



Celebrating
**the Motherland of Young
African Entrepreneurs**

MAY 2024

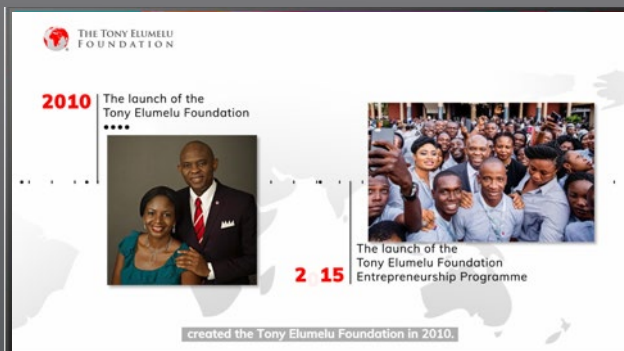
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The Tony Elumelu Foundation has produced a television commercial to share the story of it's impact across the 54 African countries.

The TV Commercial is airing across Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and the Americas for the next 12 weeks on Arise TV, Alja Zeera, Canal +, CNNi, and DSTv.

WATCH NOW 

Editor's Note



In recognition of this year's Africa Day, we at the Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF) celebrate the vibrancy and ingenuity of young African entrepreneurs who are putting our continent on the global stage. Their innovations are not just transforming Africa, but are also influencing global markets, solving critical challenges, and showcasing the limitless potential of African talent.

This month, our Founder, Tony O. Elumelu, CFR embarked on an inspiring journey across three countries and two continents with a singular mission – to mobilise support for young African entrepreneurs. From the vibrant landscapes of Abu Dhabi to the bustling city of London, and the birthplace of the ancient Roman civilisation, Italy, our Founder's travels underscored the importance of investing in Africa's youth. Each meeting, interview, and partnership formed

during this trip was a step towards building a stronger, more connected ecosystem for African entrepreneurs. His commitment and tireless efforts are a testament to our collective belief in the power of entrepreneurship to drive Africa's economic renaissance.

Back at our office, we celebrated Africa Day with an activity that beautifully captured the essence of unity in diversity. The office was divided into two groups: the bride's family from West Africa, specifically Ghana, and the groom's family from East Africa, specifically Kenya. In a wonderful blend of modernity and tradition, both teams worked together to create a wedding that reflected the rich cultures of both regions.

The event was more than just a competition; it was a showcase of the beauty of African culture, where tradition met innovation in delightful harmony. Despite the competitive spirit, both teams worked seamlessly, displaying camaraderie and mutual respect. The winning team, in a gesture of goodwill, shared their treats with the entire office, demonstrating that in unity, we all thrive.

As we reflect on these celebrations and achievements, we are reminded that the future of Africa is bright. By empowering our youth and fostering collaboration across borders, we are not just celebrating Africa's brilliance, but we are also crafting a narrative of hope, resilience, and boundless potential.

Here's to celebrating Africa's brilliance today and every day!

Warm regards,

Moyo Awotile

Editor-in-Chief, TEFCircle

Empowerment Beyond Borders



L-R: The president of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and ruler of Abu Dhabi, Sheik Mohammed Ibn Zayed Al Nahyan; member of Abu Dhabi Executive Council and chairman of the Department of Health in Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mansoor Al Mansoori; and Founder, Tony Elumelu Foundation, Mr. Tony Elumelu, during a meeting between Mr. Elumelu and Sheik Mohammed at the Palace in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday, May 15.

This May, our Founder, Tony O. Elumelu, CFR, journeyed to three countries across two continents with one mission; to mobilise global support for young African entrepreneurs.

With a burgeoning youth population estimated to be one half of the world's youth by 2,100, and the highest entrepreneurship rates across the globe - where over 20% of working-age Africans launching new businesses and more than 75% of young people intend to start one within the next five years - it is within this landscape of ambition and potential that Africa's path to development and prosperity lies.

Yet, despite this promising entrepreneurial fervor, the continent's youth demographic grapples with systemic challenges. Joblessness persists as a significant concern, exacerbated by limited access to basic infrastructure and the escalating impacts of the global climate crisis.

These challenges underpinned our Founder's trinational mission; to drive awareness and ignite conversations aimed at fostering partnerships, urge collaborative action to tackle the multifaceted challenges hindering the potential of young African entrepreneurs, and drive meaningful change on a global scale.

Mr. Elumelu's journey kicked off on Monday, May 13, with a private roundtable co-hosted by him and Badr Jafar on the sidelines of the Abu Dhabi Global Healthcare Week, in the vibrant capital city of the United Arab Emirates. In attendance were senior government officials, business luminaries, philanthropic trailblazers, as well as four Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurs from Tunisia, Mali, Cameroon, and Kenya, all united in the Foundation's commitment to fostering entrepreneurship across Africa and the Middle East.

Sharing her success story at the Tony



L-R: Hadley Gamble, International Correspondent and TV News Anchor, moderating panel at the Abu Dhabi Health Leaders Forum. Panelists: H.E. Mariam bint Mohammed Almheiri, Director of the Presidential Court Office of International Affairs; H.E. Monica Geingos, Former First Lady of Namibia; Tony O. Elumelu, CFR, Founder, The Tony Elumelu Foundation; and Mr. Badr Jafar, CEO, Crescent Enterprises.

Elumelu Foundation roundtable session, Maureen Amakabane, 2017 #TEFAlumna from Kenya stated, ***“I received the US \$5,000 seed capital from the Tony Elumelu Foundation in 2017 and with this capital, I had an idea to create dignified for schools in Kenya because we lack toilets. Even as we speak today, schools are having difficulties opening in Kenya as a result of the flooding and one of the hard hit infrastructure is toilets. With the seed capital from the Tony Elumelu Foundation, I was able to visit 73 schools in Kenya to understand their sanitation problems and we installed 10 toilets in each school.”***

Continuing the momentum, on Wednesday, May 15, in the bustling metropolis of London, our Founder hosted Cindy McCain, Executive Director of the World Food Programme, at an intimate cocktail session. Here, key stakeholders in the United Kingdom's development sector came together to highlight the pivotal role of entrepreneurial activity in fostering economic growth and stability. In acknowledging the impact of the Tony Elumelu Foundation, Cindy McCain lauded Mr. Elumelu as a visionary and humanitarian.

She remarked, **“ There are not very many visionaries or very many people that really can wear the tag of humanitarian, but you do both. This is so important**

because a true humanitarian understand that its not about the people, although it affects the people. It's about making sure that everyone is equal and has food, shelter, medicine, clothes and education and that's what you do and thank you for that. Thank you for giving hope to so many people.”

Our Founder's journey culminated on Friday, May 17th, at the B7 Summit in Rome, Italy, where he shared insights and recommendations focused on enhancing the potential of talents and skills in the labor market, among other thematic macro-priorities. “Africa does not need aid. Africa needs investments to catalyse economic prosperity and development on the continent”, our Founder stated, as he



L-R: Blandine Umuziranenge, Rwandan TEF Alumni and Founder of Kosmotive; Maureen Amakabane, Kenyan TEF Alumni and Founder of Usafi Sanitation; Maher Oudira, Tunisian TEF Alumni and Founder of Green ALAFSCO; Coumba Diakite, Malian TEF Alumni and Founder of BY'RECYCL; Tony O. Elumelu, Founder of The Tony Elumelu Foundation; Badr Jafar, CEO, Crescent Enterprises; and Patu Ndango Fen, Cameroonian TEF Alumni and Founder of Closed Loop System Ventures.

stressed the need to invest in the immense talent, energy, and ambition present on the continent.

Central to our Founder's trinationaI journey was the overarching message that Africa's future prosperity hinges upon harnessing the immense potential of its youthful population, and through the Tony Elumelu Foundation, we have empowered young entrepreneurs, providing them with the resources and opportunities to transform their communities and drive progress across Africa.



MIDDLE: Maureen Amakabane, Kenyan TEF Alumni and Founder of Usafi Sanitation sharing her success story



L-R: Mariangela Pira, Journalist, Sky TG24; Bernard Mensah, President, International, Bank of America; Giuseppina Di Foggia, CEO & GM, Terna; Claudio Descalzi, CEO of Eni; AND Tony Elumelu, Founder, The Tony Elumelu Foundation, at the B7 Summit.



Tony O. Elumelu, CFR, Founder, The Tony Elumelu Foundation; and Cindy McCain, Executive Director, World Food Programme.

Partnership Spotlight

Empowering African Women Entrepreneurs: A Path to Community Prosperity

African women face a multitude of challenges in their quest to launch and grow their businesses. These obstacles range from limited access to financing and business networks to socio-cultural barriers and a lack of formal training. Despite these hurdles, the resilience and potential of African women entrepreneurs are undeniable. As Dr. Awele V. Elumelu, co-founder of the Tony Elumelu Foundation, aptly puts it, “When you empower a woman, you empower a community.” This statement underscores the transformative impact of supporting women in business, not just for their families but for the broader community.

The Challenges

African women entrepreneurs often struggle with:

- **Access to Finance:** Women face greater difficulties in obtaining loans and investment compared to their male counterparts. This financial gap hampers their ability to start or scale their businesses.
- **Business Training and Mentorship:** Many women lack access to quality business education and mentorship, which are crucial for navigating the complexities of entrepreneurship.
- **Networks and Market Access:** Building business networks and accessing markets can be particularly challenging for women, limiting their growth opportunities.
- **Socio-Cultural Barriers:** Traditional gender roles and societal expectations can restrict women’s entrepreneurial activities, limiting their ability to fully engage in business.

The Tony Elumelu Foundation’s Intervention

The Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF) is addressing these challenges head-on through various initiatives, one of the most significant being the “Women Entrepreneurship for Africa” (WE4A) programme. This initiative, jointly supported by the European Union (EU), the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), and implemented by TEF and the German Development Agency GIZ (E4D programme), is designed to empower African women entrepreneurs.





WE4A: Empowering African Women Entrepreneurs

Launched in January 2021, the WE4A pilot programme focused on empowering underserved communities in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly women, youth, and the informal sector. This initiative incorporated an Acceleration/Growth Programme implemented with the support of the Swiss Association for Entrepreneurship in Emerging Markets (SAFEEM).

Key components of the WE4A programme include:

- **Personalised Support:** The 100 TEF Alumnae selected for the pilot were grouped into eight clusters based on their growth stage and sector. Each cluster was led by an Entrepreneur in Residence (EiR) who provided mentorship and support throughout the programme.
- **Financial Grants:** Each participant received €10,000 in funding, along with training, mentoring, and access to valuable networks. Additionally,
- **Capacity Building:** The programme offered extensive training focused on growth, ensuring that participants are well-equipped to scale their businesses.

30 of these alumnae were selected to receive up to an additional €50,000 in grant funding following the WE4A Acceleration Programme demo day, where 99 entrepreneurs pitched their businesses.

Expanding the Impact: WE4A II

Building on the success of the pilot WE4A programme, the Tony Elumelu Foundation, in partnership with the EU and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), launched WE4A II in 2024. This second installment is part of the broader Investing in Young Businesses in Africa – Women Entrepreneurship for Africa (IYBA-WE4A) programme, which is designed to address existing gaps in capacity, business services, and funding for women-led MSMEs and start-ups, in addition to strengthening relevant networks and promote learning on successful pathways for women entrepreneurs.

Outreach and Engagement Efforts

Outreach efforts for the second installment of WE4A commenced on March 8th and ran until May 15th. TEF worked with three PR agencies, selected from a pool of international agencies, to support our strategic marketing and communication efforts in securing applications from young African women with green ideas or existing green businesses in Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Senegal, Cameroon, and Togo.

Through the exciting activities carried out by the PR agencies, such as hosting well branded entrepreneurship-focused events in partnership with local ecosystem stakeholders and promoting the call for applications across digital and traditional channels, the Foundation witnessed an increase in brand awareness and publicity across these countries, which was quantified by a boost in website traffic, trending on social media in these countries, and most importantly, securing thousands of applications from young African women with green ideas or existing green businesses across the countries. All eligible

applicants have now been onboarded onto the TEF Business Management Training on TEFConnect.

Conclusion

By encouraging and sustaining women entrepreneurs and their businesses, the IYBA-WE4A programme contributes significantly to employment creation and economic prosperity across Sub-Saharan Africa. As Dr. Awele V. Elumelu's quote encapsulates, empowering women is not just an act of support for individual entrepreneurs but a vital step towards uplifting entire communities. Through initiatives like WE4A, the Tony Elumelu Foundation continues to pave the way for a more inclusive and prosperous Africa.

TEF Alumni Corner



Patu Nango Fen

2016 TEF Entrepreneur

Tell us a bit about yourself and your business.

My name is Patu Ndango Fen, and I hail from the Northwest region of Cameroon. I have a B.Sc. in Environmental Science from the University of Buea, a Masters in International Relations (Option: Environmental Management and Sustainable Development) from the International Relations Institute of Cameroon and a second Masters in Environmental Engineering from Newcastle University.

Initially, I used to dream of becoming a Medical Doctor until I mistakenly found myself in the Environmental Science department where I realised that there were so many other ways I could contribute in saving lives (which was my main objective for wanting to become a Doctor). The environmental world offers

an opportunity to not only save the lives of the sick but also that of every living thing and mother Earth inn general.

In 2016, after making an observation regarding the very poor waste management practices in Cameroon particularly within the city where I live (Yaounde), I decided to create Closed-Loop System (CLS) Ventures, a social enterprised with mission to give a second life to different types of waste materials. We currently collect waste such as waste tires, textile waste, bottle caps, old CDs, among several others and create valuable consumer goods such as furniture, flower pots/planters, decorative items and beautiful pieces of Art.

We are currently establishing our showroom space called the Circularity HotSpot, where all our creations will be showcased and sold to the general public.

The grand opening of this creative space is slated to take place on July 13, 2024. On that day, we intend to exhibit the different things we create using waste materials and demonstrate the fact that waste can actually serve as a valuable resource and the numerous benefits that it presents.

We are currently a team of 7 persons working indirectly with over 20 persons who collect and supply us with the waste materials which we need. Our next goal is to establish a powerful online presence through our different social media platforms and also via an e-commerce platform where our products will be available for purchase worldwide.

What has been the most beneficial element of being a Tony Elumelu entrepreneur?

Being a Tony Elumelu Entrepreneur has provided me with so many benefits, the most crucial being the kickstarting of CLS Ventures. The grant received through the programme was what turned my idea into reality.

Added to that, I cannot overemphasise the importance of the three-months intensive training programme through which I acquired my very first knowledge and skills on entrepreneurship. It set a very solid foundation which I must admit helped me in securing several other opportunities such as UNDP's Youth for Africa and SDGs Open Innovation Challenge, the Women Entrepreneurship for Africa Programme, YouthConnekt, Obama Foundation Leadership Program, Techwomen Emerging Leaders Program, and the prestigious Chevening Scholarship among others.

What was your experience at the Abu Dhabi Global Healthcare Week, and what was a key takeaway for you?

It was an amazing experience taking part

in that High-Level event and it presented me with the opportunity to express how deeply grateful I am of the opportunity that the Tony Elumelu Foundation offered to me and thousands of other young Africans who never had the resources to kickstart a venture especially those who only had an idea like myself.

I also met amazing TEF Entrepreneurs like Coumba from Mali, Maureen from Kenya, Blandine from Rwanda and Maher from Tunisia whose experiences and success stories were truly inspiring to me.

A key takeaway for me is the possibility of establishing a partnership with Maher's company, a discussion which we began having in Abu Dhabi. It once again demonstrated the importance of continuously being provided with a platform to connect, network and create relationships among the Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurs.

Do you have a message for the Tony Elumelu Foundation for giving you this opportunity?

It was truly an honour to be considered out of thousands of other options you had. For this, I want to say a very big thank you once again for selecting me to be among the entrepreneurs who represented the Foundation in Abu Dhabi. I truly hope and pray that our testimonies served as a motivation for more support to be rallied for the Foundation so that more Africans can benefit from the program like we did.

I want the Tony Elumelu Foundation to know that they can always count on me as an Ambassador of the TEF Entrepreneurship Programme and a proud Tony Elumelu Entrepreneur.

And to the Founder, Mr. Tony O. Elumelu, I will never stop thanking and appreciating you for the impact you have had in my life and that of thousands of other Africans.

You have established a programme that has changed the lives of many and put in place a wonderful team that keeps the vision of the Foundation alive. A very big thank you to the entire Tony Elumelu Foundation team who coordinated and planned our trip effectively despite the limited time available for that.

TEF Alumni Corner



Maureen Amakabane

2017 TEF Entrepreneur

Tell us a bit about yourself and your business.

My name is Maureen Amakabane, and I am from Kenya. I am extremely passionate about women and youth socio economic advancement. I believe women and youth are able to achieve socio economic empowerment by leveraging entrepreneurship and technology as a catalyst. My purpose is to encourage women and youth to shift their mindset into entrepreneurship and set up businesses with an intention of creating employment and financial freedom. I train youth and women in entrepreneurship and digital literacy with an intention of skilling them to start their own business or optimise existing businesses.

I have incorporated storytelling and will be leveraging digital tools to amplify micro

and small women businesses. This aligns with the spirit of Africapitalism.

As a serial entrepreneur, I run Nyayo Moms Sokos Limited which is a digital marketplace, information and knowledge hub for women in Kenya. We run a daily digital marketplace where we have connected over 1500 micro and small businesses that are women led to quality digital markets. We also offer an 18-week business training program for women in business, the training is aimed to set women-led businesses to be formalized and set foundations where they access formal contracts and access functional formal credit.

Usafi Sanitation is a social enterprise that is bridging the sanitation gap in schools in Kenya by building green toilets. The toilets are waterless, self-composting and

durable. We also offer business advisory on how businesses can go green.

What has been the most beneficial element of being a Tony Elumelu entrepreneur?

The Business Management training I received from the Tony Elumelu Foundation equipped me with practical business skills that I continue to deploy in my businesses and has given me the confidence to start new ventures in Africa. Also being part of the Tony Elumelu Foundation Alumni network has plugged me into a dependable entrepreneurship community in Kenya and across the region. This has made my journey as an African entrepreneur bearable as I have a regional tribe that back me up on the journey, they are also great supporters of the businesses that I run. I have also benefited from the business linkages and networking opportunities in Kenya, the region and the globe, this has been instrumental in promoting my businesses and brand.

Also the access to capital via the monetary grant was also very beneficial. I received the US \$5000 nonrefundable seed grant that helped me conduct market research and MVP for Usafi Sanitation. I later received follow on non-refundable seed grant of €40,000 that we invested in Nyayo Moms Sokos where we upgraded our product offering and curated our business training program that we launched into the market.

What was your experience at the Abu Dhabi Global Healthcare Week, and what was a key takeaway for you?

The event was well set up with global health care leaders and the themes and discussions were quite intriguing and eye opening. I appreciated the insights Tony O. Elumelu CFR brought to the discussions on the role of local enterprises in contributing to the health care system in Africa. He gave an example of a fellow entrepreneur, Tony

Elumelu entrepreneur who is distributing vaccines in their country. This is a strong indicator that local enterprises have a huge role in strengthening health and they should be included and prioritised in the global healthcare ecosystem.

Do you have a message for the Tony Elumelu Foundation for giving you this opportunity?

I am grateful for the continuous belief in me. You are a great inspiration, you are a great mentor and I am committed to be a great champion of Africapitalism.

TEF Alumni Corner



Mali

Coumba Diakite

2018 TEF Entrepreneur

Tell us a bit about yourself and your business.

My name is Coumba Diakite, a 2018 Tony Elumelu entrepreneur from Mali. I am passionate about the environment and protecting it, because I believe that the environment is what represents man in all his splendor. It's this passion that drove me to create BY'RECYCL in 2018, in order to fight against pollution due to plastic waste and its incineration. BY'RECYCL is a company that recycles plastic waste and tires, to make furniture, decorative objects, toys to embellish children's playgrounds, decorations. It also offers training to women from disadvantaged backgrounds in plastic bag recycling, to enable them to have a source of income. Since its creation, BY'RECYCL has saved hundreds of tires from the fire and trained nearly a hundred women in plastic bag recycling.

What has been the most beneficial element of being a Tony Elumelu entrepreneur?

The thing that has had the biggest impact on me in the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme is the training. It gave me a grounding in management and all the skills an entrepreneur needs to run a successful business. The TEF Entrepreneurship Programme also boosted my self-confidence and my confidence in my project, by enabling me to belong to a network of young people across the continent, and also by putting me in touch with mentors.

What was your experience at the Abu Dhabi Global Healthcare Week, and what was a key takeaway for you?

1. The Abu Dhabi Healthcare Week was a great opportunity, as it brought together many decision-makers from all over the world and enabled us to talk about healthcare in its entirety. The opening panel raised many important points:
2. No single healthcare system is strong on its own - the COVID case is a good example.
3. Health care should be more about prevention than cure.
4. There is a link between healthcare and local development. This development cannot be achieved without local initiatives that know best the issues and challenges facing their communities. The panel discussion with Mr. Tony O. Elumelu and Badr Jafar took the debate a step further, proving just how important it is to invest in local initiatives. And how talented and competent young Africans are in all the fields they touch. and how important it is to multiply support for these initiatives for a stronger global healthcare system.

Do you have a message for the Tony Elumelu Foundation for giving you this opportunity?

I will just like to say thank you to the Foundation and to the Founder for his confidence in Africa's youth and his commitment to its excellence. Thank you for your continued trust and for always offering us opportunities to show our work to the world.



THE TONY ELUMELU
FOUNDATION



A decade of impact

Over 1.5 million

young Africans trained on the digital hub, TEFConnect

Over 400,000 jobs

created by our entrepreneurs

Over USD\$100 million disbursed

in direct funding to 20,000 African women and men

The Tony Elumelu Foundation is the leading philanthropy empowering a new generation of African entrepreneurs, driving poverty eradication, catalysing jobs creation in all 54 African countries, and ensuring inclusive economic empowerment.

www.tonyelumelufoundation.org



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TEF Mentor Corner



**Oluwakemisola
Adaraloye**

Tell us a bit about yourself and what you do

My name is Oluwakemisola Adaraloye, I am a seasoned legal practitioner with over 16 years of post-call experience as a corporate in-house counsel, serving on a Managerial role and most recently as a Regional Legal officer for about 7 years with the Bank of Industry Limited, Nigeria's oldest, largest and Development Finance Institution (DFI).

I am a Master of Laws (LL.M) holder from the University of Lagos. I am a Certified Fellow of International Expert Consultants (UK) and Senior Manager at the Certified International Professional Managers Association (IPSA) (UK), I have honed my skills in strategic management and international professional standards. My other credentials include being a Certified International Quality Management System Lead Auditor by the International Organization of Standardization, ISO 9001:2015 (Quality Management System) showcasing my commitment to global best practices. I also hold the designation of a Certified ISO/IEC 27100 Lead Implementer Auditor for Information Security System, besides other qualifications.

In addition to my professional achievements, I am a proud convener of the Ebelanke Foundation, a Not-for-Profit organisation dedicated to impactful initiatives, with special focus on the Senior Citizens in the Society from ages 60 and above, women and children respectively.

When did you join the Foundation's mentorship network and how many entrepreneurs have you mentored so far?

I became a Tony Elumelu Foundation Mentor during the COVID-19 pandemic in the year 2020 and I have mentored thousands of entrepreneurs across Africa both directly and indirectly.

What motivated you to get involved in mentoring Tony Elumelu entrepreneurs?

As I reflect on the path that led me to initiate a mentoring programme for young entrepreneurs, it all traces back to a profound sense of responsibility and a fervent belief in the power of guidance. What motivated me to get involved was a deep-seated belief in Africa, the transformative power of entrepreneurship, a desire to contribute to Africa's economic development and shared vision with my non-profit similar to our Kid Entrepreneur Executive Club focused on catching the children young and exposing them to the Entrepreneur Spirit through their passion.

Having navigated the intricate landscape of entrepreneurship myself, I vividly remember the challenges and uncertainties that it entails. When I learned about the Tony Elumelu Foundation's mission to empower entrepreneurs across Africa, I was immediately drawn to the opportunity to make a meaningful impact.

As a mentor, I have had the privilege of working with passionate and driven individuals who are eager to make a difference in their communities. Guiding them through challenges, offering practical advice, and witnessing their growth and success has been incredibly fulfilling.

What motivates me the most is seeing the resilience and determination of Tony Elumelu entrepreneurs. Despite facing numerous obstacles, they remain unwavering in their pursuit of success, and

being able to support them on their journey is truly inspiring.

In essence, my involvement as a mentor with the Tony Elumelu Foundation is driven by a desire to give back, empower others, and contribute to the growth and prosperity of Africa's entrepreneurial ecosystem and by sharing my experiences, failures, and triumphs, I aim to equip the next generation with the tools they need to thrive in an increasingly competitive world.

In every mentee, I see a potential trailblazer, an architect of change. The satisfaction derived from seeing them evolve, succeed, and perhaps surpass even my own accomplishments is the driving force behind this mentoring initiative. It's a symbiotic relationship where I gain as much from their fresh perspectives as they do from my seasoned insights.

What is your message to young entrepreneurs who considering getting a mentor to guide them on their journey?

Now is the time to seize the opportunity of a lifetime and take your entrepreneurial journey to new heights by applying to the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme in the nearest future.

As someone who has experienced firsthand the transformative power of the TEF Entrepreneurship Programme, I cannot emphasize enough the immense value it offers to aspiring entrepreneurs like yourselves.

In conclusion, the TEF's network has been a linchpin in my career, entrepreneurial and mentoring pursuits. It's not merely a collection of individuals; it's a dynamic ecosystem that nurtures collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and collective growth.



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FOUNDATION



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www.tefconnect.com



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IMPACT REPORT

TEF Squad Corner



Chidinma's Travel Diaries:

Work Took Me on my First Trips to Abu Dhabi & London

I have a confession

I can be a bit cynical sometimes. However, my coping mechanism for handling this is by also being widely optimistic that good things are supposed to happen to and for me. I think that more than anything else, our experiences shape us and shape our perspective of life. For me what this means is that when we seek out meaningful experiences, we can cultivate a more open-minded, empathetic, and optimistic outlook on life. We are less cynical and can fully embrace the myriad possibilities the world offers.

Speaking of meaningful experiences, work took me to two new countries this month – Abu Dhabi and the United Kingdom. I haven't been able to properly articulate how grateful I am to have had this experience which is why I thought to write this piece.

A week before this trip, I took some much needed time off work to just rest. I deliberately made no plans for this leave, all I wanted to do was to spend that time rotting in bed, binge watching the final episodes of Friends, cooking and eating my favourite meals. Thankfully, I got exactly what I wanted. Two days before my leave ended, I received a WhatsApp from Chinabia, a colleague of mine who works in the Chairman's office. She was asking if I had a UK Visa and I immediately responded saying that I did not and she just said 'Okay'. Her message came in while I was on the phone with my brother, and I remember mentioning it to him and we both laughed at how random that interaction was.

When I resumed at work, I was instructed to apply for my UK Visa, and I was informed that my visa to Abu Dhabi was also being processed. Although anxious, I remembered Rihanna's advice on confidence: "fake it." With no prior travel history outside Africa,

I doubted I would get my visas on short notice. However, by Thursday, I had my UK visa. This experience taught me the importance of letting optimism outweigh cynicism.

A day before our trip, we got feedback that a few of us were yet to receive our visa for Abu Dhabi and yet again, I was so sure that I was part of those who did not get it. In my head, if they were going to refuse anyone on the team, it had to be the girl who was visiting UAE for the first time – me. I was so happy to be wrong.

The journey to Abu Dhabi was quite long and by the time we arrived, it was dark but one thing that stood out to me was the city's architecture. High rise buildings, people riding on their bikes or scooters, extremely clean roads, and extremely hot weather – these formed my first impression of Abu Dhabi. When we got to our hotel, I met with some of our Tony Elumelu Foundation Alumni who had arrived earlier. It is always such a joy to interact with TEF Alumni, they are a key part of everything we do at the Foundation and as such they are always well represented at all our outings.

We spent less than 48 hours in Abu Dhabi and in this time, we attended the Abu Dhabi Global Healthcare Week where the TEF

Founder, Mr. Tony O. Elumelu CFR joined his good friend, Badr Jafar in a high-level panel session at the Health Leaders Forum. A key message from Mr. Elumelu's remarks was the need for a multi sector approach in addressing Africa's healthcare delivery challenges. The private sector, public sector, governments, and philanthropies must all work together to improve health outcomes for Africans.

Shortly after this, Mr. Elumelu also co-hosted a roundtable session that brought together senior government officials, business leaders and philanthropic champions who are committed to fostering entrepreneurship across Africa and in the Middle East. Our amazing TEF Alumni shined so bright during this session, sharing their stories of impact and incredible milestones, and leaving our guests inspired and energised to do even more in empowering African entrepreneurs.

The next day, we said goodbye to Abu Dhabi and ventured on another 6-hour flight from Abu-Dhabi to London. Before leaving for London, I had asked my friend Bolu what the weather was like and she said it was actually quite warm. Leaving my jacket behind, I soon realised that her definition of warm greatly differed from mine, and I was freezing.

I loved London. The morning after we landed, the team headed out for breakfast, and I finally had an actual English breakfast. I know the food is excellent when I start involuntarily moving my body in a dance after a taste test. Shortly after breakfast we had a meeting to go over plans for our event later that evening, Our Founder, Mr. Tony O. Elumelu was going to host Cindy McCain, the Director General of World Food Programme. It was such a thing of pride for me to hear one of the top voices in the global development space speak so highly about the amazing work of the Tony Elumelu Foundation.

One of my least favorite parts of adulting is being away from friends and loved ones seeking a better life abroad. This trip to London was extra special because I got to spend time with one of my best friends, Bolu who has been away from Nigeria for two years now. Reconnecting with her grounded me, reaffirming that despite the distance, the core of our friendship remained as strong as ever.

The relationship between cynicism, experiencing the world through travel, and open-mindedness is complex but significant. While cynicism can be a barrier to fully appreciating the world, there is something about the experiences that you have when you travel that counteracts cynicism. It provides an opportunity for one to come to appreciate the richness and diversity of human experiences, it helps you become more empathetic towards others, and more importantly it broadens your perspective on life. I am forever grateful that I get to work in an organisation where I am not only involved in meaningful work that is transforming Africa but also affords me an opportunity to see the world – this has always been the dream.

THE TONY ELUMELU FOUNDATION ENTREPRENEURSHIP



TEFCircle is the Tony Elumelu Foundation's monthly publication sharing updates on our alumni, partners, mentor network, and our activities in the global entrepreneurship ecosystem.

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