



Presents:

Naija In Lights

Photography Exhibition

(Naija in Lights program was developed by StoryMi Academy and sponsored by CFI Media development. Ten young professional photographers were selected amongst over 70 candidates. From December 2022 to April 2023, they followed professionalising workshops in Kano and Lagos, and worked on their personal documentary projects under the guidance of highly recognized Nigerian photojournalists, Fati Abubakar and Andrew Esiebo.)

In collaboration with:



Naija In Lights

Photography Exhibition



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Introduction

The beginning of the year 2023 has witnessed so much uncertainty in modern Nigerian history; from election unpredictability, hanging tensions and unexpected political decisions. The last campaign was a unique moment in the socio-political equation; that most citizens witnessed and endured, with stress, mixed feelings of joy, tears and fear.

But now that 200 million Nigerians are back to their daily life and their usual hustle, how many of them will remember?

These memories come to life through the lenses and photography of the ten participants of the Naija in Lights program ; telling their own stories of the 2023 general election, and hence, contributing positively to the national history of their country.

They followed first time voters in Lagos, women candidates and electors in Kano, the indigenous people of Abuja FCT, they listened to their aspirations, their dreams and expectations from their Leaders. They shed lights on broken promises, abandoned projects in Nasarawa; cities plunged into darkness or rural areas with no access to portable sources of water in Oyo State, hoping to be advocates of social change and tools for accountability and good governance. Their pictures capture our cityspaces and walls covered with posters of ego and commensurate power.

Their photographs do not show a broken state or a failed democracy. They show resilience and strength, like these students who were forced to turn into fashion designers or musicians during the academic strikes. They show volunteers of local NGOs who have dedicated their lives to make sure people register to vote and get their PVC's. They shed lights on anonymous yet amazing individuals, like “Ambassador Sani for One Nigeria”, a disabled man who sleeps in the streets of Abuja, but makes sure that his green and white clothes are well washed and his hat is pristine clean when he goes to cast his vote for his favourite candidate.

They are the future of the representation of the African continent, and their work will mark a stone in the archives of Nigerian history.

Sophie Bouillon

Founder and Director of StoryMi Academy

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How volunteers work behind the scene to guard free and fair elections and defend good governance

In the midst of a global political dissatisfaction and mistrust, some people still believe that a democratic election process is the answer to a better life for all.

For months, hundreds of Nigerian volunteers and observers go from rural areas to the middle-class neighborhoods and dedicate their time and energy to encourage citizens to cast their votes, for whoever they deem fit.

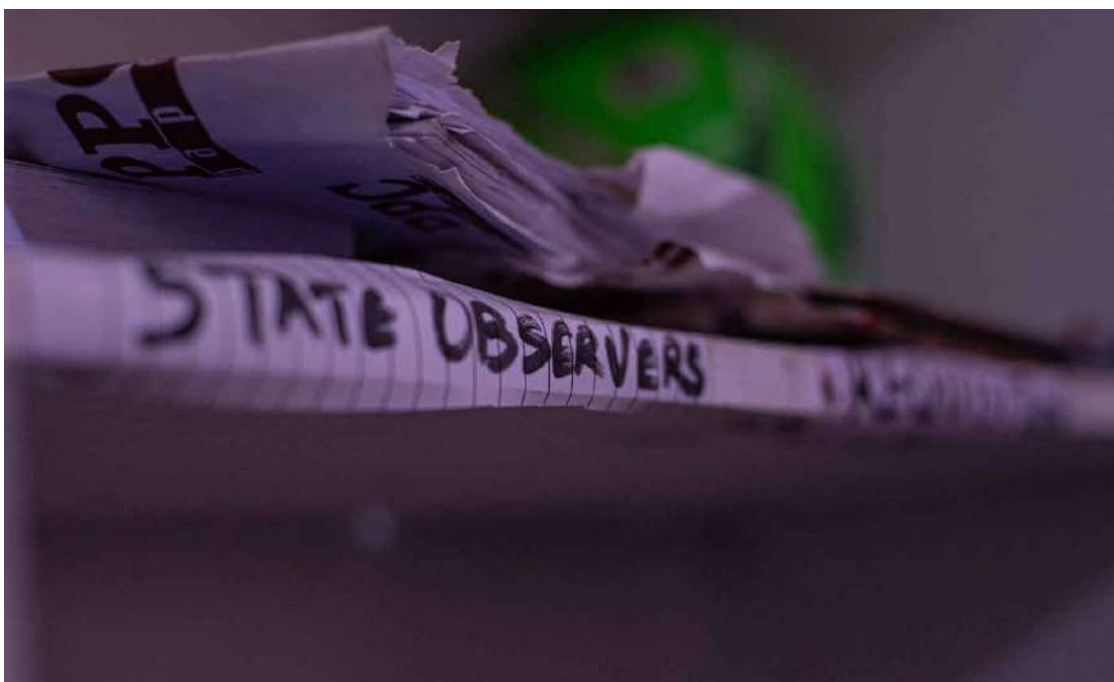
Mike Semiye, head of The Dean Initiative, one of the Nigerian NGO's promoting good governance, says that it has been his "calling" for almost 15 years. With his team of young activists, they encourage citizens to register, go and collect their PVC's, and ensure that their votes count and their voices are heard.

Such NGO's like The Dean Initiative or Connected Development, empower people and help them access valid and politically unbiased informations during the electoral campaign. In this project, I am exploring the role of such organisations, which are working behind the scene for a better Nigeria.

When most of the people complain about bad governance or have lost hope in the electoral system, I found it essential to shed lights on these positive and encouraging initiatives.



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ABANDONED

FATIMA YUSUF

www.instagram.com/xahrashots

ABANDONED

FATIMA YUSUF

www.instagram.com/xahrashots



Fatima Yusuf is a photojournalist as well as a shopkeeper based in Lafia. She has been documenting people from all walks of life (especially the Fulanis, she is a Nupe) with a special eyes for cultural festivals (recently the Durbar Festival in Lafia and the Odu Festival in Doma) or traditional activities (henna applying, calabash carving). She studied microbiology from the University of Abuja.

ABANDONED

FATIMA YUSUF

www.instagram.com/xahrashots

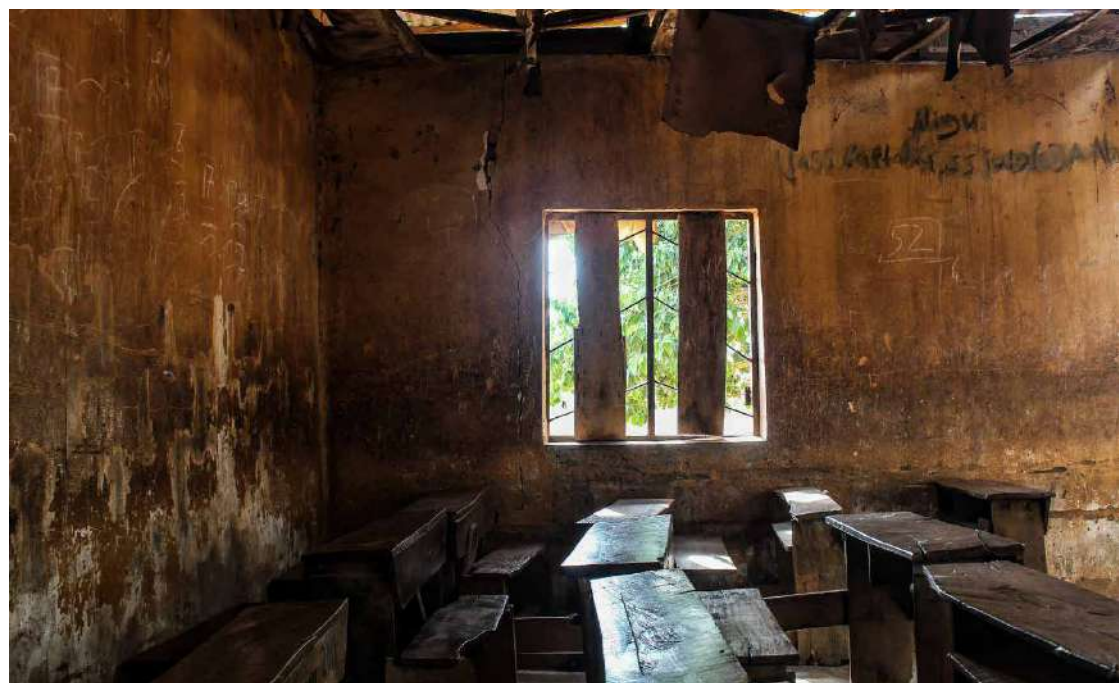
“Abandoned” is an overview of abandoned government projects into the rural areas of Nigeria, a reflection of democratic failure by politicians. In Nasarawa State, where these pictures were taken, schools have no roofs, villages have no clean water, health facilities are ruined and non-functional. These are the kind of places where my grandparents lived in. Those are my roots.

These series of photographs show emptiness, and abandonment. I deliberately chose not to show faces, or active life in the villages, to highlight the disappearance of the State and secure anonymity of the people I photographed. These were taken in Nasarawa State, but almost all rural areas in Nigeria are facing the same lack of amenities and neglect, despite promises made by politicians every four years.

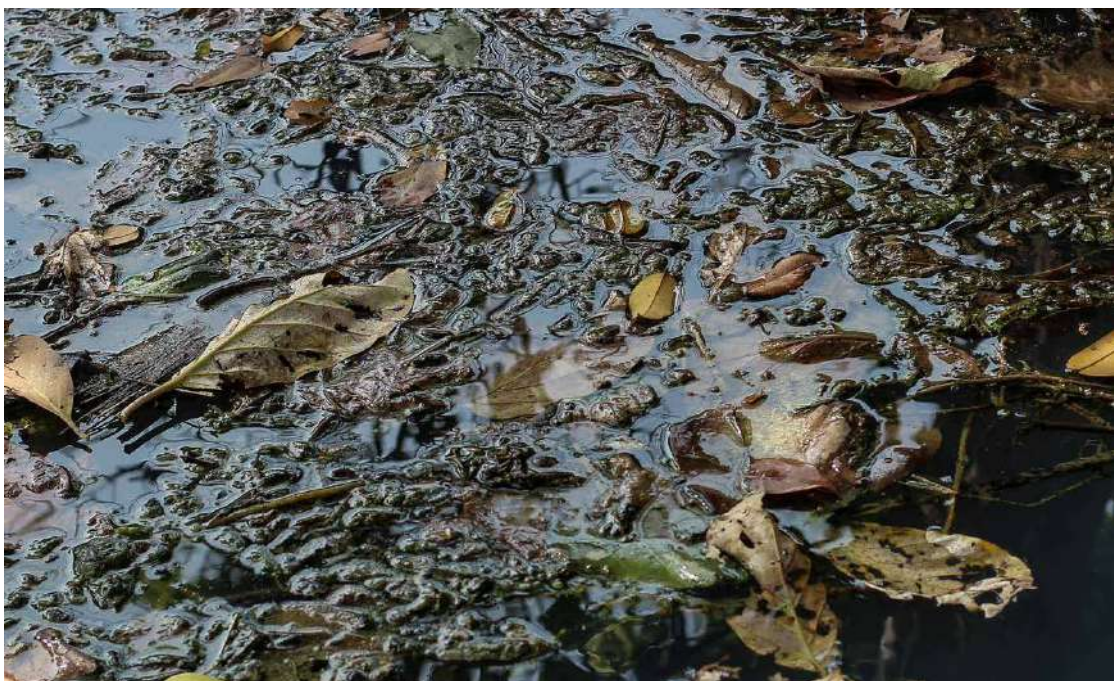


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Mo' Advert Mo' Power

FAWAZ OYEDEJI

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FAWAZ OYEDEJI

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Fawaz Oyedeji is a photojournalist. His work (about the boom of private security companies, the indigenous Otto community, protests against police violence or life as a student cadet) has been published by The Financial Times, exhibited in Rwanda and Germany and awarded major international grants : by the Eugene Smith Foundation, the Bronx Documentary Center and the Daniele Tamagni Foundation. He says : "What drives me is to keep records. I love the seemingly mundane. That's how we can reflect on who we are." He studied history and communication at Yaba college of technology and the university of Lagos.

Mo' Advert Mo' Power

FAWAZ OYEDEJI

www.fawazoyedeji.com.

Every four years, when elections are approaching, thousands and thousands of party-political posters start to invade our cityscape. This has become almost a campaign weapon for parties' rivalries over urban space and for politicians to demonstrate their power and demarcate their territories. It is a visual performance of power.

My work explores the role of political posters in everyday party politicking in Nigeria to the extent that they have become an almost normal or naturalized habitual repertoire of political action.

Printing in Nigeria is a growing industry that is becoming increasingly important to political culture. It is worth millions, despite still using artisanal methods in most places. Posters, banners, and billboards are never big enough for politicians to impregnate our minds with their electoral ambition. Campaign after campaign, the posters are twice as large, twice as tall, and always more dominant than the previous one.

The candidates want to convince voters that they would be the best choice to run their life, through portraits that mimic historical and reassuring political leaders, either smiling or with emotionless faces. For the few months of the campaign, they are everywhere, on every corner, every street or bridge, and major road... We, as citizens, experience the hyper-visibility of politics before the images tarnish and the promises fade.



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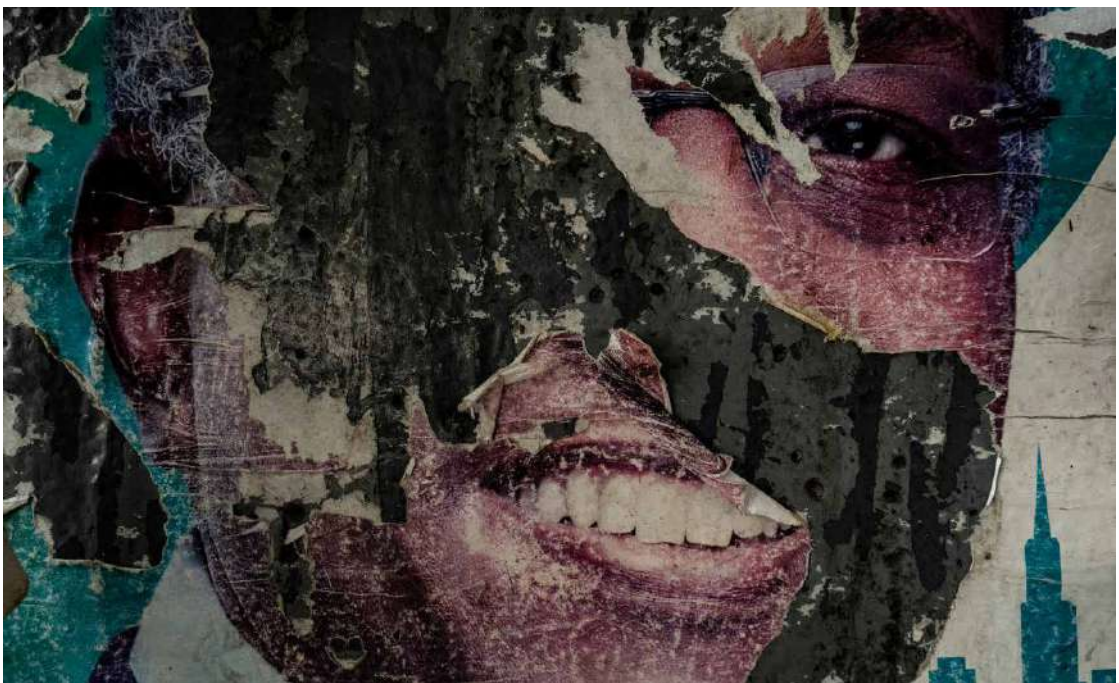












ÀWA LÓ KÀN

ANANOU EBENEZER JEAN-FIDÈLE

[instagram.com/jean_fidele](https://www.instagram.com/jean_fidele)

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***Jean-Fidèle Ebenezer Ananou** is a photographer who combines documentary projects with commercial commissions : he has photographed dozens of weddings and hundreds of individuals for portrait sessions out of his Igando base. He has a thing for profiles : followed an orphan, called Faith, for his series *The Vacuum Loss Creates a student, called John* whom you are about to meet. His most famous single image was captured in the streets of Lagos (Ogunlana in Ikosi-Ketu) and was exhibited at the Didi museum. He is a member of*

ÀWA LÓ KÀN

ANANOU EBENEZER JEAN-FIDÈLE

[instagram.com/jean_fidele](https://www.instagram.com/jean_fidele)

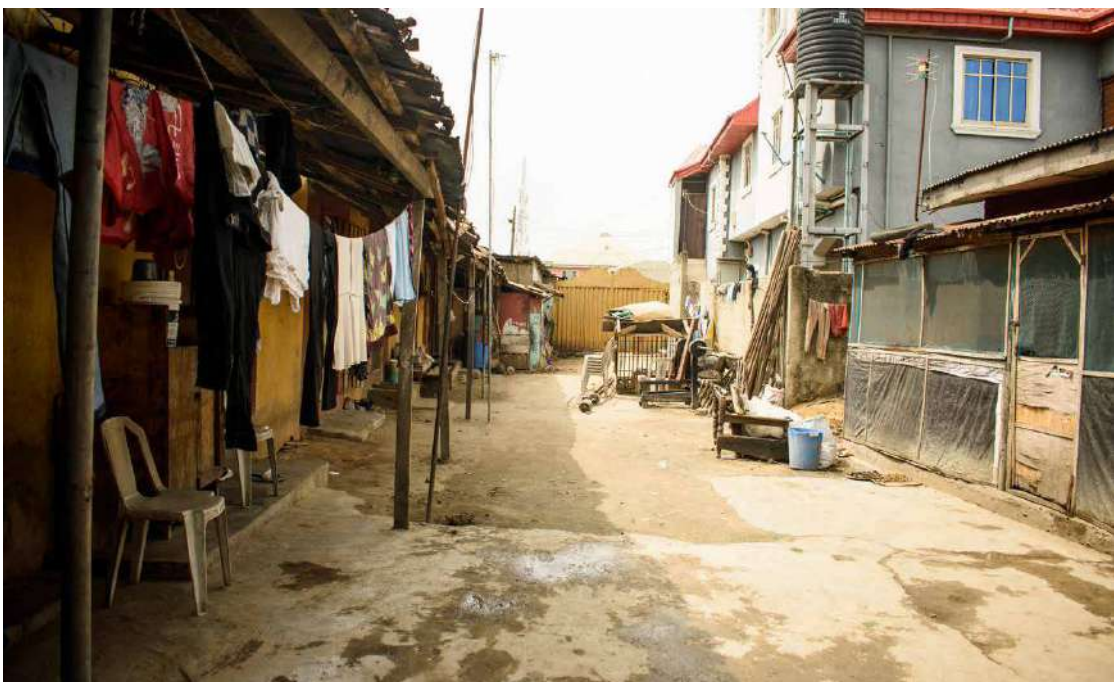
According to the official statistics, over 93 million people registered to vote in the 2023 general elections. Close to 40% of them are young people and one-third of them are students. They are the first generation after the military regimes, and they strongly believe that their votes will help them improve their standard of living and make their educational journeys easier.

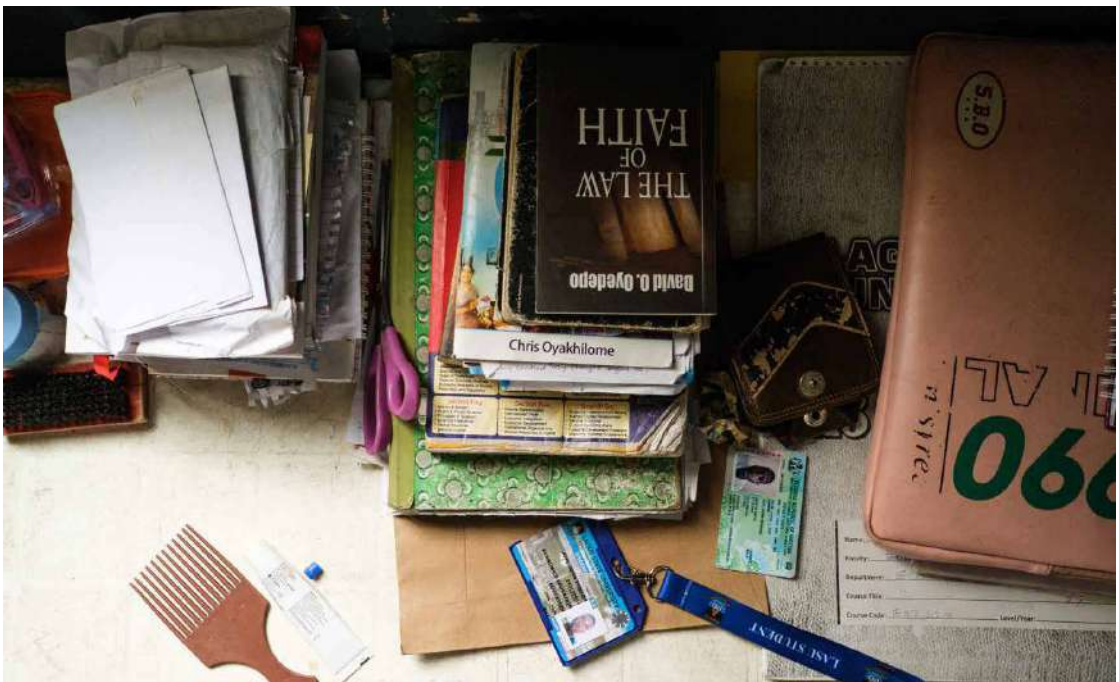
Àwa ló kàn (“Our turn”, in Yoruba) is a photo project that follows the daily life of a student who is about to vote for the 1st time. John Joyi, born in 1998 is a student of Economics Education at Lagos State University. Like most students his age, he shares his struggles in finding decent accommodation, access to electricity and clean running water.

Despite the difficulties in getting his voter's card, he never got discouraged, and insisted on making his vote counts, hoping that it would make a difference.



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HIS EXCELLENCY, MR. AMBASSADOR "ONE NIGERIA"
JOHNPETERS ANYANWU
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JOHNPETERS ANYANWU

www.jp-anyanwu.com



Johnpeters Anyanwu is a photographer. His series about Nigerian undocumented migrants returning from Libya, after failing to reach Europe has been shown all over Nigeria. His Fulani boys series was recently shown at the German embassy and his street soccer in villages at the Japan embassy. He often works on commission for humanitarian organizations (Unesco, WFDP, LifeUs) and government agencies. He studied sociology at the University of Abuja and sits on the board of the Abuja-based Dbegotin foundation,

HIS EXCELLENCY, MR. AMBASSADOR “ONE NIGERIA”

JOHNPETERS ANYANWU

www.jpnyanwu.com

Sani Ibrahim, AKA “One Nigeria”, was once given the title of “transformation ambassador” by former president Goodluck Jonathan. Since then, the man, walking with clutches, or shuffling the streets of Abuja on his wheelchair, has been taking this title with high sense of pride: his purpose in life is to advocate for a better Nigeria. Disabled by polio, Mr. Ibrahim was once sent to Ghana, where he was used by some unscrupulous individuals to beg on the streets. This harmful experience shaped his attachment for his country, for which he then dedicated his life.

This photo project is to showcase the daily life of this outstanding man, who despite being homeless, and disabled, would always keep his head high and his hopes undaunted. As a photojournalist, I followed “Ambassador Sani” during a very decisive period of the 2023 presidential campaign, in which he actively took part, campaigning for his favorite candidate.

“One Nigeria”, as his friends call him, is a Nigerian of a kind: not material driven, not religious or ethnically driven, he reads about politics, aspires for a better education system, and hates corruption. His strength has overshadowed his disability, and can encourage and inspire greater inclusion, representation, and accessibility in political spheres and in our society as a whole.



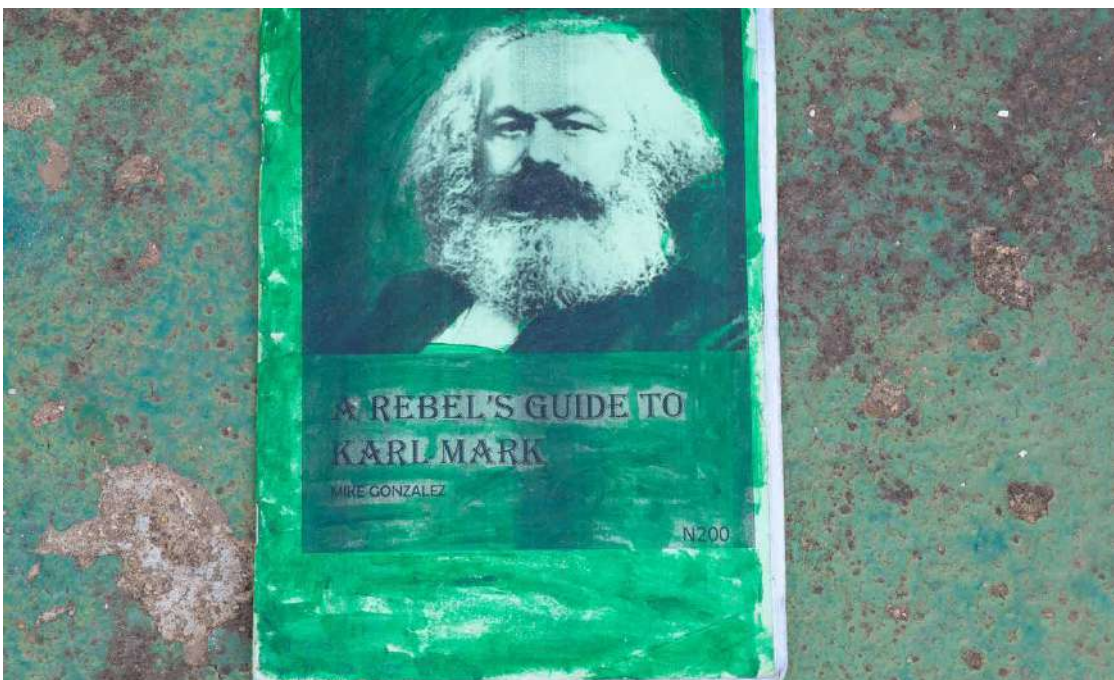
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A white lab coat is shown with a green and white striped tie. The tie has the text "HUMAN BEING LIKE YOU LOVE AND RESPECT PEACE ALL" printed in green. A green pen is visible in the pocket of the lab coat.

HUMAN
BEING
LIKE YOU
LOVE AND
RESPECT
PEACE ALL



FRIDAY 3-3-2023

BREAKING

Politicsnigeria.com

"We won the election, we will prove it" - Peter Obi makes vow.

Politics: Sahara Reporters

How Governor Makinde Withdrew Support For Tinubu Last Minute After...

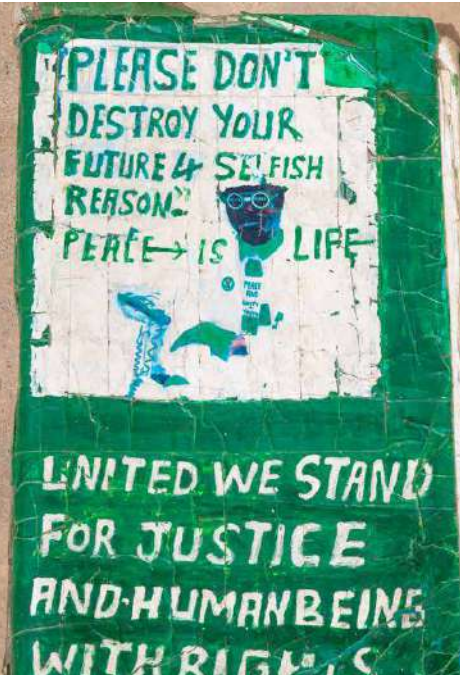
Video: Watch Emotional Moment Peter Obi Broke Down In Tears During...

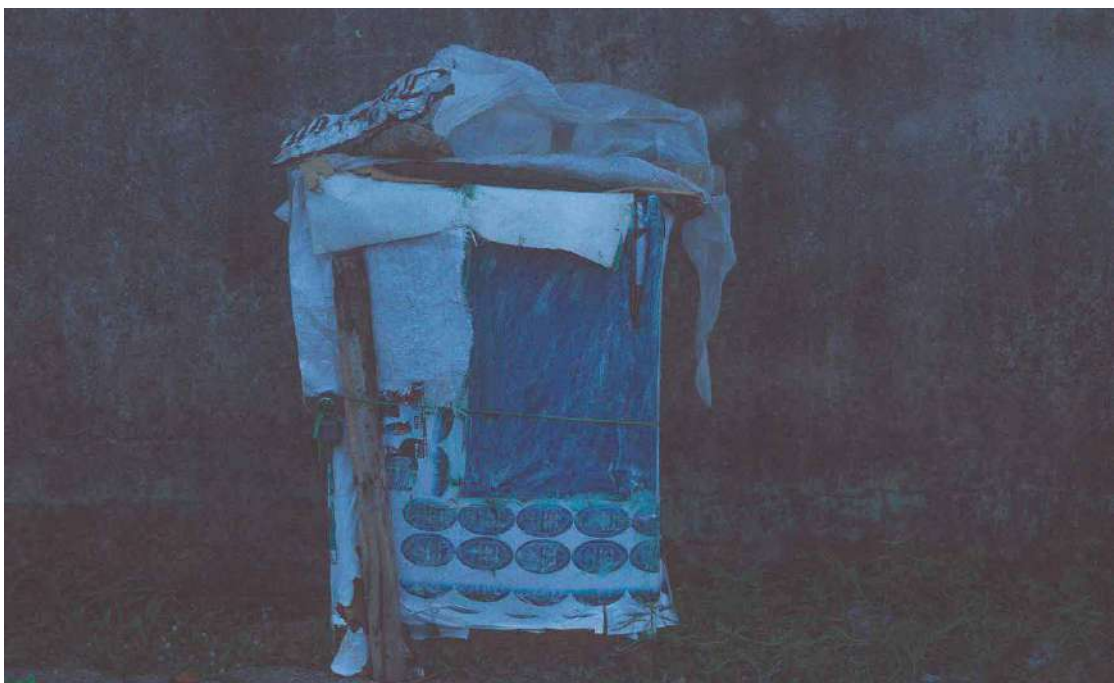
Tinubu's Camp reacts as Obi Vows to go to Court.

You need to be Patient - Tanke Yakasai tells Peter Obi.

Peter Obi Sends message to Nigerians ahead March 11 Poll

Election results: Tinubu Will not be President of Nigeria - Ezeife

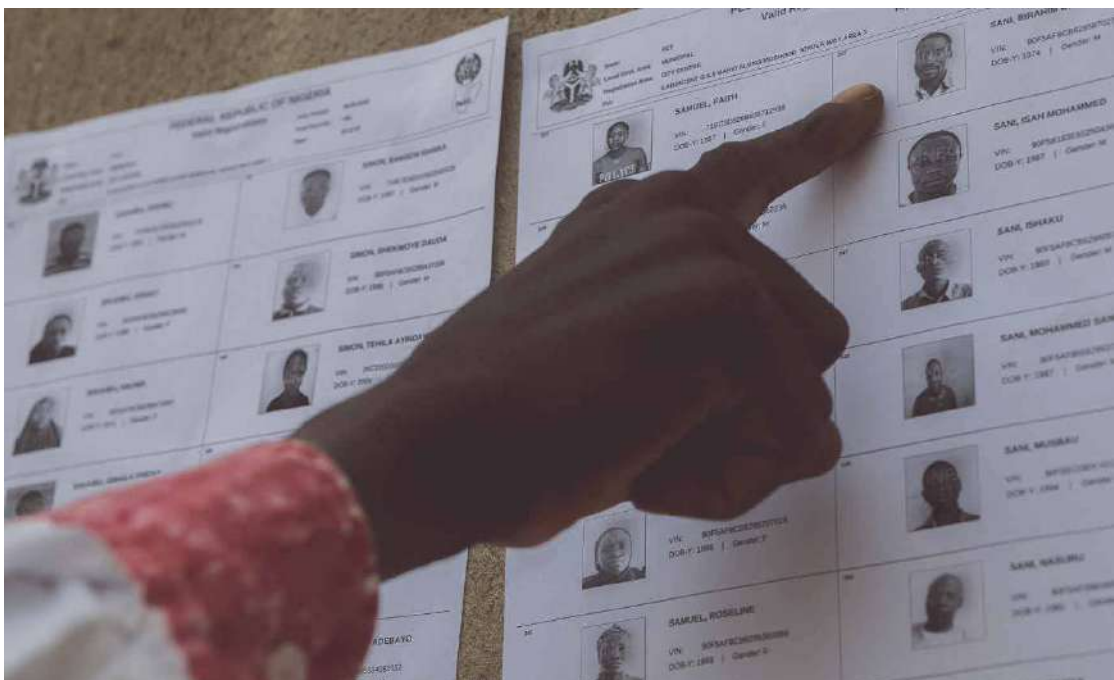














NO MAN'S LAND

LUCY LADIDI ATEKO.

Instagram : [ladilucie](#)

NO MAN'S LAND

LUCY LADIDI ATEKO.

Instagram : ladilucie

***Lucy Ladidi Elukpo** is a photojournalist with The Guardian in Abuja, with many front pages to her credit - from EndSARS protests to the Bring Back our Girls movement. She was awarded the NB Photojournalist of the Year award in 2018 for her news coverage. She studied Botany at the University of Jos.*



NO MAN'S LAND

LUCY LADIDI ATEKO.

Instagram : ladilucie

In February 1976, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) of Nigeria was created and the life of the Gbagyi people changed forever. With the aim of decentralising the capital city from Lagos to a more central location, the land of the Gbagyi tribe, in the center of Nigeria, was chosen without their consent or even any discussion.

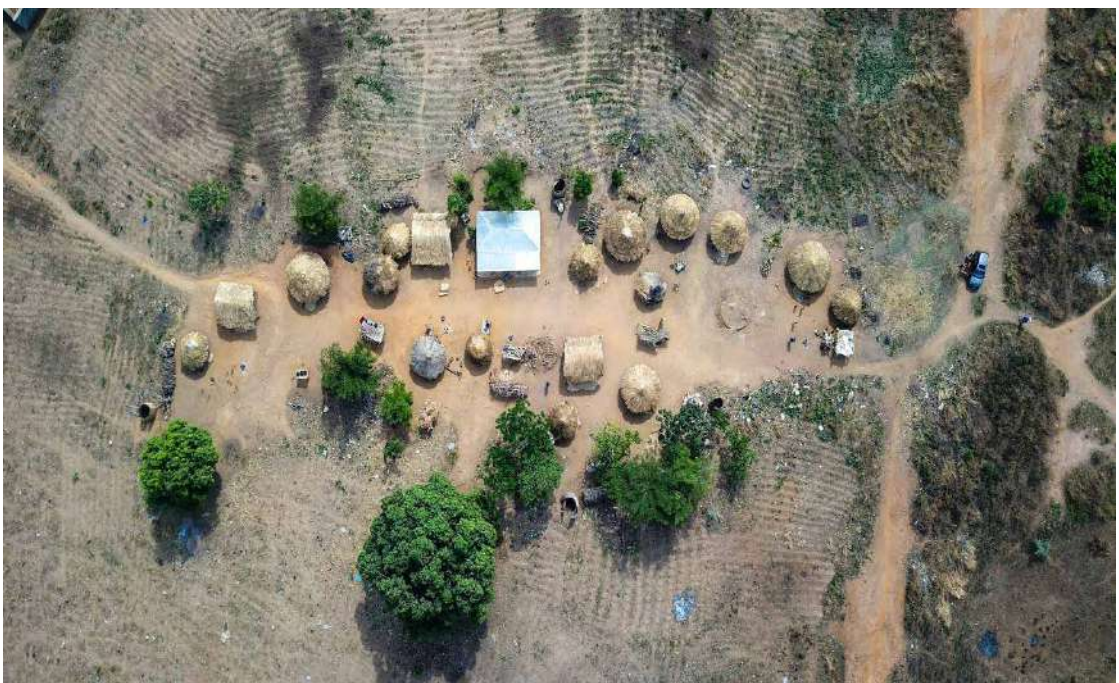
I have lived in Abuja for more than a decade now, and with my work as a photojournalist for the Guardian, I have interacted numerous times with their leaders and these original inhabitants of the land.

They feel that their land was forcefully taken from them without proper compensation which rendered them stateless and marginalized. The indigenous people of FCT refer to their land as a "no man's land", excluding them from key decision making institutions, denying them from their economic, political and social rights in their ancestral land.

But some want things to change, and they hoped to see the last political campaign as a tool for a better representation in the Parliament.



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THE RISE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MUHAMMAD MUBARAK

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THE RISE OF WOMEN VOTERS

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Muhammad Mubarak, aka Moha Sheikh, is a photographer and drone pilot photographer, based in Kano. He has traveled extensively across the Sahel documenting the heritage and traditions of northern Nigeria and Niger (including the Maigatari cattle market, and many Wodaabe and Tuareg festivals) One of his recent assignments was about the desertification of Yobe's Yusufari Oasis. He occasionally works for corporate clients such as Nestle and the Heritage bank. He is a graduate of Bayero University in Kano.

THE RISE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MUHAMMAD MUBARAK

www.moaseikh.com

Less than 10% of the candidates who contested for the 2023 Nigerian general elections were women. And out of this small number, 96% of them lost to their male counterparts.

But Nigerian women do not only face barriers as political contestants. They struggle to have their voice heard in the electoral process as voters, journalists, electoral administrators or civil society representatives, ... All the pillars of a healthy democratic system.

In the north of Nigeria particularly, their rights are frequently undermined by cultural expectations, religion and social norms, exclusion from male-dominated decision-making platforms, lack of financial resources, discrimination and widespread violence. But slowly things are changing.

In Kano, the electoral campaign was extremely tensed, as the opposition was running and gaining popularity. More than in the past, women voters came out in numbers to support their candidates and dared to demonstrate their support in public spaces.



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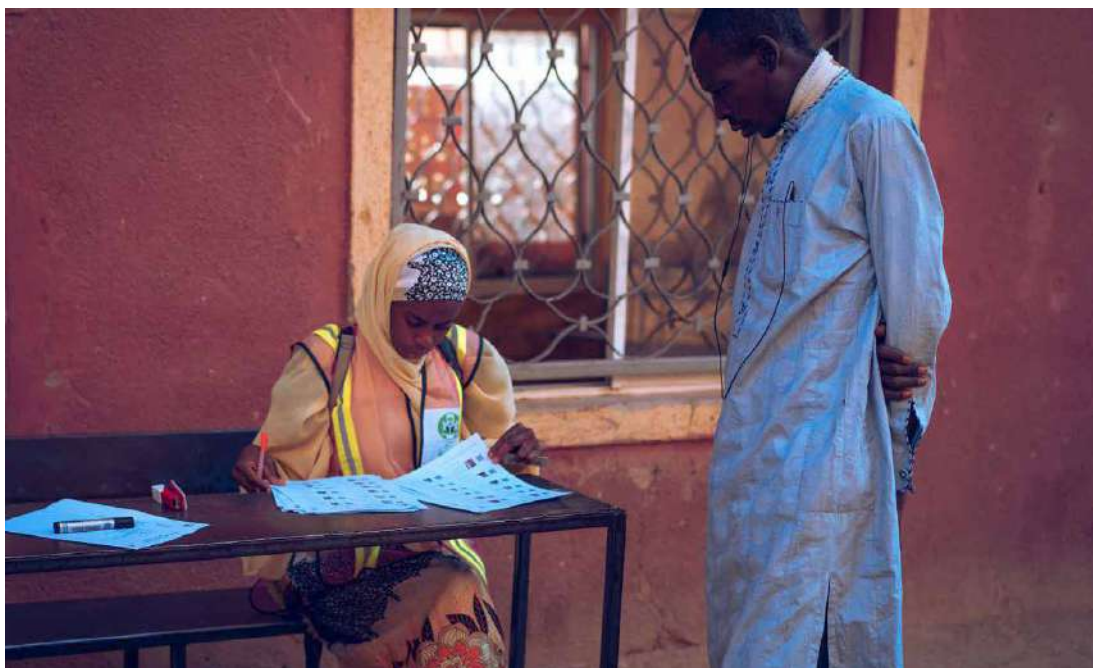
















THE LAST DROP

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THE LAST DROP

SEUN ADENIYI

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***Seun Adeniyi** is a photojournalist. He freelances for news organizations, including the Agence France-Presse and works as a communication officer for the Kuta Art Foundation in Abeokuta. His photographs have been exhibited at the Lagos Photo Festival. He has a degree in linguistics and Nigerian language with a specialty in Yoruba culture from Kwara State University.*



THE LAST DROP

SEUN ADENIYI

www: seunadeniyi.com

The inhabitants of Ilogun Orile, Abule Ila, Olowonyo, and Omi Lande, communities situated in the northern part of Ogun State have been surviving with hardly any water. In 2010, the government brought in a traditional borehole. But after 3 days, the engine got missing. The authorities had already left, letting the villagers back to their previous hardships, which are only getting worse year after year.

In this region, the land is fertile and the vegetation is rich. But, because of the city and rural population's high growth, the ongoing conflicts for the farmlands with cattle herders, and the rise of global temperature, rivers are shrinking, and water has become scarce and muddy.

Among the communities, where this project was carried out, only one of them has access to a borehole and all the other villages depend on it for drinking water. For washing, cooking, or bathing, or for those who can't afford the N100 containers, filled up with the precious liquid, have to source for it at non-perennial rivers or tiny springs.

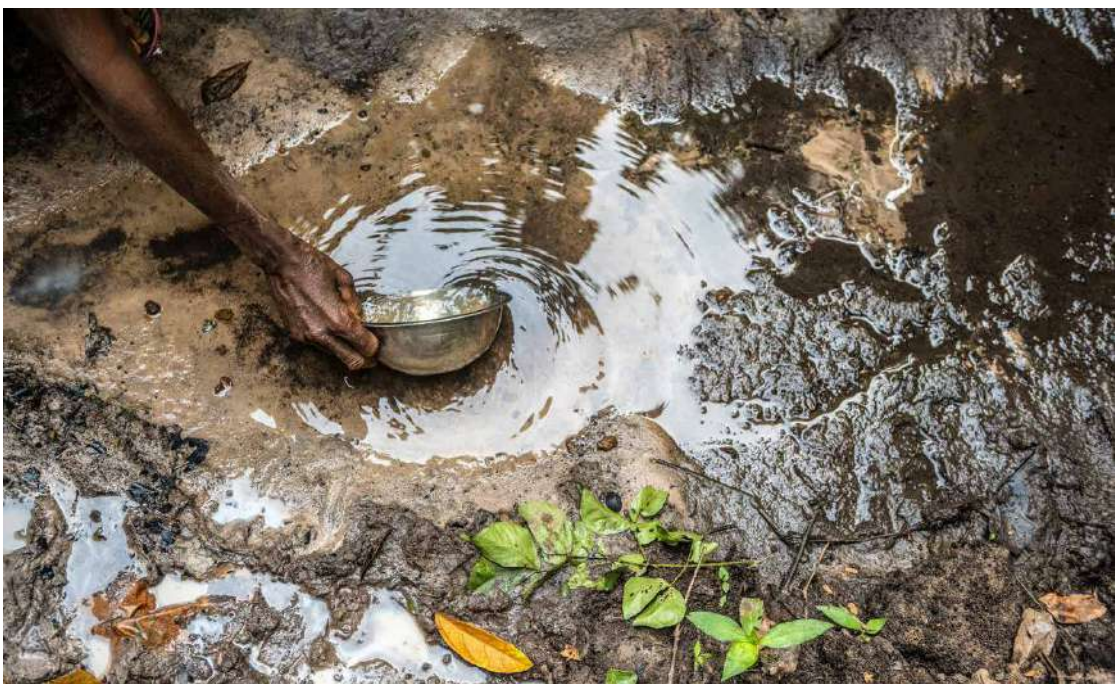
This situation has direct consequences on the health of the people, especially the children who are often sent kilometers away to fetch water for their families. The lack of irrigation systems also affects agriculture production which they depend on to survive, and aggravates the rural-urban migration.

In these communities, during the electoral campaign, parties sent delegates and pasted posters. They made promises that the basic needs would soon be met. But these false assurances were repeated prior to the election, which reinforced the community's mistrust.



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LIVING OFF THE GRID

TOYIN ADEDOKUN

www.toyinadedokun.com



LIVING OFF THE GRID

TOYIN ADEDOKUN

www.toyinadedokun.com

Toyin Adedokun is a documentary photographer. He has produced long form features - both personal and commissioned - about floods in Ogun State, about the twin capital of the world (that is Igboora in Oyo State), about child amputees, and about traditional palm oil production- His work has been exhibited at the Lagos PhotoFestival two years in a row. He has a degree in business administration from Kwara State university.

LIVING OFF THE GRID

TOYIN ADEDOKUN

www.toyinadedokun.com

Access to electricity is often taken for granted in today's world. In Saki, one of the major towns of Oyo State South West of Nigeria, babies are born in the dark.

Nurses use mobile phones to perform deliveries at night. In the markets, women vendors sell under paraffin lights, bakers cook their bread under torch lights. Solar panels are a luxury for a few, even though they have become more and more used by small businesses.

For more than a decade this community of over 500.000 inhabitants live with just a few hours of electricity a week. It affects schooling, business development and health of the people, as much as it increases the cost of living and incite rural exode.

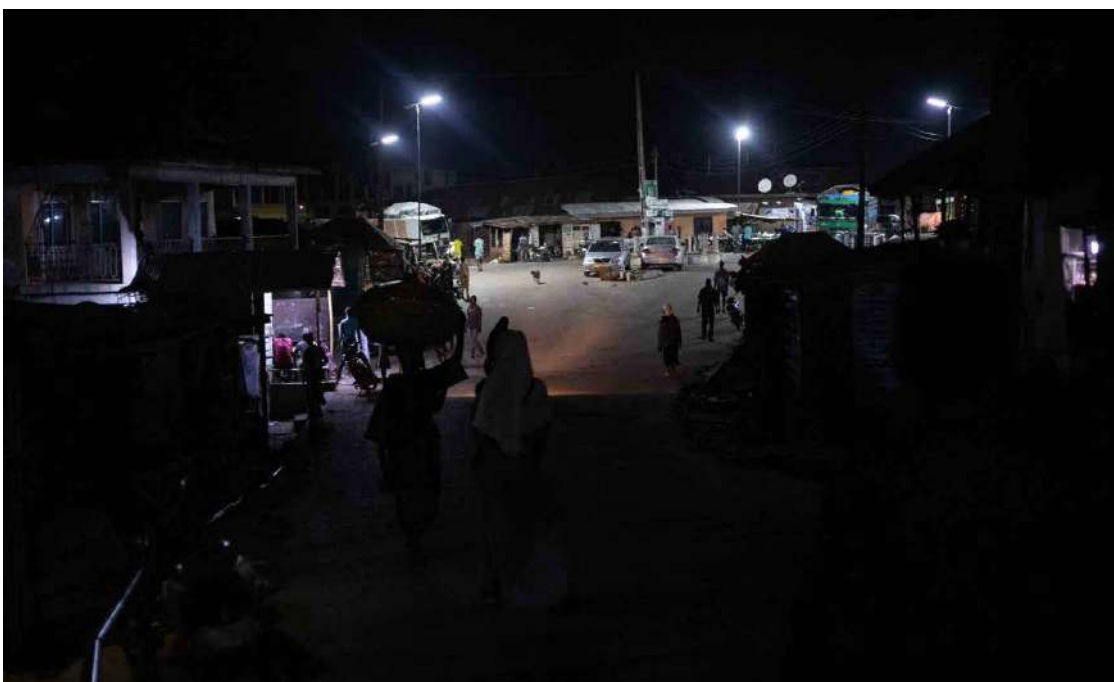
I came across this community, while documenting the work of Barrister Kahreema, a female politician who was running for house of assembly under Saki constituency, for a minor party. Following her daily life and her campaign for a better Nigeria, made me realize the challenges faced by the people who were called to vote during the last elections.

Every four years, electricity is used as a political tool. A transformer was once given to a neighborhood in Saki, but the lack of cables have made it useless and it sits there, in the middle of the town like a monument for long gone promises.

Living off the grid is part of a series of documentary photographs which are aiming to capture stark realities, untold struggles, and inspiring resilience of communities grappling with basic needs in Nigeria; electricity, water and education.



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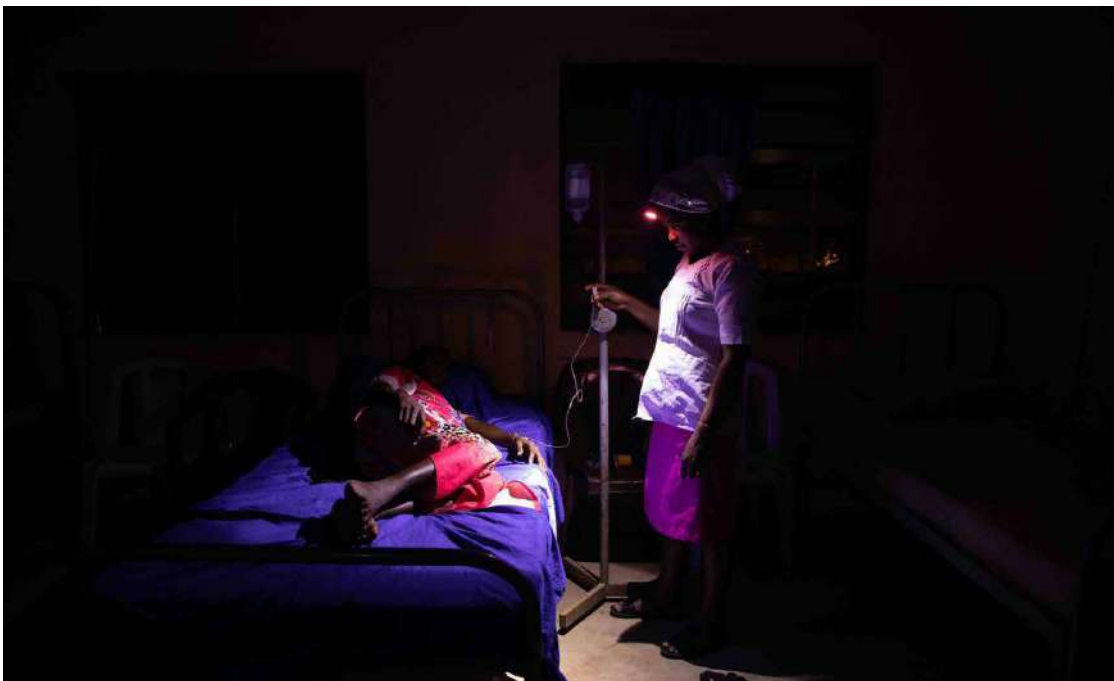


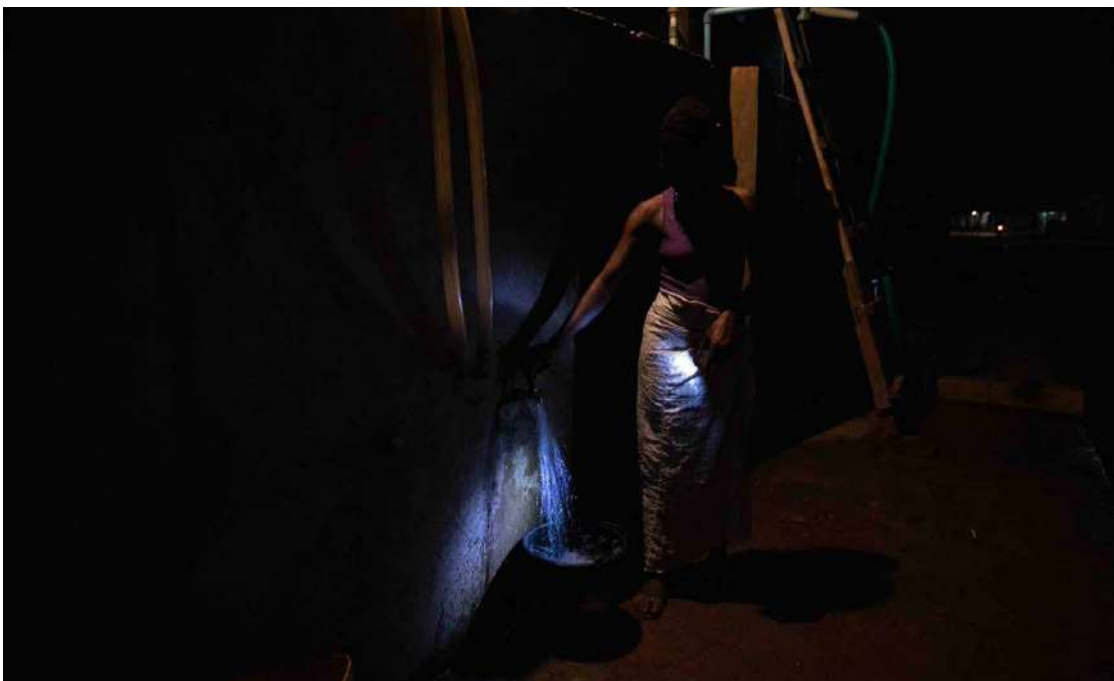












INTERRUPTED CYCLES

TAIWO AINA

www.taiwoaina.com

INTERRUPTED CYCLES

TAIWO AINA

www.taiwoaina.com

Taiwo Aina is a photojournalist. She recently had her coverage of Peter Obi's presidential campaign and of the Nigerian cash crisis published by the New York Times. Her documentary work has been featured in the Guardian UK : "I just wanted to push these stories out to the world..." So out to the world they went : the floods in Koton Karfe, a fishing and farming community on the banks of the river Niger near Lokoja. And how boxing is transforming the lives of young 6 women she met at a gym in VI. "I understood right away how they felt. Whenever I have my camera, I'm empowered". The series, called Game of confidence, became her first solo exhibition, right here at the Alliance Française.



INTERRUPTED CYCLES

TAIWO AINA

www.taiwoaina.com

Since 1999, academic strikes have been regularly affecting tertiary education, leaving students' pursuits on pause. Despite these promises, the state of the educational system remains unaltered, failing to meet expectations of seamlessness and excellence. For students and lecturers, it is often a time of financial hardship and boredom, but also it can be an opportunity for self-reflection.

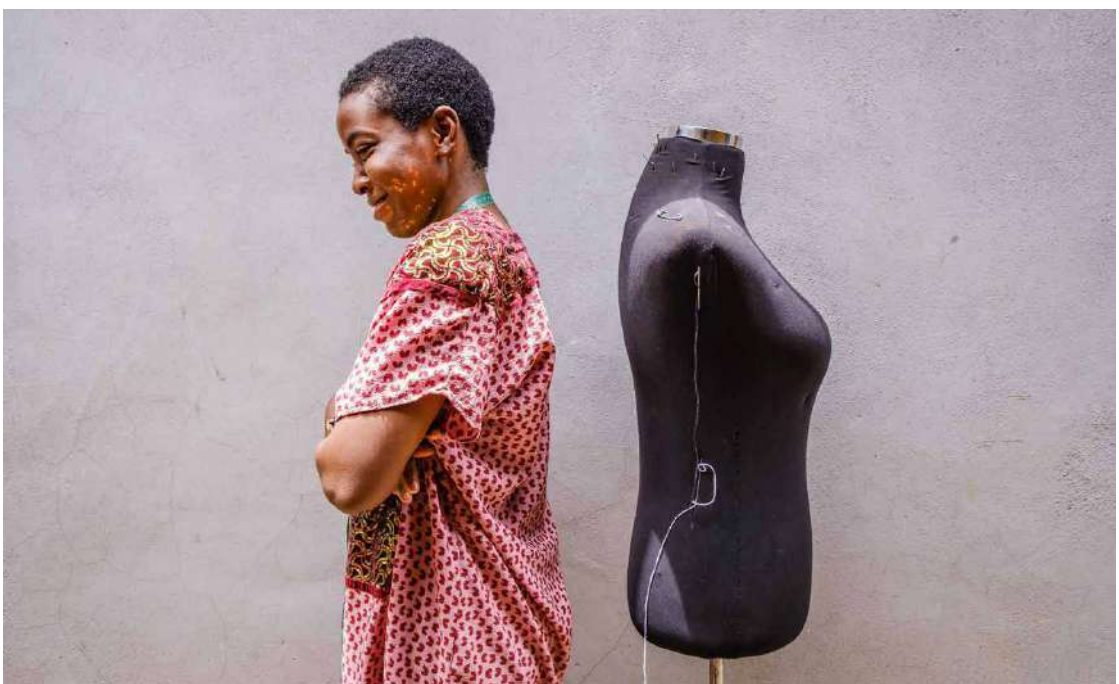
I personally turned to photography during a 9-month strike at the University of Ilorin, in 2020 and developed my career and grew my passion. This is what I wanted to document in this personal photographic project.

Christabel, Philip, Solomon, and Dayo are all Nigerian undergraduates. I followed their daily life, and how academic strike has affected their studies and shifted their career path. Now back on campus, most of the students have kept their businesses going, to enable them to make a living and support their family. From Mass communication to fashion design, from engineering to playing the saxophone professionally, or biology to photography, these stories show the resilience of the young Nigerian generation, who will turn obstacles into new opportunities.



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Sophie Bouillon

The founder and director of StoryMi academy is an award winning journalist. She spent most of her career in Africa, first as a freelance journalist for several international media. She relocated on a permanent basis to Nigeria in 2016, where she worked with Agence France-Press (AFP) as a deputy director in the Lagos bureau. She is currently the director and coordinator of the Hausa Service for Radio France Internationale

(RFI). Sophie is an accomplished author with three books to her name. Manuwa Street, her last book, was published at Farafina Books in 2022. She founded StoryMi academy with the goal of upscaling media and journalism and giving opportunities to the new generation of Nigerian reporters. She is currently the youngest ever recipient of the highest award in French Press, the Albert Londres Prize.

Workshop Facilitators



Andrew Esiebo

A visual storyteller who integrates Multimedia practice and artistry to illuminate reportage on Sexuality, Gender, Politics, Football, Pop Culture, Migration, Religion and Spirituality. His works have been published globally in Books, Magazines and websites including; The National Geographic, New York Times, Courrier International, Washington Post Financial Times, Guardian Online amongst others. A social Justice advocate with his brand of journalism, he continues to work with several local and international institutions. He is considered as one of the best African photojournalist of his generation.

www.andrewesiebo.com



Fati Abubakar

A documentary photographer, Photojournalist and a Health worker based in Nigeria. She uses photography to highlight issues at the communal level. This has led to her being commissioned to work with UNICEF, international alert, Action aid and other organisations. Her project titled “Bits of Borno” highlights the societal struggles in her hometown Maiduguri, after years of suffering from the siege of insurgency and terrorism. This project garnered international acclaim and brought the plight of her people to the Global stage. Her pictures have been published internationally by New York Times, BBC, Reuters, AFP, CNN ,Voice of America, Newsweek Europe amongst others. She is currently visiting lecturer in media and art at Duke Kunshan University, China.

www.fatiabubakar.com



Olayinka Sangotoye

Olayinka Sangotoye, a visual artist who specializes in industrial design and a two-time National Art competition award winner. A contemporary photographer who expresses himself with conceptual photography, his documentary photography addresses the issue of global warming. His vast experience as General/Gallery Manager at African Artists' Foundation/ LagosPhoto Festival has led him to explore and contribute greatly to the standard of exhibition and photo festival display in Nigeria and Africa at large. He has collaborated in some notable photo projects with: British council, German embassy, Polish embassy, Brazilian embassy, Alliance Française Lagos and many others.

