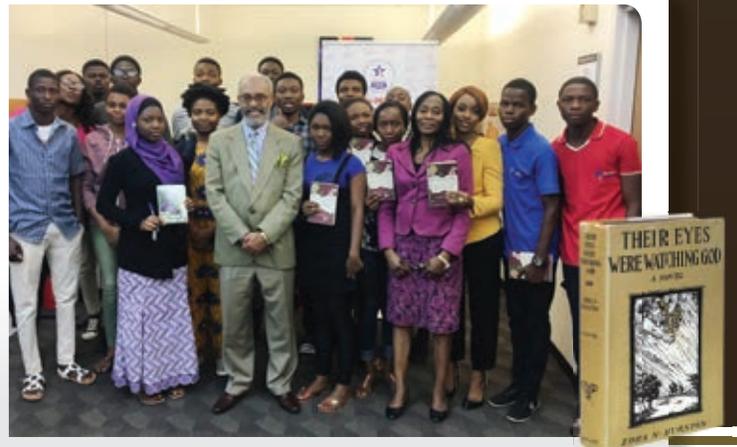
Black History Month programming on the theme: The Role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities HBCUs in the U.S. Civil Rights and African Independence Movements. The schools included: Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Kaduna State University, Baze University, and University of Abuja. He also spoke to students at Essence Secondary School about academic opportunities at HBCUs.

February 23 | Lagos
Conversation Café: Combating Crisis

With the sub-theme, **How Diversity and Inclusion Could Strengthen a Nation**, a video clip of an anti-racism experiment was screened and the interactive session that followed emphasized the need for tolerance among different ethnic groups.

February 23 | Rosa Parks Center
Book Review: Their Eyes were Watching God

The book by Zora Neale Hurston was specifically chosen to coincide with Black History Month, and Education USA members took advantage of the opportunity to speak with visiting IIP speaker, Dr. Barry Lee, to better understand the history of African-Americans in the United States and the context for the novel.





Christine Souffrant delivers a presentation at Ventures Platform, Abuja



March 2-6 | Abuja, Jos & Kaduna Women's History Month Kick-off with Christine Souffrant

Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), Kaduna State University, University of Jos, Jos Business School, and African Women Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP) members participated in a series of events with IIP speaker and business start-up expert Christine Souffrant in Kaduna,

Abuja, and Jos March 2-6. She challenged audiences to follow a four week model to identify patterns, build a professional network, and launch a business. Souffrant responded to questions concerning finding support and overcoming community hurdles by emphasizing the availability of online resources and the importance of marketing and monetizing one's brand.



Christine Souffrant with participants after the presentation

EducationUSA Visits All-Girls High Schools To Promote All-Women Colleges

In commemoration of Women's History month, EducationUSA Abuja dedicated the month's outreach efforts to all-girls high schools within the Abuja metropolis to promote girl child education and scholarship opportunities at women's colleges in the U.S.

March 8 | U.S. Consulate General, Lagos International Women's Day

PAS Lagos kicked off its Women's History Month programs with an event themed **Celebrating Women in Business and the Labor Force**. It was attended by over 70 participants. The Chairman of the Board of Directors of Access Bank of Nigeria, Mrs. Mosun Belo-Olusoga (an IVLP Alumnus) and the Technical Adviser (Youth and Gender) at the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ms. Mosunmola Cynthia Umoru, were among the panelists.

Consul General F. John Bray spoke on the Presidential Proclamation for Women's History Month, explaining that International Women's Day recognizes and celebrates the unique contributions of women to the development of societies across the world.

March 9 | U.S. Consulate General, Lagos Girls' Quiz Contest

EducationUSA Lagos organized a quiz competition to mark Women's History Month. The theme for this year's program was **Bold For Change**. The competition featured two seniors each from four all-girls high schools: Louisville Girls High School, Lagoon Secondary School, Vivian Fowler Memorial College, and Queen's College all in Lagos. Two EducationUSA Lagos members also represented the Center.

The Consul General, John Bray, gave welcoming remarks in which he acknowledged all the participating schools. He said the U.S. government is firmly committed to upholding gender equality and fighting for women's rights. After espousing the merits of an education, he encouraged the girls to use their power to be "bold for change." The team of EducationUSA members won the competition.



March 17 | Rosa Parks Center
Movie Screening: Ruby Bridges

The movie is the true story of Ruby Bridges, the first black student to attend integrated schools in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1960.



March 20 | Ekiti Hall, U.S. Embassy, Abuja
Women in the Workplace

The Public Affairs Section hosted a gathering of nearly 100 female professionals to discuss the most significant challenges facing women in the workplace and strategies for breaking through barriers to success. An Embassy social media survey identified gender discrimination in leadership roles as the biggest challenge. The panel included successful Nigerian women in top management in both the public and private sectors, who shared their stories of how they broke through the glass ceiling.



March 21 | Zuba, Abuja
Panel Discussion: Barriers Facing Women in Higher Education

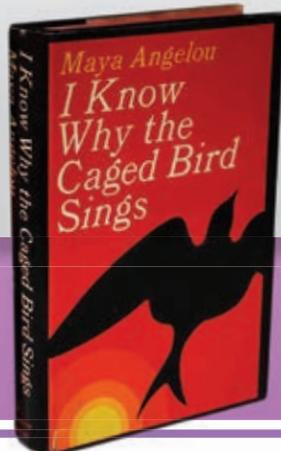
The Public Affairs Section hosted a session with 120 students of the Federal Capital Territory College of Education, Zuba to discuss sexual harassment, an issue nearly 60% of survey respondents described as the biggest challenge facing women in higher education in Nigeria. Prior to the discussion, students narrowly defined sexual harassment as rape. A first tour officer at the Embassy and law school graduate emphasized sexual harassment includes verbal and non-verbal unwanted sexual advances. The Nigerian member of the panel also shared information about resources available to victims of sexual harassment.

March 22 | Ekiti Hall, U.S. Embassy, Abuja
Empowering Women through LLM Opportunities

EducationUSA Abuja partnered with Pepperdine University to host an interactive webinar for female lawyers and legal practitioners on LLM opportunities in the United States. Participants included women from the Nigerian Law School, International Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA), and Global Association of Female Attorneys (GAFA).

March 23 | Rosa Parks Center
Book Review: I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

EducationUSA Abuja Book Club met to discuss "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" by Maya Angelou, in commemoration of Women's History Month. Students discussed race, black images of motherhood, the quest for identity, and the importance of family.



March 28 | Genesis Cinemas, Abuja
U.S. Promotes Participation of Girls in S.T.E.M.

The Public Affairs Section screened an American Film Showcase documentary—Code Girl—for a group of 120 high school students from six public and private schools in Abuja. The movie featured the story of five Nigerian girls—Team Charis—whose app, Discardious, designed to tackle the problem of waste management in Nigeria, won the 2015 Technovation Challenge in San Francisco. Ambassador Symington reiterated the commitment of the US Government in increasing the participation of Nigerian youths, particularly women and girls, in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).



Consul General, John Bray, presents the trophy to Team EducationUSA

STRENGTHENING OUR BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP

By Sani Mohammed

W. Stuart Symington, the United States Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Nigeria, presented his credentials to President Buhari on December 1, 2016. A career diplomat, Symington was formerly Ambassador to Rwanda and Ambassador to Djibouti. Recently, he was Deputy Assistant Secretary for Central Africa and African Security Affairs and, before that, U.S. Special Representative for the Central African Republic.

In the short period of four months in Nigeria, Ambassador Symington has reached out to all levels of government and Nigerian society, strengthening the bonds of friendship between the two countries in his very unique style. He has traveled widely and consistently across the country's geopolitical zones—meeting, listening and talking with the Nigerian people about their dreams and aspirations.

The Working Level Meeting of the United States-Nigeria Bi-National Commission held in December 2016 reaffirmed the depth of cooperation between the two countries. At that forum, Ambassador Symington said, “we agree with Nigeria on the priorities of the Buhari Administration. We are focused on the need to defeat the Boko Haram insurgency, the fight against corruption, and the importance of successfully diversifying the Nigerian economy. The

United States Government supports progress on all of these priorities, with a strong bi-partisan consensus that has been sustained over many Administrations. We will continue to advance this effort, working with Nigerians of all walks of life, in all parts of the country. We will do so because Nigeria’s success and prosperity matters to its people, to the Continent, and to the United States and the rest of the World.”

Ambassador Symington has so far visited 18 states, including Lagos, Ogun, Kogi, Nasarawa, Ekiti, Anambra, Enugu, Benue, Bauchi, Delta, Plateau, Ebonyi, Akwa Ibom, Katsina, Kano, Kaduna, Rivers, and Edo. Wherever he speaks, he reminds the audience that, “What really matters is for you to believe in yourselves as Nigerians and work together as a team to make your country great. The United States is not here to dictate to you, but to partner with you in several

mutually beneficial areas, including security cooperation, governance and democracy, as well as economic growth and development.”

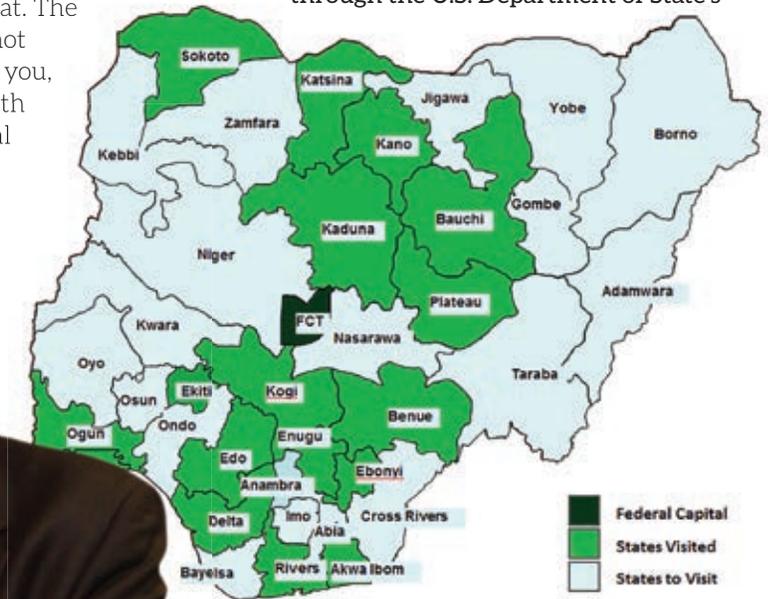
He has also interacted extensively with civil society, non-governmental organizations, private sector leaders, and students. At these meetings, the Ambassador has inspired Nigerians with President Kennedy’s iconic quote “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.” He encourages Nigerians, young and old, men and women, “to be hopeful, and to do great things.”

Other quotes from the Ambassador’s remarks at different engagements are equally instructive and inspiring:

At the Screening of “Code Girl”, an American Film Showcase documentary which featured Team Charis, the Nigerian winners of the 2015 Technovation Challenge.

“The Nigerian team’s achievement at Technovation is a clear example of what young Nigerians can accomplish with proper mentoring, determination and team spirit.”

At the Justice and Security Dialogue in Plateau State--a project funded through the U.S. Department of State’s



As of March 2017, Ambassador Symington has visited 18 states

Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) and implemented by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP).

“Peace is a path that has to be traveled constantly and maintained constantly, and used constantly for the good of the people... it’s a joy for me to see people who are not just dedicated to talking about reconciliation, but to see people who are traveling the road to make it possible, to make it last.”

Remarks at launch of solar energy

partnership between Lumos and MTN-- project supported by Power Africa

“This very simple solution in a clinic means the difference between life and death, in the home it means the difference between learning and literally having the lamp of learning go out for the night, and in a store, it means the difference between being able to pay your bills the next day, or having to do something else”

At a grant signing ceremony for preservation of Nigeria’s cultural heritage--through the U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation

“I don’t think I’ve had a single conversation in which people haven’t said, ‘I love the people of Nigeria,’ and when I asked what is it about the people of Nigeria that you love, literally every person that I spoke to said, ‘I love our cultural diversity.’”

At World AIDS Day 2016

“We can spend tens of billions of dollars around the world and in Nigeria, but if you don’t strengthen your own health system at home and in the office and around the country, if you don’t invest your lives and your love, who else will do it for you? No one can do it for you”

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY MATTERS

By Susan Dauda

May 3 is celebrated as World Press Freedom Day every year. It started with the proclamation by the U.N. General Assembly in 1993 following a recommendation adopted at the 26th session of UNESCO’s General conference in 1991. However, it came as a response to a call by African journalists in 1991 when the Windhoek Declaration was produced. This was a declaration of free press principles put together at a UNESCO seminar in Windhoek, Namibia on promoting an independent and plural press not only in Africa but worldwide.

World Press Freedom Day is an occasion to focus on the importance of press freedom, evaluate its status worldwide, defend the media against attacks, and honor those who have lost their lives in the course of their work. This is important as the work of journalists around the world can be difficult and sometimes dangerous. They face harassment, imprisonment and assaults with some even losing their lives. Reporters without Borders

state that global and regional indicators show that “there has been a deep and disturbing decline in respect for media freedom throughout the world.” Journalists also face “unprecedented threats” according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. The organization noted that these threats lead to the suppression of public interest news which ultimately has impact on all other freedoms.

Freedom of the press remains critical and as article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

A free press is also a core value of the United States. U.S. founding father Thomas Jefferson said, “Our liberty cannot be guarded but by the freedom of the press, nor that be limited without danger of losing it.” Jefferson also added, “[W]ere it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.” The U.S. thus continuously works to advance media freedom around the world through bilateral engagement, public diplomacy, and multilateral diplomacy. This is because a diverse

and independent press is crucial to holding governments accountable and sustaining democracy around the world.

An independent media ensures that people are informed about issues that are important and have direct impact on them. In addition they are able to air their opinions on policies and actions of government. Information flow between the government and the people is most effective where all feel free and safe to express their views.

An independent media helps to promote transparency by exposing corruption thus enabling citizens to hold government at all levels accountable. UNESCO notes that where press freedom is low there tends to be high corruption rates. Thus, access to government information, especially through freedom of information laws, is key and should be guaranteed in law and in practice.

Every year, the U.S. Mission to Nigeria engages in various activities to celebrate press freedom and high level Mission officials including the Ambassador take part in these activities to underscore this critical component of a vibrant democratic environment. UNESCO has announced “Critical Minds for Critical Times: Media’s role in advancing peaceful, just and inclusive societies” as this year’s theme which will focus on the issue of journalist safety.

THE RISE OF THE BLACK (NIGERIAN) WOMAN

by Malate-Ann Atajiri

The black woman is always interesting, sometimes strange, occasionally exciting, never boring. Whether Nigerian or American she has undergone particular struggles that neither black men nor Caucasian women have faced. She exists at the delicate intersection of two major societal issues, race and gender. When we observe Black History Month and Women's History Month, the experience of the black woman embodies both these themes. As a black woman who grew up in Nigeria, studied in the United States and is back home now, I have a particular perspective on the differences, shared struggles, challenges and aspirations of black women in Nigeria and America. Whether in their homes or in the



Attendees pay rapt attention during the Women's History Month event at the U.S. Embassy Abuja on March 20, 2017

public space, the issues and problems facing black women are more complex than those confronting most other groups.

As one example, the patriarchal nature of Nigerian culture is one of the causes of disempowerment of Nigerian women, in combination with cultural and religious beliefs that infringe on women's rights. The hashtag #BeingFemaleInNigeria has been used online by both women and men to debate gender identity, and illustrates how women face sexism in their workplace, public places and even in their homes. At home, Nigerian women are not considered equal partners when making decisions, even if they are expected to make substantial financial contributions to the household.

Married or unmarried, the Nigerian woman faces a complex set of challenges. Challenges facing the girl-child in Nigeria include gender discrimination, female mutilation, early marriage, lack of education, and sexual abuse. Although black women in the U.S. do not face exactly the same challenges, African-American women also confront a unique set of issues. Black women make up eight percent of the U.S. population, but 22 percent of homicides that result from domestic violence happen to black women making it one of the leading causes of death for black women ages 15 to 35.

The Catalyst- a nonprofit organization that promotes inclusive workplaces for women found that black women in the workplace face barriers and often experience a "double outsider" status, unlike white women or African-American men, who share gender or race in common with their colleagues or bosses. In the U.S., when black women decided to go into business on their own to escape the discrimination they

encounter in the workplace, they are denied access to small loans and federal contracts. A 2013 report from the Small Business Administration found that even when the type of business, business structure, and credit score were the same, women- and minority-owned businesses were less likely to get approved for loans. In Nigeria, women are often unable to obtain small business loans and are financially dependent on their husbands or fathers. The lack of financial independence puts women at a greater risk of falling into poverty due to their limited economic opportunities.

Behind many of the most important battles for racial and gender equality in the United States and Nigeria— from the civil rights movement to women's rights— black women played important roles but very few have been recognized.

The Civil Rights Movement primarily focused on the oppression of black men. Many are familiar with the name and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, but few are acquainted with women such as Dorothy Irene Height or Ida Wells or even Septima Clark who also played important roles in the



Acting Auditor-General of the Federation, Florence Anyanwu, speaks at the U.S. Embassy Abuja during the Women's History Month event on March 20, 2017

Movement. Even within the campaign for women's rights, black women have had to take a back seat. In Nigeria, women such as Hajiya Gambo Sawaba and Margaret Ekpo played leading roles in women's liberation and were pioneering politicians of the First Republic. However, their legacy is not as celebrated as their male colleagues.

Black women are underrepresented in politics within both the United States and Nigeria. Despite their large representation in the U.S. voting electorate, black women remain underrepresented in elective office

and the judiciary for example only 2 black women have ever been elected to the U.S. Senate. In the Nigerian political scene, particularly at state and federal levels, women are mostly invisible. Socio-economic and systemic constraints combine to limit women's participation in politics. In Nigeria as in the U.S., women's political participation has improved, but much still needs to be done. Recently, the Nigerian Senate voted down legislation—the Gender Parity and Prohibition of Violence Against Women bill—that aimed to give women equal rights in marriage, education, and employment.

Despite these challenges, black women globally are making significant strides. The increased participation of women in the formal education system has been one of the most powerful agencies of change. Closing the gender gap in education has led to increased gender equality, which has not only benefited women, but has resulted in better opportunities for all people. Women with an education are also more involved in the family and are more active in public life. Whether in business, politics, civic activism, media or sports black female leaders and pioneers abound.

A NICHE SCHOOL MIGHT BE THE BEST FIT

by Malate-Ann Atajiri

With almost 5000 accredited colleges and universities in the U.S., finding the right college can seem like a herculean task. College applicants searching for the best fit often take factors such as the desired program, cost, and location into consideration. The right school for an individual requires a lot of research; not only research into the colleges and universities, but also about one's self.

After asking all the general questions, some might still find it difficult to settle on a school. Students interested in a unique and atypical college experience should consider niche schools. The U.S. has a variety of institutions such as co-educational vs. single-sex colleges/universities; traditional vs. progressive; specialized schools vs. liberal arts colleges. This article focuses on two types of niche schools: Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Women's Colleges.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities often called HBCUs, are institutions of higher education originally set up with the intention of serving the African-American

community, though they accept students of all races. With over 100 HBCUs including public and private institutions, medical and law schools, HBCUs have a rich legacy of matriculating Nigerian and African-American leaders. Prominent figures such as Martin Luther King (Morehouse College), Oprah Winfrey (Tennessee State University) and Nigeria's Nnamdi Azikwe (Lincoln University in Pennsylvania) attended HBCUs.

A recent study by Gallup found that HBCU graduates are more likely to say that their colleges properly prepared them for life post-graduation than black graduates of non-HBCUs. The study also found that HBCU graduates had better support from mentors and professors. Graduates report having had classes and extracurricular activities that gave them an opportunity to explore African-American history and experiences. At HBCUs, students encounter people with

whom they share similar backgrounds and cultural experiences which might make adjusting to life in the U.S. easier for international students.

HBCUs also tend to be more affordable than typical colleges and universities. Statistics show that the average total cost of attendance at HBCUs was 26 percent lower than the average. In addition to the lower cost, HBCUs have a strong alumni network that provides support with internships and work placements. There are also many scholarship opportunities available that aim to make college education more affordable and accessible. HBCUs can be co-educational or single-sex such as Morehouse, a college for men and Spelman, a women's college.



Prominent figures such as MLK, Oprah Winfrey and Nigeria's Nnamdi Azikwe all attended HBCUs

Black Girl Magic (#BlackGirlMagic) is an online movement that celebrates the beauty, power and resilience of black women despite their adversities. Wherever we look, black women are doing amazing things, setting an example and paving the way for more women to follow. Examples of black women making magic happen in various fields abound. In business, Ursula Burns, the first black woman to lead a Fortune500 company (Xerox) and Nigeria's Folorunsho Alakija, a business tycoon and one of the richest and most powerful women in the world, serve as role models for women with a dream to conquer the male-dominated business world.

Media mogul, Oprah Winfrey and Mo Abudu, Africa's first woman to launch a Pan-African TV network, show us that there are no limits to what women can achieve. And of course, we have women like Serena Williams who has proved she is not only one of the best female tennis players but also one of the greatest athletes of all time. Notably the leaders of some the biggest recent movements in the U.S. and Nigeria, #BlackLivesMatter and #BringBackOurGirls, have been black women.

Renowned Nigerian Author Chimamanda Adichie in her essay, *We Should All Be Feminists*, argues that "a

feminist is a man or a woman who says, yes, there's a problem with gender as it is today and we must fix it, we must do better. All of us, women and men, must do better." A growing school of thought, black feminism, argues that sexism, class oppression, gender identity and racism are inextricably bound together. By understanding the issues black women face at the intersection of race and gender, all of us, men and women must work together to alleviate the current challenges confronting black women. Black women are a vital component of the future success of any country.

CR

Women's colleges were founded because women were traditionally excluded from the higher education system. Although Harvard University opened in 1636, the first college to admit women did not do so for another 200 years. Women and men did not start attending college in equal numbers until the 1970s. According to research conducted by the Women College Coalition, women's colleges excel at educating young women, and graduates of women's colleges achieve higher rates of success than their female counterparts from coed institutions.

Women's colleges have a higher percentage of majors in economics, math and life science than women at co-educational colleges. Although a majority of women colleges are private liberal arts schools, they have a proven track record of preparing female students for traditionally

male disciplines in math and sciences in which they are typically underrepresented.

Women's colleges typically have lower enrollment numbers and smaller class sizes, which gives students the opportunity to fully engage in an environment that is conducive for them to thrive. Women's college graduates are said to be more successful in their careers. According to the Women's College Coalition, graduates of women's colleges are more likely to become leaders in traditionally male fields. Notable alums of women's colleges include Hilary Clinton (Wellesley), Katharine Hepburn (Bryn Mawr), Nancy Pelosi (Trinity College), Pakistan's first (and to date only) female Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto (Radcliffe College), and Gloria Steinem (Smith College) among others. Women's colleges also have strong alumni networks and many scholarship opportunities that make college education more affordable.

Despite the advantages of HBCUs and women's colleges, some misconceptions exist about these institutions. Some people question their relevance in a post-racial and more gender equal society.

Despite these misconceptions, the numerous benefits of these institutions cannot be overlooked. HBCUs and women's colleges might not be the best fit for everyone, but they add to the diversity of the U.S. higher education system. When researching and selecting the best fit for you, it is important to be open and explore all of your options including HBCUs and single-sex colleges, rather than ruling them out completely.

The EducationUSA Advising Centers in Abuja and Lagos provide quality, accurate, and unbiased information about all accredited U.S. higher education institutions for persons wishing to study in the United States. For more information about EducationUSA and study opportunities in the United States, please visit <http://www.educationusa.state.gov>

Abuja

Email: AbujaEducationUSA@state.gov
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/EducationUSA.Abuja>

Lagos

Email: LagosEducationUSA@state.gov
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/EducationUSALagos>



Notable alumna of women's colleges include Hilary Clinton and Nancy Pelosi





Exchange Alumni leaders during the conference in Abuja

Exchange Alumni Leaders Strategize

By Grace Lamon

high impact projects in their communities.

U.S. Ambassador W. Stuart Symington opened the workshop encouraging alumni with the words, "Grassroots leadership is critical in changing a society for better." He challenged alumni to use their leadership skills and positions to advocate for peace, good governance, and economic growth. He emphasized that the United States would continue to partner with Nigerians committed to making institutions work better for the people they serve.

participant remarked, "This workshop reawakened me not only to do more for my community, but to do more with others."

Alumni also shared inspiring stories of their ongoing projects. The Abuja alumni chapter detailed its monthly mentoring program and how it engages young people on topics such as inclusive education, the rule of law, and the rights of the disabled. At the end of the workshop, the alumni were eager to connect with counterparts from their regions, expand existing projects, and explore new ideas for sustainable development in local communities.

In March 1, alumni leaders from several U.S. exchange programs participated in a strategic planning workshop organized by the Public Affairs Section of U.S. Embassy Abuja.

Representing 27 states, alumni developed skills to design collaborative,

Highlights of the workshop included a discussion on grant proposal writing and an exchange of information about funding opportunities offered through Mission Nigeria and the International Exchange Alumni (IEA) website. The activities sharpened alumni leadership and project management skills and exposed them to practical tips for building partnerships across public and private sectors. As one

Alumni of the following programs participated in the workshop: the Fulbright Program, Hubert Humphrey Program, Study in the U.S. Institute (SUSI), International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), Youth Exchange and Study (YES), Mandela Washington Fellowship Program, Women in Technology (TechWomen), and Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Regional Leadership Center.

#SMARTGIRLS SMARTNATION

By Diran Adegoke

To commemorate International Women's Day 2017, Auxano Foundation for Empowerment and Development, in collaboration with the American Corner Abuja organized an event at Government Girls Secondary School, Dutse (GGSSD). The event, which was organized to promote self-development among young girls, featured a short film show, debate competitions, and presentations by representatives of UNICEF, UNODC, and NAPTIP. The students were also introduced to YALI Learns resources as a tool of self-development.

Awards were presented to the Principal Mrs. B. R. Nasir, and a long serving teacher in the school – Mr. Nnok Yohanna, for their commitment to raising a generation of smart girls. Academic excellence awards were also presented to Oji Ugoji Amarachi (SS1), Ibitolu Bolade (SS2), and Alayanyi



Lawrenta Igoh takes a selfie as the AFED Team mentors the students of GGSSD on International Day for Women



GGSSD debaters making cases on the topic "Beauty, Not Brains, Makes A Smart Woman"

Bostic (SS3) for their outstanding performance in the last academic year.

The full day of events was crowned with the unveiling of a signpost at the entrance of the school with the inscription "Investing in the girl child is the surest way to a sustainable economy" to serve as a constant reminder of the value of girl child education to parents, visitors and the school's external community.

Auxano Foundation for Empowerment and Development is run by Lawrenta Igoh – a member of the YALI Network in Abuja. The YALI Network is a State Department-sponsored platform supporting young Africans to learn, share ideas, and collaborate on projects. The YALI Network offers access to free online courses on topics ranging from climate change to entrepreneurship to human rights and provides opportunities to attend special events or organize knowledge-sharing workshops such as YALI Learns.

To sign up, visit www.yali.state.gov



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS!

Fulbright African Research Scholar Program

The Fulbright African Research Scholar Program awards three to nine-month research grants to select university faculty professionals to conduct research in any academic discipline at a U.S. academic or research institution.

Fulbright Foreign Student Program

The Fulbright Foreign Student Program welcomes young and exceptionally promising faculty members in the second year of their doctoral program, who wish to conduct three to nine months of their doctoral research in the United States.

The Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program

The Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program is a Fulbright program that brings accomplished young and mid-career professionals with demonstrated leadership potential to the United States for a year of non-degree graduate-level study, leadership development, and substantive professional collaboration with U.S. counterparts.

To learn more about these programs and how you can apply, please visit: <https://ng.usembassy.gov/education-culture/exchange-programs/>

Deadline - June 1, 2017

FOOTBALL

An Alternative for Kano Youth

By Aisha Shehu

U.S. Embassy Abuja partnered with Inclusive Community Education and Development Association (ICEADA) on a football diplomacy initiative to counter violent extremism in northern Nigeria. The project, Youth for Healthy Communities Initiative (Y4HCI), targets young people in 16 communities of Kano State that are vulnerable due to a history of communal conflicts and juvenile delinquency. Y4HCI seeks to provide a safe environment that offers coaching on self-development in leadership, civic activism and peacebuilding, while channeling youthful energy into healthy exercise. Football, being popular in Nigeria, was chosen as the driving vehicle for this form of engagement.

As part of its awareness campaign, Y4HCI reached out to traditional and

religious leaders to obtain their buy-in for the initiative. Various sensitization and advocacy activities were conducted to support the notion that sports is more than just a game and instead provides a safe means for youth development by instilling the qualities of patience, tolerance, team work, and discipline.

The Emir of Madobi community supported the project enthusiastically and was personally engaged in the sensitization of parents and other traditional leaders. In each of the communities, 22 boys from age 15 to 35 formed a team named after their community, and were guided by 5 officials from their communities.

Football practice routines include an hour of leadership and vocational skills development. The project provides branded materials to promote team spirit and has developed a tailored

guide for the self-development sessions. The aim is to not only train active youth in the community, but also embed in them skills that will be beneficial for their participation as self-reliant and patriotic citizens.

Women and girls in the community are encouraged to listen and participate in the sessions. Female businesses also provide refreshments for the training sessions. Women receive branded hijabs for their involvement and receive free mentorship from urban female entrepreneurs on packaging, marketing, branding and distribution of their products.

This initiative has proven to provide a means for grass roots communities to share best practices of using sports to encourage healthy exercise, tolerance, female inclusion, and community cohesion.





Say “No!” To Touts

By Julia Smart

Got a cousin who “knows” how to get a visa to the United States? Did a friend recommend a visa agent “guaranteed” to make your application successful? We see applicants every day who have been led astray by well-meaning advice. Your friends, family, and colleagues may be trying to help you, but if you’re turning to outside information, you may be getting the wrong “facts” and damaging your application prospects.

Thankfully, you can ask us your questions directly on Nairaland. Our thread is labeled, “U.S. Non-immigrant Visas: We’re Listening”. AbujaNIV and LagosNIV answer your queries directly so you don’t have to use informal channels to get the “real deal”. We also have a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section on the Embassy website.

We don’t coach people on surefire ways to get a visa. However, here’s

one important piece of advice that can make or break all your future visa applications: tell the truth in your online application and during your interview.

**...YOU CAN ASK US
YOUR QUESTIONS
DIRECTLY ON
NAIRALAND.**

If you are entirely honest during the visa application process but are still found ineligible, you can always apply again and you may qualify in the future. There is no shame in this.

Thousands of people have waited for their circumstances to improve before reapplying and have been approved down the road.

On the other hand, if you lie or misrepresent yourself on your application or in your interview, you may be found permanently ineligible from receiving a visa to the United States. What’s more, you will have damaged your integrity and the value of your word.

One more thing: there are these pesky rumors that the United States doesn’t issue visas to applicants with “virgin” passports (that is, no prior travel stamps or visas). This is false! Hundreds of first-time travelers are issued visas each day! Fake visas, however, can lead not only to a refusal, but perhaps a travel ban, and potentially even a police arrest. It’s just not worth it.

Say no to touts, say yes to Nairaland!

Making A Difference



Under 5 child receives LLIN at distribution point in PHC Moniya, Akinyele LGA, Oyo State

Nigeria has the highest burden of malaria globally. It is transmitted throughout the country, with 97 percent of the population at risk. The disease accounts for 60 percent of outpatient visits and 30 percent of hospitalizations. Malaria is also a leading cause of illness and mortality in children under five. Through the U.S President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), along with its local partners, works to decrease the number of malaria-related deaths in pregnant women and children by increasing availability, access and use of insecticide-treated bed nets to prevent malaria infection. Additionally, USAID works to ensure all Nigerians test for malaria before treatment and have access to safe, affordable and reliable malaria treatment medications.

Between 2010 and 2015, malaria interventions through PMI and other malaria stakeholders resulted in a 36 percent reduction in malaria parasites found in the blood of children under age five, per the 2015 Malaria Indicator Survey. Since 2014, PMI/Nigeria has distributed 22 million mosquito bed

nets, 14 million malaria rapid diagnostic test kits, over 48 million treatment courses for malaria, and eight million doses of medication to prevent malaria in pregnancy. In April, an additional 2.2 million bed nets will be distributed in Kogi state.

With an estimated 62 million malaria cases in Nigeria annually, the disease places a heavy burden both on individual families and national healthcare systems. It adversely affects worker productivity, drains household incomes, hinders educational development, and perpetuates poverty. Because most malaria transmission occurs in rural areas, the greatest burden of the disease usually falls on families who cannot afford proper health care. This is exacerbated by the prevalence of stolen or counterfeit drugs circulating in Nigeria.

To help lessen this burden, USAID and partner organizations promote access to affordable, quality medicines and ensure people have a mechanism to report counterfeit drugs. Since 2011, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has subsidized Artemisinin- based combination treatment (ACT), the

first-line medication to treat malaria. The result is increased availability, affordability and usage of ACTs in Nigeria. Subsidized ACTs are easily identified by the green leaf logo on the packaging, which ensure quality and affordability.

Not only is affordability of malaria treatment a concern, but the world health community continues to warn that the abundance of fake malaria medicines threatens the progress being made to control the malaria. Stolen malaria medicines are often transported or stored in sub-optimal conditions leading to decay, putting those who take them at risk. Not only are there a number of health risks but the production and importation of counterfeit medicines takes money away from legitimate businesses and discourages growth in Nigeria's pharmaceutical industry.

U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria, W. Stuart Symington, said, "Despite so many gains in malaria prevention and treatment, the widespread prevalence of counterfeit, substandard medicines is contributing to the alarmingly high number of malaria deaths and costs of health care in Nigeria."

To combat these harmful fake and substandard drugs, the United States government, through the Office of Inspector General and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), relaunched the "Make a Difference" (MAD) hotline and reward program in October 2016. The program offers rewards for verified information concerning the illegal distribution of stolen and falsified anti-malaria medication in Nigeria.

The hotline has a local telephone number, operates 24 hours a day and has English-speaking operators. Any person with knowledge of theft of counterfeiting of anti-malaria drugs is urged to call the hotline or email madmalariahotline@usaid.gov. Information is treated in confidence and people who file reports are protected to the fullest extent of the law.

REPORT & GET REWARDED!

When you suspect anyone selling stolen or
fake malaria medicines



Call Make a Difference (MAD) Hotline
0809 993 7319

Or email madmalariahotline@usaid.gov

You stand a chance to receive a cash reward

Rewards pertain to US Government anti-malarial commodities only

ALL INFORMATION WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

There are many fake and substandard malaria medicines in Nigeria

REMEMBER: If a product states "Not for Sale" and it is being sold, then it was stolen.
Illegitimate batch numbers, expiration and manufacturing dates shows that the medicine is fake.

This is a United States Agency for International Development, Office of Inspector General

Make A Difference Malaria Campaign



We have a new website
and a new domain name!



<http://ng.usembassy.gov>

The modernized website of the
United State Embassy and Consulate in Nigeria
is more dynamic and user friendly.
Update your bookmarks.

Join our online community

Our social media channels present you the fastest means to reach us
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