

# YAV

YOUNG AFRICAN VISIONARIES MAGAZINE

JULY/AUGUST

**VOL.1 ISSUE THREE: SOUL SURVIVORS**



BACK TO SCHOOL GUIDE  
COLLEGE TIPS & RESOURCES

CAGEM  
HOPES & TRIUMPH

LOVE WEAH  
HER STORY

VISIONARY OF THE MONTH:  
YOLI OUIYA  
HER GREEN LIVING

SOPHY AIIDA  
ACTING LESSONS

GER DUANY  
A NEW DAY

SZANIE ELVIS  
VISUAL ARTIST

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# YAV

YOUNG AFRICAN VISIONARIES MAGAZINE

## WHO WE ARE

## ENVISION TOMORROW TODAY

# YAV

YOUNG AFRICAN VISIONARIES MAGAZINE

MARCH/APRIL ISSUE

**VOL. 1 ISSUE ONE: AFRICAN RENAISSANCE**



### THE MAGAZINE INNOVATIVE

### OUR BUSINESS ENTERPRISING

### OUR AUDIENCE INSPIRING

### OUR COMMUNITY CREATIVE



### YAV MAGAZINE: MISSION STATEMENT ENVISION TOMORROW TODAY

YAV MAGAZINE SEEKS TO FIND THE MOST INNOVATIVE WAYS TO PROVIDE STORIES TO OUR READERS THAT ARE RELEVANT. OUR ENTERPRISING SPIRIT, ALLOWS FOR A BUSINESS THAT WILL GROW WITH OUR READERSHIP. WE TAKE PRIDE IN THAT OUR AUDIENCE INSPIRES OUR TEAM TO REPORT STORIES OF TRIUMPH, SUCCESS, & INSPIRATION. YAV MAGAZINE IS ALWAYS LOOKING FOR CREATIVE WAYS TO ENGAGE WITHIN THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY OF YOUNG AFRICANS WORLDWIDE.

# YAV

YOUNG AFRICAN VISIONARIES MAGAZINE

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# *Letter From Editor*



## *We Are Survivors-Let's Share Our Stories*

It is so relevant that African stories be told from all perspectives. Too often Africa has been considered the continent of “victims”, whether it be in relation to the slave trade, colonialization, apartheid, civil wars, genocide, or civil unrest. Africa’s political and social mishaps are often at the forefront of discussions internationally while other stand points in reference to what Africa’s struggles and triumphs really mean on a global scale are not discussed. The truth is; Africa is the continent of survivors and heroes. There is no continent in the world that has not had problems similar to or the same as Africa, but it seems our stories are often told with a twisted point of view or a biased agenda. In this third issue, YAV Magazine will celebrate the survivors and share their authentic stories. In this third issue you will read the stories of young Africans who have overcome obstacles and become survivors and ultimately heroes. We hope to tell more of these stories in issues to come.

We Salute You,

**Rebekah A. Frimpong**  
Editor-in-Chief /Publisher  
YAV Magazine-BGNB Productions



Visit YAV Magazine [www.yavmagazine.com](http://www.yavmagazine.com) Follow Us on Twitter @YoungAfricanVis

# YAV

YOUNG AFRICAN VISIONARIES MAGAZINE

## ENVISION TOMORROW TODAY

### CONTRIBUTORS



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**Photography & Writing**

Mazuba Kapambwe

**Writer**

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**Photography**

Tau Battice Photography

**Photography**

#### SOUL SURVIVORS-A PASSION FOR LIVING

In this third issue, YAV Magazine will celebrate young African visionaries that are involved in the green movement, aspiring humanitarians, innovative leaders, and enterprising visual artists. The Soul Survivor issue sheds light on overcoming obstacles with grace and has the main theme of :“ I am a soul survivor, I follow my passion and dreams”.



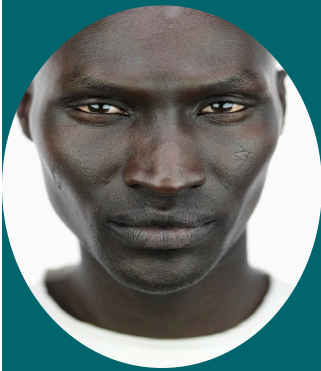
# YAV

YOUNG AFRICAN VISIONARIES MAGAZINE

## ENVISION TOMORROW TODAY

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Yoli Ouiya; Yoli's Green Living-our cover story and Visionary of the Month, read more inside.

## LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Dear Editor,

I want to draw your attention to a humanitarian organization in Ghana called “School Is Fun Foundation” Led by one Miss Cynthia Allotey Danquah. The foundation is doing great job in the rural areas and needs commendation. Their mission is to promote education among the deprived communities in Ghana. Miss Cynthia Allotey Danquah is doing a good job with kids in rural areas and I was told she is working with schools with high dropout rate in Accra as well. I was a witness to one of their seminars and donations held at Akwidaa where the village folks were thought about the importance of education, parents’ responsibilities towards their wards and the role of parent in child’s education. Their educational campaign drive has gone down well with the local people. The village folks now believe that they can change their destiny by giving their wards quality education to improve their life someday. As an illustrious son of the soil, I feel this act of magnanimity should be made known to the world. The enrollment of the school has now increased tremendously. She took the problem from the root, which is encouraging the parent to motivate their children to go to school and not make them help at the sea on school days, to the top by motivating the children and teachers. Before, some parent will take their children to fishing instead of allowing them to go to school but whenever I go there now I see lots of changes.

The foundation also assists schools by supporting them with text books, exercise books, pencils, pens, school uniforms and other educational materials. In fact the school in my village benefited from the donation which has brought so much relief to the community. Information I had was that the founders are Ghanaian student studying at Dickinson State University in the United States of America, that’s what, touches my heart to write to Young African Visionary program. I wanted to acknowledge their kindheartedness on behalf of the needy communities in Ghana.

Thank you.

Obed Kofie

**Want Us to Highlight a Young African Visionary? Write Us: [bgnbpro@gmail.com](mailto:bgnbpro@gmail.com)**

## EDUCATION



EDUCATING OUR YOUTH: YAV SCHOLARSHIP INITIATIVE

### YAV Magazine Scholarship Initiative

YAV Magazine will have a special scholarship initiative that will be available to three promising young African visionaries! We will be rewarding youth in these three fields of leadership:

- Environmental*
- Social Awareness*
- Health and Science*

#### Here is How to Apply:

Visit [www.yavmagazine.com](http://www.yavmagazine.com) and submit an essay describing in detail your story and what makes you a visionary. All rules and guidelines are on the website and the winners will be announced later this year and get featured in an issue of YAV Magazine.

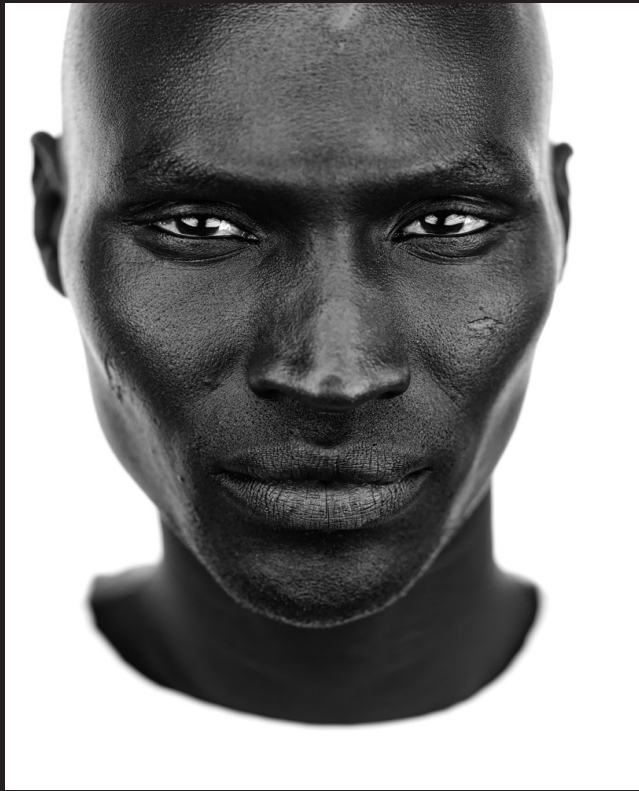


# A NEW DAY: GER DUANY



Interview By Mazuba Kapambwe and Photos Courtesy of Peter Hurley

Ger Duany is a model, actor, filmmaker, and activist who is always willing to share his story of triumph and struggle to inspire others. The stunning figure standing over six feet tall is refreshingly humble. Moving past stories of war, being separated from his family, and living as a refugee, Ger Duany now shares his story of hope and his excitement about seeing his people of Southern Sudan build a nation after years of war. For Ger Duany peace, is the title of a new chapter for Southern Sudanese people. Ger Duany's story is remarkable. The Southern Sudan native was barely an adult when war broke out in his country, leaving him separated from his family. A chance meeting led him to the United States where he became an actor, starring in *I Heart Huckabee's*, and most recently the critically acclaimed *Restless City* film directed by Andrew Dosunmou. He also as a model has appeared in various high fashion magazines and walked in fashion shows around the world. YAV contributor Mazuba Kapambwe caught up with Ger after his recent trip to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where he modeled for Hub Ethiopia fashion week. Sh ask him about his current projects and his hopes for his new documentary film *Ger: to Be Separate*.



**Q: Your documentary Ger: To be Separate raised over \$12,000 on kickstarter. When can we see it? (The documentary by Kenyan film-maker Waniru Kahi followed Ger as he visited South Sudan in 2010 to re-unite with his family and voting in the referendum that split Sudan into two separate countries).**

Duany: Very soon hopefully. I hope to have a private screening towards the end of July.

**Q: Speaking of July, your country celebrates its second independence this month. In your opinion, how is last year different from this year?**

Duany: Last year was the beginning. The truth is, we're still at war. Bad things are happening. We are pretty crippled by the people in power. There's corruption. But we need to focus less on the negativity and work on being more self-sufficient.

**Q: How do we get African youth in the diaspora more involved in activism?**

Duany: There are many ways. African youth in the diaspora are more connected. We need to work on more state-to-state mobilization so we can be more united. It's really easy to lose ourselves as Africans when we get here, so it's important for us to keep our roots and give back to our communities.

**Q: What projects are you working on in the near future?**

Duany: I hope to have my Non-Profit organization launched this year, and I'll be organizing an event for South Sudan's independence in New York.

For more information on Ger and his documentary, visit [www.gerduany.com](http://www.gerduany.com)



# SOPHY AIIDA

## ACTING LESSONS

Written By Mazuba Kapambwe

Photo and Image Courtesy of Sophy Aiida



**T**o say Sophy Aiida is a busy woman would be an understatement. For as long as I've known her (since 2008), the Cameroonian beauty has been involved in multiple projects at the same time in different cities. If she's not premiering one of her movies in Lagos, Nigeria, or posing for a shoot in Paris, you'll most likely find her hosting an event for her non-profit organization called 'The Nakande's' project in New York City. Luckily, she found time to conduct a brief interview with YAV.

### **Q: Why did you start the Nakande's Project?**

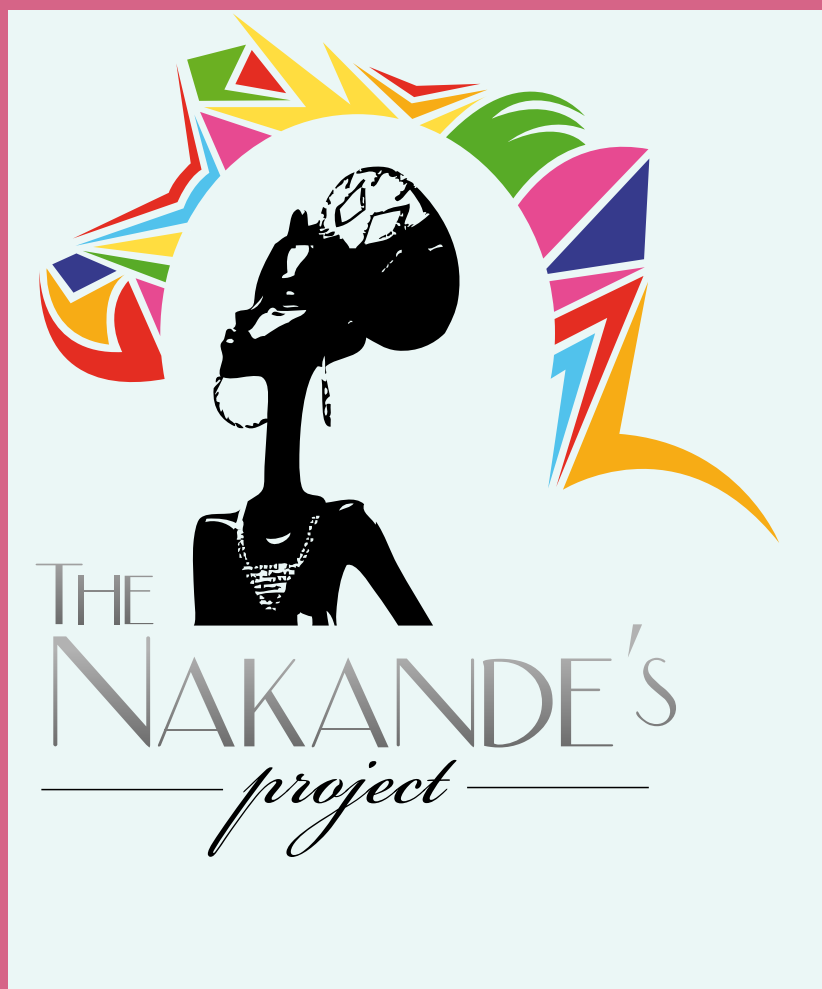
Sophy: I started The Nakande's Project after a discussion with my co-founder Olivia Ngou about the issues young African women were facing on a daily basis in Africa. I always knew that I wanted to work with young women focusing in arts but after Olivia opened my eyes on the health challenges that those young women were going through, it only made sense to join forces and develop a program that would educate them as well as benefiting them culturally.



***“I Always Knew  
that I Wanted to  
Work With Young  
African Women...”***

**Q: Can you highlight some of the most recent events you’ve done in Paris and New York City?**

Sophy: This year we had our very successful “Nakande’s Project women in Business Breakfast” that took place in Paris and NYC in March and April. Our next event coming up is our “Nakande’s Project Annual Leadership Seminar” taking place in Yaoundé, Cameroon in August 2012.



**Q: I know you focus on young girls mostly, but do you think there’s not enough focus on young African men as most non- profit organizations focus on improving the lives of young girls and women in Africa?**

Sophy: We chose to work with young women because unlike women or young girls, they aren’t really many organizations focusing on the 1 to 25 age range. Between my sophomore and senior years of high school was when I felt I needed the most guidance. That is why young women are our target.

**Q: What are the challenges of running a Non-Profit organization?**

Sophy: The main challenge is finding the funds to execute. People aren’t really willing to give you money to support your projects so most of the time it’s your own money that you put in and even when you run low, what you’ve started must go on. That’s when it becomes tricky but I have to say that so far we’ve been very blessed and I would never give it up for anything in the world. This would not be a success if there weren’t any challenges!

**You can learn more about the Nakande’s Project via the site <http://www.thenakandesproject.org/> and by following Sophy on twitter @SophyAiida**

# Mr. Africa

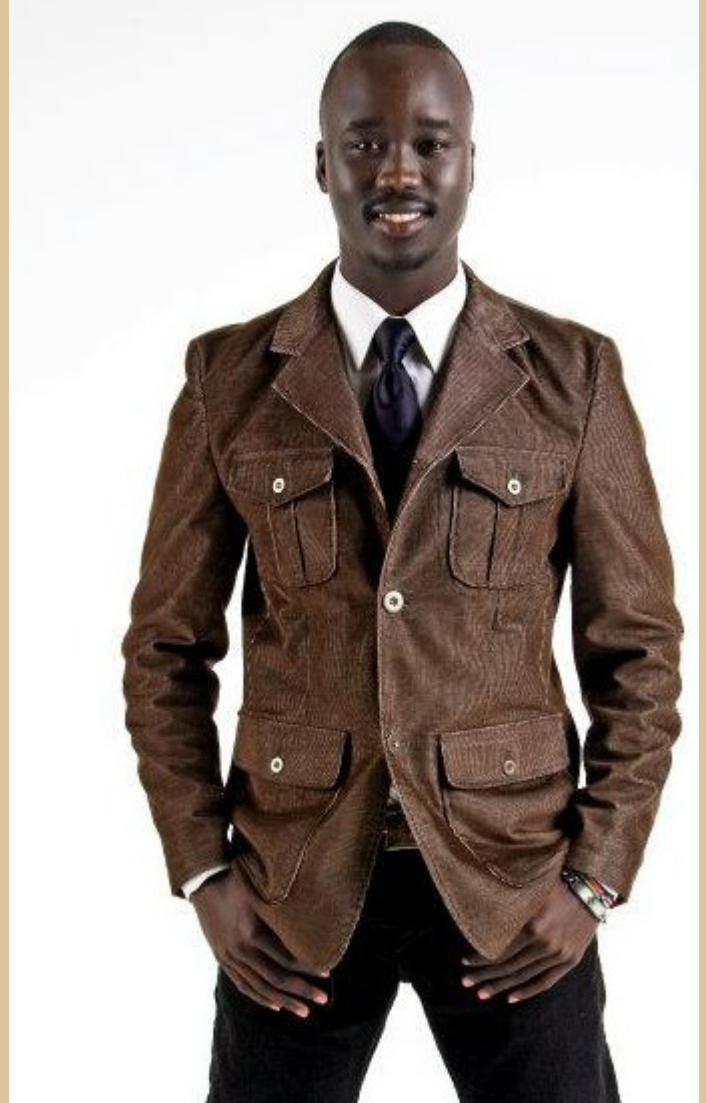
## Michael Mabor Majak

Written By Mazuba Kapambwe  
Photos Courtesy of Mr.Texas Africa

**W**hen I first met Michael Mabor Majak (Mr Texas Africa) at a fundraising event in Dallas, Texas this past May. Within minutes of speaking to him, I was impressed with the amazing amount of work he's done in his community in such a short space of time. I caught up with him to talk about his journey from being a Refugee to a Pageant King.

**Q: Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and your journey to the United States?**

Michael: My name is Michael Mabor Majok. I am 22 years old and originally from Khartoum Sudan but now holding claims to Rumbek South Sudan birth place of my parents. I was born in 1990, a year when my country's civil war just took a turn for the worse. Throughout my young age I never knew what was happening around me, for my parents sheltered my siblings and I. After losing my sister in 1998, my father thought it was best for my mother, remaining two siblings and I to move out of the country and head to Egypt where we could possibly gain refuge to the United States. My young life was both up and down in Africa, and when my family and



I moved to the United States that's when things same to get brighter. Today I am currently attending the University of North Texas majoring in International Studies with a focus in Developmental Sustainability. My goal is to work with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and bring development to my beloved country of South Sudan.

**Q: How does it feel being Mr Texas Africa and what platform/causes do you support through your role?**

Michael: Winning The Face of Africa Mr Texas Africa was one of the best things that has happened to me. As Mr Texas Africa, my role is to showcase positivity and reassurance to the younger African youth in believing in our motherland. My platform is Development and Sustainability throughout Africa. I am currently the President of the South Sudan Youth of Texas, member of the South Sudan

community and will be working with the East African development program being launched here in Dallas, Texas this coming October. This August I will be visiting Ghana to do some community work there.

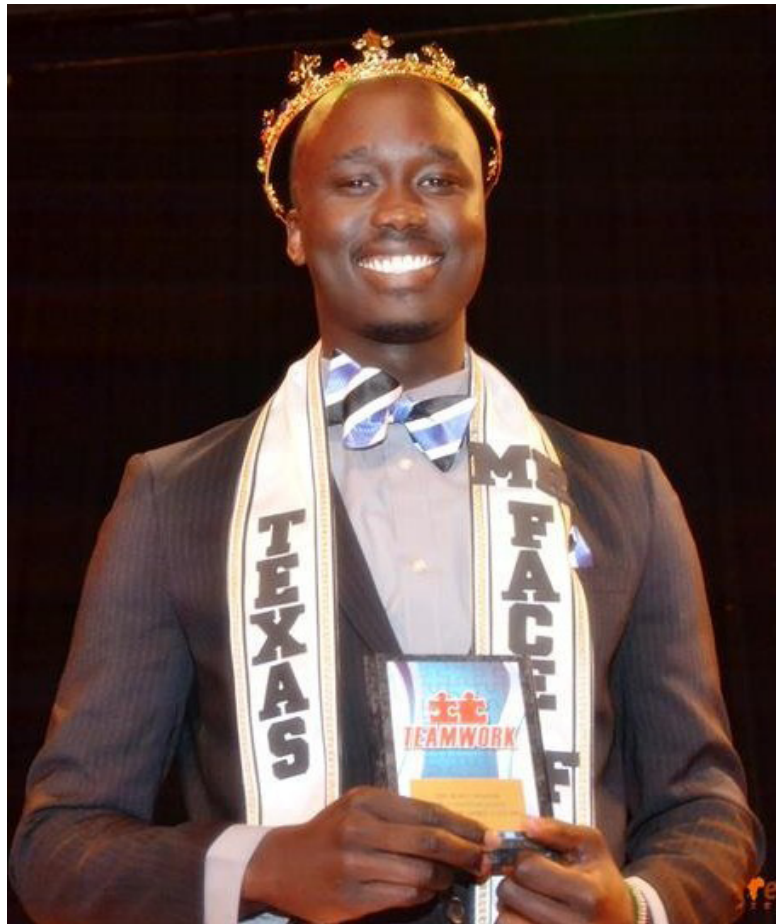
**Q: Let's talk about Southern Sudan; your country celebrates a year of independence this July. What are your hopes and dreams of Africa's newest country?**

Michael: This question brings up so many memories of hardships, heartaches, and the years of war that my family and people have endured. Independence is not something easily achieved. My people fought for more than two decades losing more than 2mln people and more than 4 million people were displaced from their homes. Thus, today the youth of South Sudan's main goal is to bring prosperity and development to the country and we will not give up before seeing all of this come true.

**Q: Even though you are not based in your country, you are still involved in making it a better place. How can more Africans in the diaspora be involved in developing their countries?**

Michael: As the next generation of Africa, it is our duty to make sure that we are doing all that we can to make Africa on the map with better education, healthcare, development and just being more active in our countries. For instance, the African Student Organization at my university are active in community service and showcasing our heritage through fashion shows. If we could have organizations like this in every city and state and back home, we could one day bring forth a generation of active youth.

**Q: What are your future plans when you hand over the crown of Mr Texas Africa?**



Michael: I plan to continuously work with the South Sudanese youth, work with the East African Development Program, graduate from school, intern with the United Nations Development Program and continue on prospering my company "Wenciens Organization".

**Q: You're one of the main organizers of an upcoming fashion event this month called ROSS. Tell us more about that.**

Michael: ROSS fashion show is an event my cousin and I started in January. We thought that it would be a great way to get South Sudan noticed by people who didn't even know it existed. The actual show will be held on July 13th. On the 14th, we will showcase the designers, models and artists. On the 15th, we will have a children's seminar and fashion show. We hope to promote South Sudanese models, designers, and the brilliantly talented youth of the Republic of South Sudan.

**Find out more information about the Ross event via their facebook page "Ross Fashion Weekend".**



# LOVE WEAH

## HER STORY

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**L**ove Weah is a young Liberian-American model, singer, and entrepreneur that has quickly started getting noticed for her work in the Washington DC and Virginia area. She has also helped with outreach programs for youth based on education development back in Liberia and Ghana. Love Weah shares with YAV Magazine her story as a young African woman embracing her beauty, starting a new magazine celebrating beautiful women of color, and her new journey to share her music with the world. Read as we asked Love Weah seven questions about the projects she is currently working on and the projects she has on the horizon.

**Interview By Rebekah Frimpong  
Photos Courtesy of Goddess Magazine and Love Weah**

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### **1. What inspires you to start Goddess Magazine?**

I was inspired to start Goddess Defined when I traveled back to Liberia and Ghana. I noticed that the women in Africa beauty, strength and talent was under appreciated and decided to create something that would uplift and celebrate the African woman.

### **2. You are working on so many great initiatives, how important do you feel it is for young African women today to be open to diverse career paths?**

It is extremely important for African women today to pursue diverse career paths. This is the time of opportunity we have African women holding top offices. Seize the moment ladies it is our time never settle and always remain optimistic.

### **3. You recently got into singing, tell us more about your music?**



Singing for me is an outlet, it allows me to address specific issues that I am unable to address as a model. My music comes directly from within, is real and stright to the point. My goal remains the same with music as it is with modeling uplift and celebrate Africa and the African woman.

**4. How important do you feel it is to stay connected to your community (Liberia and African community abroad) while pursuing your goals?**

Extremely important. I have established a scholarship fund in Liberia that currently enrolls four children ages eight to thirteen in school. I am a member of the Liberian organization here in the States and is constantly collaberating with the African Community Network on various humanitarian efforts.



**5. What are some upcoming goals you have for this year?**

I am working on several singles two of which will be released later in the year. I am also working on issue two of Goddess Defined as well as a clothing line.

**6. What hopes do you have for the future in regards to your magazine and your music?**

I am hopeful that the will of God will be done. The lord in first in everything I do therefore the sky is the limit.

**7. Lastly, please share with us something that people may not know about Love Weah?**

I am geniune and very optimistic. A lot of people after talking to me for the first time confesses that they thought I was stuck up and stand offish and not goofy and so down to earth.

# RISE AFRICA



**I**mage is everything; and a new organization called Rise Africa is bringing to the forefront African stories that are authentic and positive to help keep the image of Africa and African people in perspective. YAV got a chance to interview one of the co-founders of the Rise Africa organization and to learn more about Rise Africa. Beulah Osueke shares how the organization was started and why it is so important for Africans to be involved in keeping Africa's image relevant and accurate.

## **Q: What inspires you to start Rise Africa Organization and how did it get started?**

I saw a need for a community that encouraged pride in African youth and members of the African diaspora. I was aware that there were a lot of people out there who were looking to refute the negative images of Africa, but I didn't see anyone who's mission was to provide a place for people to be able to speak out and voice their insecurities, frustrations, and journeys as young Africans. The inspiration to start Rise Africa was a desire to see people understand that they're not alone and that they can learn from people they never thought they'd be able to relate to.





**Q: What do you hope your audience gets from Rise Africa Organization?**

I hope that our audience can learn to appreciate the various experiences from the different perspectives that exist. I also hope that people who follow us would be encouraged to express themselves whenever and however they see fit.

**Q: Why is the message behind Rise Africa Organization so important?**

It's important because it's personal, not only to me but to the thousands of other people who have ever been asked "How do you speak African?" followed by a combination of tongue clicks and snickers. It's important because millions of people, even people in great positions of power, still view and treat Africa as a country. I wouldn't be as passionate about our message if I didn't witness the effects of ignorance regarding Africa every single day, an ignorance that causes young Africans from all across the continent

to hate or be ashamed of their heritage. Not only is it important for us to change other people's perceptions about Africa, but it's also important to ensure that our youth, whether living on the home continent or residing somewhere abroad, take pride in who they are and where they come from. This benefits them as an individual, but what I would really hope for is that people's pride in their respective nations give them a connection and sense of duty that would encourage them to go home and enrich their communities with the resources and knowledge that they've acquired.

**Q: Your theme is “Africa is Done Suffering” why do you think this stigma is still going on around Africa's image?**

Negativity is still tainting Africa's image because people are either unwilling to change their perspective and find comfort in their ignorance or don't even know that they're ignorant at all (regarding Africa). Our claim that “Africa is Done Suffering” isn't a statement of denial to the struggles we now face, it's a call for aspiration and hope. Africans nations do have their financial, economic, social, and political woes, but these plights are not what defines African countries or Africa as a whole and we believe this is the image that Africa receives in the media because people aren't willing to looking to acknowledge Africa as more than a pit of suffering.

**Q: What are some of the goals for Rise Africa Organization this year?**

We just hope to expand and create a community where people can feel safe in discussing matters dear to them that pertain to their identity as a person of African descent.

**Q: What is next for you? What hopes do you have for the future?**

As an organization I simply hope that we can expand. The more people who know about us, the more insight, opinions, and thoughts will be shared. We're a young organization so we're still looking to establish a strong foundation. We hope to ultimately accumulate enough funds to create an operating system where we can begin a scholarship fund for various African youths spread throughout the globe.

**Q: Lastly, please let us know where we can find more on Rise Africa Organization?**

For more information visit [www.africaisdonesuffering.com](http://www.africaisdonesuffering.com) or contact us at [info@africaisdonesuffering.com](mailto:info@africaisdonesuffering.com).

# MISS DYNAMITE: INSPIRING CHANGE

Written By Mazuba Kapambwe and Photo Courtesy of MTV Base



They say big things come in small packages and that is true of the petite sized Tanzanian beauty Vanessa Mdee aka “*Miss Dynamite*”, whose bubbly personality helped her win an MTV Base VJ search in 2007. Five years later, she’s travelled around Africa hosting events in Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, Mozambique and more. She’s been an inspiration to an aspiring entertainment host like myself, and after exchanging messages on twitter for a few months, I was honored to sit down with her on a recent trip she made to New York.

**Q: Why was it important for you to go beyond being an entertainment and MTV Base VJ and radio presenter (Choice FM) to being an activist with MTV’s Staying Alive campaign?**

Vanessa: I happened to have stumbled upon the activism to be honest. Don’t get me wrong I love it and it has become a major part of my life, let alone my career. (It started)when MTV Staying Alive asked me to be their roving reporter for the United Nations AIDS High level meetings in Bamako, Mali and Capetown, South Africa. My assignment was only supposed to last for the duration of those meetings. However, dynamite’s mission (my awareness/ prevention website) was getting a huge following. People my age and older from my peers to some supporters of my work (from MTV and Choice FM) were interested in what I had to say. So it became a responsibility almost to read more, learn more, blog more and to give as I received.

**Q: In your travels, you have met inspirational people like Desmond Tutu, Kelly Rowland and more. Who would you say touched you the most and why?**

Vanessa: Hands down, Desmond Tutu is one of the most inspiring men you will ever meet. Every third





phrase out his mouth is a dose of wisdom. I'd capture, box and sell an hours conversation with him - his spirit and energy is extremely refreshing and inspiring. However, Kelly Rowland moved me near to tears. We visited "Uwanja wa Fisi" (Hyena Square) a notorious slum in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. This visit involved us meeting sex workers and drug addicts whose situations seemed hopeless. At the end of this day, any being would be emotionally drained. We attended a press conference that I hosted and in a moment of retrospect, Ms. Kelly broke down and cried as she urged those in attendance to challenge our governments and avail the youth with the tools needed to fight the epidemic. The reason why I was so touched was because of her sincerity, a lot of celebrities lend their voices to causes they feel nothing for and in turn their contributions are depthless. I'm also moved tremendously by the youth who participate at grass root levels in this prevention revolution, they run organizations on air and water, their passion is so real you can taste it.

**Q: You recently spoke at the Global Power Women Africa network launch in Zimbabwe. Can you tell us a little more about your experience there?**

Vanessa: I initially thought I was heading there to moderate a session, but I ended up being slotted in as one of the speakers for the second day of the event. My topic was on Young Women and Leadership accountability. You can view a brief of my presentation here: [www.dynamitesmission.com](http://www.dynamitesmission.com)

**Q: We know that the majority of Africa's population is under the age of 30. How do you think we can get the youth to be more involved in activism?**

Vanessa: I am still trying to figure that out myself. It always seems to be the one major query. Take for example HIV/AIDS as a young woman, under 25 in Africa I fall in the most affected by the epidemic bracket. It's a known fact that 1 woman in Africa between the ages of 14 - 24 is infected with the virus every minute. That's about (depending on how fast a reader you are) 3 women as you have read this interview. Now for me it's a no brainer, let's get involved. Not everyone thinks this way. I have realized though that young people hate preachy overly patronizing speech and technique - so I suppose by adjusting our means of message conveying could be a start and then keeping them interested enough to participate.

**Q: Lastly, you can mention upcoming campaigns you are working on?**

Vanessa: I am attending a High Level meeting in Washington DC this month for the UNAIDS. I can't share too much yet but visit the website ([www.dynamitesmission.com](http://www.dynamitesmission.com)) and follow me on twitter @VanessaMdee for details.

# YAV COLLEGE RESOURCE GUIDE

## Steps To Consider When Preparing to Attend College or University

### **Getting Started**

Find the right school for you  
Going on Campus Tours  
Ask Questions  
Get a mentor

### **What to Study**

Think about your career goals  
What are you good at doing  
Look for something that you are passionate about  
Try shadowing someone in that field of study  
Remember you can always change your mind

### **Funding and Financial Aid**

Scholarships  
Grants  
Financial Aid-Loans  
Work-Study  
Working and Saving  
Sponsorship-International Students

### **Getting the Most of Your Education**

Volunteer for a professor  
Study smart  
Ask questions  
Enjoy the experience  
Be active on campus; join a group/organization  
Try new things, learn a language or new skill  
Make friends and build networks  
Stay in touch with professors  
Double major or get a minor

### **Career Goals and Planning**

After Graduation “what is next”  
Plan early  
Make your goals in 5 year increments  
Invest and save for future plans  
Get guidance from a career center  
Write your resume and CV

### **Things They Don't Tell You**

College can get expensive, think about the future when it comes to getting loans  
Grades are important, maintain a 3.0 and up  
Try not to get overwhelmed, make a schedule and exercise (reduce stress)  
You get what you put in; effort is important  
College is not for everyone, make sure you know all your choices

# African Leadership Efforts

## Focus on Nigeria:

The 3rd Annual Nigerian Leadership Summit 2012

Theme: Expanding Frontiers and Confronting Challenges

Date: August 10-11, 2012

Venue: The LaGuardia Plaza Airport Hotel (104-04 Ditmars Blvd, East Elmhurst, NY)

New York, NY – June 16th, 2012

The Nigerian Leadership Summit is an annual event designed to connect Nigerian Professionals, Academicians, and Entrepreneurs from all across the Diaspora and friends from the International Community, especially youths and young people to discuss about Nigeria's present leadership issues, share innovative ideas, knowledge, experiences, addressing issues threatening the survival and development of the Nigerian democracy and familiarize participants with the Leadership styles and strategies needed in the partnership required to deliver results that will trickle down to Nigerians at home for the economic growth of the country.

Accelerated national development is the collective responsibility of every single Nigerian home and abroad, hence at these annual gatherings, participants are informed, empowered and inspired to make commitments and take actions on developmental or societal issues they care about most, while building partnerships for sustainable results.

The 3rd Annual Nigerian Leadership Summit 2012 will focus on leadership, economic development, business, energy, education, healthcare, social media in Nigeria, entrepreneurship, cross-cultural partnerships and corporate social responsibility, with the goal of increasing and involving Diaspora Nigerians participation in the discussions and development of Nigeria. Also this year's summit will connect committed Diaspora Nigerian Professionals and groups from the international community with the opportunities to develop, partner and work on new ideas, strengthening commitments to Nigeria's vision 2020.



The poster for the 3rd Annual Nigerian Leadership Summit 2012 features a green background with a map of Nigeria. At the top, the 'LEAD NIGERIA' logo is displayed. Below it, the text '3RD ANNUAL NIGERIAN LEADERSHIP SUMMIT 2012' is written. A row of five small photographs shows various individuals. The central theme, 'Expanding Frontiers & Confronting Challenges', is written in large, bold, yellow letters. Below this, a box lists the 'WITH KEY FOCUS ON' areas: Leadership, Business, Economic Development, Education, Healthcare, Energy, Tourism, Peace & Security. To the left, the 'Date' is 'August 10-11, 2012' and the 'Venue' is 'Laguardia Plaza Airport Hotel 104-04 Ditmars Blvd East Elmhurst, NY'. To the right, it states 'Participants/ Delegates must be registered at [www.leadnigeria.org](http://www.leadnigeria.org) to attend all summit programs'. A white box at the bottom right contains the 'Registration Deadline August 9th, 2012'. At the bottom, it says 'Supported by:' followed by logos for Arik, Atlantic, COVINGTON, and IYC. A row of five small photographs at the very bottom shows more people.

**LEAD NIGERIA**

3RD ANNUAL NIGERIAN LEADERSHIP SUMMIT 2012

**THEME**

**Expanding Frontiers & Confronting Challenges**

**WITH KEY FOCUS ON**

Leadership, Business, Economic Development, Education, Healthcare, Energy, Tourism, Peace & Security

**Date**  
August 10-11, 2012

**Venue:**  
Laguardia Plaza Airport Hotel  
104-04 Ditmars Blvd  
East Elmhurst, NY

Participants/ Delegates must be registered at [www.leadnigeria.org](http://www.leadnigeria.org) to attend all summit programs

**Registration Deadline**  
August 9th, 2012

**Supported by:**

Arik Atlantic COVINGTON IYC

For Sponsorship, Participation and Support, please contact us at (917) 488-0783 or [info@leadnigeria.org](mailto:info@leadnigeria.org)

We invite you to make plans to attend and join us in the discussion of a better Nigeria. Participants/delegates must be registered to attend the Nigerian Leadership summit 2012 programs. To register and/or reserve you room for our special group rate with the code: "LEAD Nigeria", go to [www.leadnigeria.org](http://www.leadnigeria.org).

Looking forward to your esteemed presence this August.

The LEAD Nigeria Team

Rethink/Renovate Education Gala 2012

This year, ReNOVATE will kick off the 2012 Education and Mentorship Project by hosting a mentorship event-the Education and Mentorship Fair, also in the village of Eduanbon. Eduanbon in many ways is the typical Nigerian village, disenfranchised and in need of a turn-around. Upon our last visit to this village, we were confronted with some harsh realities, including barely-functioning clinics with no hospital beds or medicine and with extremely sub-par clinical procedures which at best have no effect and at worst, expose the sick to



greater risk. The schools that we visited lacked functioning bathrooms, and classroom facilities were found to be defunct and unsuitable for teaching and learning. The failure of the education system itself, is something that every Nigerian can bear witness to, from under-performing teachers, to outdated curriculums, to the very lack of teaching and learning resources such as text books.

The 2012 Education and Mentorship Project specifically aims to equip Eduanbon's youth- those currently in the two high schools, including the Anglican High School and the C.A.C. Grammar School, with the knowledge that they require in order to secure a successful future as members of the labor force and contributors to our nation's economy.

The Nigerian Reunion Corporation is a global organization whose primary purpose is to promote and strengthen the unity and honor of Nigerians and Nigerian descendants in the diaspora for the betterment of Nigeria, Nigerian descendants and Nigerian Communities. The Nigerian Reunion Corporation draws on its broad cultural diversity to facilitate professional and academic development, along with personal growth through effective communication, social programming and skills leveraging to enhance the strength and honor of Nigerians in the Diaspora.

For the first time in its 16 year history, LEAD Nigeria got a chance to participate in the Nigerian Reunion programs and activities. Interestingly we had a rare opportunity to work with the Nigerian Reunion corporation in the 2 months preceeding the summit, giving us a firsthand understanding of its organizational structure and strenghts. This year's activity held at the Hunt Valley Inn, Maryland feautured various activities including; leadership empowerment sessions, battle of the sexes, speed dating and social mixer sessions, townhall meetings, Nigerian image awards, Nights of a 1001 laughs, gospel concerts, performances by Nigeria's latest BET nominee Ice prince, Comedians basket mouth, jedi Ayo and a host of others.

For us at LEAD Nigeria, we had an exciting time at the Nigerian Reunion 2012, and we look forward to reuniting with the Nigerian Diaspora family next

year at the Nigerian Reunion 2013. If you missed the 2012 events, make plans to be there next year.

Report by:  
The LEAD Nigeria Team

This year for the first timr, LEAD nIGERIA HAD THE OPPORTUNITY .

Greetings from LEAD Nigeria

Over the last two months, the LEAD Nigeria team and our partners have been working tirelessly planning and organizing for the 3rd Annual Nigerian Leadership Summit 2012 which will take place August 10-11, 2012 in New York City at the Laguardia Plaza airport hotel. Last year, a total of 104 participants traveled from over 13 states in the US and 5 countries to be a part of the 2nd Annual Nigerian Leadership Summit 2011. To read reports of the Nigerian Leadership Summit 2012 click here for all the details.

We encourage you to join us for the exciting opportunity to be part of the 3rd Annual Nigerian Leadership Summit 2012 . Apply here to attend the Nigerian Leadership summit 2012 follow on Twitter | friend on Facebook | forward to a friend  
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Our mailing address is:

LEAD Nigeria  
P. O. Box 866

Williamsbridge Station,  
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# Questions with Africa's New Voice -An Interview with Suzanne "Africa" Engo

Written By Mazuba Kapambwe & Photos Courtesy of "Africa Engo"



Most of us grew up with our parents telling us that “charity begins at home” and that is exactly what celebrity activist Suzanne Africa Engo learned as a child when she was pushed to donate all her Christmas gifts to a handicapped center in her home country of Cameroon. She notes of that memory: “Initially, I wasn’t thrilled about it but after I did it, I felt amazing. I like to think that awakened a purpose in me that God gave me and that my parents lit a flame.” Many years later, Engo has gone on to do amazing work in the area of humanitarianism. I spoke to her about her MTV documentary, running to the Oprah studios, and her upcoming projects.

**Q: Your documentary ‘I Love Africa’ which ran on the MTV site for a week showed you running from the UN in New York to Oprah’s Chicago studios. Why was it important for you to document your journey and why was it important that you end at Oprah’s studios?**

Africa: It’s actually still running!! Please click and watch . The Movement (movie + movement) continues 7 months later. That’s huge! I am ever grateful to my MTV family for that. I started my diet with Oprah Winfrey’s “Best life” diet which is just as much about the exercise as it is about really facing yourself and living your best life in all areas. I ran there to thank her for it and also to thank her for all she has done for African girls and the fight against AIDS. I love Oprah Winfrey and even if she hadn’t met me, I would have run to that building for what it represents in my life. Really at the end of the day Oprah is the most positive reflection of myself I ever saw in the American media. Now we have Mrs. Obama as well, so maybe I’ll run into her next.

**Q: You are also a co-founder for the African Action on Aids. What have your biggest accomplishments been as an organization?**

Africa: My greatest accomplishment with the organization is that it is 20 years later and we are still going and adjusting constantly to the issues faced. But I tell you when I walk into a classroom and I know students are there because of our work and they hug me that's the best (feeling). It's like we have affected a life. It's about being connected, not them as a victim and me as a hero but that they are well enough on that day for us to connect as human beings, to laugh for a while and play and talk about grades too. I am proud to be part of the collective effort of women that is African Action on AIDS. My name is a bit more known but I am not the strongest piece. There is Loris, Laraine, Barbara, Hope, there is Betty, Herta, Mary and Ruth .I'm honored to sit with them.

**Q: Last year, you started a new venture called the 'New African Empower' and you hosted the New York screening of 'Viva Riva'. Can you tell us more about New African Empower and your future projects?**

Africa: What I hope for that is to create an exclusive club of Africans who as a collective push the efforts of the representation of Africans in Hollywood and the media at large to make sure we have room. But I like to begin with myself always and I am now going to be stepping away from behind the camera where I have been these last 10 yrs. I'm closing my "Girl Behind the Camera" Productions company doors and I am Launching "I love Africa Giving Living media". Many exciting things will be coming and I will show using myself



as an example of what it looks like to be involved in the business and while every project I will launch won't be about Africa, I'll be very proud to say that I am an African girl when they ask. We need more people to remember to say it proudly!

**Q: You have a new one woman show that you're working on called 'The Skinny: How to lose 100 pounds and change the world too'. How do you balance producing the show with the many other projects you're involved in?**

Africa: The Skinny is going to be a work in progress. Please stay tuned it's going to be a journey as musicals don't just pop up takes time. I am at the choreography phase of the project .As for balance; every new project I do is about telling my story and helping others so I don't have to balance my work. I am just myself. And now I also will be focusing on my personal life as well so it's with that I have to create a balance. I won't be doing as much but what I do will be with great zest.

**Q: Lastly, with the Kony 2012 campaign by Invisible Children, it seemed as though there was a new wave of social media activism. Young Africans in particular criticized the campaign. What were your personal thoughts?**

Africa: I'll say this simply. I am not a fan. Catch Africa Engo's documentary 'I Love Africa' on <http://act.mtv.com/iloveafrica>



# Our Bodies-Our Voices

## The Voice Behind CAGEM



**Y**AV Magazine got the chance to talk to CAGeM director Stella Thompson and ask her how CAGem was started and what inspired the organization's mission. Stella Thompson shared with us that CAGem was started by African women physicians in 1998 after studies showed that maternal and infant mortality rates were linked to the practice and was associated with a high health care cost. The physicians, all volunteers started reproductive health campaigns in communities as a way to educate practicing communities against the practice. Later on the first lady of Nigeria, Stella Obasanjo became a spokesperson for the campaign which led to her declaration of February 6, 2003 as the international day of zero tolerance against female genital mutilation. CAGeM is staffed by volunteers, a lot who have been victims themselves and have decided to fight against the practice. While volunteers range in all ages, it is inspiring to see young girls and boys take a stand against the practice. They are the future and only they can truly stop it. YAV Magazine asked Stella Thompson a few more questions to better get an understanding of how important the message of CAGem is in some African communities.

**Q: The issue of FGM is such a heart wrenching topic, what in your opinion can be done to**



**remove the stigma associated with FGM and open the dialogue for healing?**

I think encouraging survivors to speak out and tell their stories is the first step. We have done this with “Their Voice” conference which was held on July 16 at the New York Academy of medicine where survivors spoke out from their hearts for the first time. It was a very emotional experience that moved the audience to tears but took a lot of courage. But it was definitely the beginning of healing and the birth of new advocates. These young survivors are now receiving free counseling to help them with the healing process and give them strength to carry on the advocacy against FGM that they have started with their words.

**Q: Can you share with our readers the dangers associated with FGM?**

There are many. FGM is associated with both physical and mental trauma. The immediate and long-term health consequences of female genital mutilation vary according to the type and severity of the procedure performed. Immediate complications include severe pain, shock, hemorrhage, urine retention, ulceration of the genital region and injury to adjacent tissue. Hemorrhage and infection have resulted in many deaths. Long-term consequences include cysts and abscesses, keloid scar formation, damage to the urethra resulting

***STATS:***  
***About 2 million girls are mutilated yearly which amounts to about 1 every 16 seconds.***

in urinary incontinence, dyspareunia (painful sexual intercourse), sexual dysfunction and difficulties with childbirth. Psychologically, FGM may leave a lasting mark on the life and mind of the woman who has undergone it. In the longer term, women may suffer feelings of incompleteness, anxiety and depression.

**Q: What is the biggest challenge that survivors of FGM are facing right now, can you share some statistics?**

There are over 140 million women who have been genitally mutilated in the world today. About 2 million more are mutilated yearly which amounts to about 1 every 16 seconds. In the US, there have been about 300,000 reported cases which is an underestimation of the actual number of cases in the US because there is a shroud of silence over it which we are trying to change. There is a sense of shame particularly by survivors in the US because they are aware of the western view of the practice. Getting them to speak out can be challenging. Also a lot of survivors cannot afford the healthcare costs associated with treatment for consequences. We are trying to help with that by partnering with healthcare providers and opening a free hospital specifically for them.

**Q: What are some of the goals for your organization this year?**

In Africa, we hope to reach 800 more practicing communities but the biggest project is opening the free clitoral reconstruction hospital in Port Harcourt for which we have over 500 women on the waiting list. The hospital is already built but we need medical supplies and equipment. Unfortunately, organizations that collect donated medical supplies and claim to offer it free to third world countries actually charge the recipients about \$25,000 shipping fee for one 40 foot container shipment to the country which far exceeds actual shipping costs. This is sad since they collect donations on their site specifically to cover these costs but what they don't say on their website is how much they still charge the recipients. So this is a challenge and we have the "Restoring the Rose" walkathon on September 15 in New York City to try to raise funds for these costs so we can open by the end of the year.

**Q: What is next for you? What hopes do you have for the future?**

Eradication within a generation. It is not easy to stop a practice that has been going on for thousands of years as far back as ancient Egypt where they practiced pharonic circumcision of females. But foot binding was eradicated in China in a single generation after 1000 years. Although FGM has been practiced for much longer, it shows that there is hope for eradication. We will continue to recruit more people and communities and offer treatment to victims.

To learn more on CAGeM visit their website: [www.cagem.org](http://www.cagem.org) and thier Facebook [facebook.com/End.FGM](https://facebook.com/End.FGM)

**All photos by CAGeM**

- 1) FGM survivors speaking out for the first time at "Their Voice" conference**
- 2) Women of all ages gather to register for the free clitoral reconstruction surgery**
- 3) Young girls in Mali stand up against female genital mutilation**

**Interview with Stella Thompson  
Executive Director CAGeM**





# Ambassadors of Africa

## *Bringing Women to the Forefront*



She is a woman of vision; YAV Magazine had the opportunity to have a talk with Natacha Gwet born and raised in Cameroon, about how she developed the US-Africa Ambassadorship Program. Natacha Gwet currently residing in the Bronx with her best friend and husband, is the eldest of three siblings: one brother and two sisters. As the first and only child for almost ten years, she grew up in a religious family and although her parents were not wealthy they gave everything so that she could have the best possible education in Cameroon. Natacha Gwet's own story is what inspired her to develop with her husband US-Africa Synergy and later the US-Africa Ambassadorship Program.

**Written By Rebekah Frimpong and Photos Provided By  
Natacha Gwet of US-Africa Synergy**

## Natacha Gwet Story: Behind the Vision

In 2008, she received her Bachelor Degree in Banking and Finance from The University of Buea and landed her first job as Relationship Manager at eighteen with one of the major financial institutional in West Africa. Through her ability to develop relationships with clients and create productive work environment, she was able to triple her portfolio in two years. Her dedication and resourcefulness have enabled her to be promoted area manager on January 2010. Three months later, she traveled to New York for family reunification.

As soon as she arrived in New York, Natacha's desire to contribute in the building of a stronger African community led her joined the group of talented young Africans men and women eager to change the negative perception of Africa through several initiatives. Her most proud accomplishments has been to engrave her footprints in the building and growing of US-Africa Synergy, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to empower men and women of African descent and to streamline their social insertion to enable them to be more productive members the community through educative and social programs that address their needs.

As a fierce advocate of issues that affects the welfare of young girls and women, she leads the Ambassadorship Program which is a platform that aims to uplift, inspire, and celebrate young African women's dreams, passion, ambition, and aspirations. a platform where young African women share their stories, experiences, learn from each other, and support one another grow and prosper and last but not least a platform for community organizing and advocacy on issues hindering our communities.

The 2011 edition brought together more than 300 participants to cheer the 10 young African women from Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Congo Brazzaville, Cameroon, Chad and Guinea Conakry competing for the title of the US-AFRICA AMBASSADORSHIP.

## The Elected US-AFRICA AMBASSADOR 2012

# Jeanine Nkechi Ezech

Jeanine Nkechi Ezech is a young Nigerian woman, born in Scotland and raised in a vast number of countries, including Nigeria, Guinea, Hong Kong and New York. Being exposed to such a diversity of cultures, people and places has helped make her the well-rounded and sociable individual that she is today. She is a recent college graduate with a Bachelors Degree in Financial Mathematics and an aspiring model.

She wishes to make her mark in society by promoting the importance of peace, empowering and motivating young women to strive for excellence and undertake leadership roles. In addition to dedicating her efforts primarily towards making a difference as an ambassador of peace, she hopes to engage in self-service within the community by organizing events to fight abuse against women and encourage girls' education through interactive campaigns, while promoting the African culture. She is also committed to establishing sustainable bridges of partnership between Africa and the United States and builds genuine friendship among Africans and Americans. She implores you to join her in spreading awareness about the importance of peace. With peace, we achieve progress, and with progress we attain positive change!

**Short term goal:** Masters degree completion within the next 2 years.

**Long term goal:** to be a professional supermodel and a successful self made entrepreneur. As well as positively impacting the lives of people (particularly young women) and Nigeria in one way or another!

**Role model:** Oprah Winfrey, for a self made success



# **HEALTH SPOTLIGHT:**

**Check Out The African Health Conference**

**African Health Conference 7 - 9 May 2013  
Gallagher Convention Centre, South Africa**

Africa Health is a major three-day exhibition and congress held in South Africa dedicated to all healthcare professionals and medical trade buyers. Africa Health is an integral part of Informa Exhibitions' successful Life Sciences portfolio. It is also the sister event of Arab Health, the second largest healthcare event in the world. Africa Health Exhibition & Congress provides a unique platform for the world's leading manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors to meet with the medical community from sub-Saharan Africa region and beyond.

The first edition of Africa Health launched in May 2011 and was a great success with over 290 exhibitors including leading companies such as Siemens, Fujifilm, Karl Storz, Nihon, Kohden, Agfa, Maquet, ArjoHuntleigh, Unicore and many more. Over 30 nations were represented including pavilions from China, Germany, France, Korea, India, Taiwan, Italy, Bavaria, USA and Iran. Over 35% of exhibition space was rebooked on-site for 2012, demonstrating the success of the first edition of Africa Health. The event is set to follow in the footsteps of its sister event, Arab Health. Any healthcare manufacturer or distributor looking to reach the medical market in sub-Saharan Africa should exhibit at Africa Health.

The sub-Saharan African healthcare industry is expected to sustain its growth rate in the near future due to persistent burden of disease and poor demographic conditions. People are affected by the poor health delivery and high costs. Governments are realising the importance of providing quality services and are increasingly looking into public-private partnerships to improve their healthcare systems. Infrastructure developments, as well as drug supply, especially in primary healthcare, will be the main focus in the coming years.

**For more information on any of these conferences or on the Africa Health exhibition, please email: [africahealth@informa.com](mailto:africahealth@informa.com)**

## **What Health Topics Are Important in Your Community?**

Write YAV Magazine about health topics important in your community and we will try to get health experts and scientists to explore solutions and answers.

**Write "Health for YAV" at:  
[bgnbpro@gmail.com](mailto:bgnbpro@gmail.com)  
for more information and to make suggestions for our Health page.**





**Jerryanne Heath** is the Founder & CEO of ConceptLink, a social business specializing fundraising, event planning and communications for African nonprofit organizations.

Since ConceptLink's inception in 2008, Jerryanne has helped her clients raise more than \$4 million through a variety of fundraising strategies. These funds have had a wide-reaching impact in several communities in South Africa, Tanzania, Malawi, Ghana, Nigeria and the US by promoting access to clean water, educational opportunity, environmental sustainability, and scientific discovery.

Jerryanne has also managed a number of high profile events which featured global leaders including US President Bill Clinton, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and international artists such as Angeliqe Kidjo, Youssou N'dour and Lira.

Previously, Jerryanne was an Executive Committee member of the Association of a New Generation of Leaders for Africa (AngelAfrica), a New York-based professional network that fosters economic development and entrepreneurship across the African continent. During her tenure with AngelAfrica, she conceived and co-chaired the Africa Social Enterprise Forum, a unique conference which convened 150 Africa-interest social entrepreneurs and social investors such as Rockefeller Foundation, Grassroots Business Fund, and Acumen Fund. In addition to planning such events, Jerryanne has been a panelist at conferences and seminars hosted by the University of Johannesburg, the South African Chamber of Commerce in America, and the Baruch College African Students Association.

Recognized for her commitment to the social sector, she was named a StartingBloc Fellow in 2010 and participated in a social innovation institute with 130 other dynamic young leaders from around the world. At the StartingBloc Institute, she was a part of the winning team in the 2010 Social Innovation Competition which developed a sustainability communications plan for a multinational technology corporation.

Prior to founding ConceptLink, Jerryanne worked on Wall Street, where she evaluated and executed private equity investments totaling more than \$130 million. She continues to apply a similar results-oriented and professional approach to her work in the social sector.

Jerryanne holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Urban Studies (cum laude) and a Master of City Planning from the University of Pennsylvania, with a concentration in Community Economic Development. She is an alumna of two prestigious educational and career programs, Management Leadership for Tomorrow and Sponsors for Educational Opportunity.



## ConceptLink – History and Achievements

- 2008 January - ConceptLink is founded by Jerryanne Heath
- 2008 February - ConceptLink participates in launch of UN Campaign to End Violence Against Women
- 2008 June - ConceptLink launch party
- 2009 March - ConceptLink takes on its first client working in South Africa
- 2009 August - ConceptLink moves into its office in Brooklyn, New York
- 2009 October - ConceptLink produces International Crisis Group Gala
- 2010 February - Jerryanne Heath participates in the Starting Bloc Institute for Social Innovation
- 2010 November - ConceptLink launches its new brand and corporate identity
- 2011 February - ConceptLink completes its first fundraising event in South Africa
- 2011 March - ConceptLink blog goes live
- 2011 April - Jerryanne Heath speaks at the Social Enterprise World Forum in Johannesburg
- 2011 November - ConceptLink organizes the first Africa Philanthropy Day in New York
- 2012 – Service packages are 1) Fundraising 2) Event Management & 3) Brand Management & Communications for the nonprofit clients
- 2012 February – ConceptLink released an online newsletter, ConceptLink Courier – a weekly collection of articles on Africa, Social Good, Nonprofit, Development, Philanthropy, CSR, Fundraising, Communications, Branding, Strategy and more.
- 2012 April – Updated mission statement to: “ConceptLink is a social impact strategy firm that helps Africa-interest organizations effect change in their communities”
- 2012 April - ConceptLink launches new website
- 2012 April – ConceptLink works with Africa.com on the Africa Straight Up video project
- 2012 May – Jerryanne speaks at Rising Affluent Advancement and Achievement conference
- 2012 May – ConceptLink starts work with DAWN – Diaspora African Women’s Network

ConceptLink announces launch of website and commitment to be a strategic partner for Africa-interest organizations

**For Immediate Release:**

New York, April 25, 2012: The team at ConceptLink is pleased to announce the launch of its new website, [www.conceptlink.com](http://www.conceptlink.com). The website redesign marks an important milestone in ConceptLink's four year history of helping African social good organizations raise their profile, finance their programs and build loyal supporters.

The website features a bold new design offering easy access to updated information on ConceptLink's clients, experience, team and insights. Special features include case-studies and blog articles on a variety of topics including nonprofit fundraising, brand communications, grant-making, social entrepreneurship and much more.

"We consider ConceptLink to be a special kind of consultancy and it was important for our branding and communications to reflect our uniqueness. In developing this website, we wanted to go beyond "design" and create a platform to showcase the work of our clients and to articulate how we have helped them achieve their long-term objectives. Our new website makes it easy for Africa-interest organizations to understand our values, our services and how we can help them achieve greater impact in their communities." said Jerryanne Heath, Chief Executive Officer of ConceptLink.

As a social impact strategy firm, ConceptLink is committed to delivering an unprecedented level of rigor and professionalism to Africa's social sector. The firm's approach is deeply rooted in a belief that its clients are capable of creating positive change in the communities they serve – ConceptLink's role is to help them sustain that change by taking a strategic approach to their operations.

In celebration of the new website, ConceptLink is offering a special discount of 15% on its newly released 'Finishing Touch' package – a service designed to put the finishing touches on fundraising and brand building events. This service is currently available for Africa-interest organizations in the New York area and will be expanding to more cities in the near future.

Sign up via the website: [www.conceptlink.com](http://www.conceptlink.com) to receive news and updates from ConceptLink, and connect via social media –

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ConceptLink>

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/ConceptLink>

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/company/ConceptLink>

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About: ConceptLink is a social impact strategy firm that helps Africa-interest organizations effect change in their communities. The firm offers strategic fundraising, event planning and communications services to social good organizations. For more information or to schedule a consultation, send an email to [info@conceptlink.com](mailto:info@conceptlink.com)



# BEHIND THE LENS OF KWAME

Insight Behind the Film *KWAME*, An Interview with Filmmaker Edward Osei-Gyimah



Filmmaker Edward Osei-Gyimah's film "*Kwame*" is making waves in the independent film circuit. The film is about a Ghanaian immigrant living in California after the recent coup in Ghana. "*Kwame*" takes an intimate look at how immigrants assimilate to American culture and also explores briefly the reasons why some immigrants feel the need to stay connected to their home countries and why some have chosen to return home after living life in America. Edward Osei-Gyimah shares more about the ideas behind the film.

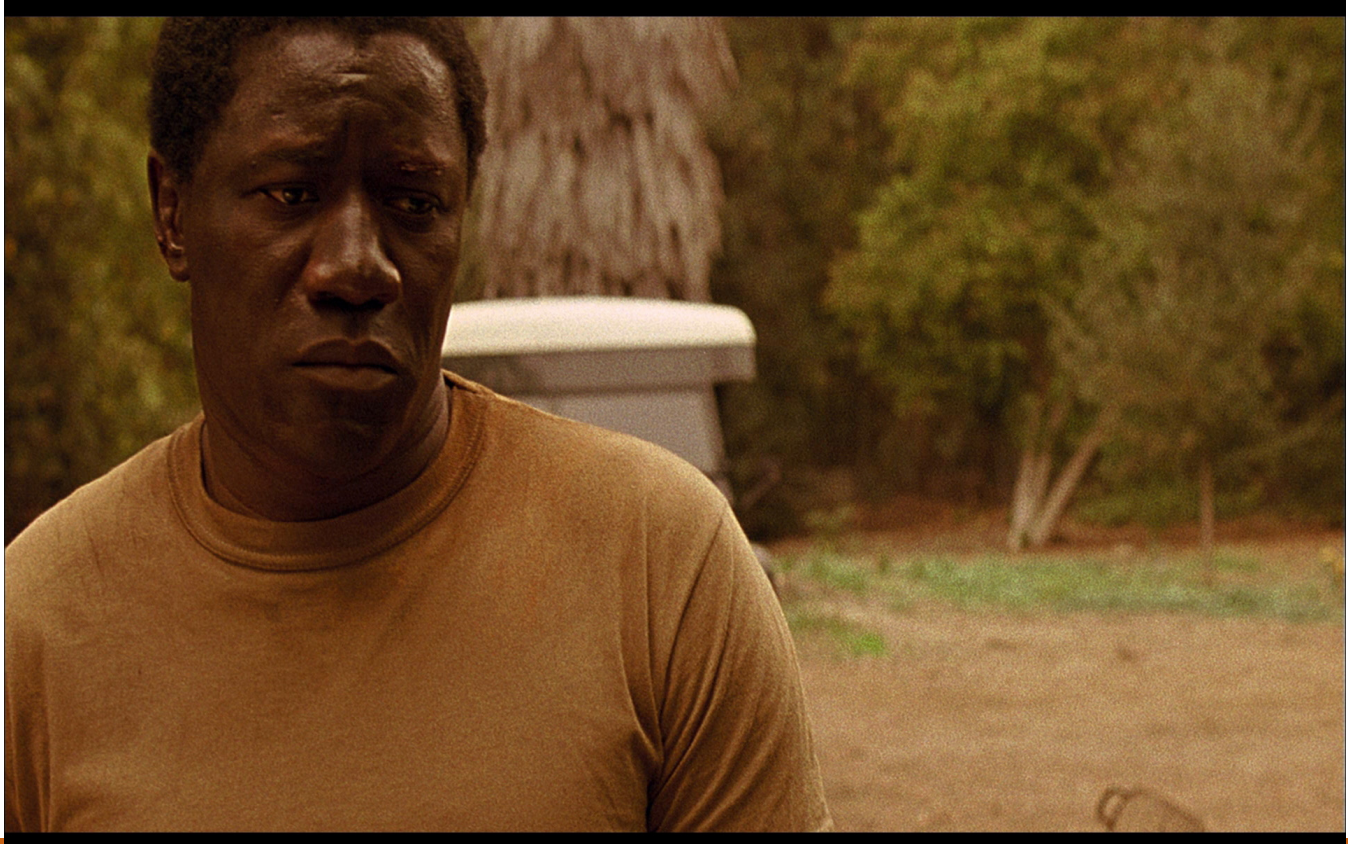
**Interview By Rebekah Frimpong and Photos Courtesy of Jay Visit.com**

**Q: With your film "Kwame" what were you hoping to accomplish with the dialogue on immigrants in America?**

I wanted to individualize and humanize the story of immigrants in America. At the time I conceived the concept I was attending the University Of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts. USC is a private school and a lot of the student body, particularly the Undergraduates come from wealthy backgrounds. I recall an occasion when two co-eds were eating lunch near me and commenting on the school's custodial staff who were all immigrants. The dialogue was basically about how immigrants all came to America for free money, didn't pay taxes and were robbing actual Americans of opportunities. Being the child of immigrants myself, I know that they don't simply leave native land in order to syphon the wealth from people in richer nations, the truth is most people would like the opportunity to provide a good life for themselves and their families in their home country. Unfortunately there are often situations that prevent this from being possible; whether it be civil war, religious or ethnic persecution, corrupt government or the long lasting negative effects of neo-colonialism. My point being it is not ever that simple, Immigration is a complicated and polarizing story; but often when it is discussed, we lose sight of the fact that we are talking about people and that's what I wanted to communicate with *Kwame*; to give a face to the cab driver, the custodian and the short order cook.

**Q: What do you hope your audience gets from your work?**

As a filmmaker my first objective is to entertain, no one wants to make a boring, un-engaging piece, but I also hope to promote discourse from my audiences. In this social networking age, too often we operate in soundbites, people just make sweeping generalizing statements. We used to think out our position, maybe as a result of all this information we are now privy to, it has all become too much so we grab for the nearest



viewpoint. I hope my work, on whatever topic it deals with, causes people to carefully consider their position and employ their humanity when reflecting on subjects. Cinema is a way for society to preserve our culture, we all know our opinions on certain films reflect our views on society, it is human nature, I'm not saying I can change the world, but I would definitely like to give people pause for thought and consider in the complexities of life.

**Q: What was the first film you saw that inspired you and did you always know film would be your passion?**

I saw E.T. with my mum when I was 5 and that was it. I wouldn't stop pestering her about the film and asking her all sorts of production questions which she couldn't possibly have known the answer to. I was obsessed with the craft of storytelling because I saw how gripping it was and it made people happy. I was always a creative child, writing short stories and when my Dad got our first VHS camcorder...it was over. I would dress my kid brother up and make him star in my films. Somewhere there is a really bad VHS copy of my shot-for-shot remake of Godfather III. So the answer to your question is: Yes. I have always known film is my passion.

**Q: If you could give advice to young Africans in regards to success or making it in your field of work what would it be?**

Write. Scripts are the currency of this industry. Write a good script and then write it again, question everything you do in a script because good ones don't come easy. Too often people get caught up in the toys and cameras, that's not the most important aspect of filmmaking, it's the story telling. You can find people with the technical expertise to help you if that is not your strongest suit, but if you don't have characters who are believable, that the audience can have empathy, then what's the point? The truth is that the vast majority of the world has a very stereotypical view of Africa, it is some miserable depressing place over there. If you believed all the news reports and depressing tales about Africa, you



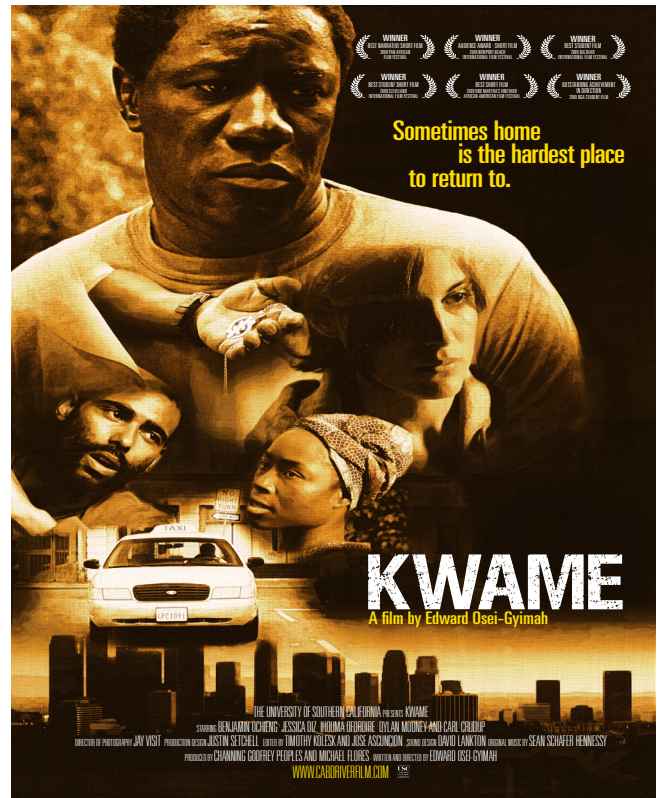
would have no reason to ever want to visit, but the truth is, despite it troubles, people make a life there. They love, they laugh, have adventures and the spirit and compassion of the people is awe inspiring. I can only speak to Ghana, which my parents country of origin, but whenever I have visited, it have had some of the best times of my life, and some of my fondest memories come from vacations there with my family. The stories coming out of Africa need to be hopeful and sophisticated, we need romantic comedies, action-adventures. I'd love to see films by the Nigerian Woody Allen or the Ghanaian Albert Brooks to promote the diversity, culture and majesty of the continent. Don't fall in to the trap of recycling what has come before, be original.

**Q: What is next for you? What hopes do you have for the future of film in Ghana or in terms of your work?**

Next for me is getting my first feature film off the ground, it will be a tale based in the United States because this is where I have been living for the past 8 years, so I feel the time is right to offer my take on certain things I see happening around me. It is hard and arduous process, getting people to read your work, believe in your vision and then going out to raise the finance to actually get the project made, but this is my addiction so I will keep on feeding it. I am currently in production on my feature documentary called: "Kick In The Door" which looks at the rise of Hip Hop and the role technology played in its journey. So I am traveling around the country interviewing artists and record executives, telling the story of how this small sub-cultural genre became a global billion dollar empire.

**Q: The theme for this issue is "Soul Survivors" (we are looking at those who follow their heart) , how do you feel your work is reflective of this, in particular your film "Kwame"?**

Kwame was a very personal film, it reflected events that had a direct effect on my family, but it was also representative of genre of cinema that I am drawn to, that being third cinema. I naturally look to tell stories of those who are ignored by mainstream media, the tales of those who fall between the cracks.



It's why I am drawn to the work of such artists as Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, Costas Gravas, Oliver Stone, Ousman Sembene but to name a few. Their work seeks to entertain, whilst at the same time educate, the characters in their films wrestle with their humanity whilst trying to deal with the externalities of life. I haven't yet been able to work on films I am not drawn to, I wish I could, I'd be a lot richer, but I strive to have my work promote understanding and compassion. That was my goal with Kwame, to humanize and individualize the immigrant story and not have them relegated to this "other" by mainstream society.

**Q: Lastly, please let us know where we can find your work.**

The documentary I co-wrote and edited titled The Girls In The Band is playing at festivals throughout the US, whilst another documentary I produced and edited called America The Beautiful 2 will be available on Netflix from next month and Kwame is available at <http://www.playfestivalfilms.com/> for download.





# SOULPURPOSE

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## **Association of African Journalists and Writers (AAJW) in New York**

The Association of African Journalists and Writers (AAJW), a New York-based organization is a unified platform for African journalists to connect; network; collaborate; and promote better reporting and understanding of Africa and African communities living in North America.

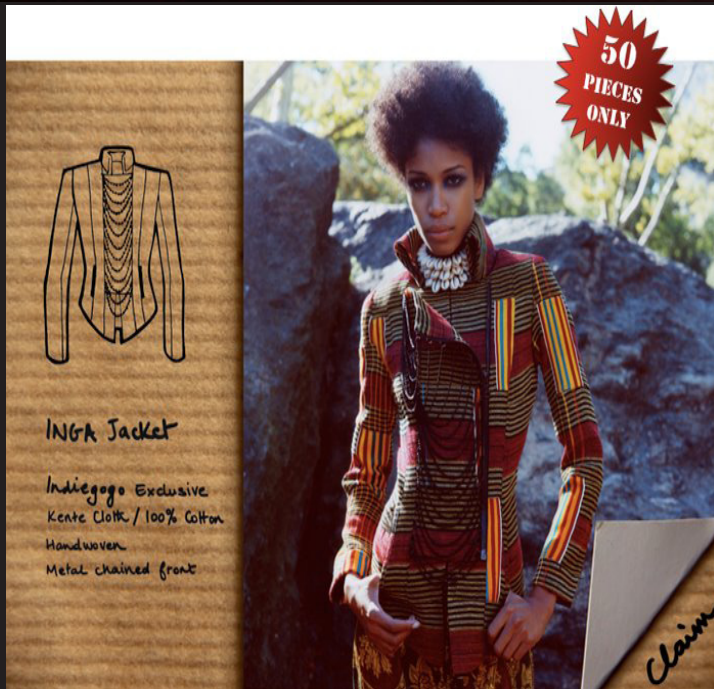
### **AAJW is a platform for African journalists and writers is a place :**

- To network, connect professionally and build partnerships
- To share, exchange ideas and collaborate on media or writing projects
- To engage in programming to promote the work of African journalists and African writers
- To engage in informative, educational forums and discussions with the general public to improve understanding of African issues and the African immigrant experiences in North America
- To engage with African-born or children of African immigrant students who are studying journalism or creative writing and are looking for internships, mentorships and guidance
- To form a support network for African media and African writers to interact and engage with like-minded peers who are from Africa or children of African immigrants with a professional focus on African affairs or African issues
- To bring informative, educational, entertaining programs, dialogue that uplifts and engages African media and African writers
- To promote informed and accurate reporting of the African continent and African communities living in North America
- To create a database of African media and African writers who can serve as a resource for the mainstream media on African topics in African immigrant communities or issues happening on the Continent to bring informed, accurate reporting on Africa issues
- To improve understanding of the diversity of the African continent and African immigrant communities

The Association of African Journalists and Writers (AAJW) welcomes Africans and Friends of Africa who are interested in an accurate and informed portrayal of the Africa and African communities living in North America. For questions, please email [AAJWnewyorkcity@gmail.com](mailto:AAJWnewyorkcity@gmail.com).



## SPOTLIGHT VISIONARY



## LOZA MALEOMBHO



## HER CAMPAIGN:

The young Afro-Brazilian and Ivory Coast raised designer Loza Maléombho is pushing her label Loza Maleombho New York to “re-brand” African-made apparel and help empower Ivorian women. The label is promoting this new initiative through the fundraising platform Indie Gogo and offering great fashion items in exchange to start raising the funds to reach the ultimate goal of \$100,000.

### Loza Maleombho Plan of Action to Empower Ivorian Women:

- HIRE WOMEN FULL TIME: vision to be efficient and long lasting we need to provide them with a full time salary.
- PROVIDE FAIR WAGE: providing 10 women with a paid job will feed 70.
- MAINTAIN ETHICAL LABOR: safe and enjoyable working conditions.



Support Loza Maleombho New York:  
<http://www.indiegogo.com/lm4women>

Buy items ranging from \$110-\$500 and be apart of this movement to empower women in Africa.



# YAV MAGAZINE'S VISIONARIES BRUNCH

Photos By Arao Ameny



This summer YAV Magazine was able to host a successful brunch to celebrate and discuss young African visionaries. The brunch was hosted by Joloff Restaurant in Brooklyn New York and co-sponsored by AAJW. YAV Magazine will be hosting more events like this one in various cities. If you are interested in hosting an event with YAV Magazine contact us at [bgnbpro@gmail.com](mailto:bgnbpro@gmail.com) for more information.



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VISIONARY OF THE MONTH

# GREEN LIVING





**Y**oli Ouiya is setting a new standard, her vision of sharing African ideas that are not only healthy but sustainable has made her the new face of the green movement in America amongst the African and urban communities in New York. YAV Magazine got a chance to talk to Yoli Ouiya about “Green Eco-Chic Living” and celebrating health and the environment in African communities. Ouiya shares with us her thoughts and how to find out more about living a green lifestyle using the tips she provides on her interactive blog “Yoli’s Green Living”.

**Written By YAV Staff and Photos by Rebekah Frimpong**



**Q: What inspired you to start Yoli’s Green Living?**

My family, friends, and seeing the increasing health issues of the general public inspired me to start YolisGreenLiving.com. They always asked me for opinions of dietary concerns, products and healthy living. I wanted to provide a resource for people to develop healthy habits in all areas of their lives, including mine.

**Q: What do you hope your audience gets from your initiative in regards to healthy living?**

That the little steps do matter. I would rather someone take small, incremental steps than one vast change. The former is more likely to succeed in creating a new habit.

**Q: Why do you think “green living” is becoming more popular these days?**



Everyday there is a new study showing things that were once promoted as harmless are in fact harmful. High profile individuals are dying young. The obesity rate is higher than it has ever been. In my observation, people recognize there is a problem and want to take steps to find solutions, starting with their own lives.

**Q: What have been some of the challenges you have faced getting Yoli's Green Living started and going?**

One challenge that has been consistent is illustrating to readers is that being green isn't exclusive to those of affluence and that good health is in fact a choice. Yes, genetics play a part, but more importantly, everyday choices have a lifelong impact.

**Q: What is next for you? What hopes do you have for the future?**

I like to live in the present and build a vision for myself privately. I am working on a book with a co-author and continue to support the philanthropic organizations I work with.

Find out more about Yoli Ouyi and her work at : [YolisGreenLiving.com](http://YolisGreenLiving.com)



**Here Are Some Green Tips From Yoli's Green Living : [YolisGreenLiving.com](http://YolisGreenLiving.com)**

*Food- eat well find healthy snacks food that energize; like plums*

*Beauty- find out about green beauty products like " Me and the Girls"*

*Home-learn how to detox your kitchen and save enrgy in your home*

*Tech-read about the new cars making life greener and cheaper*





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## YAV MAGAZINE'S MUSIC CORNER

Written by YAV Staff and Photos Courtesy of RAF Photography and Oddisee Album Website



Nigerian soul singer Bez is bringing a fresh sound to the underground international music scene. His title track from his album *Super Sun* is a clear representation of the eclectic soul sound of Bez. He writes melodic ballads that are reminiscent of soul pioneers like Nat King Cole, Otis Redding, and more. YAV Magazine got a chance to hear Bez do a special performance at The Shrine in Harlem New York, and his set was impressive and captivating. Make sure to get Bez album on iTunes now entitled *Super Sun*.



Sudanese-American producer/emcee has released his latest work *People Hear What They See* and has single handedly elevated the Hip-Hop and Soul underground scene in terms of production to another level. Every track on this album is superior and laced with a little bit of Oddisee's whimsical flare. Whether you hear the bass and drums of his Washington DC area roots or the playful poetry amidst his Hip-Hop vernacular, this album is classic. Get *People Hear What They See* on iTunes.



# An aFREEcan Story

**N**ana Ama is a free-spirited young artist who has a new clothing line inspired by beauty not only from the beauty of her own Ghanaian people but also from that which makes people uniquely wonderful. Nana Ama is inspired by the way people think and the pure expression that comes from art and giving. She shares with YAV Magazine how she started her new clothing line aFREEcan.

**Written By YAV Staff Writer**  
**Photography By Tau Battice Photography**



**Q: What inspired you to develop “aFREEcan”?**

aFREEcan, in essence, created itself. In 2007, I had just begun to peck through my creative shell. I was sketching and painting in an effort to articulate myself when my speech did not quite serve. I began to paint on my clothes, tees especially. I penned abstract figures and painted words; the first aFREEcan tee emerged. Of all my creations in that time, this word particularly haunted me. It struck me as powerful yet spoke quite simply. One word, remixed to fuse the expression of two distinct proclamations: Yes, I am African. Yes, I am FREE.

**Q: Why do you feel it is so important for Africans to embrace diversity within our communities?**

I love this question because it captures the essence of aFREEcan.apparel. This brand is expressly about embracing African identity to include, appropriately, all of humanity. As a Ghanaian born in America, I experience a common duality: being of both cultures and not quite belonging to either. This duality was read as an invitation to anyone with two cents, to assign me a singular identity, because I surely



could not claim both. It took a long time for me to embrace the fact that I am free form peg -- odd in shape and size, fitting no symmetrical societal hole. The more I was forced to “choose a side”, I more embraced myself and refused to relinquish a connection to all the ingredients that have come together to make me. The aFREEcan.brand boldly, yet simply embraces all that we (humans) are... with no gimmicks, no fanfare.



**Q: What are your hopes for the further development of “aFREEcan”?**

I hope to expand the brand internationally, beginning with Ghana of course.

**Q: How can people get the “aFREEcan” merchandise?**

You can find us on Facebook for now, <http://www.facebook.com/aFREEcan>, apparel, or search “aFREEcan apparel”. Please like us and message us for a custom made tee or tank.

**Q: What is next for you?**

I am looking forward to building stronger relationships in the industry in Ghana. I will seek out our indigenous textiles and aim to preserve them in contemporary context.

**Q: The theme for this issue is “Soul Survivors” (meaning those who go after their passion in life without giving up), how do you feel you are a “soul survivor” in regards to the work you do and achieving your goals?**

aFREEcan. In this word, the “can” is an embedded affirmation that true freedom empowers. This affirmation is born out of my own experience, struggling with the emotions attached to denying myself freedom, for whatever reason. Owning my true colors, it turns out, actually fulfills, encourages and nurtures the soul to keep on keepin’ on. Entrepreneurs are all, on some level, pioneers. We must have a will of steel to pursue the road less travelled. While many offer reasons why we shouldn’t, or give even better reasons why we should do things their way, a true Soul Survivor moves ever on. My family (by blood and soul) has been a powerful motivator for me to pursue my dreams, steady forward. This is just my beginning.



# The Visual Artist

## Introducing Szanie Elvis



**S**zanie Elvis is a Hip-Hop emcee living in Kampala Uganda who decided to choose the visual arts as a preferred medium to express himself better to the rest of the world. Born in 1989, Szanie Lusiba Elvis is a multi-faceted artist, raised by a single mother along with his two sisters. Cynthia, his younger sister is also an artist who Elvis is mentoring to walk in his shoes. Elvis' father passed away and in total Elvis has a family that consists of thirteen other siblings. Elvis shares his passion for the visual arts and his views on expression and communication through the arts.

**Interview & Photos By  
Gilbert Frank Daniels**







**Q: How has art changed your life?**

I am a leader no longer a follower and this makes me very happy. Way back in high school, I was this lazy, quite person. I never wanted to take responsibilities any leadership positions in school after all; I wasn't that clever in class. But all this changed; now I am able to stand and speak in bigger forums, meetings and my words inspire and mend broken hearts. I am self-employed and I talk myself as a CEO of my own strategy – generally a responsible man.

**Q: What inspired you to do abstract art / contemporary art?**

The times when I used to grab my backpack, a bottle of water and an iPod just to admire the tall buildings and classy quiet places in town. I came to realize that most of the Hotel and café's had paintings on their walls and commercial buildings had relief abstract art, relief sculptures outside. Whenever I reach the spaces, I would stop unknowingly and take a minute, I can't really explain the energy that pulled towards these pieces of art; maybe the rhythm of the lines, ancient art shapes, the music that I listened to on my iPod. The feeling around the art was at times satisfactory to me that even when I felt hungry, the experience would take the hunger away. Sometimes I would go inside Serena Hotel, Imperial Royale just to stare at paintings on the walls, the foreigners, and tourists, smell the sweet scents from the hotel kitchens. So this whole experience forced me to stop just admiring this kind of life and to man up and learn to live this life and the only way to do that was to become an artist. That's why most of my paintings' themes are rotating around Sunday evenings, all about Jazz, hotels, eating and wining but expressed in abstract art.

**Q: Why did you change from being a Hip-Hop emcee to concentrating more on art as a way of living?**

I am still a good emcee, I just didn't want to be overtaken by the western cultures. I always had a force that pulled me to African traditions and cultures. Like one day my mum and my uncle Steven put me





in a meeting complaining on the way I was dressing like “witch doctor” just because I was wearing paper bead and heavy hand crafted necklaces. My Hip-Hop blends in African instrumentation you can call it Afro Hip-Hop. My conception my music has to blend with Africa cultural norms starting from the lyrics, beats, language to bring out the indigenusness. I feel I need to do music that will be able to blend with my culture, art and community.

**Q: How have you used art to influence social positive change in the community?**

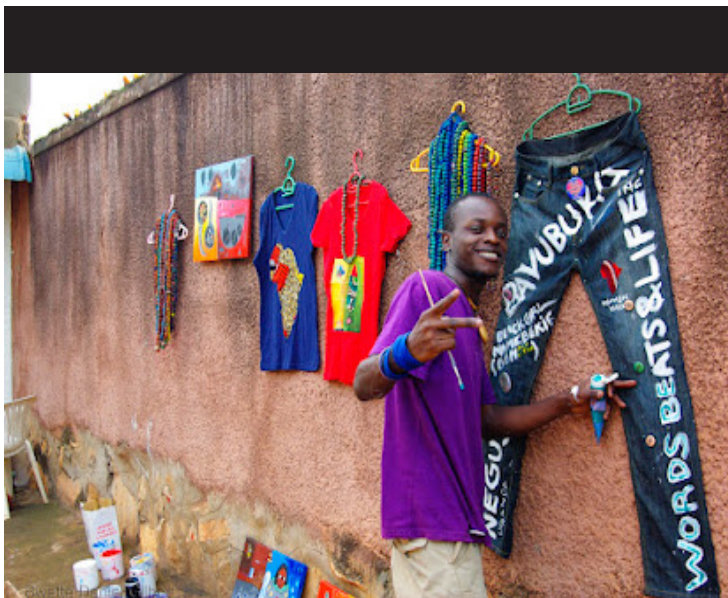
We are surrounded with so many children from our neighborhood between the ages of two years all the way to even 20 years. So, on Sundays after their church sessions, I collect them and we have an art creative workshop though painting, drawing are made from old socks, straws and others find objects so that I can teach them. I talk to them to inspire and challenge them to use their talents to achieve what they want to have in future. I traveled with Bavubuka Foundation team and taken as a speaker who uses art in the Bavubuka Indigenous Hip-Hop forums around different of Uganda where I spoke to the youth who were facing situation like poverty, AIDS, Ignorance to empower them and to share skills and knowledge to them.

**Q: Why do you define yourself as Urban Indigenous?**

Urban Indigenous is the name that was given to me by Silas Babaluku. I think he got derived it from the concept that I was doing Hip-Hop (emceeing) and at the same time fusing it with contemporary art. The vision is bringing back our indigenous African cultures and heritage into the hearts of the youth. So he nicknamed me Urban Indigenous and together we created the “Urban Indigenous Lifestyle.”

**Q: What are the challenges you have faced perusing your dreams?**

Money of course has been a major setback, but that hasn’t made me loose focus on my dreams. I also don’t have many close friends who understand and believe my art to the core. I feel bored sometimes to inner me as we critique my work day after the other. Documentation of my work has also been a



hindrance so I am working to get an EOS-5D Cannon, I won't need any other thing after that. I am also selling my art to enable me go back to the University to continue with my studies in art because I feel my creativity sometimes is limited due to lack of enough knowledge to push forth.

**Q: Who were some of the role models that inspired you to peruse this dream?**

Hahaha, I don't want to mention him, he will laugh at me when he reads this... but yeah, my number one is Silas Kintu Mukasa Balabyekkubo commonly known to the world as Babaluku of Bavubuka Allstarz. I got a chance to see one dreaming, then live the dreams until their dreams becomes true. He inspired me not only from the music part of him, but his drive to take risks to chase a dream many would call unachievable and he will finally achieving it. Everybody was gifted by a talent by God, so I no longer wonder why I care so much about him. I want to be next to him to learn because he is an educator in music, art, jewelry, fashion, culture among other things. Other people that inspire me are likes of Fella Kuti, Femi Kuti, Youssou 'N' Dour, Wes, Angelique Kidjo, and Tshila of Cassava Republic, and finally KRS-One (The Teacha).

**Q: What are some your greatest achievements you have accomplished so far?**

My first achievement was discovering the real me and what am capable of. What the inner me want to be and that was meant to be an artist because when I started, everything went on smoothly. My other achievement is just the first year of the diploma in my first semester. I was privileged to be one the first young men to exhibit internationally in the Museum of African Diaspora Arts (MoCADA) in Brooklyn, New York. This was big achievement to a self taught, struggling young artist like me.

**Q: What is the current project you are working on?**

Currently am painting 40 art pieces that am exhibiting in Kampala in the month of December,



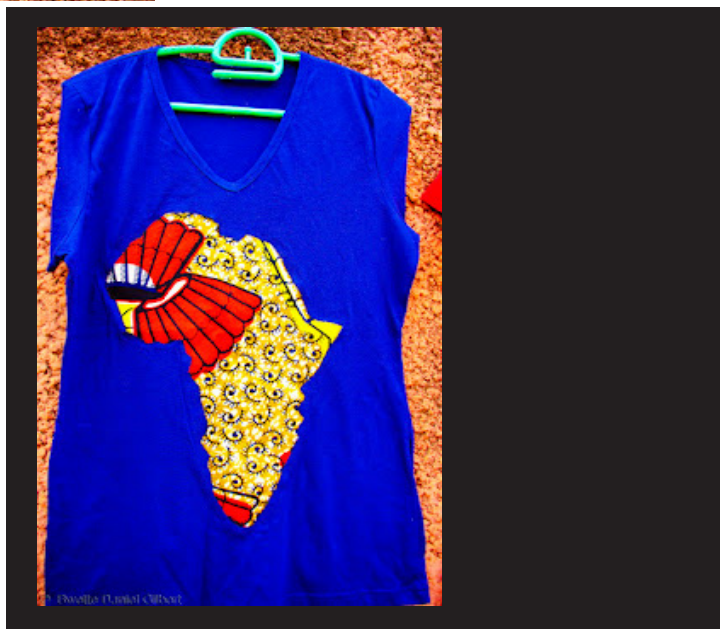


the show will feature art pieces that we have been doing with the young kids in my community plus the works from the Bavubuka Foundation regional art and Hip-Hop forums around Uganda..... otherwise am ever painting and making jewelry at home, its my studio now since I shifted from the recent expensive one. I am a full time practicing artist.

**Q; Who are some the people that have elevated your artistry dream come true and how have they helped you?**

Number one is Silas Babaluku who discovered what the inner me wanted me to do however much I wanted to learn to rap. He pursued me after seeing an abstract piece of art I had drawn at the back of my book. So I went back and re-drew in on a bigger piece of paper. I had named it “the last Queen of Scotland” because it was about a women gender balance in Idi Amin Dada’s regime the former president of Uganda. The other person in a lady called Rebekah Adjowa-Kwatema Frimpong who help us exhibit at MoCADA museum. She always encouraged and supported me to do art taking it from paper to canvas. She contributed on my first acrylic painting when she came to visit Uganda. If it weren’t for these two people, I wouldn’t have made it through art.

**Q: What is the message you wish to give the youth in Uganda and on African Continent to be successful in their endeavors?**



Knowledge yourself. Don’t get drown in seas of materialism. Youth is a process of becoming a turning point in the journey of life. God created everyone with a job, a task they are supposed to fulfill; you’re must be good at something but not until you put effort to discover your potential to find out what you’re really good at. Liberate your soul, body and mind to change yourself and the world through your passion. As my friend Silas always says; “The world is in your hands” which means its up to you to be a failure or successful in life. Love what you do, and do it with all the passion, success will be following you.





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