

# MANSA MUSA

Edition 1 | March 2024

THE  
RICHEST MAN  
WHO EVER LIVED

EXPLORING THE LIFE AND TIMES OF  
ONE OF THE WORLD'S WEALTHIEST  
RULERS FROM AFRICA.

# NANA BENZ OF TOGO

THE WEALTHY AND PROMINENT AFRICAN  
BUSINESSWOMEN WHO CONTROLLED BUSINESS AND  
POLITICS IN TOGO

# VALERIE LABI

MEET THE POWERFUL WOMAN  
BEHIND GHANA'S FIRST ELECTRIC  
VEHICLES AND BIKES



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# GLOBAL AFRICAN TIMES

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The 13th African Games kicked off with a spectacular official opening ceremony in Accra, the capital of Ghana, on Friday night - 8th March 2024, bringing together tens of thousands of athletes, officials, and sports fans across the continent to celebrate the prestigious event.



## President's Words:

*For the one who writes, writes History.*

I am thrilled to introduce the inaugural edition of Global African Times Magazine, a publication that strives to capture the essence of our dynamic and interconnected world. In a time of rapid change and unprecedented connectivity, the power of storytelling cannot be understated. "For the one who writes, writes History." These words echo throughout our magazine, reflecting the importance of our collective narrative in shaping the course of history. As global Africans, we are the product of diverse cultures and countries, born from the dreams of drums in continental Africa.

In today's landscape, where challenges such as migration and cultural integration abound, it is more crucial than ever for Global Africa to claim its voice. Our magazine seeks to amplify the voices of individuals of African descent worldwide, showcasing their resilience, strength, and contributions to our shared culture.

From stories of forced immigration to tales of chosen migration in pursuit of a better life, each article in Global African Times Magazine aims to celebrate the human spirit and highlight the interconnectedness of our global community.

As we navigate this ever-evolving media landscape, we recognize the transformative power of information. Through our publication, we endeavor to present relevant news stories that not only inform but also inspire, fostering a sense of unity and pride among all members of the African diaspora.

In essence, Global African Times Magazine is a testament to our love of humanity, love of self, and commitment to preserving our rich history for generations to come. Together, let us embark on this journey to showcase the wit, strength, and resilience of Global Africa.

Long live Global African Times!

**Charles Kollo**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles Kollo". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned below the printed name.

# CEO's Welcome

Until the Lion tells his side of the story, the hunter will always be the Hero in the hunting story. This African proverb could not be farther from the truth as this proverb means that the story is never complete until we hear from all the sides to the story.

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, valued partners, and dear friends,

A very warm welcome to each one of you as we celebrate a momentous occasion – the launch of the maiden edition of Global African Times Magazine. This is a day filled with excitement, anticipation, and the realization of a vision that has been carefully nurtured by the dedicated team behind Global African Times founded by our dear President.

As the CEO, it is both an honor and a privilege to appear before you on this historic day as a champion of this amazing vision. The birth of a new global African magazine is not just the culmination of months of hard work and dedication; it is a testament to our shared belief in the power of storytelling, information, and the transformative impact of ideas emanating from Africa and Africans.

At Global African Times, we are embarking on a journey to redefine the landscape of a global African media. Our vision is to create a platform that connects and transcends borders, cultures, and perspectives – a platform that brings together diverse voices and narratives from every corner of the world.

The maiden edition you see is not just a collection of pages; it is a gateway to a world of discovery, exploration, and inspiration. Through the lens of Global African Times Magazine, we aim to capture the essence of our interconnected world, shedding light on stories that deserve to be told, voices that need to be heard, and ideas that have the power to shape our future.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our esteemed President and our incredible team whose creativity, passion, and tireless efforts have brought this vision to life. To our partners and collaborators, your belief in our mission has been a driving force, and we are excited about the journey ahead as we continue to build meaningful relationships, networks and friendships.

To our readers and followers on social media, we thank you for joining us on this inaugural voyage. We invite you to immerse yourself in the pages of our maiden edition, to be inspired, informed, and captivated by the stories that unfold within. Today marks the beginning of an exciting chapter for Global African Times.

As we launch into this new era of global storytelling, I invite you all to share in the enthusiasm, to celebrate diversity, and to embrace the power of knowledge that unites us all.

Thank you for being a part of this historic moment.  
And let us make Africa great again !  
God bless you, and God bless Mother Africa !

**Gustav Addo**  
**CEO / Editor-in-Chief, Global African Times.**






# Editor's Brief

Every now and then, we face momentous times. Africa as a continent is facing several events that will shape its destiny going forward, politically, economically socially, and in the arts and culture.

Across the globe, its people are stamping their footprint and showing the world that Africa is not the dark continent that Europeans and the West imagined it to be back in the 19th century.

Back then, it was their ignorance of the continent that led Welsh journalist and explorer, Henry Morton Stanley to dub Africa 'The Dark Continent.'

Well, Africans and those of African origin have been making their mark across the globe and shaping world history – past, present and future -- for as long as humanity itself.

Take the story of Mansa Musa for example, the man reported to be the richest who has ever lived.

He ruled the West African kingdom of Mali when he became its 9th sultan. In his time the state stretched across 2 000 miles from the Atlantic Ocean to Lake Chad and included all or parts of such modern nations as Ghana, Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Chad.

That empire was rich in salt, gold and copper which were main commodities of the trans-Saharan trade.

He may have lived in the 14th century, but we continue to derive many lessons in leadership from the great man.

We share with you our readers some of those in the inaugural edition of the Global Africa Times magazine.

How can leaders leverage wealth and prosperity for the right purpose? Are profits merely for impressive numbers or tools for achieving even more growth and wealth?

By some account, upon his return from pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324, Musa brought with him Arab scholars, government bureaucrats, and architects who introduced advanced building techniques to Mali. The lesson being that investing in education and knowledge is necessary and paramount.

Today, we have many Africans and those of African descent who are blazing trails across the globe in business, politics, arts, medicine, Artificial Intelligence and every sphere of life.

The lack of knowledge of major and minor complex accomplishments of Africa and those people of African descent cannot continue.

This is because as GAT Magazine, we are here to share Africa people's successes and accomplishments with you and how those influence our tomorrow.

We will also relive the lives of those that have come before us and lessons we can derive from their lives and actions.

**Alfonse Mbiwo**  
**Editor (Continental Africa)**




# Mansa Musa

**The  
Richest  
Man  
who  
ever  
lived**



# Have you ever heard of a man called Mansa Musa? If yes, what did you or have you heard about him?

Mansa Musa was a ruler from the great empire of Mali in the XIV (14th) century, right at the time when Christopher Columbus was still requesting funds to finance his journey to explore another route to get to India. Mansa Musa is the richest emperor known who ever lived up to date, and at the time he owned about 50% of the known gold reserves and cowries. He also had salt that was also used as a unit of exchange. At that time, Gold was mostly used for international exchanges while cowries were used for local exchanges.

Mansa Musa, a 14th-century African emperor was the ninth Mansa (King) of the Mali Empire, a nation in West Africa which reached its territorial peak during his reign. Musa is known for his wealth and generosity. He is believed to be the wealthiest person in history but the extent of his actual wealth is not known with absolute certainty.

Mansa Musa was born in 1280 and ruled the Mali Empire from 1312 to 1337. He was a strong leader with a strong cultural identity. He was among the strongest African rulers at that time and is being touted as one of the African leaders who brought the culture of West Africa to the limelight. This is when the Gold Coast didn't have any separation, but was in full control of its natural resources. During his reign, he ordered the construction of

Timbuktu. This was a center of excellence and center of attraction from all over the world. He managed an efficient government through a bureaucratic system that provided each village with political and financial support through a healthy distribution of wealth, while establishing provinces and provincial governors to handle local affairs.

## How Rich was Mansa Musa?

As far as wealth goes, it is nearly impossible to quantify the riches that Musa had during his lifetime. According to University of Michigan's Associate History Professor Rudolph Ware, the vastness of Mansa Musa's land and material holdings seems downright incomprehensible today. "Imagine as much gold as you think a human being could possess and double it, that is what all the accounts of Mansa Musa try to communicate". He continues and concludes with humor saying "This is the richest guy anyone has ever seen".

Today's estimation of Mansa Musa's wealth in our modern day is a whopping excess of over \$400 billion. He is acclaimed the richest person ever to walk the face of the earth. He was one emperor with an accumulation of wealth often described as "unimaginable" or "incalculable."





This makes him much richer than the world's current richest man Elon Musk who has a net worth of \$ 251.3 billion as at 2024 according to Forbes and Jeff Bezos (Amazon) who currently has a net worth of \$ 168.4 billion as well as Mark Zuckerberg (founder of Facebook) currently worth who has overtaken Bill Gates (Microsoft) to become the world's current richest person at a net worth of \$ 125.3 billion. It has been found out at the beginning of this year 2024, that 9 out of the 10 richest persons in the world are Americans. However, this King whose wealth and net worth exceeds them all was a Man who was an African born, bred and lived in Africa. (Is that surprising to you as it is to me?)

### **Musa's Grand Voyage to Mecca**

During his famous journey to Mecca, Mansa Musa built several mosques and gave lavish donations to people on the way of his journey. He travelled with around 60,000 people to carry his gold and support he and his wife. His wife was called Inari Konte, and was known around the world as the queen of gold partly due to her husband's influence of wealth at the time. He (Mansa) also traveled with his personnel, the notion of slavery was very different at the time because slaves were able to access citizenship and slave owners / masters were compelled to treat their subjects with compassion. Slaves played an important role in Mali as royal administrators and soldiers which is a remarkable difference.

It wasn't until 1324 that the world outside of Mali's

border would get a glimpse of the king's expansive wealth. A devout Muslim in a majority Muslim community, Musa set off on a journey to Mecca for his Hajj pilgrimage. But the king didn't travel by himself.

The voyage, which would span an estimated 4,000 miles, was traveled by Musa and a caravan that included tens of thousands of soldiers, slaves and heralds, draped in Persian silk and carrying golden staffs. Although records of the exact number of people who participated in the voyage are scarce, the elaborate convoy that accompanied Musa marched alongside camels and horses carrying hundreds of pounds of gold.

Of course, this spectacle was noticed by residents of the territories that Musa passed through—after all, a group so massive was impossible to overlook. The impact the Malian emperor left on the Egyptian people would reverberate for more than a decade.

Arriving in Cairo, Musa's character was put on full display during his reluctant encounter with Cairo's ruler, Al-Malik al-Nasir. According to texts from the ancient historian Shihab al-Umari, Musa was greeted in Cairo by a subordinate of al-Nasir, who invited him to meet with his fellow monarch. Musa declined the proposition, claiming that he was only passing through on his pilgrimage to Mecca.

The reason why soon became clear to onlookers. "I realized that the audience was repugnant to him, because he would be obliged to kiss the ground and the sultan's hand," said a man named Emir Abu, as chronicled in the

documents. “I continue to cajole him, and he continued to make excuses, but the sultan’s protocol demanded that I should bring him into the royal presence, so I kept on at him till he agreed.”

The meeting grew contentious when Musa refused to kiss the feet of the sultan, and only turned calm after Musa elected to properly greet al-Nasir. Following a conversation between the two men, al-Nasir offered lodging to Musa and everyone accompanying him, and Musa, in turn, left a piece of his incomprehensible wealth in Egypt.

From the markets of Cairo to royal offices to the impoverished people who crossed his path in Egypt, Musa’s generosity and purchase of foreign goods left the streets littered with gold—a resource that was greatly appreciated and in short supply. The people were thrilled—at least at first. Though well-intentioned, Musa’s gifts of gold actually depreciated the value of the metal in Egypt, and the economy took a major hit. It took 12 years for the community to recover.

### **Expansion of Musa's Empire and Cultural Contributions**

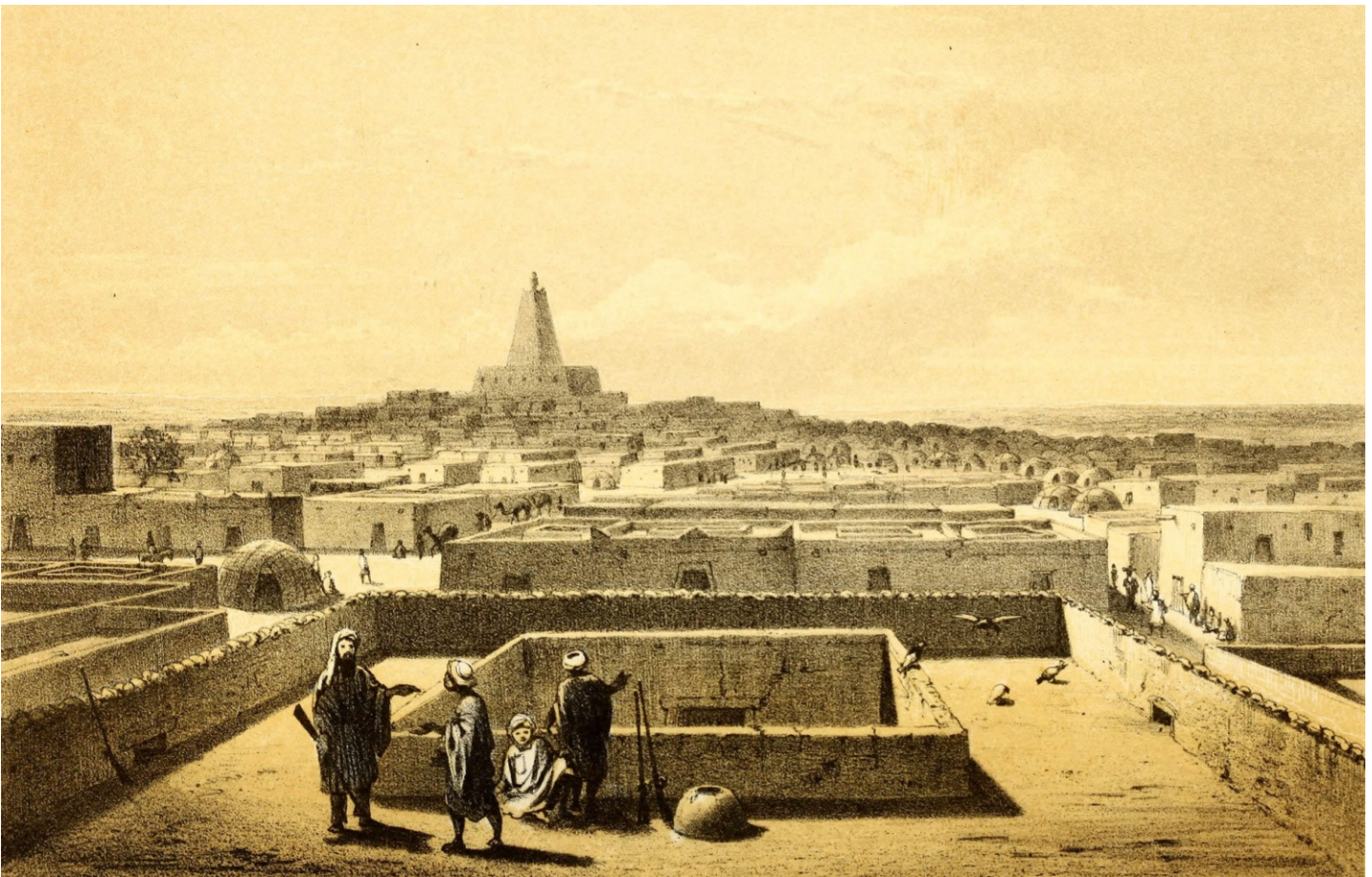
But the king’s trip wasn’t all about giving. On his voyage,

he acquired the territory of Gao within the Songhai kingdom, extending his territory to the southern edge of the Sahara Desert along the Niger River. He would go on to have an empire that spanned several territories, including current-day Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Mauritania, in addition to Mali.

However, Gao would be of special importance to the king. This territory, in today’s Mali, is where Musa would build one of several mosques after completing his Hajj. Timbuktu was also an important city for the affluent king, who used his wealth to build schools, universities, libraries and mosques there. The burgeoning trading hub was where Musa commissioned the Djinguereber Mosque, a famed place built of mudbrick and wood that has stood the test of time, remaining active for more than 500 years.

### **More about Mansa Musa – His Rule and Influence on the world’s perception of Africa**

Almost at the same time as Mansa Musa was ruling in the Kingdom of Mali, centuries of prosperity and growth in Europe came to a halt. A series of famines and plagues, including the Great Famine of 1315–1317 and the Black Death that reduced the population to around half of what it had been before. Along with depopulation came social



unrest and endemic warfare. During these medieval times, life was difficult with a very high mortality rate.

Mansa Musa, one of the leaders of the Mali empire not only depicted his greatness, but he stood tall and he still stands among other talented African rulers that have come before him and those that have come after him and this it is very important to highlight.

The modern media regularly frames the origin of the African experience in the light of slavery which is a single event in history, omitting the factual rendition of the of the overall black culture.

It is known from local manuscripts and travelers' accounts that Mansa Musa's wealth came principally from the Mali Empire controlling and taxing the trade in salt from northern regions and especially from gold panned and mined in the gold rich regions to the south: Bambuk, Wangara, Bure, Galam, Taghaza and other such kingdoms over many centuries. Over a very long period Mali had created a large reserve of gold. Mali is also suspected to have been involved in the trade in many goods such as ivory, slaves, spices, silks, and ceramics. However presently little is known about the extent or mechanics of these trades. At the time of Musa's ascension to the throne, Mali in large part consisted of the territory of the former Ghana Empire, which Mali had conquered. It is also noted that the Mali Empire consisted of land that is now part of Guinea, Senegal, Mauritania, the Gambia, and the modern state of Mali.

Mansa Musa's personal name was Musa the name of Moses in Islam. Mansa, which meant "ruler" or 'king' was the title of the ruler of the Mali Empire. In oral tradition and the Timbuktu Chronicles, Musa is further known as Kanku Musa. In Mandé tradition, it was common for one's name to be prefixed by their mother's name, so the name Kanku Musa means "Musa, son of Kanku", although it is unclear if the genealogy implied is literal. He is also called Alhaji Mansa Musa in oral tradition because he made hajj as a good Muslim is supposed to.

In the Songhai language, rulers of Mali such as Musa were known as the Mali-koi, koi being a title that conveyed authority over a region: in other words, the "ruler of Mali".

This narrow framing of the African experience perpetuates harmful stereotypes and undermines the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the people who originate from this continent. It is important to recognize that Africa has a complex history that spans centuries, and it is impossible to reduce it to a single event or narrative. By

acknowledging and celebrating the multifaceted nature of African culture, we can begin to challenge the harmful misconceptions that have been perpetuated for far too long. It is time to broaden our understanding of the African American as well as the Global African experience and recognize the many contributions that black culture has made to our world from the Kush - Pharaoh leaders to today's entertainers and impactful entertainment and social leaders. Word of Musa's wealth and influence only spread beyond Africa after his voyage to Mecca. Tales of his enormous convoy and generosity continued to be passed on long after his death, which is believed to have taken place sometime between 1332 and 1337.

### **The Rise of Mansa Musa and the Mali Empire**

Musa became ruler of the Mali Empire in 1312, taking the throne after his predecessor, Abu-Bakr II, for whom he'd served as deputy, went missing on a voyage he took by sea to find the edge of the Atlantic Ocean. Musa's rule came at a time when European nations were struggling due to raging civil wars and a lack of resources. During that period, the Mali Empire flourished thanks to ample supply natural resources like gold and salt.

And under the rule of Musa, the prosperous empire grew to span a sizeable portion of West Africa, from the Atlantic coast to the inland trading hub of Timbuktu and parts of the Sahara Desert. As the territory grew while Musa was on the throne, so did the economic standing of its citizens.

By the late 14th century, Musa had been drawn in the 1375 Catalan Atlas, an important resource for navigators of medieval Europe. Created by Spanish cartographer Abraham Cresques, the atlas depicted Musa sitting on a throne with a gold scepter and crown, holding a gold nugget.

From the abundance of natural resources, he cultivated to the growth and development of communities that he left behind, Musa has a legend that could give the fictional Black Panther a run for his money.

Mansa Musa was one of the greatest. And he was African, let us remember that.

*Written by Charles Kollo – President, Global African Times*

**Source: [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com), [www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com)**



# Burkina Faso, Mali And Niger Exit From The Ecowas: Implications For Ghana

*By David Quaye*

**O**n January 28, 2024, a significant regional development unfolded as Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger formally requested to withdraw from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), one of the continent's most notable regional blocs.

In a joint press statement released by the three countries, the countries stated “ECOWAS, under the influence of foreign powers, betraying its founding principles, has become a threat to its member states and its populations whose happiness it is supposed to ensure”

The three countries have declared their resolve to defy Article 91 of the bloc's Treaty, which stipulates that member countries remain bound by their obligations to the regional bloc for a period of one year after notifying their withdrawal. They want to leave immediately.

The common dominator for the three countries, who share borders, is that they are led by the military junta after deposing of democratically elected governments.

In a letter addressed to the ECOWAS on February 7 by the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the Malian government, stated "the government of the Republic of Mali is no longer bound (by the) time constraints mentioned in article 91 of the treaty. The letter further noted that the ministry has decided to “withdraw, without delay” due to ECOWAS’ desecration of its own texts – citing when the organization failed to meet its obligations by closing member states' borders with Mali in 2022, denying it access to the sea.

Analysts have indicated the severe impact this decision will have on the trio. However, what implications does this development have on Ghana?

## **Economic Ramifications**

Article 27 of the ECOWAS treaty highlights the need for economic integration within the sub-region. To achieve this, member states are admonished to ensure the gradual removal of all obstacles to free movement of persons, services and capital (Paragraph 1 of Article 27). The presence of this protocol has enabled countries within the bloc to increase trade overtime, despite the bottlenecks restricting the full implementation of the protocol. Ghana has enjoyed steady economic relations with the three countries, particularly with Burkina Faso. According to the Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC), Ghana has relished an increased annualized rate of 17.6% over two decades of trading with Mali, from \$1.96M in 1996 to \$82.4M in 2019. In 2019, Ghana exported \$82.4M to Mali while importing \$12.3M in the same period. This highlights the economic ties, no matter how ‘small’, which exist between the two West African countries. Unlike Mali, Burkina Faso borders Ghana to the immediate north, and thus, has a greater percentage of trading with Ghana. According to the United Nations COMTRADE database on international trade, Ghana exports to Burkina Faso amounted to US\$277.69

Million in 2019. In reverse order, Burkina Faso's export to Ghana totalled US\$53.08 Million during 2022.

Commodity wise, it is estimated by the Ghana Incentive-Based Risk-Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (GIRSAL) that Ghana currently imports 90 percent of its fresh tomato from Burkina Faso, with a national consumption demand in excess of 800,000 metric tonnes per annum (B&FT Online, 2024). B&FT also estimates that Burkina Faso and Mali account for almost 70 percent of Ghana's livestock import while in 2021, the main destinations of onion exports from Niger were Ghana (US\$21.7million). Ghana's Ministry of Food and Agriculture estimates that onion import from Niger, currently valued at US\$26million, will increase to US\$30million by close of 2024.

The numbers above point to a major economic leak for Ghana in the wake of the trio's exit from the ECOWAS. This, is because, through the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLs) - the main operational tool for promoting Free Trade Area within West Africa - Ghana is relieved from customs duties levied on imports and exports as well as some non-tariff barriers. The Ghana Export Promotion Authority states that:

*"As member of ECOWAS, Ghana benefits from the fact that there are numerous international Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA). Most important one is the ECOWAS-EU EPA, which led to the gradual removal of trade restrictions between the partners"*

As highlighted by the Global Credit Rating (GCR), there is an expected wide-ranging inflationary impact in the domestic markets of all the three countries, which will reflect in the

future prices of food commodities imported into neighbouring countries such as Ghana (see B&FT report 2024). A rise in the cost of import and exports for Ghanaian traders is imminent due to the absence of regulations which enable traders to enjoy exemptions. This decline in trade relations will thus affect Ghana's economy, affect purchasing power of traders and consumers in general. In simple terms, there is a tendency for reduced bilateral economic relation between Ghana and the individual countries.



This means Ghana will lose out on a significant portion of its GDP as consumers face acute shortages or begin to pay more for the same or even less due to a possible re-introduction of tariffs. Given the current position of the Ghanaian economy, a further instability in international trade will worsen woes of the state. Already, the Ghana has defaulted on its debt

servicing program, forcing it to restructure most of its external debts to favour an IMF bailout. How safe will our borders be?

In a world which is becoming more interconnected, both for better and for worse, international cooperation has become ever more crucial in dealing with the raging complex security threats at both global and national levels. The exchange of information between trusted allies and partners is at the heart of devising and executing any joint security action.

Now, second only to Afghanistan for the highest number of terrorist actions and resulting deaths, is Burkina Faso - which shares a land border with Ghana. A report by the African Defense Forum, based on the Global Terrorism Index said, Burkina Faso and Mali together account for 52% for all terrorism-related deaths in Africa (ADF, 2023).

To deal with the butterfly effect of terrorism, a number of joint agreements have been signed among the Sahel countries. Notable among them are the Multinational Joint Taskforce (MNJTF), the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and the Accra Initiative (AI) (Birikorang & Abdallah, 2023). The Accra Initiative which is the most recent collaboration established in September 2017 faces a bigger setback in the face of the Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso exit from ECOWAS. The pillars of the AI are:

- (1) information and intelligence sharing
- (2) training of security and intelligence personnel
- (3) conducting joint cross-border military operations to strengthen border security.

One of the critical pillars of counter-terrorism is intelligence sharing. Kruys (2007) succinctly captures it saying: "Operations to counter





terrorism and insurgency depend largely on timely accurate intelligence”. This position is also highlighted by Danoy and Corbett (2022) who posit that “as any good policymaker, planner, or military commander will tell you, the formulation and execution of an effective national security strategy is dependent on the availability of sound intelligence”.

However, as acknowledged in the introductory paragraph of this subsection, intelligence sharing is firmly rooted in trust. In the wake of the trio’s exit from the ECOWAS, there is an imminent threat to the trust enjoyed among these countries, if it has not already broken.

This argument is rooted in the basis for which Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger have decided to end their longstanding relationship with the

regional block – that the ECOWAS “has become a threat to its member states”. The trio’s lack of confidence in the ECOWAS can and will potentially be transferred to all other members of the group. This will reflect in restricted information sharing and collaboration between individual member states, such as Ghana and the trio. Burkina Faso’s closeness to Ghana is a greater worry considering the heightened security crises in Burkina Faso and the impending general election in Ghana. What becomes of the relationship between the members of the AI? Intelligence sharing once again can be hampered considering the fact that the trio are part of the agreement. A terrorism spillover effect can be

triggered by this new development.

#### Recommendations

Ghana must re-access its bilateral relations with Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger and strengthen cordial relations. This may involve renegotiating bilateral trade agreements.

Given the potential security implications of the trio's withdrawal from ECOWAS, Ghana should bolster its border security measures. This may involve increasing patrols, investing in technology for border surveillance, and enhancing collaboration with neighbouring countries to combat transnational security threats.

With the potential disruption to food and livestock imports from Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, Ghana should

explore diversifying its sources of agricultural products. This could involve investing in local agricultural production or establishing trade agreements with other countries to ensure food security and stabilize prices in the domestic market.

Ghana should advocate for reforms within ECOWAS to address concerns raised by member states. This will help in promoting transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in the decision-making processes.

#### Final word

The ongoing impasse between ECOWAS on one side and Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger on the other end has myriad impacts on individual states such as Ghana. While many analysts are focused on the worsening plight to be experienced by the trio, we must not lose sight of the spillover effect. The arguments being raised by the trio regarding the inability of ECOWAS to protect the interests of its members have been trumpeted within many writings. If the necessary actions needed to build trust are not factored into the future of ECOWAS, there is a likelihood of other dissidents in the future. Ghana has a role to play considering its position in the formation of ECOWAS and its respected position within the sub-region.

*David Quaye is an International Relations and Regional Integration Analyst. He writes in his personal capacity and is contactable on [davequaye@gmail.com](mailto:davequaye@gmail.com) and +233 24 166 4181*

# Solomon Adufah Is A Chicago-Based Ghanaian Artist.



He is a multidisciplinary artist who's incredibly striking work depicts narratives and complexities of identity through cultural exchange and negotiates the social-historical paradigm of globalization in his home country and regions alike. Adufah employs inherited traditional painting themes yet carefully composed and accompanied by vibrantly colored backgrounds.

He achieves artistic delineation through his usage of bold colored patterns, textures, and shapes relevant to the everyday lives and communities he engages with. He combines specific photographic images from memory and experiences into a visually seamless arrangement.

These memories become the vocabulary that informs his uniquely illustrated paintings. Adufah's palette of colors is appointed in accordance with the tones and nuances of his community, conveying specificity beyond the personal periphery. This constant physical engagement is mirrored in his work, carefully examining the endless parallels through his experiences.

Adufah received his BFA from the University of Southern Illinois (SIUC) in 2017. He was awarded Bilder Art Scholarship and Rickert-Ziebold Trust; two of the highest prestigious awards offered in the arts at the institution. During the same period, Adufah's work was exhibited at the Southern Illinois Museum of African Art.

In 2016-2017, he was commissioned by the Institution to present works to Civil Rights Activist Dr. Cornel West and founder of the Black Panther Party, Angela Davis. He participated in the Center Program designed for artists, filling gaps in traditional professional development programs with distinctive partnerships with other Chicago institutions and leaders in the visual arts like 3Arts, Luminarts, Marwen, UChicago's Arts + Public Life, and Center for the Study of Race, Politics & Culture at the High Park Art Center.

His work has exhibited in Scope Art Basel, Art Africa Miami, and in public arts in Ghana. In 2017, he was published in New American painting, Edition 131. He exhibited his first international solo exhibition in Geneva, Switzerland with a remarkable series of work now in private collections in Europe, North America, and Africa. Through his Homeland Project started in 2014, Adufah has helped facilitate creative art workshops to support children in Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.

# CV

---

2017. BFA, Southern Illinois University. Illinois (USA)

## EXHIBITIONS SOLO EXHIBITION

2019 Galerie desbain, Moment of Mindfulness. Geneva, Switzerland.  
 2017 Connect Gallery, This Image Is Not Available in Your Country. Chicago, IL.  
 2016 The Bishop Gallery, Homeland Ghana. Brooklyn, NY.

## GROUP EXHIBITION

2020 Black Creativity, Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago. IL 2017 Art Africa Miami, Art Basel Art Fair/Back to Black. Miami FL. 2017 Surplus Gallery, Rickert-Ziebold Trust Award. Carbondale, IL  
 2017 NYCH Gallery, Farewell44. Chicago, IL.  
 2017 NAACP Gala, Carbondale, IL.  
 2016 Southern Illinois Museum of African Art, Carbondale, IL.  
 2016 Art Africa Miami. Soul Basel. Miami, FL.  
 2016 Gallery Guichard. Bombay Sapphire Artisan Series. Miami, FL 2016 Crude Creatures Gallery, Parallel Universe. Chicago, IL 2016 Surplus Gallery, C4 Exhibition. Carbondale, IL.  
 2015 Gallery Guichard, Bombay Sapphire Artisan

Series. Chicago, IL.

## PROGRAM / RESIDENCY

2018 Center Program, Hyde Park Art Center. Chicago, IL (Cp17)

## PUBLICATION / AWARDS

### Awards

2017 Rickert-Ziebold Trust Award Winner 2017 Bilder Art Scholarship  
 2016 Bombay Sapphire Artisan Series Chicago Regional 1st Place Winner  
 2016 10 Annual Forum Juried Exhibition Best in Show-1st Runner UP

### Publication

2017. New American Paintings. No. 131.  
 2016 BBC News, Homeland Philanthropic work  
 2015 ABC7 Chicago, Homeland Ghana  
 2015 Heart and Soul: FOX32 Chicago "Homeland": Life of Solomon Adufah  
 2015 WGNTV Chicago artist



**Solomon Adufah**

Sunday Best (Adwoa and Sandra), 2023

48in x 60in (122 x 153cm)

Oil on wood

\$12,000.00 USD



**Solomon Adufah**  
Sunday Best (Sunday School 2), 2023  
48 in tondo  
Oil on wood  
\$10,000.00 USD



**Solomon Adufah**  
Sunday Best (Sunday School 1), 2023  
48 in tondo  
Oil on wood  
\$10,000.00 USD



**Solomon Adufah**

Melody, 2023

24in tondo

Oil on wood

\$5,000.00 USD



**Solomon Adufah**

Lily, 2023

24in tondo

Oil on wood

\$5,000.00 USD



**Solomon Adufah**  
 January 1st (1-4), 2023  
 16x20 in (40.6 x 50.8 cm)  
 Oil on canvas, acrylic  
 \$4000.00 USD (each)



**Solomon Adufah**  
Color me in, 2023  
28x30 in (71.1 x 76.2 cm)  
Oil on canvas, acrylic  
\$6,500.00 USD







**Solomon Adufah**  
Whatever will be will be (1), 2022  
48 x 70 in (122 x 178 cm)  
Oil on canvas, acrylic  
\$14,000.00 USD





**Solomon Adufah**

Whatever will be will be (2), 2022

48 x 70 in (121.9 x 177.8 cm)

Oil on canvas, acrylic

\$14,000.00 USD

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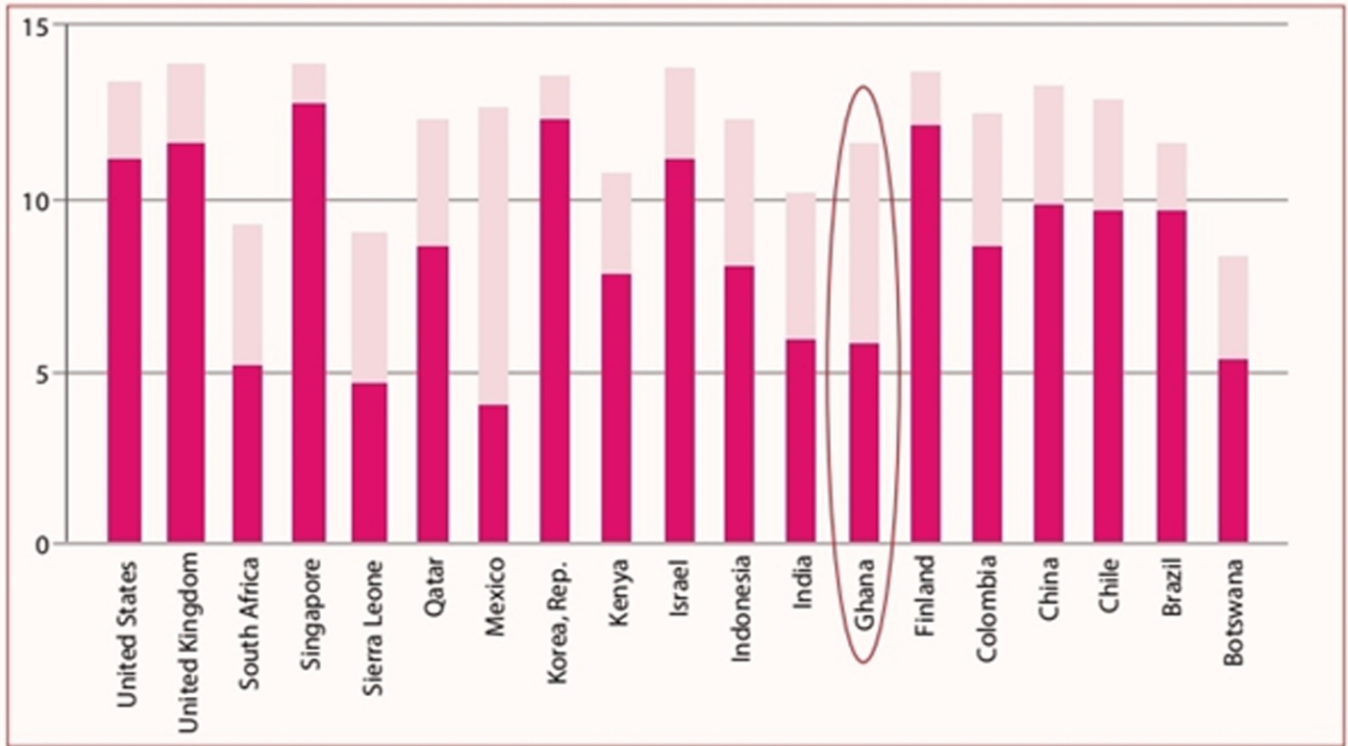


# Unlocking Opportunities For Tertiary Students In Ghana And Africa

**W**e often see education as a key to success without trying to find out what the lock to success is. There is no doubt that ‘education is the key to success, but it’s also important that we come to realization that ‘finance is the lock to success too.’

Just as a car without a lock makes the function of a key doubtful, so is an education without finance makes the achievement of success doubtful. As a developing country, it is necessary to critically notice how the citizens struggle to finance their education and measures that could be employed to minimize the struggles. Tertiary education plays a crucial role in shaping the future of individuals and the societies, however, financing this level of education can be significant challenge for many students. The article explores various sources of funds for tertiary education whilst addressing the issues of social vices and the need for concrete support system from the government.

Fig. 1: Learning Adjusted Years of Schooling and Expected Years of School



<sup>1</sup> UN Secretary-General, 2022. 'Vision Statement of the Secretary-General on Transforming Education' UN Trans  
<sup>2</sup> President Akufo-Addo of Ghana announced as GPE champion for education financing | Infos | Global Partnersh  
<sup>3</sup> MOE and GES. 'Ghana 2021 National Standardized Test Results'  
<sup>4</sup> MOE, 2021. 'Education Sector Performance Report'  
<sup>5</sup> Angrist et al. 2020. 'How to Improve Education Outcomes Most Efficiently? A Comparison of 150 Interventions L Metric  
<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

# Sources Of Funds For Tertiary Education

Source of financing	Higher Educational Institution		Total
	University for Development Studies	Wa Polytechnic	
Self	15(44.1%)	19(55.9%)	34(100%)
Both parents	32(61.5%)	20(38.5%)	52(100%)
Friends/relatives	6(33.3%)	12(66.7%)	18(100%)
Mother alone	14(56.0%)	11(44.0%)	25(100%)
Father alone	5(35.7%)	9(64.3%)	14(100%)
Guardian	6(66.7%)	3(33.3%)	9(100%)
Scholarship	1(100.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>79(51.6%)</b>	<b>74(48.4%)</b>	<b>153(100%)</b>

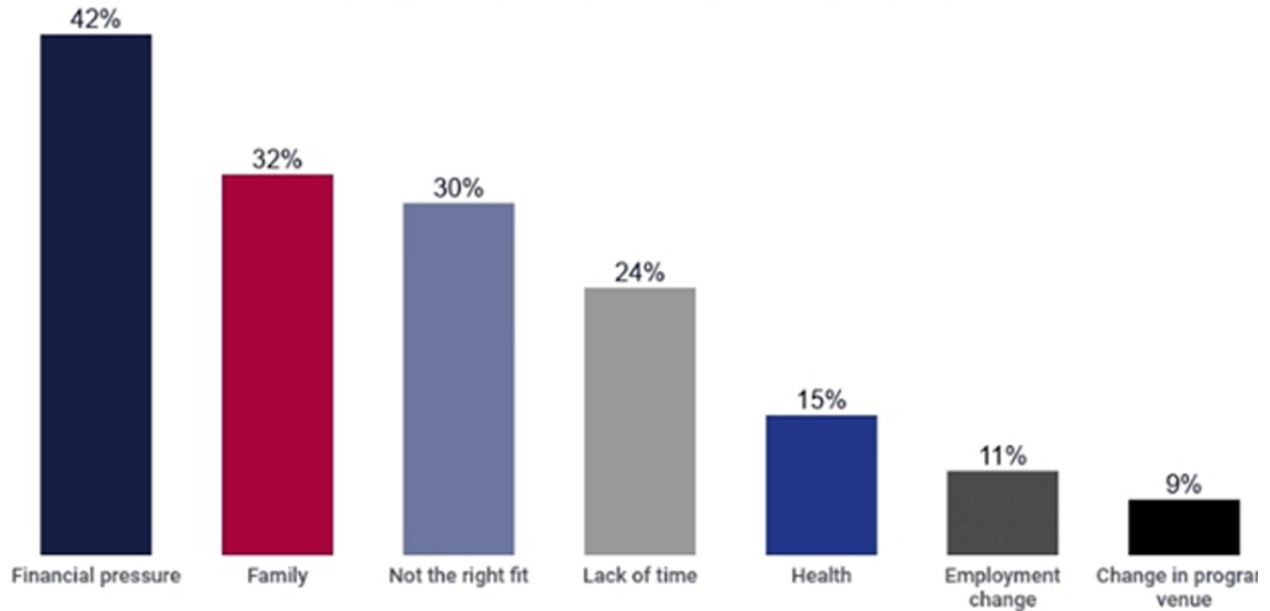
N = 153, Pearson Chi-Square = 8.588, df = 6, Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) = 0.198

Source: Field Survey (2018)

Moreover, the results in Table 4 revealed that programmes of study do not influence students' sources of financ

## -Sources of Financing Higher Education Institution

**Top Reasons College Dropouts Give for Leaving School**  
(by the percentage of dropouts who cited each reason)



Education Data Initiative source: StraighterLine with the University Professional and Continuing Education Association

Majorly, parents form the foundation of the source of funds for most students in the tertiary institutions in Ghana. In 2018, an evaluation was conducted on the Campuses of tertiary institutions in the Upper West Region of Ghana and the findings were that, about 61.5% of parents provide funds to their wards in the universities and 38.5% in the polytechnic. Self financing formed 44.1% in the universities and 55.9% in the polytechnic. Other sources like friends, relatives, guardians and scholarship also had their percentages.

According to (UNESCO, 2006), 'there is an undeniable linkage between education and national economic performance' hence for any society to develop and prosper, education is embraced as a key. 'Education is therefore considered as social investment since it's social and spillover benefits outweigh what individual gain as private returns' (Woodhall, 2004).

Spill-over benefit of education implies what the surrounding communities' copy, learn and gain from an educated person (King, 2007). This may reflect in wealth, health, feeding, living conditions, among others. 'Education financing involves the sacrifice of alternative possible investment' (Irènè Ndayambaje et Al). In the Ghanaian perspective, financing of education, especially tertiary is a responsibility of parents and sometimes the involved individual of which must be a choice The government pays less attention to that.

Statistics provided by Paul Effah, the former executive secretary of the National Council for Tertiary Education in Ghana indicate that, in the year 2000, the education budget was \$2,870,359 which constituted only 12 percent of the total government education discretionary budget distributed among five public universities and eight polytechnics. Owing to the state of the economy, citizen do not expect the government to fund education for everyone in the tertiary institution but measures can

be adopted to soften the financial pressure on the students.

According to Straighter line with the University Professional and Continuing Association, financial pressure is the highest percentage in terms of reasons to tertiary dropouts. More than 70% of students are stressed with financial pressure.

### SOCIAL VICES

Most energetic and eligible human resource of this country have indulged in many vices to generate funds either for education or livelihood, owing to the difficulties the country is facing. Females have involved in prostitution, side chick jobs and have succumb to all sort of dirty jobs to raise funds for their education. The males on the other hand, have inculcated the habit of stealing, dealing in hard drugs and other cyber crimes. The country's youth and the working force are entering into the 'internet stealing era,' where everyone wants to learn how to fraud. It is recognized as a form of education since education is a form of socialization that involves acquisition of knowledge in order to live meaningful in the society. As to whether the knowledge acquired is useful for societal development or not, all can be determined by the government. Well established and structured support systems is what the country lacks. The government do not invest enough and wisely into the education sector, for instance, individual who are intellectually occupied and can use the internet to steal should be trained legally and employed in the public sectors for beneficial purposes.

Most youths are now into robbery, easy earning methods of getting money and even into illegal mining; therefore causing a lot of hazards to our environment and the future. There are quite number of private institutions and organization that sponsor students education, however, they are not enough to assist more students who are brilliant but needy.

### POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Scholarships and grants are one of the primary sources of funding for

tertiary education in many countries. Government should provide more scholarships and grants opportunities to students to benefit. Universities and organizations should offer a wide range of scholarships and grants, covering tuition fees, books, and living expenses through the support of the government. Persons should also dedicate time to research and provide strong scholarship platforms available to support or fund their education. This can increase the chances of students securing financial aid.

While loans are not ideal, they can be a viable option for financing tertiary education. If the government institutions cannot provide loans for students, the government should monitor and regulate the profit charge on Students' loans by private institutions. Students could explore government or private financial institutions that offer student loans. Terms and conditions should be implemented to enable students borrow responsibly and consider their future earning potential to ensure manageable repayment after graduation.

Provisions of part-time Jobs and Work-Study Programs. Working part-time while studying is a common way for students to generate funds. Universities should often offer work-study programs that allow students to work on-campus or in affiliated organizations, providing a convenient source of income. Part-time jobs offer valuable work experience and can contribute to personal development while helping cover educational expenses.

Reviewing the investment in terms of budget allocation for education in Ghana and provision of infrastructure and considerable educational floors would encourage everyone including the dropouts to stop whatever they are doing and enroll into education especially the tertiary education. Government should not sleep over the dreams of the youth but it should awake and provide grounds for the youths' dreams to manifest into reality.

# Empowering Africa: The Holistic Impact of African-led Technology

Africa has over the last decade emerged as a vibrant hub of technological innovation, driven not only by external investment but increasingly by the ingenuity and creativity of its indigenous people. This shift marks a significant departure from the traditional narrative of Africa as a passive recipient of technological advancements, instead positioning the continent as an active participant and leader in shaping its technological future.

According to Google-IFC's e-Economy Africa 2020 report, Africa's Internet economy has the potential to reach 5.2 percent of the continent's GDP by 2025, contributing nearly \$180 billion to its economy. Digital opportunities across Africa are deep as well as broad, despite setbacks from COVID-19. This substantial growth is reflected in the impressive expansion of Africa's digital services exports, which have soared from \$9 billion in 2005 to an impressive \$33 billion in 2022, surpassing the growth rates of more traditional export sectors over the same period.

One of the most transformative aspects of African-led technology is its focus on creating solutions that are accessible and relevant to the needs of local communities. Mobile technology has played a pivotal role in democratizing access to essential services, with mobile phone penetration in Africa reaching over 80% of the population (World Bank, 2021). This widespread connectivity has paved the way for innovative solutions like mobile banking platforms, which have revolutionized the financial landscape. For example, initiatives like M-Pesa in Kenya have enabled millions of Africans to access banking services, transfer money, and

make payments using their mobile phones.

Similarly, telemedicine platforms like Kangpe Health, founded in

2015, has grown to become a leading provider of telemedicine services in Africa, serving over 50,000 users across three countries: Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya and expanded access to healthcare services in remote areas, leveraging mobile technology to connect patients with healthcare professionals.

According to the GSMA Report The Mobile Economy Sub-Saharan Africa 2023, there was a marked uptick in 5G-related activities in Sub-Saharan Africa, including 5G commercial launches in 15 countries and a growing number of spectrum allocations. This comes at a time when 3G is the most dominant technology in the region (accounting for 55% of total connections in 2022) while 4G is already dominant in other regions, implying network and customer readiness for the transition to 4G. The approach to 5G in the region will need to consider the current connectivity landscape and unique market features that could affect the rollout and adoption of the technology. 5G network ecosystem players in the region must also find ways to deliver cost-effective and efficient 5G networks, balancing investment and value creation.

Technology is also driving economic growth and entrepreneurship across the continent, providing opportunities for young Africans to leverage their skills and talents in the digital economy.

Tech hubs and incubators have proliferated in cities like Accra, Lagos, Kampala, Nairobi, and Cape Town, nurturing a new generation of startups and innovators. These ventures span a wide range of industries, from e-commerce and

FinTech to AgriTech and renewable energy. For instance, companies like Alt School, Andela, and Moringa school are tapping into Africa's abundant talent pool to provide software engineering services to global clients, while platforms like Jumia are revolutionizing the e-commerce landscape.

Technology has been demonstrated, to play a crucial role in democratizing education and skills development, empowering individuals to unlock their full potential regardless of their background or location. Internet penetration in Africa has more than doubled in the past decade, reaching over 28% of the population in 2019 (ITU, 2021). Online learning platforms offer a wealth of educational resources, allowing Africans to acquire new skills and credentials from the comfort of their homes. Initiatives like Andela's software engineering bootcamps provide intensive training programs that equip participants with the technical expertise needed to thrive in the digital workforce. Additionally, open-source projects and online communities enable collaboration and knowledge sharing among African developers, fostering a culture of innovation and continuous learning.

From socioeconomic impact lenses, technology is also serving as a powerful tool for promoting cultural exchange and representation on the global stage. Social media platforms provide a platform for African voices to be heard and stories to be shared, challenging stereotypes and misconceptions about the continent. Africa has over 216 million active social media users, representing a significant opportunity for content creators and influencers to reach diverse audiences.

Zooming into the fastest-growing vertical in the digital economy today are African artists, writers, and content creators are leveraging digital platforms to showcase their work and engage with audiences around the world. Amidst its potential, Africa's share of the global creative economy remains significantly low, accounting



for only around 2.9% of global creative goods exports, representing \$58.4 billion and less than 1% of the African GDP (Accelerating Creativity and Innovation in Africa - UNDP Report 2023). However, initiatives like the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) are leveraging technology to facilitate trade and collaboration among African nations, creating new opportunities for cultural exchange and economic cooperation, in anticipation to boost this burgeoning ecosystem.

While the rise of African-led technology presents immense opportunities, it also brings its fair share of challenges. Persistent issues such as the digital divide, inadequate infrastructure, and regulatory barriers continue to hinder the full realization of Africa's tech potential. According to the ITU, broadband penetration in Africa remains low, with less than 30% of the population having access to fixed broadband subscriptions (ITU, 2021). Moreover, disparities in internet access persist between urban and rural areas, exacerbating existing inequalities. Additionally, concerns around data privacy, cybersecurity, and ethical use of technology underscore the need for robust governance frameworks and responsible innovation. However, these challenges also present opportunities for collaboration and innovation, as African stakeholders work together to build a more inclusive, sustainable, and equitable technological ecosystem.

Despite the progress made in recent years, gender disparities persist in the tech industry, with women facing numerous challenges and barriers to full participation and advancement. Women are significantly underrepresented in tech-related jobs and leadership roles, limiting opportunities for career growth and innovation. Gender bias and discrimination in hiring, promotion, and compensation further exacerbate these disparities, perpetuating a male-dominated culture within the industry. Access to education and training in STEM fields remains limited for many women, hindering their ability

to pursue tech careers. Moreover, work-life balance issues and lack of supportive policies pose additional challenges for women in tech, particularly those balancing caregiving responsibilities and family commitments.

Addressing these gaps requires concerted efforts from various stakeholders, including policymakers, employers, educational institutions, and the broader tech community. Initiatives to promote gender diversity and inclusion, such as targeted recruitment efforts, diversity training, and mentorship programs, can help create a more inclusive and equitable tech ecosystem. Implementing supportive policies such as paid parental leave, flexible work arrangements and equal pay measures is essential to address systemic barriers and create a more conducive environment for women to thrive in tech careers.

Access to funding and capital remains a critical factor in the growth and sustainability of tech companies in Africa. While the continent has seen a significant increase in venture capital investment in recent years, there are still challenges in accessing adequate funding, particularly for early-stage startups and entrepreneurs. African startups raised over \$4 billion in funding in 2020, with FinTech, e-commerce, and HealthTech sectors receiving the largest share of investment (Briter Bridges, 2021). However, the funding landscape remains uneven, with a disproportionate amount of investment concentrated in a few countries and sectors. Initiatives such as the GSMA Ecosystem Accelerator provide funding, mentorship, and networking opportunities to promising tech startups across the continent (GSMA, 2021).

Impact investors, development finance institutions, and corporate venture capital funds are increasingly recognizing the potential of African tech startups and allocating capital to support their growth and expansion. However, more efforts are needed to ensure that funding reaches a diverse

range of entrepreneurs and startups, fostering a more inclusive and vibrant tech ecosystem across Africa.

Looking ahead, the trajectory of technology in Africa appears promising, with several trends and developments poised to shape the continent's digital landscape in the coming years. The continued growth of mobile technology will drive innovation and expand access to essential services, particularly in FinTech, e-commerce, and telemedicine. The emergence of tech ecosystems beyond urban centers will foster entrepreneurship and create new economic growth and development opportunities. Moreover, advancements in AI, IoT, and data analytics will drive transformative change across various sectors, unlocking new possibilities for innovation and progress.

African-led technology is reshaping the continent's narrative and driving holistic transformation across various sectors; prioritizing accessibility, entrepreneurship, education, and cultural representation will accelerate the pace at which African innovators can harness the power of technology to create positive change and empower communities. It is also imperative that we drive local investment in African-led tech initiatives by educating the masses and developing a fractional ownership financing model that allows active and passive earnings for every Africa who considers the asset class worthy - and this is how we will unlock an active last mile inclusion in establishing an inclusive Africa-led technology production-ownership-ecosystem.



*By: Foster Awintiti Akugri  
Lead, Africa Business, Innovation Village*

# When Great Leaders Make Bad Decisions



**By: Dr. Reuben O. Brian**  
Strategist and Leadership expert,  
Researcher, Author, Advisor, Speaker  
and Teacher. Chairman, Sixteenth  
Council, UK and CEO, Africa Economic  
Summit Group, UK

*If as a leader, you worry less about results and focus more on doing the right things (processes), the results will take care of themselves.*

It is self-evident that leadership determines how an organisation turns out. When you get leadership right, everything is just going to be okay. When people have the habit of not taking responsibility in communities, nations, and in corporations, things cannot change for the better. Decisions are the cornerstone and the building blocks of every outcome. Now outcomes are dependent variables, results are also dependent variables. If as a leader, you worry less about results and focus more on doing the right things, the results will definitely take care of themselves. The trouble that we have in the world today is that more people are more concerned about the results than the process that creates the result. It is important for us to understand that the micro elements of our outcomes are decisions. If the micro elements are great, the outcome will be great. So already, you have a problem when you try to manipulate results.

Every failure is the result of bad choices. When leaders make bad choices or decisions, the result is failure. But the focus here, on is what happens when great leaders make bad

decisions.

Now that's an irony because the reason they are called great leaders is because they produce great results. Every organisation that is termed great is run by great leaders. The organisation is great because behind the scene, there are great decisions driving the process that leads up to the great results. Hence, it is safe to say that what builds ordinary organizations into extraordinary organizations is the greatness of the choices and decisions made by the leaders.

When nations or organizations fail, it is proof that some bad decisions have been made irrespective of how great the leader may be.

So, the question is, why would a great leader make a bad decision? Or how does this lead to corporate or a national failure? That is why several nations that you have heard about in history lost their place, because at some point in time somebody made the wrong choice. That's the reason why businesses fail or lose their place and become absolved into more successful organizations. Now you understand that no organization is immune to failure, and the factor behind the rise of organizations is the quality of decisions being made. When the leaders making those decisions lose sight of why greatness happens in the first instance, everything falls like a pack of cards. In order to keep an organization or a nation strong, you have to make great decisions and keep making them.

First of all, when great leaders make bad choices, the result is that failure begins. It's like a sickness, it begins to attack a particular part of the body first, and then as time goes on you realize that all other parts of the body get affected and symptoms start showing and changes start taking

place all over the whole body. The thing is when, organizations and nations are very successful they never believe that anything can ever go wrong, it seems like the towering success will ever remain. But history shows and proves otherwise.

Companies have gone up to come down, while Nations who hitherto rose so high in history have fallen. These companies and nations never really believed that circumstances could ever get that way, but it happened. And once that difficulty sets in, once a firm or a nation sets on the path of decline, recovery is always very difficult. There are a few companies like IBM and Apple that were able to make a great comeback after some terrible experiences. Not so many companies can have great leaders that can turn things around that way.

For some, like Wang Laboratories their own decline was sharp and instant. Some tried to turn things around like Kmart and eventually they took the way out while some limped along for some time and still failed. Let us take a look at Kodak, they were able to manage their difficulty for more than a decade before they eventually gave in and signed for bankruptcy. When that happens, there is a tendency for leaders to think that the reason for the decline is the environment. While that could be true in some situations, it may not be the case in some other cases. Considering closely a company like Northern Rock in the UK. During the 2008 recession, Northern Rock was starved of funds and then the company failed. Now with this particular scenario, the case of Northern Rock was actually more of an exception than a rule.

To even get some things in context, great leaders produce great results, and great results come from great decisions made by these great leaders.

The results of great decisions can be instant but could also sometimes take a while to materialize and the same goes for the result of bad decisions. I remember when J C Penny was trying to turn around their business and they hired Ron Johnson as a CEO. Roy Johnson was a remarkable leader with an impressive track record. It was he whom Mr Steve Jobs hired when he wanted to set up the Apple Store for example. The level of trust and faith that people had for Ron Johnson was evident as the stock price of J C Penny went up the very day the news of his new position was reported. Since there was no other announcement about J C Penny that day it was clear that people had respect for Mr Johnson and his ability to turn things around at J C Penny. So that was an instant result of a decision that was made.

However, over the few months that followed, it turned out that the choice of Roy Johnson to run J C Penny was a lousy one. The respected executive who had produced amazing results in the past couldn't produce a great result in J C Penny. Why did this happen? If you read the story, you will find out why Ron Johnson could not produce the intended result. He made choices which even the other managers thought were wrong. In some cases, they raised an alarm and suggested that some of Mr Johnson's ideas should be tested before they were rolled out, but Mr Johnson insisted they needn't test them at all at Apple. How? and why would Roy Johnson think that way? Here is an excellent example of a great leader making bad decisions. At the time of those decisions, they hardly appeared to be bad decisions, but they really were.

The same is true for the 900 million US dollars in advert money from Google to Myspace which accelerated the decline of Myspace. But just as the case of Ron Johnson, in 2006 when it happened it was highly praised and celebrated in the media. Everyone thought that this was the best deal ever, that this was the best call of action for both companies. Well, the next few years proved that it was not. By 2007 just a year after that, the company Myspace was worth billions of dollars but in the space of a year, Myspace had lost so much value

that it was eventually sold for 35 million dollars! That's a company that was worth over a billion dollars. The decline didn't start in one day, it began the day they realized they needed the advert money more than what their users cared about. They annoyed their users and all of them left them for Facebook.

So clearly, great leaders can make bad decisions and that is not a surprise because leaders are tenants of time and context and when leaders are not awake to changing context and changing times, they could make the wrong decisions without even realizing.

But what is the bad decision? A bad decision is that decision which is inadequate, unsatisfactory and worthless (quite bluntly put). So bad decisions are case-specific. What applies as a bad decision to a company? No leader ever sets out to make bad decisions. Everybody wants to succeed. So, the question is how can a great leader make a bad decision?

The first case is making the right decision for the wrong context. That means the decision is a good one but under the context in consideration, it is wrong. For example, reorganisation is a good decision. Imagine an organisation having issues of performance. When performance is not the way it should be, reorganising will not a bad decision. There is only one problem- you don't reorganise if the problem is a contextual problem. In other words, if the business environment has changed rendering your strategic direction meaningless, reorganization can't help the organisation. Reorganisation is rather going to accelerate failure for the organisation. Reorganisation in the face of changing business context only means, you are doing the wrong things more effectively. And because you are effective at the wrong things, you fail even faster. This is one case in which a great leader can make a bad decision because he is not aware that times have changed. In this case he is making a right decision but for the wrong context, this is called contextual ignorance. Contextual ignorance can lead a great leader to make a bad decision. That was what happened to Roy Johnson. He took

decisions in Apple and plugged it into J C Penny. He failed to realize that the customer segment was different. This contextual ignorance came with a heavy cost and very serious losses for the company as well as for Ron Johnson himself.

The second case is when the leader is unable to make a right decision. In this case he cannot make the right decision as a result of structural hindrance. The way an organization is designed could disable a leader from making the right decisions. Here, the way the business or the organization is structured could jeopardize the leader's ability to make the right decisions.

Think about a situation where the board of directors has an overbearing influence over the manager or Chief Executive Officer of that company, that can create a problem.

The third case is rather ironic. It is when a leader is unwilling to make the right decision as a result of vested interest. In the case of Kodak, they focused on reorganization and reorganized for up to 8 times in 10 years because they were fighting digital photography as a result of their very strong competitive advantage in the film and chemical industry. They were controlling up to 60 per cent of market share in the United States. As a result of this they were unwilling to make the right decision. They knew the right thing to do but they refused to take their position as tenants of time and context. As a result, within only a decade later Kodak was no more. They knew the right decision but they were afraid because they were concerned about the asset they had built, the relationship and the investment they had made. Kodak was great because of the greatness of the leaders. Kodak failed because the leaders willfully made bad decisions.

Dr. Brian Reuben is a strategist and leadership expert, researcher, author, advisor, speaker and teacher. His time is currently devoted to strengthening public and private institutions through strategic engagements with leaders. He works with governments, corporations and nonprofits around the world. He is the Chairman of The Sixteenth Council and CEO of Africa Economic Summit Group, United Kingdom.



# MEET THE POWERFUL WOMAN

## BEHIND GHANA'S FIRST ELECTRIC VEHICLES & BIKES

Ever encountered a female e-mobility pioneer hailing from Africa? Enter, Valerie Labi an enterprising force, a mother of three, and a University of Cambridge alumna who is spearheading Ghana's ground-breaking strides in climate smart mobility technology.

Valerie is not just creating a business; she's sculpting a sustainable legacy that transcends boundaries. Nestled in the bustling heart of Accra, Valerie Labi is architecting an automotive revolution, fostering Ghana's most innovative landscape for electric vehicles. Wahu Mobility (Valerie's Company) is also building the very first designed and manufactured electric car in Ghana in collaboration with some German partners. But her vision extends beyond technological innovation; it's about carving meaningful opportunities for gig economy riders and engineering a thriving ecosystem that births sustainable jobs.

Valerie isn't just a leader; she's a torchbearer of EV innovation in West Africa. Through her pioneering efforts, she's sowing the seeds for change, planting a factory that's sprouting over 100,000 jobs for the vibrant youth of Ghana by 2030. But it's not just about job creation; it's about offsetting carbon emissions, painting a greener future, and, above all, sharing her journey as a beacon of inspiration to embolden others to forge sustainable businesses.

Her story isn't just about e-bikes; it's a saga of resilience, innovation, and empowerment. She isn't merely scripting her success; she's authoring a narrative that inspires a generation to dream big, think green, and build a better tomorrow.

Valerie passionately brought attention to the strides made in recognizing women in entrepreneurship, shining a light on their outstanding performance and distinct requirements in this domain.

By 2030, it is projected that electric vehicles (EVs) will represent more than 60% of vehicles sold globally. But the BIG question remains – With this imminent wave of change, will Africa continue importing second-hand combustion engine cars, or will it create e-cars that suit its own needs?

Valerie Labi, Co-Founder and CEO of Ghanaian EV company, Wahu asks. As much as the question gives a lot to ponder over, it is encouraging to know that Valerie and her company, Wahu, have already taken pioneering steps into the e-mobility space to ensure that Ghana is positioning itself to take advantage of the next innovation wave – And their aim is to develop the country's first Electric Vehicle zone!

In an exclusive interview with GIPC, Valerie noted that the company's long-term goal is to create an e-mobility as





a service ecosystem; that will enable tailored vehicle design, servicing, insurance and provide access to delivery jobs.

Her enthusiasm was tempered by concerns regarding the execution of programs designed to aid women in business. She lamented the oversight of critical obstacles, such as the insufficient increase in women's ownership in ventures, the unequal allocation of investment opportunities, and the disregard for the challenges associated with pregnancy and motherhood, which impede women from embracing entrepreneurship fully.

#### HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Asked about her inspiration for starting the company, Valerie revealed that her 6-year stay in the Northern parts of Ghana exposed her to the transport issues that the people faced. This, she said, fueled her quest to develop micro-mobility solutions to address the community's needs. "We then started by converting bicycles to electric bicycles. We were buying the old second-hand bicycles and converting them to electric ones, then, put them on the road initially in rural





communities,” Valerie noted.

She said when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, she and her team noticed that countries were quickly embracing e-commerce platforms and delivery services.

“There already were e-commerce platforms proliferating in cities like Accra, so we decided to make e-bikes to fulfill the delivery needs. That’s how we set up a production hub here in Accra, specifically targeting the large and expanding gig economy workforce.

As the company grew, it rebranded from ‘Cargo Bikes’ to ‘Mana Mobility,’ then to ‘Wahu.’ “Wahu” means ‘horse’ in Dagbani and can also be taken as “W’ahu” which means “You’ve seen” in Twi. Valerie said the team strategically adopted it to reflect their African identity and resonate well in multiple local languages.

**THE E-BIKE PRODUCTION**

According to Valerie, Wahu owns the design of its bikes, which is tailor-made to suit the realities of the African market in terms of functionality and price. “We have been working with international suppliers to build or source components that can fit our design,” she noted. Valerie has disclosed that the company had recently received a grant from the German government to progressively localize the bike’s manufacturing. Therefore, they expect to reach 80% localization of its production by the end of 2023. What a great achievement ?!

Currently, Wahu has produced 110 motorcycles and is ramping up efforts to increase production capacity to 200 bikes per month before the start of next year.

To ensure that gig-economy workers can afford these bikes, the company offers a hire-purchase module with 18 or 24-month payment options. “We offer asset financing, so people can pay for the bikes on a weekly basis, over an 18 or 24-

month period. After getting our bikes, we also link you to a pipeline of jobs, so you can earn a living with it. That aside, we provide services that support riders, such as insurance, maintenance, and loyalty points, so you can earn money for carbon credits.”

## MANUFACTURING GHANA'S FIRST ELECTRIC CAR

Beyond e-bikes, Wahu is looking to expand its fleet solutions approach into four-wheelers. So, it is currently manufacturing, from scratch, an electric car that will soon hit the road. “Same as our bikes, we own the design of the car we are building, and we are 100% manufacturing everything here except the battery. We are able to do so because Ghana already has a strong automotive industry around component production.

Wahu has a team of industry experts, including engineers, artisans, and former key players of some established European car brands, who are working together to bring the dream to fruition.

## FUTURE OF THE E-MOBILITY SPACE AND WAHU

The transition to e-vehicles “is happening, and it’s happening very fast,” Valerie noted. “Unlike Europe, where the approach was mostly from top to down, with their governments’ interventions, in Africa, it’s happening organically, from the bottom upwards. When petrol prices skyrocketed, our market became ready for alternative solutions.

Answering the other BIG question on what Africa has to do, Valerie stated that: “What we need is for everyone to participate... not just as investors, but as partners, entrepreneurs, and teachers as we look at how to encourage the future of the country to focus on industries that have a positive impact on our environment”.

## VALERIE LABI ON WOMEN IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Valerie has stressed the urgent need for early, robust investments in industries capable of delivering substantial societal benefits, particularly in manufacturing. She emphasized the necessity for custom tailored support to empower women in entrepreneurship, along with advocating for changes in HR policies to better accommodate maternity needs.

Additionally, she has emphasized the significance of broadening market access for women entrepreneurs.





# Nana Benz of Togo

The Huge African Female Businesswomen who controlled Business and Politics in Togo



In African history, there have been very great women in business and entrepreneurship who penetrated, survived, thrived and prospered in trade and business despite the numerous inherent challenges and obstacles.

We are pleased to announce and celebrate the Nana Benz of Togo. The Nana Benz were famous businesswomen in Togo. “Nana”, a diminutive or nickname (if you will) of na (or ena) to mean “mother” or “grandmother” in the mina (or guin) language of South Togo, where most of these traders came from at the time. And “Benz” for the Mercedes Benz cars they liked to drive. Overtime, the word lost its original parental dimension and has been used as a form of respect and politeness to acknowledge the social position of the Nana Benz.

The Nana Benz of Lomé, a unique category of Togolese merchants, were without question members of the middle class, who, in building wealth from trade in printed cloth, in many respects harkened back to the cloth merchants

who prospered in the West in the Middle Ages. From a historical perspective, they were the embodiment of the merchant bourgeoisie, in that they were mostly found in cities and specialized in trade.

In the 1940s and 1950s, Nana Benz (as they were popularly called) were the first cloth retailers to start importing textiles from Ghana and then proposed selling them to import/export firms in Togo when relations between Sylvanus Olympio and the Ghanaian president Kwame Nkrumah went sour over the British Togoland and Ewe issue. Those firms were the British GB Ollivant, United Africa Company (UAC), John Holt, the French SGGG (Société Generale of the Gulf of Guinea), CFAO (Compagnie Française de l’Afrique Occidentale), and SCOA (Société Commerciale de l’Ouest Africain).

In the 1970s, the Nana Benz rose in prominence to become a cornerstone of the Togolese economy. They were credited for positioning Lomé into a regional center

of textile distribution as they dominated the trade in wax prints from Holland, Belgium, France, and England. It is estimated that between 1976 and 1984, at least 40% of the commercial business in Togo which was in the informal sector, was in the hands of the Nana Benz. In addition to establishing Vlisco as the top-selling textile brand in West Africa, the Nanas also carried the nation's economic burden during a time marked by large budget deficits (from 13.4% of GDP in 1973 to 39.6% of GDP in 1979). In the early-90s, political instability, followed by economic sanctions, and a 50% devaluation of the CFA led to their loss of monopoly over the wax print market.

In a keen Togolese's words "Growing up, I remember watching documentaries about the Nana Benz of Togo: these powerful ladies who 'owned' the country solely by selling textiles. I also remember that my grandmother was (and still is) very fond of 'Wax Hollandais', and how many women will go through hoops to have access to these pricey wax prints traveling to Togo or Ghana to acquire them. They all loved to dress in these bright colors, with these bright and often lavish wax prints."

The Nana Benz of Togo, made their mark internationally by trading in wax printed cloth starting in the 1930's and 1950's, before independence. They started from nothing to rise to be among the country's richest. They imported the fabric from Dutch companies based in Indonesia. From there, the materials arrived on Togo's shores and the women distributed it throughout West and Central Africa. They became known as Nana Benz because in the mid-50's through 80's they had made so much money that they were the only people who could afford Mercedes Benz cars, so much so that the government used to hire their Mercedes Benz for important guests and state functions (can you imagine that? – and what is lovelier, they were women). The phrase 'Nana Benz' came to symbolize the freedom, ingenuity, creativity, pride, achievement, success, and courage of these women. A woman did not become a Nana Benz through inheritance, or society's choice, but through ingenuity, and struggle. It is on this note, that I posit that there were African women who despite supposed male dominance of business at the time, still rose to become the *crème-de-la-crème* in the Togolese society and the corridors of Power. So, one cannot and should not say – I am a woman and so, my place is in the kitchen or labour room or bedroom (hiccup) no offense.

### **Nana Benz in the 1970s**

The Nana Benz positioned Lomé, Togo's capital, into a regional centre of textile distribution and dominated the trade in wax prints. Between 1976 and 1984, at least 40%



of the commercial business in Togo which was in the informal sector, was in the hands of the Nana Benz. During the 1970's, the scope of this trade in textile was so important that it exceeded Togo's phosphate industry, the country's primary source of revenue. The Nana Benz rose in wealth and power. Although many were uneducated, they travelled abroad on business, and played a leading role in national politics under the one-party rule of the *Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais* (RPT). They rose in society's echelons. During his presidency, Gnassingbé Eyadéma (Togo's President at the time), appointed them to high offices in the women's wing of the RPT. A leading Nana Benz, Madame A. Amedome, was appointed Minister of Social Welfare in 1977 even though she could not read or write.

### **A Nanette in Lomé Market**

They sold the 'wax hollandais' made by the dutch, in particular by the dutch company VLISCO implanted in Togo since 1846 to sell textiles to Africans. No offense, but implanted since 1846? Why are Togolese or Africans not making their own wax prints 150 years later? We love it... so we should make it too! What were African textiles doing before then? was it mostly 'bogolan' type of textile? This should be the subject of another write up. In the meantime, let us celebrate the ingenuity of the Nana Benz.

If you are ever in Lomé, make a stop at the market and buy the right fabric known as Vlisco that made the Nana Benz famous.

### **The Social Representations of the Nana Benz**

A persistent legend alleges that the Nana Benz co-habited

with multiple partners, a sort of reversed polygamy. Another rumor based on local beliefs ascribes magical practices to them and the possession of occult powers that have brought them success in business and great amassed wealth (Rivière 1973). Well, that is to be debated and discussed in the next edition or across our media channels. But that is not in focus today.

In this popularized sociology, the Nana Benz are also attributed the same success criteria as men. In effect, success only takes on meaning when manifested through consumption of ostentatious goods like big cars. A well-fed body also serves as a vehicle for expressing this wealth. However, even when owning several residences is possible, which could be indispensable for displaying opulence, houses are by definition an immobile asset and are only seen by interested or curious parties. Another masculine attribute associated with these businesswomen is that they financed their household expenditure and educated their children in the best schools in the country or abroad. It is generally thought that they exercised the real authority at home, a role traditionally accorded to the husband. And they did this to ensure that their economic success was socially recognized. Hence, they “de-gendered” themselves and took on masculine attributes in a society that proudly upholds a commonly shared, standardized machismo. We can easily match them to the analysis made by Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch (1994) of the Amazons of Dahomey: “they thus rejected the

traditional gender condition, but were proud to be extraordinary women.” These traits as popularly represented, at times picturesquely so, are clichés (like that of their supposed illiteracy) that have cemented their reputation and myth and thereby consolidated a sociological truth.

The Nana Benz came to represent the symbol of wealth in this general context, and even more so when one considers that the cost of living, at a constant base, was lower during the Glorious Thirty than it is today. As such, “with their wealth, they built luxury villas in the Lomé residential neighborhoods, bought apartments in Europe (especially Paris) and imported the latest German luxury vehicles, BMW and Mercedes, to Togo.” This was seen as an abusive generalization of a minor group of Nana Benz at the top of their profession, especially those whose monthly incomes ranged between 800 and slightly over 2000 euros. It overlooked the two other more frequently observed groups: the average Nana Benz (with a monthly income of about 100 euros) and the small Nana Benz (below 100 euros). Irrespective of their categories, they had all exceeded “low prosperity” and thus were not vulnerable, nor any longer at risk of losing status, even under the harsh conditions imposed by globalization.

These pioneers of the trade have grown old and are now between 75 and over 90 years of age. They have not all retired, and some, like Dédé Rose Creppy, are still in



business. They have initiated their daughters, passing on the baton. The daughters, aged between 30 and 50 years old, still protect the model of the family businesses, including the start-up capital raised by their mothers through loans, gifts from various sources (parents, spouses), and personal savings. There are also personal connections likely to determine access into this highly protected textile trade—a spouse in customs, or a relative working for an import-export company—as we shall see later. This social capital has been transferred by mothers to their daughters, who now maintain and multiply it. At this level, schooling, and especially higher education, introduces an important epistemological break in the structuring of their social capital, which differentiates these daughters from their mothers.

In the words of an elite Togolese gentleman “The name came from the vibrant women who made money through trading and they were very wealthy. At that time even the new government in office years after the coup could not afford luxurious cars for official use nor for their guests and dignitaries. So, at the time when Pompidou (ex-France president pre- and post-colonial era) was coming to Togo, Eyadema (the President of Togo at the time) had to appeal to these wealthy and powerful women to make

use of their Mercedes Benz cars for presidential and diplomatic convoy hence the name NANA BENZ “the ladies with the BENZ “. He further states in his words “They were so wealthy that they controlled the economy of TOGO, and the banks maintained close relationships with them”. “Also, the neatest and finest of the luxurious vehicles seen in town were all owned by these women then came the name of Togo “the Switzerland of Africa”.

This now behooves the question, where are the popular powerful Nana Benz of Togo? and what has become of their fortunes and vast business empires?

Furthermore, what lessons should this generation and future ones learn from the lives, courage, tenacity and business acumen displayed by these great women? Even though they were women.

There will be more renditions on these great African women in our subsequent weekly Newsletters, in our next Edition of the Magazine and on our social media platforms.

**Source:** *www.togoarchives.com , ATV News ,*

# Nurturing Cooperation:

## Advancing Labour-Management Collaboration in Organizations



*Esther Fefoame*

In the intricate fabric of organizations, the harmonious relationship between labour and management is the bedrock for sustainable growth and collaborative work environments. In this edition, we explore the

crucial imperative of cultivating robust collaborative foundations, highlighting the positive rapport between labour and management. Join us on this insightful journey as we delve into compelling case studies, unveil strategies fostering effective collaboration, and analyze the overarching impact on employee satisfaction, productivity, and organizational prosperity.

### I. Building Strong Foundations

Effective collaboration between labour and management is more than a strategic choice; it is a commitment to a workplace that thrives on cooperation. By fostering a positive relationship, organizations can create an environment where employees feel valued and motivated.

### II. Unveiling Strategies for Effective Collaboration

**Transparent Communication:** Open and transparent communication channels form the cornerstone of successful collaboration.

Establishing a culture of honesty and openness encourages trust and understanding between labour and management.

**Inclusive Decision-Making:** Involving both labour and management in decision-making processes creates a sense of shared responsibility and commitment. This inclusivity fosters a collaborative spirit within the organization.

### III. Impact on Employee Satisfaction and Productivity

A content and satisfied workforce contributes significantly to organizational success. When labour and management collaborate seamlessly, employee satisfaction soars, leading to a more stable and motivated workforce.

**Boosting Productivity:** Successful collaboration translates into increased productivity, efficiency, and innovation. The positive ripple effect on overall organizational success cannot be overstated.

### IV. Addressing Challenges and Embracing Opportunities

**Navigating Challenges:** Unique challenges may arise, but by acknowledging and addressing them head-on, organizations can turn obstacles into opportunities for growth. Cultural nuances and regulatory landscapes can be managed with strategic planning.

**Seizing Opportunities:** Identifying and capitalizing on opportunities for collaboration specific to the organizational context is key. Proactive engagement can lead to sustainable growth and development.

### V. Conclusion: A Call to Collaborate

In conclusion, the journey towards building stronger collaborative foundations between labour and management is a shared endeavor. Through shared insights, experiences, and a commitment to open dialogue, organizations can foster environments where collaboration not only thrives but becomes a driving force for success.

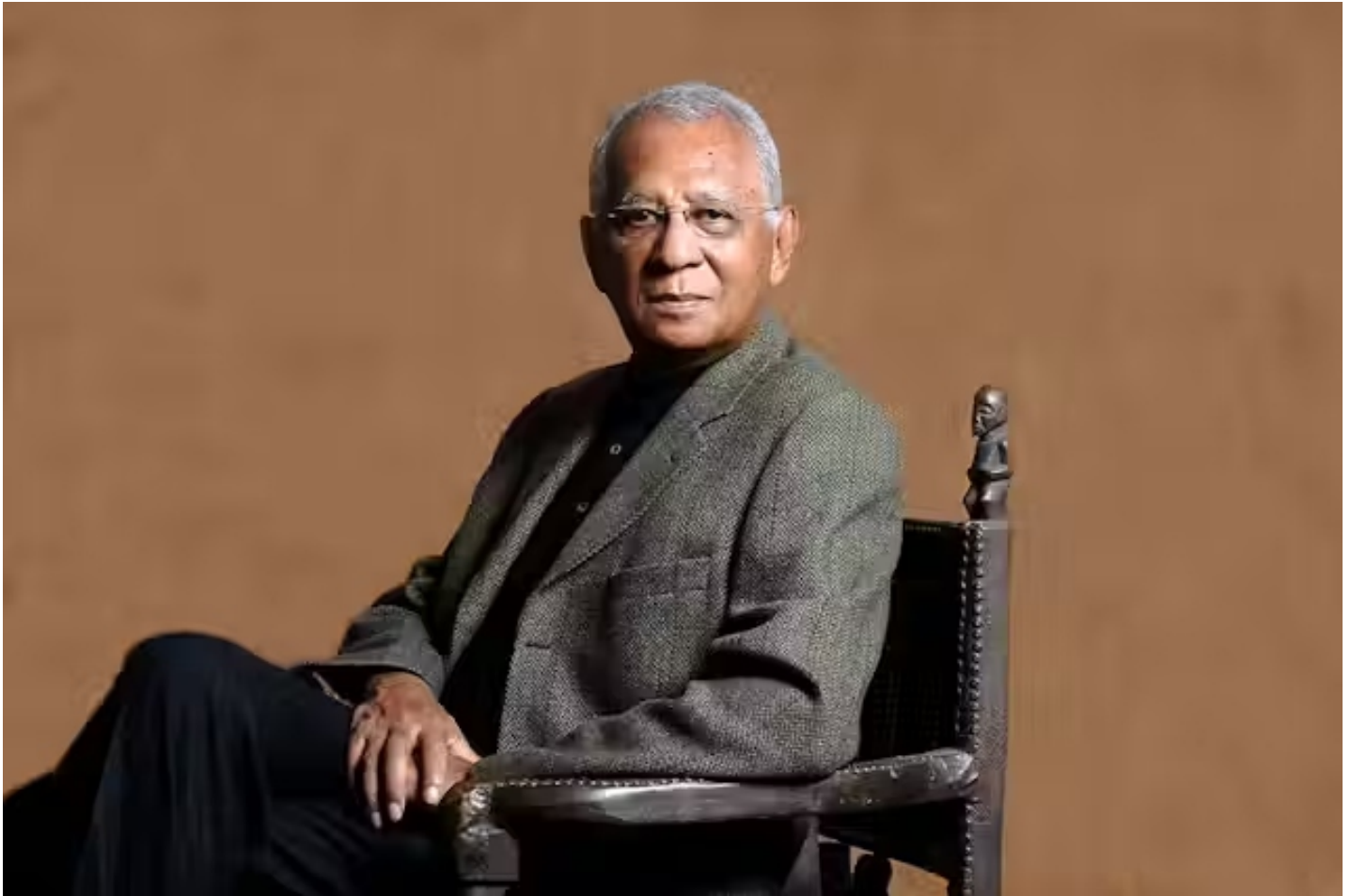
Thank you for joining us on this exploration of collaboration within organizations. We hope this edition sparks meaningful reflections and encourages proactive steps toward building stronger alliances in your workplace.

**Connect with Us:** For further insights or inquiries on labour-management strategies, we invite you to reach out through our designated contact form on our company website or connect with us through our official communication channel, [efandassociatesgh@gmail.com](mailto:efandassociatesgh@gmail.com).

Best regards,

**Author: Esther Fefoame, MBA**  
**Experienced Senior HR / ADR Management**  
**Professional**  
**Managing Partner, EF & Associates Ghana Limited.**

# Henri Lopes: Congolese Greatness And Humility



**W**ith five months to go until the 2024 Olympic Games (July 26 - August 11) in Paris, it's time to pay tribute to a great man: Henri Lopes, who passed away on November 2.

What is this mysterious link between the French capital, the City of Light, and one of the greatest diplomats in the contemporary history of the Republic of Congo?

## A Unique Diplomat

He was Minister of National Education from 1969 to 1971, Minister of Planning in 1973, Prime Minister from 1973 to 1975, Minister of Finance from 1977 to 1980, and Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1972.

At the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), he was appointed Senior International Civil Servant in 1981. The following year he became Assistant Director-General for Program Support (1982-85), then Assistant Director-General for Culture and Communication (1986-90), Assistant Director-General for Culture (1990-94), Assistant Director-General for External Relations (1994-96), and Deputy Director-General for Africa from 1996 to 1998.

In October 1998, he was appointed by President Denis Sassou-Nguesso as Ambassador of the Republic of Congo to France, a position he held until 2016.

## A Historic Intervention

What we don't know is that Henri Lopes moderated the fifteenth session of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee, held in Carthage from December 9 to 13, 1991.

As Assistant Director-General for Culture, he spoke on behalf of UNESCO's Director-General. In retrospect, his speech was historic: Henri Lopes began by expressing UNESCO's deep concern at the human tragedy caused by the armed conflict in Yugoslavia. He expressed UNESCO's dismay at the damage already done to Dubrovnik's old town during the conflict.

He then thanked the Tunisian government and people for inviting the fifteenth session of the World Heritage Committee to Carthage.

Henri Lopes informed the Committee that Angola, Bahrain, Cambodia, El Salvador, Ireland, Kenya, Saint Lucia and San Marino had become States Parties to the Convention in the last twelve months, bringing the total number of States Parties to 123.

Finally, he indicated that the World Heritage Convention was being taken into account in the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, in particular in the elaboration of a future instrument on biological diversity and in the formulation of "Agenda 21".

In conclusion, Henri Lopes informed the Committee of the efforts made to safeguard the Angkor monuments in Cambodia.

## A Unique Inscription

Above all, Henri Lopes and the Committee examined 29 new nominations for inclusion on the World Heritage List.

Henri Lopes thus decided to include Paris, banks of the Seine on the prestigious list.

Three criteria convinced Henri Lopes and the Heritage Committee to inscribe Paris:

- (i) it must represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
- (ii) it must bear witness to a considerable exchange of influences, over a given period or within a given cultural area, on the development of architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning or landscape design;
- (iv) which is an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates a significant period or periods in human history;

With regard to criterion (I), the quays of the Seine are dotted with a succession of architectural and urban masterpieces built between the Middle Ages and the 20th century, including Notre-Dame Cathedral and the Sainte-Chapelle, the Louvre Palace, the Palais de l'Institut, the Hôtel des Invalides, the Place de la Concorde, the École Militaire, the Hôtel de la Monnaie, the Grand Palais des Champs-Élysées, the Eiffel Tower and the Palais de Chaillot.

With regard to criterion (ii), certain buildings on the banks of the Seine, such as Notre-Dame and the Sainte-Chapelle, set a clear benchmark for the spread of Gothic architecture, while the Place de la Concorde and the perspective des Invalides influenced the urban planning of European capitals. The Haussmannian urbanism that marks the western part of the city has inspired the construction of major cities in the New World, particularly in Latin America. Last but not least, the Eiffel Tower, the Grand and Petit Palais, the Pont Alexandre III and the Palais de Chaillot are outstanding reminders of the universal exhibitions that were so important in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Concerning criterion (iv): brought together by a most majestic river landscape, the monuments, structures and representative buildings on the banks of the Seine in Paris illustrate in turn with perfection most of the styles, decorative arts and building methods used over nearly eight centuries.

The notion of integrity and authenticity had also caught

the attention of Henri Lopes and the Committee.

### **For One Thing, Paris is a River City.**

From the earliest human settlements, from prehistoric times to the Parisii people, the Seine has played both a defensive and an economic role.

Today's historic city, as it developed between the 16th and 20th centuries, reflects the changing relationship between river and city.

The clearly defined area between the Pont de Sully and the Pont d'Iéna is based on an ancient distinction between upstream and downstream.

Upstream, the port and the city of river transport; downstream, royal and aristocratic Paris.

It is this part of the Seine, along which the functions of the capital city have developed, that has been chosen.

The State's hold over the area through its achievements and legislation is extremely strong, enabling the property to be preserved in its entirety.

On the other hand, the completion and consolidation of the great river, urban and monumental perspectives of Paris date from the first half of the 20th century, with the Tokyo and Chaillot palaces.

The urban and visual integrity of the site (great vistas from the riverbanks) is vulnerable to the pressures of real estate development, vehicular traffic and tourist frequentation, and requires rigorous control to maintain its outstanding universal value intact.

### **A Profound Singularity**

He was an eminent Congolese personality who worked - on African soil - for the inclusion of Paris, banks of the Seine, on the World Heritage List, in application of the Convention adopted by UNESCO in 1972.

"Simplicity is the form of true greatness" wrote Francesco de Sanctis.

Henri Lopes' virtue, by which he voluntarily lowered himself before God and his fellow man, is now mingled with a sense of the inadequacy of his merits.

With the impression that already great in his being, his functions, his writings and his actions, the man suddenly becomes even greater with the discovery of the historical anecdote of 1991.

With a question: what other greatness hides his humility, this Congolese particularity?

Hachim FADILI  
Member of the Paris Bar  
Secretary of the Bana Ossio Association



# 13th African Games Kicks Off in Accra, Ghana under the theme “Experience the African Dream”.



The 13th African Games kicked off with a spectacular official opening ceremony in Accra, the capital of Ghana, on Friday night - 8th March 2024, bringing together tens of thousands of athletes, officials, and sports fans across the continent to celebrate the prestigious event.

The ceremony which held at the University of Ghana Sports Stadium in Accra, Ghana brought together Heads of State, high level dignitaries, athletes, officials and spectators from across the continent to mark the commencement of this awaited special event. The African Games brings together athletes from across the continent every four years. And the event is intended to showcase athletic talent, celebrate African cultural values and heritage, and promote solidarity, and integration. The theme for this year's 13th African Games is “Experience the African Dream”.

The opening ceremony of the African Games was graced by H.E. Nana Akufo Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana; H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of African Union Commission; H.E. Amb. Minata SAMATE CESSOUMA, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development (HHS) at the African Union Commission and a host of other dignitaries.

In his opening remarks, Ghanaian President Nana Addo

Dankwa Akufo-Addo said the Games presented an opportunity for Africa to use sports to unite the continent.

"The African Games is a celebration of unity, sportsmanship, and excellence across the African continent. As we gather here today, we embark on a journey of challenge and competition where nations come together to showcase the remarkable talents and spirit in us as Africans," the president said.

"We cherish diversity and recognize the strength it brings to our collective identity. Let us cherish the unique contributions of each nation represented here today. As we embrace our differences, we will surely come together as one African family," Akufo-Addo added.

The 13th African Games under the theme "Experience the African Dream" was marked by the participation of over 4,000 athletes competing in 29 sports disciplines, eight qualifying to the Paris 2024 Summer Olympics.

The ceremony included key Highlights such as:

- The Handing over ceremony of the AU flag by the AU Commission to the Government of Ghana.
- Traditional African performances and cultural displays



- Parade of nations with participating athletes
- Lighting of the African Games torch
- Welcome speeches by the President of Ghana, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and high-level dignitaries.
- Firework display and musical performances by renowned African artists.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The African Games, owned and organized by the African Union on behalf of its member states, brings together athletes from across the continent every four years, one year before the Olympics. This prestigious event showcases athletic talent, celebrates African cultural values and heritage, and promotes solidarity, and integration. Additionally, the Games offer a crucial and effective platform for fostering youth education, gender equality, and social cohesion, all important milestones for fulfilling some of the Agenda 2063 aspirations of The African We Want.

The Games is being organized in collaboration with the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA) and the Association of Africa Sports Confederations (AASC) following a Negotiated Agreement signed earlier in February 2023 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on the Management and Organization of the 13th Edition of the African Games.

This important continental event - The 13th African Games will be held in the following cities: Accra, Kumasi and Cape Coast from 8th -23rd March 2024.

The Local Organizing Committee (LOC) for the 13th African Games, dubbed Accra 2023, is determined to host a mega competition indeed one of its kind since its commencement in the year 1965 as All African Games when they were first held in Brazzaville, Congo DRC. The Committee, chaired by Dr. Kwaku Oforu-Asare, liaised closely with the Government of the Republic of Ghana through the Ministry of Youth and Sports to make

the Games a great success. The sector minister, Hon. Mustafa Ussif, deserves commendations for his continuous support and encouragement in this endeavour.

All the members of the Committee have collectively been pushing and prosecuting the agenda. Meanwhile, the Media and Communications Committee has been tasked to ensure that the publicity is upped and the Committee is strategizing to achieve this task.

Vice chairman of the media and Communications Sub-Committee, Ahmed Osman said: “We have started implementing the strategies. We have been on various radio stations to discuss the benefits the nation will derive from the Games as the host, for the first time in the history of the Games.”

Ghana, a beacon of Africa in all endeavors; Democracy, Rule of Law, Sports, a Stable Country, and all the positives had not hosted the Games, (African Games, not All African Games). The nation will benefit tremendously from hosting the Games. These include jobs, tourism, financial stability of the currency, and the expansion of the national and local economy.

It is hopeful that with the provision of the sports infrastructure at the University of Ghana, Legon, and the Borteyman (a suburb in Accra, Ghana), Accra and Ghana will have a quasi-capacity to be hosting international and national competitions.

“Presently, the nation does not have any accredited facility to host any international tournaments. Therefore, hosting the Games is a blessing to our budding athletes and stars of our beloved nation,” he stated.

All hands have been on deck to achieve the objective of the nation hosting this mega Games and winning more laurels. And we look forward to the whole of Africa and Africans in Diaspora (Global Africa) being happy and proud of the outcome of these games.

*Source: [www.accra2023ag.com](http://www.accra2023ag.com) , [www.fei.org](http://www.fei.org)*

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