

# CROSSROADS

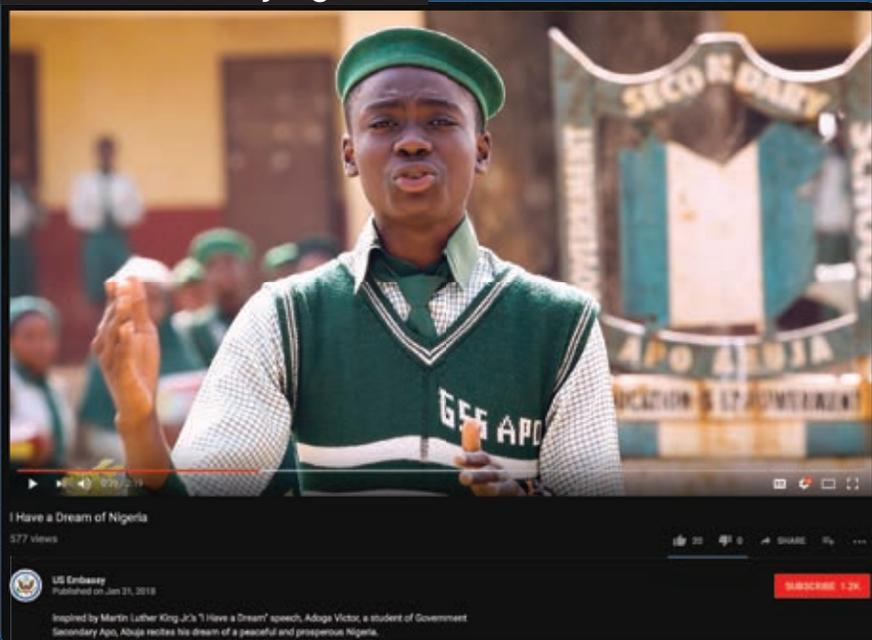


**THE  
INDISPUTABLE  
POWER OF  
FILM**

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*W. Stuart Symington*  
U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria

On behalf of all of my colleagues at the U.S. Mission in Nigeria, Welcome to the latest edition of Crossroads!

This issue is special for two reasons. First, it celebrates the partnership between creative Nigerians and Americans by describing some of

the ways we are working together. At the same time, it shows the power of people creating Intellectual Property to enrich and transform our World.

When ideas become intellectual property, they literally create new fields from dreams and grow enterprises that no walls can contain, creating new jobs out of imagination and new opportunities at the speed of inspiration. It has long been said, "buy land, they are not making any more of it." The creators of intellectual property build new worlds from ideas. Painters and poets, artists and avatars lead us every day down paths they have just, as Walt Disney said, "imagined."

I have now visited all 36 of Nigeria's states and know first hand the wealth of your nation and the "WOW factor" of your natural beauty: your shores and rivers, mountains and plains, birds and animals, forests and fields. In every state, I have met Nigerians who are living proof that Nigeria's greatest resource is the Nigerian people, not oil or gas, soil or minerals, water or sunlight. I saw everywhere proof of

Nigerian's resilience, diversity, warmth, imagination, and indomitable spirit. I heard Nigerians, from one end of the country to the other, describe those very traits as what they love about Nigeria. Those ideas, that spirit is a powerful base for sustained Nigerian success as a united nation and as a leader as a global leader in the world of ideas.

You create opportunities at the speed of hope with ideas that become industries and growth that outpaces need and fear. My own fervent wish is that this year, many of you will find new ways to turn ideas into enterprise and that intellectual property will help create fields large enough for every Nigerian to find a place to prosper. We hope, too, as you approach the 2019 election, that - in the world of electoral ideas - the pre-election speech, the partisan platforms, and the electoral process itself - those who seek to earn your vote will always show the utmost respect for Nigeria's greatest asset, the Nigerian people.

**W. Stuart Symington**

## CROSSROADS

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Vol. 24 No. 2

February 12-27 | Abuja  
**EDUSA School Readings**

In the month of February, as part of the activities commemorating this year's African American History Month, the Public Affairs Section of the U.S Embassy pioneered the book reading and donation series at Abuja public and private primary schools. Children's picture books based on three notable African Americans that shaped the course of history were read and donated to six primary schools within the FCT; the titles included **A Picture Book of Martin Luther King Jr.**; **A Picture Book of Rosa Parks** by David A. Adler, and **Preaching to the Chickens: The Story of Young John Lewis** by Jabari Asim. These readings exposed the pupils to events in the history of African Americans with emphasis on the civil rights movement for justice and equal rights for African-Americans.



Staff and pupils of New Capital School, Abuja after Ambassador Symington read to the kids

Six separate readings and donations anchored by American officers including the Ambassador and the Acting DCM were held between February 12-27 at the following schools:

- New Capital Nursery and Primary School, Asokoro
- Model Primary School, Asokoro
- LEA Primary School Utako
- Community Nursery & Primary School, Asokoro,
- Florence Ade Akodu International School Maitama, and
- Springsville School Garki

February 16 | IMAX cinemas, Lekki, Lagos  
**U.S. Consulate Hosts Black Panther Premiere**

In commemoration of Black History Month, the U.S. Consulate in Lagos hosted a private screening of the blockbuster movie Black Panther on 16 February, 2018 at the IMAX cinemas, Lekki, Lagos.

The premiere was greatly attended by many, including diplomats, actors and major producers in the Nigerian film industry. The movie showcased various African fabrics, cultures and costumes which portrayed Africa in a positive light.

Black Panther is an American superhero film produced by Marvel Studios and distributed by Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures.

February 16 | The Merit House, Abuja  
**"A Raisin in the Sun" Brings Rare Live Theater to Abuja**

The Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy celebrated Black History Month 2018 in partnership with the Department of Theatre and Performing Arts of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria, the largest university in sub-Saharan Africa. The event included a lecture series and a performance of Lorraine Hansberry's classic play for a 300-person public audience. In his opening remarks, the Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Aruna Amirthanayagam emphasized how Black History Month highlights the importance of American diversity as a source of the country's strength. The performance followed a series of round table discussions earlier in the week at the Ahmadu Bello and Bayero Universities in northern Nigeria on the theme: "Acknowledging our History: Memory, Culture, and the Black Race." Visiting Michigan State University film professors Jeffrey C. Wray and Tama Hamilton-Wray presented on how the African American experience had shaped contemporary American theater and film.



Dance performer Kaffy, visiting speaker Prof. Zizwe Poe, PAO Darcy Zotter, and a guest at the screening

February 28 | Embassy, Abuja  
**Abuja American Center Marks Black History Month**

On Wednesday, February 28, the American Center Abuja screened "Boycott" for an audience of over 50 people to conclude the 2018 Black History Month celebrations. The film **Boycott** was introduced by Information Officer Russell Brooks, who explained the significance of non-violent actions of African Americans in the U.S. civil rights movement. **Boycott** is the true story of Rosa Parks (played by Iris Little-Thomas) which resulted in the 1955 bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. Following the screening, there was an interactive session led by two distinguished alumni of the Hubert Humphrey Fellowship Exchange Program – Dr. Victor Fodeke and Dr. Lani Stephens. The interactive session was very participatory as the film truly resonated with the audience and marks a call to action for non-violent approach to issues among Nigerian youth.

February 28 | Silverbird cinemas, Jabi Lake Mall, Abuja

**U.S. Embassy Hosts Black Panther Premiere**



Deputy Chief of Mission David Young with guests before the screening in Abuja

Contributed by Katherine Suwa, Chibuike Ohieri, Sagir Ahmed and Olaoluwa Aworinde

February 27 - March 2 | Lagos

**Kristina Wong's Visits Lagos**

The U.S. Consulate Lagos hosted a renowned visiting American performance artist and comedian, Kristina Wong, from February 27 to March 4 as part of the Lagos Theatre Festival. She is notable for her works focusing on women and economic empowerment.

Wong conducted masterclasses for performing arts students, faculty, and theatrical directors at the University of Lagos, Lufodo Academy of Performing Arts, and Pencil and Film Television Institute (PEFTI) Film Institute. During her visit, she also performed her critically acclaimed Wong Street Journal show on March 2, which was hosted by United States Consul General, F. John Bray at Terra Kulture Arts and Cultural Centre, Lagos.



*Kristina Wong performing at Terra Kulture in Lagos*

March 18-23 | Lagos, Abuja

**Silicon Valley Women Tech Leaders Inspire Women & Girls in STEM Fields**

The U.S. Mission Nigeria hosted a 16-member delegation of senior women technology executives and professionals from Silicon Valley, California who visited Lagos and Abuja from March 18-23 to mentor young women and girls to spark their interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields. Nigeria and Egypt were selected this year to be part of the visiting country.

The delegations are part of the TechWomen program-an initiative of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural

Affairs, with support from the Institute of International Education, which empowers, connects and supports women leaders from Africa, Central and South Asia, and the Middle East in STEM through mentorship and exchange. They represented organizations as diverse as Twitter, LinkedIn, Netflix, Mozilla, Autodesk, WomenCollegeTech, Stanford Graduate School of Business, Juniper Networks, as well as Fairrer Samani Group, Northgate Environmental Management, Jessica Dickinson Goodman Consulting.

The U.S. Consulate Lagos hosted a series of events, the first of which was held at Lonadek Inc.- a world class and certified engineering and information technology consulting company focused on delivering value through STEM related activities. U.S. Consul General F. John Bray, speaking at the event, called for the inclusive participation of women in STEM to engage local talents for economic growth and sustainability in the country.

On the 22nd of March, the Embassy in Abuja in collaboration with Baze University hosted fifty secondary school girls in a series of interactive sessions. The girls were exposed to activities such as loom coding, motherboard design, and basic website development and how these tools could contribute to economic development while having a social impact. As part of the events, Techwomen Impact Day was hosted by Civic Innovation Lab and dubbed **Leading the Change: Women in STEM Making Impact**



*The TechWomen delegation being received at the Co-Creation Hub (CcHub), Lagos*

March 20 | U.S. Embassy, Abuja

**Northern Nigerian Senator Speaks to Women on Education as a Springboard**

EducationUSA Abuja organized a discussion with more than 90 young women and Senator Binta Masi Garba of northern Adamawa state, one of only six women in Nigeria's 109-member senate. Senator Garba encouraged the university students and recent graduates to aspire to positions of influence and create space for women in fields dominated by men. The activity formed part of the Mission's Women's History Month programming and opened participants' eyes to the Importance of a firm educational foundation and the need for barrier-breaking women leaders.



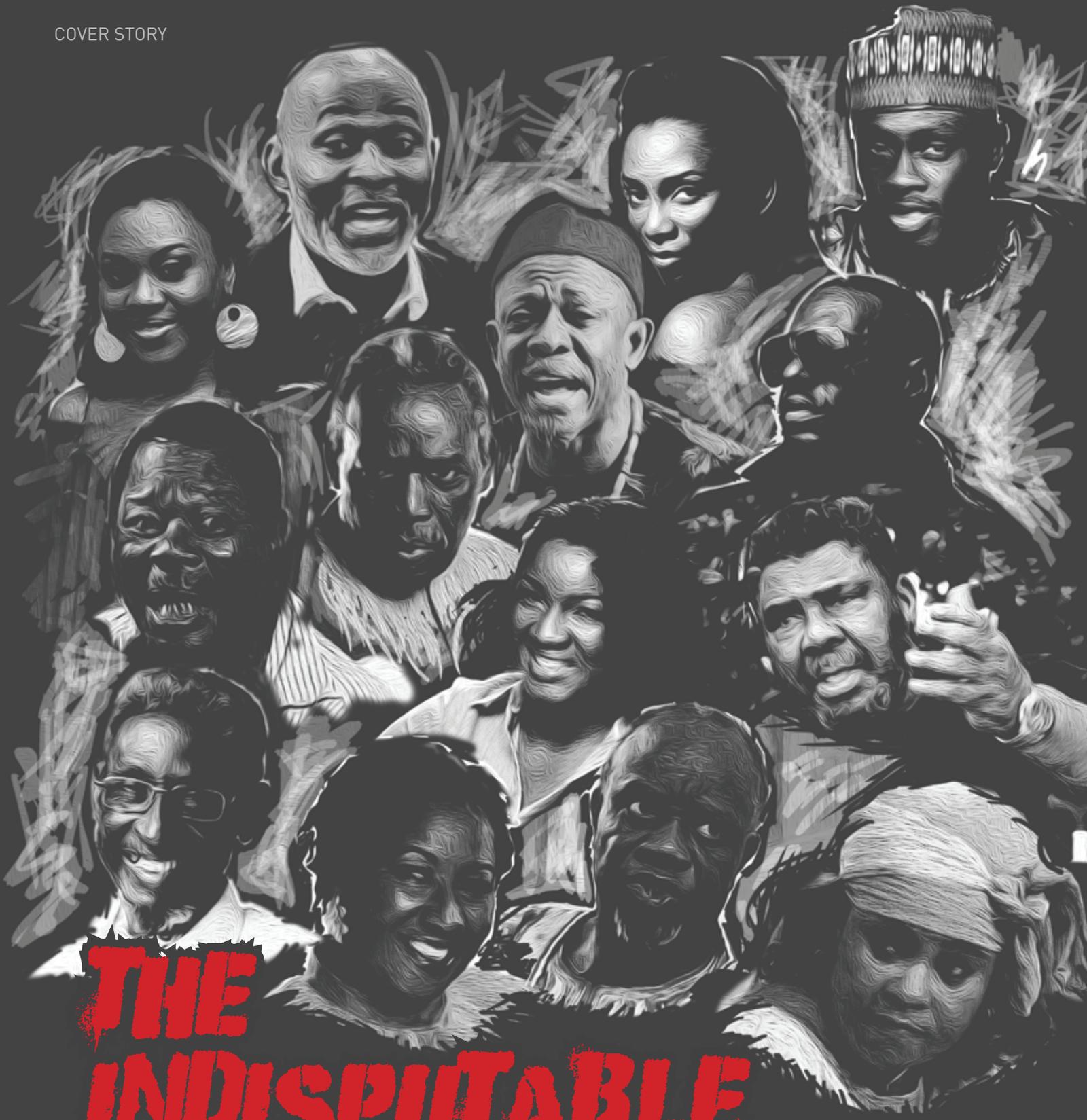
*Senator Binta Masi Garba speaks to the largely female audience*

where 100 participants inclusive of Techwomen alumni, the Techwomen delegation, Nigerian private sector, civil society, university, and government representatives discussed pragmatic applications of new technologies.

At a reception in his residence, Ambassador Stuart Symington encouraged 80 women who work in fields such as renewable energy, space technology, solar, and ICT to take challenges to use their skills in technology to solve social problems and contribute to economic growth. The visit inspired the STEM leaders of today and tomorrow through an exchange of experiences, challenges, and successes in a field where Nigerian women are severely underrepresented.

*Contributed by Chibuikwe Ohieri, Grace Lamon and Shade Adebayo*

COVER STORY



# THE INDISPUTABLE POWER OF FILM

words by Bella Ndubisi  
art by Ola Aworinde



**T**he Nigerian film industry (Nollywood) is recognized as the second largest in the world in terms of volume of production. A major employer of labor, Nollywood contributed 2.3% to Nigeria's GDP in 2016. While the industry has made tremendous progress over the years, challenges like financing, lack of infrastructure, piracy and copyright violations among others, continue to hinder the industry from competing globally in terms of profitability. The U.S. Mission to Nigeria in the last couple of years has supported Nigeria's vibrant film community through capacity building workshops. One of the vehicles it has used is the American Film Showcase (AFS). Now in its sixth year (and second year in Nigeria), the AFS, a partnership between the U.S. Department of State and the University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts (USC), is designed to bring award-winning contemporary American documentaries, independent fiction films, and documentary know-how to audiences around the world. Last year has been an exciting journey learning about Nigeria's film industry, forging collaborations through various interactions, and demonstrating the power of film as a catalyst for social change.

### **Hollywood Meets Nollywood**

In late 2017 and early 2018, U.S. Embassy Abuja invited three filmmakers to Nigeria to participate in a series of capacity building workshops and film screenings. Film producer Kathlyn Horan, Academy Award-winning documentary film editor Doug Blush, and television screenwriter and community organizer Angelina Burnett travelled to Nigeria in October, December, and March respectively hosting workshops, film screenings, and meeting with filmmakers in Abuja, Nasarawa, Jos, and Lagos.

### **Fall is for Film Festivals**

Four AFS documentary films featured in the 2017 Abuja International Film Festival in October. The four titles: **The IF project, Class Divide, Fastball, High School 9-1-1**, which cut across sports, education, and citizen engagement, captured the theme of the festival: **Film as a Tool for National Security and Patriotism**. U.S. independent filmmaker Kathlyn Horan also hosted a two-day masterclass workshop on commercial production and self-financing for nearly 200 filmmakers and film enthusiasts.

Similarly, the Embassy supported the 2017 African International Film Festival (AFRIFF) in Lagos. Veteran American lighting designer Christian Epps hosted a two-day masterclass workshop on lighting design for industry professionals. Four AFS documentary films: **She Started It, Class Divide** and **Dream, Girl** were screened at the festival, while a special screening of **The IF Project** was hosted by U.S. Consul General John Bray.

We also supported the Tamerri Festival, Abuja's most prominent music, arts, and cultural festival, held from November 30 - December 2, 2017. Following in the theme of the festival "Earth Made," the Embassy screened AFS short documentary film **Smoke That Travels** which explores a personal story of preservation and loss of culture as told by the Native American filmmaker Kayla Briët.

### **Capacity Building Masterclass Workshops**

Last year, we rekindled our relationship with the Nigerian Film Corporation, the regulatory body for filmmaking in Nigeria and through this renewed partnership we are committed to building the capacity of students at



L-R: Co-founder of The IF Project Kim Bogucki, Counselor for Public Affairs Aruna Amirthanayagam, president of the Abuja International Film Festival, Fidelis Duker, American filmmaker Kathlyn Horan and Mrs Temitope Duker



Deputy Chief of Mission David Young delivers remarks at the screening of *The IF Project* at the Abuja International Film Festival 2017



Oscar award winning film-maker Doug Blush (centre) with participants in the masterclass he facilitated in Lagos



L-R: Afie Braimoh, Operations Director of African International Film Festival (AFRIFF), filmmakers Damilola Sobowale, Joycee Awosika, Blessing Afiom, and Uche Jombo during a panel discussion at AFRIFF 2018



American television screenwriter Angelina Burnett speaking at a workshop hosted by Pencil Film and Television Institute (PEFTI), Lagos



Angelina Burnett with organisers and participants of the workshop



the National Film Institute (NFI). In December, the school hosted Oscar Award-winning filmmaker Doug Blush for a two-day masterclass workshop with film students. In March, NFI also hosted television screenwriter Angelina Burnett. Through the mission's partnerships with Nigerian counterparts, visiting U.S. filmmakers have had the pleasure of working with privately run film academies including Royal Arts Film Academy, Pencil and Film Television Institute, and the Lufodo Academy for Performing Arts. Students at Plateau State Polytechnic, Jos and Baze University, Abuja benefitted from workshops and discussions as well.

### Abuja Film Club

In December 2017, the Embassy partnered with The International Institute for Creative Development to launch the Abuja Film Club, a bi-weekly thematic film screening intended to spark discussion around

topical issues. This year, IICD has screened ten AFS documentary titles covering topics on civil society, gender, technology, and environmental protection. The film club will continue to host interactive meet-ups of cinema lovers.

### AFS Documentary Film Workshop

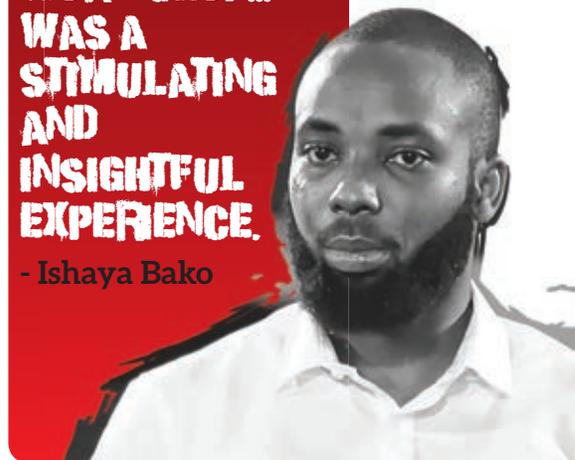
Last summer, U.S. Embassy Abuja nominated documentary filmmaker Ishaya Bako for the 10-day AFS documentary film workshop at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, California. Ishaya Bako had this to say about this experience.

"The AFS Documentary Workshop at the USC campus in the summer of 2017 was a stimulating and insightful experience. Being among 11 other filmmakers from across the world, taught by seasoned professionals in a city renowned for filmmaking was inspiring and challenging: inspiring to see how important and relevant film still is; challenging in making

sure I continue to make films that are poignant and push boundaries. Alan Baker and his team were warm,

**THE AFS  
DOCUMENTARY  
WORKSHOP...  
WAS A  
STIMULATING  
AND  
INSIGHTFUL  
EXPERIENCE.**

**- Ishaya Bako**



friendly and they made sure we made the most of the workshop and our stay in LA."

# National Parks National Treasures

by Katherine Katetzer-Hodson

The very first national park in the United States was Yellowstone National Park, found in the state of Wyoming. When President Ulysses S. Grant signed into law the Yellowstone National Park Protection Act, it established for the first time that a piece of land was “dedicated and set apart as a public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.” Since that time, over 57 additional parks have been preserved in the United States. The parks not only provide people access to recreation and experience nature, but also a place to protect the plant and animal life for future generations.

Nigeria’s own national and state park system plays a similar role across the country. There are eight national parks spread across Nigeria: the Chad Basin; Cross River, Gashaka Gumti, Kainji, Kamuku, Okomu, Old Oyo, and Yankari. Located in diverse geographic locales, they represent very different ecological systems but with each

playing a critical role in protecting both plant and wildlife. For example, Kainji national park and Yankari Game Reserve are the only two places in Nigeria where lions still roam free, though their numbers are dwindling.

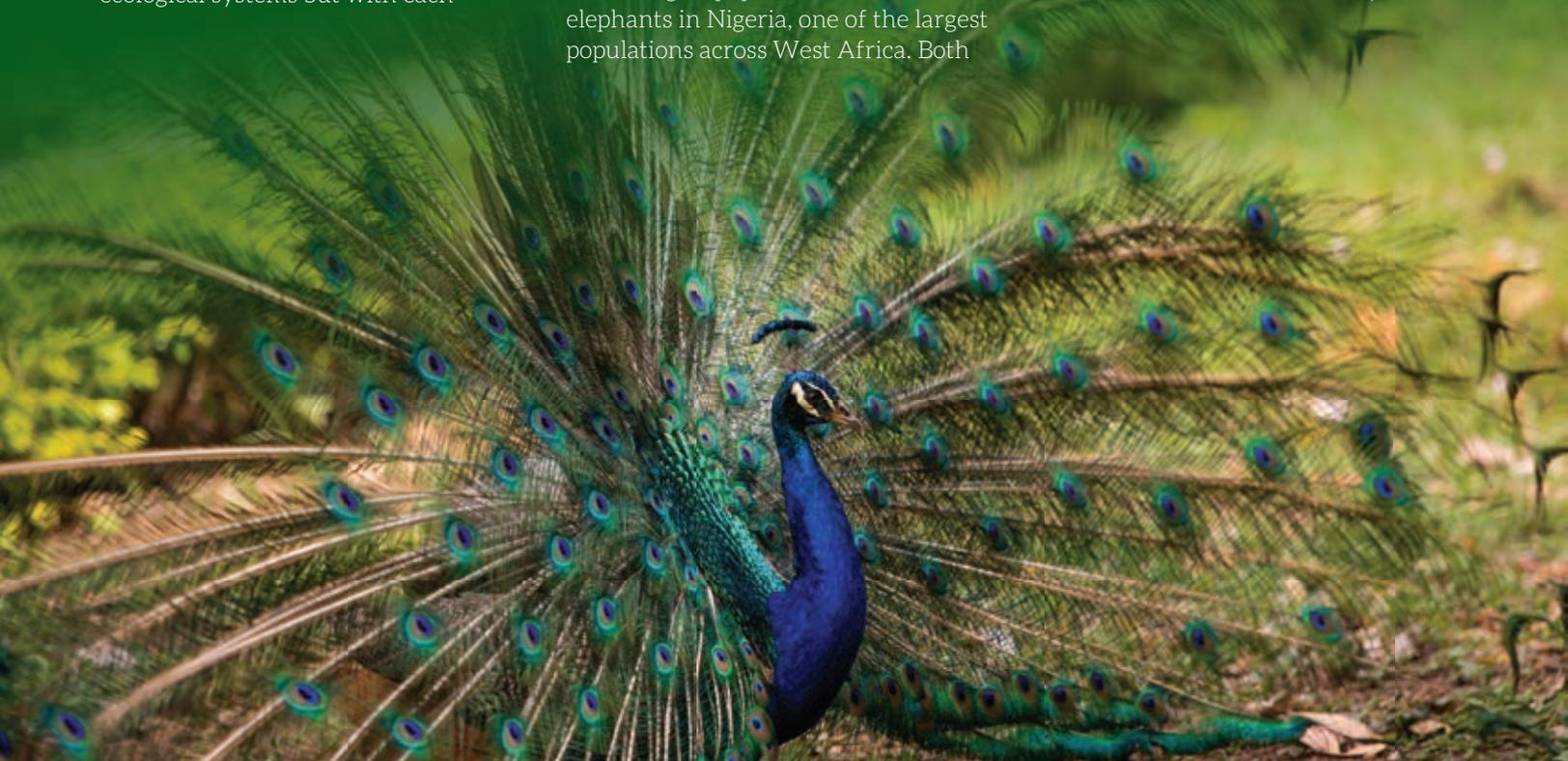
Gashaka Gumti is the largest national park in Nigeria and stretches across Adamawa and Taraba states. At 6402 square kilometers, the park is home to a number of endangered animals. What is unique about Gashaka Gumti is that it is composed of five different ecological zones, with everything from savannah to rainforest, and even includes Nigeria’s highest peak. The park is home to the largest population of the most endangered chimpanzee in the world. Known as the Elliot’s chimpanzee, there are perhaps only 1,000 of them living in the park.

Yankari Game Reserve is operated by the Bauchi state government and is home to a wide range of mammals and over 350 species of birds. It is also home to the largest population of African elephants in Nigeria, one of the largest populations across West Africa. Both

Yankari and Cross River national park are something of a hybrid, depending on both state support and community involvement. Between them, they are preserving the habitats of a host of animals, many endangered, including the Cross River gorilla.

Anywhere people and animals intersect; there is always a risk of confrontation. National parks are just a part of the solution to protecting wildlife across Nigeria. It also takes awareness. Many of these parks offer community resources and opportunities to learn more about the unique aspects of their wildlife and vegetation. In Abuja, the National Park Service also has a visitor center and museum dedicated to providing information on the parks and their diversity.

The national parks of Nigeria are as diverse as the regions they occupy, and they depend on everyone’s protection. Seek out more information and discover the treasure trove they hold.



# SPORTS SCHOLARSHIPS

AND THE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES THEY PRESENT

by Malate-Ann Atajiri

The United States remains one of the top destinations for students seeking a world-class education. One of the reasons many chose to study in the US is the availability of scholarships, however one often overlooked source of financial assistance is sports scholarships.

Many of us may know one or two talented individuals who are exceptional in one sport or the other. Schools award merit-based scholarships based on a student's accomplishments whether in academics, athletics, or arts. While some schools may consider financial need, with merit scholarships, rewarding talent is the primary goal.

Udoka Azubuike was born in Lagos Nigeria. His dad, who was a police officer, died when Udoka was only 10 years old

while his mum was a secondary school teacher. Udoka's basketball prowess caught the attention of Basketball without Borders (BWB), the NBA and FIBA's global basketball development and community outreach program. BWB stages basketball camps in 27 countries on all six continents. Through the program, Udoka got a scholarship to attend Potters House Christian Academy where he started playing organized basketball at the age of 13. Udoka excelled in the sport with ESPN ranking him 22nd overall for the class of 2016 for high school basketball. Udoka had his pick of schools but eventually selected the University of Kansas. Udoka's superb performance in the 2017-2018 season led the Kansas Jayhawks to the Final Four. Udoka was also ranked the player of the decade in college basketball at no. 1 out of 42,209 players. The future looks bright for Udoka, who recently expressed his interest to enter the NBA draft without an agent.

Recently, EducationUSA organized a program on student-athlete recruitment for aspiring student-athletes. Here are some useful tips for students interested in studying at a U.S. school on a sports scholarship:

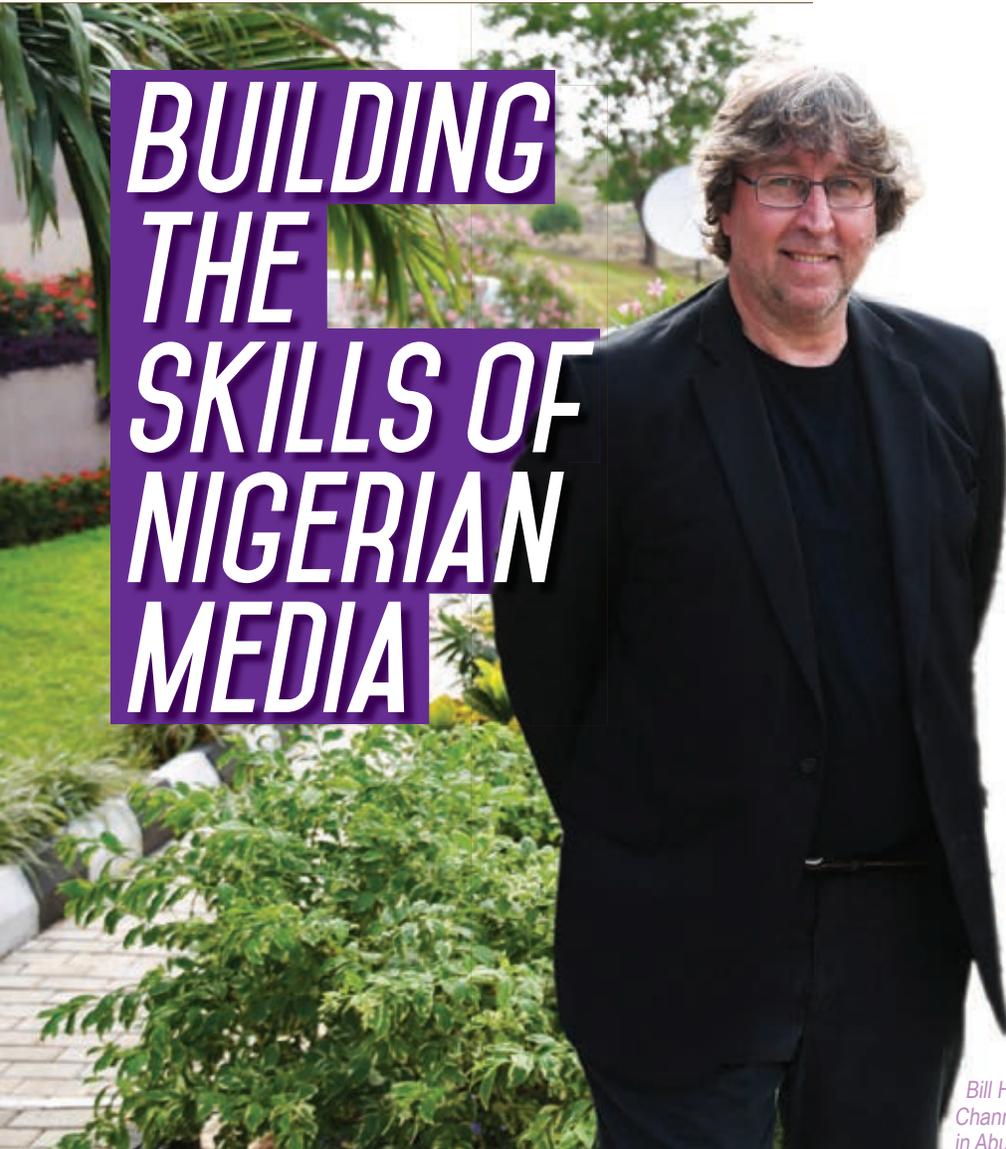
1. Research your options - You need to know at what level you want to compete? There are Division I, II, and III schools. Full athletic scholarships are common in Division I, partial scholarships in Division II, and no athletic scholarships for Division III.
2. Start early - It is important to begin early. Visit the NCAA website to register and get started.
3. Record everything - If the coaches cannot come to you, you have to find a way to get to them. Take advantage of technology. Record your games and have them edited to let viewers know which player to watch.
4. Don't neglect academics - The term "student-athlete" is intentional. People often forget that despite a person's fantastic talent, he/she still needs to meet the school's admission requirements. You are first a student, then an athlete. There are course GPA and standardized test score requirements that must be met to be eligible to play college sports.
5. Professional affiliations - Being part of professional organizations such as Nigerian football league, Nigerian basketball league, or even your state-level league adds credibility to your talent. You need to develop a sports resume that goes beyond playing with friends on the weekends or at the inter-house sports level.

For more information about studying in the United States contact EducationUSA via [AbujaEducationUSA@state.gov](mailto:AbujaEducationUSA@state.gov) or [LagosEducationUSA@state.gov](mailto:LagosEducationUSA@state.gov)

Uzoka Azubuike



# BUILDING THE SKILLS OF NIGERIAN MEDIA



*Benjamin Charles Williams of PeaceTech Lab speaks to participants of the Conflict Sensitive Reporting workshop*



*David Ajikobi of Africa Check facilitating the training on Fact Checking in Lagos*

*Bill Hinchberger at the Channels Television offices in Abuja*

by Susan Dauda & Nafisah Ahmad

As part of efforts to build the capacity of Nigerian media, the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy organized a series of workshops for journalists from February to April 2018. With trainers drawn from within and outside the country, the Embassy collaborated with organizations including Channels Television, Africa Check and Code for Nigeria. Themes for the workshops included data journalism, fact checking, covering communal violence, election coverage, and advanced journalism. Information Officer of the U.S. Embassy Russell Brooks these trainings were meant to increase the capability of the media, transparency, democracy and good governance in Nigeria. As the

country prepares for the 2019 general elections the trainings will support institutions involved in the elections to promote fair, transparent, and peaceful processes.

During the election reporting workshop the participants had the opportunity to interact with various stakeholders involved in the electoral process. Representatives of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) briefed them from a government standpoint, while members from the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) spoke from the civil society viewpoint.

The fact checking training was an opportunity to remind journalists about

the importance of facts in their news reports. Conducted by David Ajikobi of Africa Check, they were trained on how to check information they receive, to verify sources, distinguish fact from fake news, verify authenticity of websites and identify sources of images.

At the conflict sensitive reporting workshop, the participants were mainly drawn from the parts of Nigeria that have witnessed the most serious conflicts in recent times, e.g. the Northeast and North-Central states. The trainers from PeaceTech Lab emphasized that the media must go beyond just reporting to investigate the underlying causes of conflict. They were also encouraged to avoid bias and dehumanizing people in their reports. The focus of reporting here should be about helping people understand the issues that drive conflict which will enable them to take positive action.

The three-day data journalism training was conducted by representatives of Code for Nigeria. The journalists were given practical examples of how to access data sources and how to utilize the information to enrich their day to day or investigative reporting. Relating their personal experiences, the trainers demonstrated how a simple story can be turned into a compelling news item by adding relevant data, whether the stories concern budgets, elections, and health or education issues.

American journalist and media trainer Bill Hinchberger engaged senior journalists in an advanced journalism class. He reminded the participants that the motto of the Boy Scout "Be Prepared" should be that of every journalist. He took them through various aspects of journalism including ethics, covering beats, conducting interviews, writing and producing stories.

Through the numerous trainings the role of the media in promoting democracy through fair and accurate reporting was highlighted while the need for journalists to maintain high ethical standards was emphasized.

# WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY 2018

Every year, the U.S. Mission to Nigeria celebrates World Press Freedom Day. This year, we hosted the visit of Paris-based journalist Linda Hervieux. She addressed journalists, journalism faculty, and students on topics ranging from investigative journalism to the threat of Fake News during her week in Abuja.



May 2

L-R: Head of Department, Mass Communication, Baze University, Dr Abiodun Adeniyi, Managing Editor of Premium Times Idris Akinbajo, visiting speaker, Linda Hervieux, and Information Officer, U.S. Embassy, Russell Brooks during a panel discussion in the embassy



May 3

Linda Hervieux delivered a lecture on 'The Role of the Media in Keeping Government Accountable' at Nile University of Nigeria, Abuja



May 5

At the 2018 Press Freedom Awards of the National Union of Journalists, U.S. Ambassador W. Stuart Symington reminded the media that truth and trust are critical elements in a democracy

AMERICAN ENGLISH LIVE SERIES:

# Rejuvenating English Language Education



Participating teachers display their certificates on completion of the English Language program

by Fatima Umar

**E**nglish is Nigeria's official language and the primary language of instruction. As a result it is the country's most important medium of communication. English also serves to unite Nigerian citizens throughout the country, who speak more than 300 different languages, because it is the lingua franca for educated persons.

Sadly, however, there is a high failure rate in English at the secondary school level. Among the reasons for this poor performance are lack of funding, cultural bias, and high rates of child labor to name a few. The English teaching landscape is characterized by too few trained teachers, exponential growth in enrollment rates, erratic government funding, lack of infrastructure, economic hardship, and early marriage for girls. There

are also more than 10 million out of school youth in Nigeria. Youth who do not have sufficient levels of English language proficiency are more likely to drop out of school, be unable to qualify for university, and consequently limit their future job prospects.

As part of its goal to improve English Language fluency in Nigeria, the U.S Department of State promotes English language learning in all its facets via the Office of English Language Programs. The Office of English Language Programs in Washington, D.C provides programs, along with materials and resources, for English language teachers and learners. These programs are designed to provide practical and innovative ideas, methodologies and skills for teaching English based on current theory. The largest English program that Mission Nigeria implements is the American English Live Series (AELS), formerly known as the American English Webinar.

American English Live Series is a bi-weekly teacher training seminar for professional development currently hosted through Facebook live on the American English for Educators page. There are three six-part series annually whose presenters are American TESOL professionals. Topics include practical classroom teaching tips, teaching methodology and resources. Participants who attend four out of six webinar series receive certificates of completion. U.S Embassy Abuja has collaborated with government administrative structures such as the FCT senior and junior secondary education boards to recruit motivated teachers into the program.

Over 400 English teachers across Nigeria have participated and benefitted from the series since its inception in 2014. The American spaces have contributed to achieving this large figure and have provided the opportunity for a wide reach of diverse audience through concurrent live sessions hosted at the American Spaces in Kano, Bauchi, Sokoto, Lagos, Jos, Calabar, and Ibadan. AELS

## American English LIVE! Creating and Adapting Materials for a Multilevel Class Every other week



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Check the local time in your region here: [bit.ly/ChecktheTime](https://bit.ly/ChecktheTime)



alumni teachers eagerly implement ideas and methods they learned in their classrooms and have reported improvement in student engagement and learning behaviors. One of the most popular topics covered in the series was: **Using Games in the Classroom to Build Vocabulary and Grammar Skills**

This presentation highlighted the importance of grammar in language learning, but emphasized that the focus of grammar instruction does not always have to be directly on conventional teaching rules. Research shows that students enjoy varied methods of learning English grammar and vocabulary. The games demonstrated in this session were designed to help students learn, review, and internalize grammar and vocabulary by making personal connections and having fun.

Another exciting topic covered during the series is **Beyond Proficiency: Nurturing Critical Thinking in the English Language Classroom**. This topic gave the teachers an

insight into the role as well as the significance of incorporating critical thinking when teaching English. The presenter maintained that authentic communication involves real-life situations and language skills are needed to express opinions and make logical arguments. These are a few examples of the dynamic teaching practices that are encouraged in the AELS and the innovative learning environment created for both teachers and students.

Building the capacity of English teachers is crucial in the bid to curb the failure rates among secondary school students. The American English Live Series has equipped hundreds of teachers with effective methodologies to improve the English language classroom and to make learning an exciting experience for students. “The program has aided my content delivery and it has been very beneficial for my students especially in the area of resources and skills” said Christiana Oki from Government Secondary School, Wuse Zone 4. Abuja.

# Empowering Emerging Entrepreneurs

## U.S. CONSULATE, FSD ACADEMY TRAIN ENTREPRENEURS

by Temitayo Famutimi

Following the successes recorded during the first edition of the U.S. Consulate General Lagos' Conference for Emerging Entrepreneurs, the second edition was held in Port Harcourt, Rivers State April 10-11, 2018. The Consulate, in collaboration with a leading vocational training and entrepreneurship institute **Field of Skills and Dreams** (FSD), hosted about 100 budding entrepreneurs, selected from the Niger Delta and Eastern states.

Participants learned how to transform their ideas into practical business plans, manage business risks, navigate difficult moments, seek capital, and develop partnerships to help their businesses grow.

Leading business leaders including Sahara Group co-founder Tonye Cole, Emzor Pharmaceutical CEO Stella Okoli, Andela co-founder Iyin Aboyeji, award-winning designer Zizi Cardow, and senior executives of prominent commercial banks mentored and trained the participating young entrepreneurs.

U.S. Consul General F. John Bray declared the workshop open and was joined by Rivers State Deputy Governor Dr. Ipalibo Harry Banigo, and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt, Professor Regina Enyidia-Ogali. In his welcome remarks, Consul General Bray explained that one of U.S. Mission Nigeria's primary goals is to support Nigeria's economic development. He

noted the U.S. Department of State supports entrepreneurs all over the world through training and mentoring, while also working with governments to create enabling environments and entrepreneurial cultures.

"There is growing evidence that entrepreneurs the world over are the drivers of job growth. The U.S. government is firmly convinced that in addition to creating jobs and expanding economic opportunities, entrepreneurship contributes to political stability and a vibrant civil society," Consul General Bray added.

Following the opening session the emerging entrepreneurs were divided into four sectorial areas, which they selected when they applied to participate in the conference. The areas were: energy, information and communication technology, food processing and agriculture, and fashion.

On the second day, immediate past Vice-Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt, Prof. Joseph Ajiinka, co-led a session on the **Value Chain in the Energy Sector** for participants in the newly introduced energy group. Participants later came together to learn from representatives from the Bank of Industry, Bank of Agriculture, Diamond Bank, Access Bank, and Fidelity Bank about the various options for obtaining funding for start-ups.

A representative from the U.S. Foreign Commercial Service also gave a comprehensive presentation on how the participants could access international commercial opportunities. Management expert and CEO Centre for Values in Leadership, Professor Pat Utomi, gave an inspiring lecture on **Leadership Excellence in Venturing**. He also spoke extensively on the benefits of delayed gratification in business.

Follow on events include a "stock taking meeting" with participants to be hosted by the Public Affairs Section in Lagos and monitoring by the program implementing partner throughout the coming year.



U.S. Consul General Bray delivers the welcome address while the mentors and young entrepreneurs pay rapt attention

USAID

# US-Supported Drama Sends Nigerians Message of Unity

*'IN LOVE AND ASHES' BRINGS PLIGHT OF THE NORTHEAST INTO THE MAINSTREAM*



The cast and crew of "In Love and Ashes" take a bow at the gala launch of the mini-series in Lagos

by Zack Taylor

Lagos – As a long-time friend and ally of Nigeria, the United States is always looking for creative ways to promote social cohesion and national unity.

A new and inspired effort by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) unveiled at the end of March taps into the vast platform of Nigeria's entertainment industry with support for a new television drama that tells a story underrepresented by "Nollywood" – the struggle to live, love, and survive in the embattled Northeast.

Over the course of eight episodes, a new series, "In Love and Ashes," supported by USAID and the 2Baba Foundation and produced by

Watershed Entertainment, touches on universal themes such as the social and emotional challenges of marriage, the status of girls and women, the rise of poverty and hardship fomenting radicalization, the influence of political "godfathers," insurgency, and the hardships of life for the internally displaced.

Set in restive Maiduguri, In Love and Ashes sends the message that love conquers hate and draws the moral conclusion that to overcome extremism, all Nigerians must rise above ethnic and religious differences and jointly work to achieve lasting peace and reconciliation. The story of hope in the face of disaster, the series unfolds as a bittersweet tale about



A village scene from the USAID-supported mini-series



Ambassador Symington (right) greets musician and philanthropist Innocent “2Baba” Idibia at the launch along with U.S. Consul General F. John Bray (second left) and USAID Mission Director Stephen M. Haykin (second right)

the social, humanitarian and moral challenges that bedevil communities in the northeast whose inhabitants have experienced violent extremism.

“We’re here today to make sure this message gets out, to make sure this story becomes your story,” U.S. Ambassador W. Stuart Symington said at a gala launch of the series running on two national networks beginning in the month of April. “It’s a universal story about love bringing people together.”

In *Love and Ashes* stars Charles Etubiebi as Emeka, a Lagos-based humanitarian assistance administrator who makes the 750-mile trip to check the accounts of its Maiduguri office – not knowing what he will encounter in the remote corner of his own country. What he finds are people in whom he recognizes a common human spirit as they struggle to make the best of their lives under the untenable stress of conflict, violence, and deprivation.

“Everybody knows what the insurgency did to the Northeast,” series director Ali Mustapha explained. “But it also addresses the issue of prejudice.”

“*In Love and Ashes*” touches on other kinds of prejudice as well. It tells the story of Maryam, a northeastern woman who struggles to pursue a career as a photographer against her family’s wish that she get married as soon as she is of age. Nafisat Abdullahi, who plays Maryam, said with a shrug that as a Hausa woman herself, she can relate.

We also meet Mallam Laminu, a hard-working taxi driver who wants nothing more than to provide his son a good education and raise a responsible citizen. “Unfortunately for Laminu, the boy’s mind was not in studies,” said Tijani Faraga, who plays Laminu. “But the temptation of most of the youth in a terrorist haven is to join the dreaded Boko Haram group. Eventually he lost his only son. Unfortunately that is what many parents in these areas face today.”

For producer Ishaku Dashon, the story sends a core message that through all the violence, hardship and death, these characters share the common Nigerian qualities of strength and resilience. “Despite the tragedy, they are able to find hope, and find love,” he said.

For its soundtrack, *In Love and Ashes* harnessed the star power of Innocent “2Baba” Idibia, who contributed the series’ soundtrack, produced by NowMuzik. A video directed by award-winning Unlimited LA featured clips teased the series with a montage of clips interspersed with the musician-entrepreneur’s performance of the track.

At the launch, 2Baba spoke with disarming frankness about the need for north and south to come together. “This is a beautiful movement,” he said. “I hope as Nigerians we can get in the spirit and wake up from our slumber. We have to stop being naïve. We have to stop being ignorant... We must be geared toward creative peace.”

In his remarks, Ambassador Symington likened Nigeria to a giant heart, divided into three chambers by the mighty rivers that run through it. The Ambassador’s intuition, honed through a long diplomatic career in Africa, tells him that despite the vast distances and cultures that constitute the country, Nigerians are – and will continue to be – one people.

# WORLD TUBERCULOSIS DAY

March 22, 2018



U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission David J. Young addresses staff at the 2018 World TB Day commemoration



A staff member of USAID answers a question about tuberculosis at the World TB event

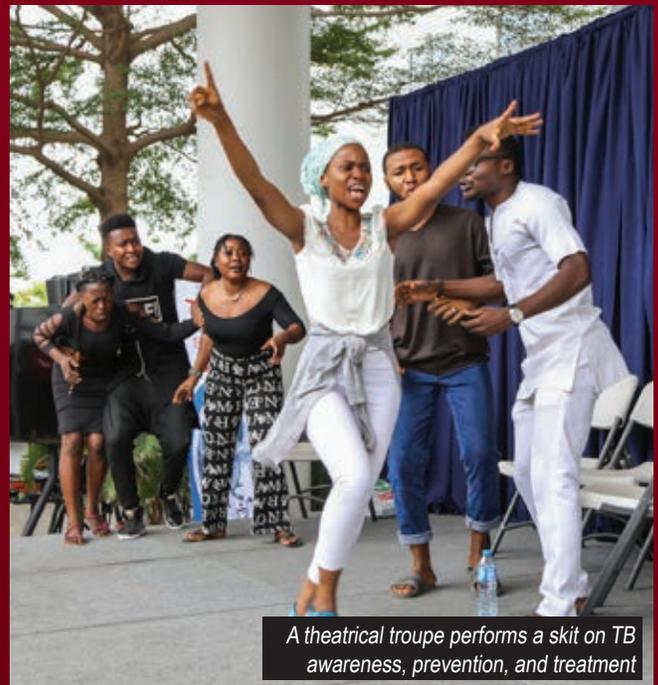
by Zack Taylor

To mark World Tuberculosis (TB) Day on March 24, a week-long series of activities were kicked off on March 19 with free screenings at Utako Motor Park in Abuja, where hundreds of people gather daily for transport to various destinations outside the capital.

To mark World TB Day on March 24, an interagency team at the U.S. Mission to Nigeria organized an event to build awareness among the staff about the disease, featuring remarks from Mission leadership, the Embassy medical officer, a theatrical sketch, and a visit from the U.S.-supported 'Wellness on Wheels' truck that brings fast TB diagnosis to communities across the country.

Hosted by the USAID-supported Challenge TB project, more than 200 screenings were conducted from the 'Wellness on Wheels' truck equipped with the latest diagnostic equipment and an x-ray machine.

During the week, a USAID representative was interviewed on local radio and television stations to raise awareness of TB.



A theatrical troupe performs a skit on TB awareness, prevention, and treatment



U.S. Embassy Regional Medical Officer Dr. Dawn Osterholt makes a presentation on TB to Embassy staff



The USAID-supported 'Wellness on Wheels' truck stopped by the Embassy on World TB Day

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