

VOL 1 | ISSUE 1 | APRIL 2023

TELL **the** IMPACT

Magazine

How to
**Communicate
Effectively**

**African
inspired
Artworks**

**How I
Became
An Avid
Reader**

Africans Don't Read?

+plus

**African
Delica-
cies**

ABOUT Read to Impact



Read to Impact (RTI) is a non-profit social enterprise brand of Gemsread. Currently, RTI has a network of readers across Africa, inspiring young people to take responsibility for their personal development. RTI organizes regular reading challenges through her WhatsApp community of about 900 members from 40+ countries, more than 90% of which are African countries. In addition to the reading challenges, RTI organizes virtual reading-related events where members of the network or community are primarily the key speakers. The diversity in the community is enriching, enlightening, and accommodating.

Vision: To become Africa's largest community and network of consistent readers.

Mission: To inspire and drive young Africans to empower their minds, enrich their lives, and improve their societies through reading.

Tell the Impact Magazine is RTI's maiden publication. Its aim is to herald the testimonies of growth, impact, and progress primarily from members of the RTI community and network. The testimonies are those resulting from reading. It is our hope that by spreading these testimonies, young people everywhere, especially in Africa, would be inspired to embrace a culture of reading so they can also count their many blessings from reading.

We have designed this magazine to have a strong African tone as a way of celebrating the African diversity of the RTI community and networks. We are proud of our beautiful and rich continent!

If you would like to feature (article, artwork, recipe) in an edition of this magazine, email us at info@readtoimpact.org.

ABOUT Tell the Impact Magazine

Editor's Note

MAKING IMPACT & DEFYING ODDS

The idea for this magazine was birthed on the historic Friday morning of September 9, 2022. My team and I had an informal executive meetup with Mr Arthur Otoijamun, founder of Visit Nigeria and Aristo Afrikana, as well as an avid reader. Mr Arthur spoke to us about being people of value, making impact, and defying odds to do big, daring things. We were fired up! Immediately he left us, I told my team: "we are starting a publication to herald the amazing things happening in the RTI community; we will call it "Tell the Impact Magazine." Work began immediately, and we set up the team for the magazine in October. From then on, we worked tirelessly to bring this idea to reality, and I am excited that you have it in your "hands" right now.



Our goal for this magazine is to demonstrate that young Africans can take their destinies in their hands despite the systemic and economic hurdles plaguing the continent. Reading is a potent means to soar above challenges: it expands your mind, enriches your thinking, and equips you with necessary abilities and drive to live the life you want to live. Reading alone may not deliver a successful life, but it extremely increases the probability of success.

The theme of this first issue is a question: Africans Don't Read? As you might have noticed, the cover photograph embodies our reaction to the question's affirmative. It is our expression of disappointment in the notion that Africans don't read. Think of it as a people who are making solid efforts at progress only to have the efforts undermined by untrue narratives. In this issue, you will see that Africans do read. More so, you will observe how readers around the rich continent are empowering their minds and changing their lives.

In addition to the aim of demonstrating that Africans do read, we have curated this issue to make it valuable to you. You will read about improving your communication and reading skills. You will take a step back to review the world through some African-inspired artworks. You will travel a bit to "taste" some delicious African delicacies. And you will take a moment to relax by trying the games we have put together specially for you. By the time you are done, you will have been educated, enlightened, and entertained, all through reading.

Meanwhile, all the contents and contributions of this edition, including the testimonies, demonstrate the diversity of the RTI community and network. This edition features voices from Malawi, Kenya, Liberia, Gambia, Ghana, Tanzania, and Nigeria, among the nearly 40 African countries in our WhatsApp community alone. We will continue to represent as many African

countries as possible in future editions, as a way of celebrating the beauty in our diversity as well as the boundless possibilities before us when we proudly embrace being African. Despite our being apart by thousands of kilometers within the same continent, reading is one value that has brought us all together, demonstrating again that Africans do read.

I hope you enjoy this edition and more importantly learn from it.

We would be glad to receive your suggestions about how we can enrich the magazine to increase its impact. Do share with your friends and loved ones, and give us a mention whenever you use any part of the publication.

See you again in the next edition.

Israel Peters

Editor-in-Chief

“
Our goal for this magazine is to demonstrate that young Africans can take their destinies in their hands despite the systemic and economic hurdles plaguing the continent.
”

Israel Peters

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MEET THE TEAM



Brandwiz Business Gengz

Brandwiz Business Gengz is a creative branding agency that specializes in creating transformative brand experiences for businesses of all sizes.

Our expert team of brand strategists, designers, and creators has a passion for helping our clients build brands that inspire loyalty and connect with their audiences.

We offer a wide range of services, including brand strategy development, messaging and positioning, brand identity design, visual design, web design and development, content creation, and marketing implementation.

Our proven frameworks and agile methodologies ensure that every aspect of a brand is curated to maximize its impact across all touchpoints, from the user experience to the visual and verbal identity.

Whether you are a startup looking to establish your brand presence or an established company seeking to revitalize your brand, we have the expertise to bring your vision to life.

At Brandwiz Business Gengz, we strive to create brands that truly reflect the values, vision, and voice of our clients.

Brandwiz Business Gengz is the official design and digital production partner of Tell the Impact Magazine.



Israel Peters

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Israel Peters is the founder of Gemsread, a publishing and technology startup with a mission to amplify voices worth hearing. He is also the founder of Read to Impact, which is now a non-profit brand of Gemsread. As a professional academic editor, he helps researchers around the world communicate their research effectively to a global audience. Israel is a recipient of the full Global Excellence Scholarship (2022) of the University of Exeter, United Kingdom, through which he is pursuing an MA in Publishing. He is a reading advocate committed to building platforms for impactful, rewarding engagements for young people. His interests are creative entrepreneurship, business strategy, and intellectual and philosophical discourse.



Omotolani Joseph

CIRCULATION AND PUBLICITY

Omotolani Joseph studied civil engineering at the Federal University of Technology, Akure (Nigeria), where she is now pursuing a Master's degree (M.Eng.) in construction engineering. She is enthusiastic about project management and execution, both in business and humanitarian settings. She is certified in content writing, project management, business management and improvement, global social entrepreneurship, and branded community building. In December 2022, she completed her Mini-MBA at Tekedia Institute and received a diploma. She is the Chief Operating Officer at Read to Impact, impacting and engaging young people in about 40 African countries weekly. Aside work, she is a free-thinker who likes reading, traveling, and interacting with intelligent minds.



Ellen Chifuniro

FEATURE EDITOR

Ellen Chifuniro is a determined and enthusiastic 23-year-old Malawian writer and librarian. She is a Young African Library Leader fellow and advocate for mental health, gender equality, and reading culture. With a First Class bachelor's degree in Library and Information Science, she currently works as a university librarian at Jubilee University, Malawi, and holds credentials in project management, monitoring and evaluation, data analysis, and gender advocacy. Ellen's interest in books and reading began at an early age and prompted her to pursue a career in library and information science. In addition to her professional endeavors, she is an avid reader and has been recognized as a Read to Impact Star Reader on three occasions. She utilizes her fiction and non-fiction writing abilities to promote reading as a valuable endeavor. Ellen is committed to building a future where reading is valued and nurtured by young Africans.



Angela Murigi

PHOTO EDITOR

Angela Murigi is an IT professional from Nairobi, Kenya. She is passionate about technology and reading. She started developing a reading culture in primary school when her parents introduced her to storybooks at age seven. In her introverted and intimate family, reading and exchanging of ideas are favorite leisure activities. This family tradition has molded her interest in reading and introduced her to people with a similar interest. Angela has created a book club with her friends, where they read and exchange feedback, helping her to appreciate the effort of different authors. Reading gives Angela a sense of direction, fulfillment, and focus on personal and peer priorities while helping her to be intentional about her relationships and herself.

Highlights

of RTI in 2022

1

800 READERS
40 AFRICAN COUNTRIES

The Read to Impact WhatsApp community grew to over 800 readers from about 40 African countries, between February and November.

2

Chill zone • LEVY NIERU • **Book club**

people that I interact with.
I am a member of Read To Impact, an online community group that carries participants from all over Africa. The group was founded with the aim of uniting all passionate readers from African countries and to impart the culture of reading to people.
As the title suggests, we read to make a positive change in the society. In the group, the founder and the secretary of the group share about 30 books then each of members give a title from the list. After a week of reading, we exchange messages from the books and the cycle continues.
The book that I am currently reading is Rich Dad, Poor Dad by Robert T. Kiyosaki. It's a financial book that aims at differentiating ways and mentalities of the rich and poor people.
The book sheds more light on why we have highly educated people but poor and illiterate yet rich fellows. It's such an enlightening read!

We received an honorary mention in Daily Nation, East Africa's largest newspaper, by Wafula M., a distinguished member of the Read to Impact community. (<https://nation.africa/kenya/life-and-style/saturday-magazine/book-club-read-to-impact-3969028>)

3

We executed 6 exciting reading challenges, 3 major virtual events (including Tell the Impact Webinar 1.0 and the female-only Dream Africa conference), and several virtual book talks.

4

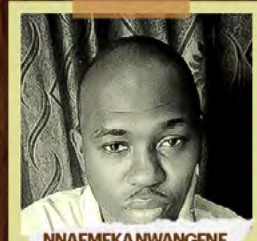
We recorded amazing testimonies from readers in our communities about how reading was positively transforming their lives.

ERTI 2022

Star READERS



ADAMU YUSUF
NIGERIA



NNAEMEKA NWANGENE
NIGERIA



HELLEN BABAWALE
NIGERIA



NYEADEH D. JACKPUEH
LIBERIA



OKO PATRICIA
NIGERIA



AMYEMMA
GHANA



CYNTHIA JEROBON
KENYA



DAVID MARY
NIGERIA



DAVID O. OLUNLOYO
NIGERIA



ELLEN CHIFUNIRO
MALAWI



FIONA SULLA
MALAWI



GAMBO CHALYA
NIGERIA



IRENE THOMAS
TANZANIA



JOHN GICHOHU MBIRU
KENYA



LEFENTSE SEOFELA
BOTSWANA



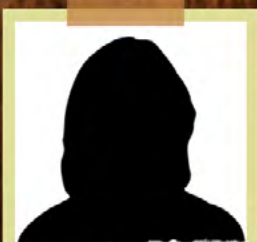
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TANZANIA



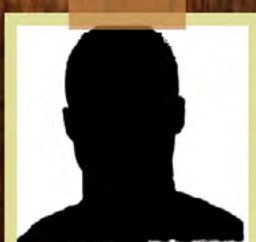
OLAOLUWA AKINTAYO
NIGERIA



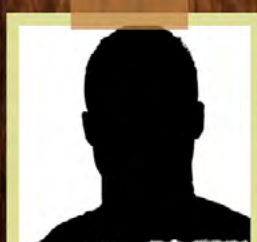
YAHYA KRUBALLY
GAMBIA



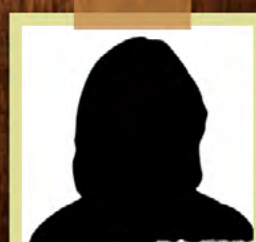
PRECIOUS MOYINOLUWA
NIGERIA



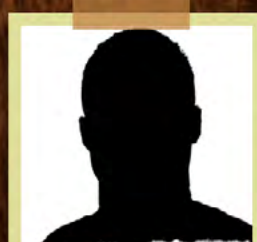
KELVIN DENNIS
LIBERIA



JOSE O. SAMUEL
NIGERIA



NASEI KENNETH
TANZANIA



ABDOU DAUDU
TANZANIA



Reading Testimonies From RTI 2022

Many of these reading testimonies were shared during or after specific reading challenges, among the six challenges we held throughout the year. We have done our best to keep them as they were shared, so you may need to imagine some of them as though they are current.

Dares Salaam is one of the cities in Tanzania. It is a city that apart from having a large number of people, traffic jams are also inevitable. Usually, I spend more than one hour in the morning from home to college. I often used that time to browse the internet, Instagram, Twitter, and so on. In fact, I was using the internet to waste time. When I returned, I would read one or two pages if I had time. There were days that passed without me reading even a paragraph.

But since I joined the "5-week reading challenge" my life changed. And we all know the principle was 1 book in 1 week. So, for me to comply with it, I started carrying my weekly book in my bag. Instead of browsing from Instagram to Twitter, I started reading one page after another in order to finish a book within a week. Frankly, at first, I was reading to finish, but as the days went by, I realized there was more than only finishing a book, and that is "understanding, knowledge, and wisdom."

[After] the challenge ended... the habit [was] developed in my brain and blood. And I carried my book... and read as I [had] been doing in the 5 weeks [of the challenge].

Irene T. (Tanzania)

Igrew up in a household where my older siblings practically had books everywhere. As a teenager I really was not interested in too much reading at the time. In fact, I only read for about 10 minutes before tossing the book aside.

Then an uncle of mine came along (may his soul rest in perfect peace). From my primary and secondary education up to my university days, he bought me every single book I had. We had a self-book club: my cousins and I reviewed books along with my uncle. Last month, his passing was a huge blow to us. Cancer sucks!

I was so mad and hurt, but his last words were "Never stop reading and evolving." That kept me going, and I was able to participate in this month's reading challenge.

When I joined Read to Impact in August, my reading skills improved for the better. I started reading from 30 minutes to an hour and half. I came across lots of book reviews here. No matter how busy life gets, I am always with a book at home or at work.

Reading has given me valuable knowledge; it improves my focus, memory, and communication skills.

Trust me, it reduces stress and improves your mental health. This is the best thing that ever happened to me!

A big shout out to Read to Impact and all the amazing readers in here. We read onnnnnn!

Nyeadeh D Jackpueh (Liberia)

I am on my sixth book now, "The Smart Money Woman" by Arese Ugwu, and I have the seventh, eighth, and ninth already on my reading list. This is a huge impact this challenge has had on me

and it's what I looked up for when I first joined even though I didn't think it would actually happen. So here I am reading on and on, learning with each day that goes by, interacting with great minds, and investing in myself daily. Thank you so much family. It's been an amazing, impactful journey for me at RTI.

Julieth Kokusima (Tanzania)

I consider the RTI reading challenge as a blessing because reading books was my biggest problem, but since I joined the RTI challenge, I started to develop the habit of reading. Of course, I joined this challenge intentionally to build and improve myself through a reading habit. And for sure I have managed to do so. Really, I cannot pass a day without reading.

The challenge is over but for me, it is like it is not over yet. It has opened the door to reading more, writing, and becoming a scholar.

I have recently started to pursue my second degree on history studies, and here reading is everything. I am now supposed to read more and more journals and articles on history, biology (disease and healing), environment, and research.

Reading is part of my life now, thanks to the RTI organizers and the whole RTI family. May the Almighty bless you all.

Rabia K. (Tanzania)

Hello, Read to Impact fam! Our journey is quite an exciting one! HAPPY NEW YEAR! I'm so grateful for the year 2022 because I became part of such a great family where I got to learn so much about how fascinating and informative reading is. These days I treat books with so much respect. Books are treasures just like diamond, gold, and silver.

Nana L. (Uganda)

I am breaking limitations and getting better every day as a reader. Engaging with like-minded people of the genre makes it look adventurous. I bet one is at the verge of impacting the world through knowledge gotten through reading. Thank you READ TO IMPACT for the opportunity.

Nsawir B. A. (Cameroon)

The reading challenge has been really good for me. I have actually learnt a lot from the tips you have given me and for that I am glad. The reading process has actually stabilized my mental health. I am no longer stressing myself because of reading. I want to say thank you for this opportunity. It's really helping me.

Violet M. (Zambia)

I had allocated 2 hours per day for my first read but after reading I found that it involves a lot of introspection and looking inwards. Therefore, I added an hour which I use to basically think

about the chapters I've read and note something down. I am currently trying to find a hard copy for this book because it deserves my top shelf!

Thank you RTI community for teaching me discipline and reading to be impacted not just for fun as has been my case in the past.

Cynthia (Kenya)

It has really been great and actually more impactful than I ever expected. Yes, this was a really busy week for me in every aspect but reading dived me in this other part of the day where the whole world was calm and I was just having a deep conversation with myself through *The Alchemist*, by Paul Coelho. Thank you for helping me through this. God bless your lives and days.

Doris K. (Rwanda)

During the last reading challenge, I read the book *Richest Man in Babylon*. After I finished, I started applying some of the ideas I got from the book and it worked out for me. Yes, I was able to save ten percent of everything I got and with that was able to buy a bicycle which I now go to work with.

Dan P. (Nigeria)

AFRICANS DON'T READ?



Is it true that Africans don't read? Some believe it is obvious while others think it is a misconception that needs to be challenged and changed. "If you want to hide something from black people, put it in a book." You must have heard the popular statement or a variation of it. It is arguable that this may have held some truth in the past. With increasing access to education and technology, more young Africans are becoming literate, with reading rapidly becoming a culture. As the Chief Operating Officer of Read to Impact, I have experienced firsthand how young Africans embrace books as they seek the immense benefits that reading brings to individuals and their communities.



Africans have a significant hunger for knowledge. This is evidenced by various book initiatives, book clubs, publishers, and social media influencers that have emerged and are working assiduously to make reading a core part of the African culture. It would be unfair to overlook the efforts of these gems. I recognize that their ambitions are often challenged by a lack of affordable access to books, alongside limited bookstores across African cities and the near absence of bookstores in rural areas. Nevertheless, digital technology and the subsequent rise in the use of e-books and audiobooks are now helping to reduce these barriers.

At Read to Impact, a growing community of young readers across about 40 African countries, we believe that reading is one of the most powerful tools for personal development and growth. When we read, we are exposed to new ideas and perspectives, and we can gain a deeper understanding of the world around us. By reading, we can broaden our horizons, expand our knowledge, and become more confident, informed, and empowered individuals. Reading is also helping young Africans to overcome many of the challenges they face in their daily lives. Whether it is poverty, inequality, or social injustice, reading provides knowledge and skills needed to overcome or manage these obstacles and achieve success.

Dear young African, don't let anyone tell you that you don't read, or that reading is not important. Refuse to accept that representation of who you are. You have the power to change your life and the world around you through the power of the written word. Embrace it, and never stop reading. Wherever you are, challenge the misconception that Africans don't read and inspire your peers to pick up books and read consistently. The future of Africa depends on a literate and informed generation, and we are committed to doing everything in our power to be that generation or help usher it in.

“You have the power to change your life and the world around you through the power of the written word. Embrace it, and never stop reading.”

Omotolani Joseph (Nigeria)
COO, Read to Impact

HOW TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

Ellen Chifuniro (Malawi)

Communication is essential to the human experience, as it has always been a fundamental part of our lives throughout our existence. Historically, as humans, we have communicated with each other, from the early days of cave paintings to the modern-day smartphone.

However, communication is not just about talking; rather, it is about understanding one another, expressing one's feelings, and establishing meaningful connections. This is what is known as effective communication.

Effective communication is an essential skill that can benefit people of all ages, but it is especially important for young people as they navigate relationships, school, and the workplace. It is a game changer as it builds one's confidence, trust, and relationships, thus making sure that information is delivered as intended. A former President of the United States of America, Gerald R. Ford, claimed that "nothing in life is more important than the ability to communicate effectively."

In this generation where people rely on connections and networks to excel in endeavours, having effective communication skills is a competitive advantage. Whether you are trying to communicate with friends, family, or colleagues, there are a few simple strategies you can use to achieve effective communication. These strategies include listening, reading, paying attention to nonverbal cues, being an assertive communicator, and using "I" statements. By using these strategies, you can communicate more effectively, understanding and conveying your thoughts and ideas to others. We look briefly at each strategy.

1. Listening

Biologically, you are created with two ears and one mouth so that you can listen more and talk less. Thus, one of the most important aspects of effective communication is the ability to listen. Listening is not only about understanding communicated information, but also about understanding how the speaker feels during communication. Most of us hear but do not really listen. We focus our minds on what we are going to say or how we will answer rather than upon understanding what the speaker is trying to communicate. Listening involves:

1. Giving the speaker your full attention,
2. Asking questions to clarify your understanding, and
3. Actively trying to understand their perspective.

Listening also involves acknowledging the other person's feelings and showing empathy.

2. Reading

Reading is a crucial aspect of effective communication. As the saying goes, "The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you go" – Dr. Seuss. Reading expands your knowledge and vocabulary, allowing you to better express yourself

and understand others. It also improves your critical thinking and comprehension skills, helping you to effectively process and analyze information. Not to mention, reading exposes you to different perspectives and ways of communicating, enriching your understanding of the world. So, if you want to improve your communication skills, make reading a regular part of your routine.

3. Pay attention to nonverbal cues

It is often said that actions speak louder than words. Body language and facial expressions can often convey a message more effectively than words can. Hence, nonverbal cues are just as important as the words we use, for all behaviour is communication. You should pay attention to your own nonverbal cues by making sure they are welcoming and try to read the nonverbal cues of the person you are communicating with. This can help you better understand their feelings and intentions.

4. Use “I” statements

When discussing a difficult or sensitive topic, it is important to avoid placing blame or making the other person feel defensive. Instead, try using “I” statements to express your own feelings and needs. For example, instead of saying “You never listen to me,” try saying “I feel like I’m not being heard when we talk.” This helps to keep the conversation focused on your own feelings rather than attacking the other person.

Effective communication involves listening actively, being clear and concise in your language, and adapting your style to your audience. It also involves being open to feedback and adjusting your communication according to that feedback. To improve your communication skills, consider reading books like

- “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People” by Stephen Covey,
- “How to Win Friends and Influence People” by Dale Carnegie, and
- “Nonviolent Communication” by Marshall B. Rosenberg.

These books provide valuable insights and strategies for effective communication in various situations. By following these simple strategies, you can improve your communication skills and build stronger, more positive relationships with the people around you.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR READING SKILLS

Ellen Chifuniro (Malawi)

Reading is a fundamental ability that can open up a world of knowledge and creativity. As the great author Neil Gaiman once remarked, “Reading is a basic tool in the living of a good life.”

Unfortunately, reading is a habit that is frequently taken for granted, yet it is a critical element of education and personal development. Hence, improving your reading skills may help you learn and retain information more efficiently, perform better in school or your career, and even boost your confidence and communication skills.

Reading is a key to unlocking a better life, and with certain techniques and tactics, you can improve your reading skills. Here are five techniques to enhance your reading skills: selecting a reading material that interests you, devoting time to reading, using the SQ3R reading strategy, taking breaks, and joining a book club or reading group. If you adopt these five ideas in your reading regimen, you may not only enhance your reading abilities, but also extend your horizons and enrich your life.

1. Select a reading material that interests you

Selecting materials that interest you can improve your reading skills in several ways. First, it can increase your motivation to read, as you are more likely to be engaged and motivated to read when the material is something you are interested in. This can help you stay focused and retain more information from the text. Additionally, reading materials that interest you can help you develop a deeper understanding of the material, as you are likely to spend more time thinking about and reflecting on what you have read. This can help you develop critical thinking skills and better comprehend complex texts. Overall, selecting materials that interest you can make reading more enjoyable and lead to greater improvement in your reading skills.

2. Set aside time for reading

This can improve your reading skills in several ways. First, it allows you to focus on reading without distractions, which can help you comprehend and retain information better. Second, it allows you to build up your reading stamina and speed, which can help you get through

more material in a shorter amount of time. Finally, it gives you the opportunity to practice your reading skills regularly, which can help you identify areas for improvement and make progress. Setting aside a dedicated time for reading can help you become a more skilled and efficient reader.

3. SQ3R reading strategy

SQ3R is a reading comprehension strategy that stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review. The first step, Survey, involves skimming the text and looking at headings, subheadings, and words in bold to get a general understanding of the content. In the second step, Question, you create a list of questions about the material based on your initial survey. The third step, Read, involves reading the text in detail and answering the questions as you go. In the fourth step, Recite, you summarize the material out loud or in writing. Finally, the Review step involves reviewing the material after some time to reinforce your learning and retention. Using the SQ3R strategy can improve your reading skills by helping you engage actively with the material, understand and retain important information, and connect new information to prior knowledge.

4. Join a book club or reading community

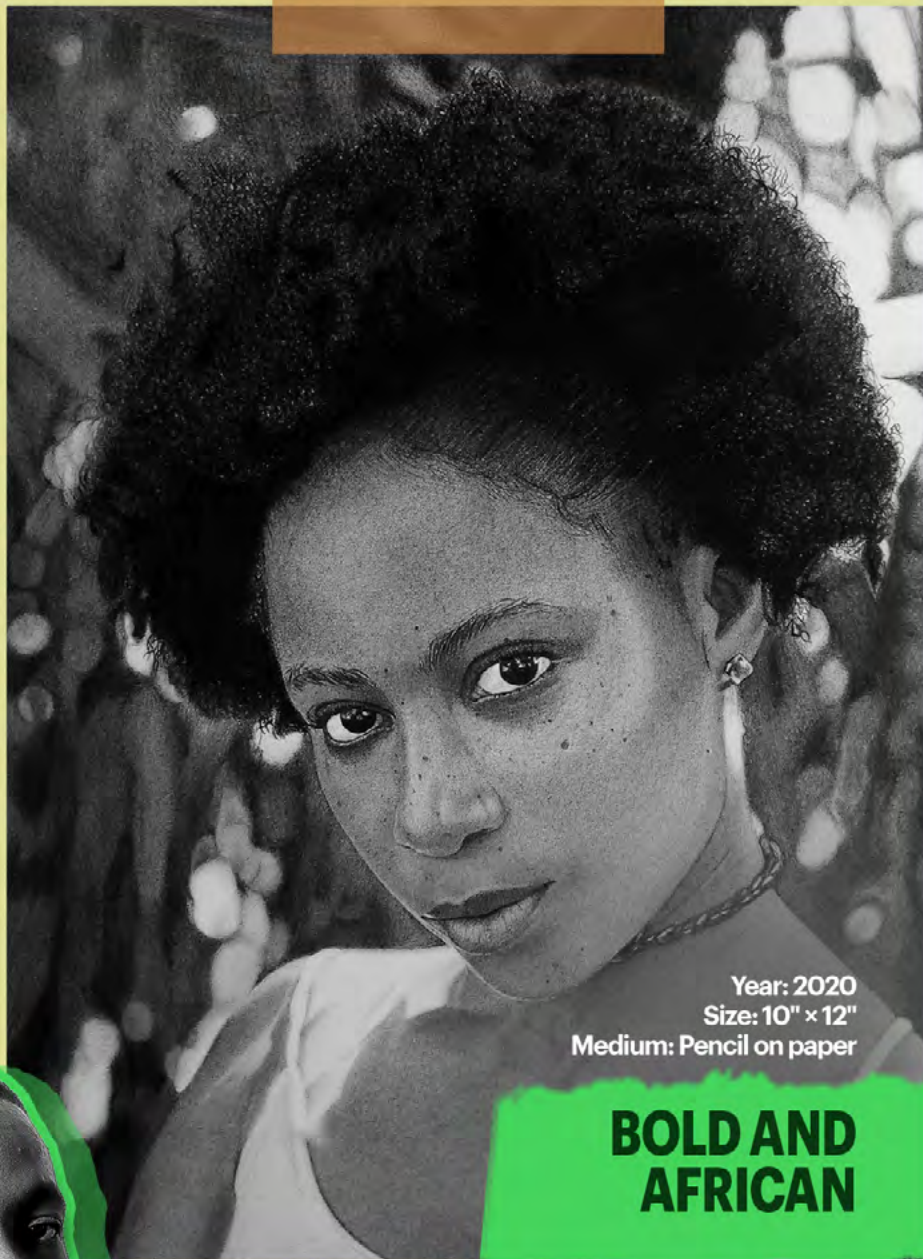
A book club is a group of people who meet regularly to discuss a book that they have all read. A reading community is similar but can include other types of literature, such as articles or short stories, as well as other activities related to reading. By joining either of these, you expose yourself to literature in its variety and can engage in discussions with others about the content of the texts. Eventually, you improve your critical thinking skills and gain a deeper understanding of the material you read. Additionally, discussing books with others helps you to improve your reading comprehension and retention. Thus, joining a book club or reading community is a valuable way to improve your reading skills and broaden your knowledge.

In conclusion, improving your reading skills can enhance your learning and understanding of various sub-

jects and topics. Moreover, incorporating a variety of reading materials, such as books, articles, and online resources, can help to keep your reading skills sharp and engaged. The key to improving your reading skills is to consistently practice and apply these strategies while seeking new and challenging materials to read.

Reading is a key to unlocking a better life, and with certain techniques and tactics, you can improve your reading skills.

African- Inspired Artworks



Year: 2020
Size: 10" × 12"
Medium: Pencil on paper

**BOLD AND
AFRICAN**

This piece generally compliments the beauty, vibrancy, and originality of the African woman. Despite the discrimination and inequality they have faced over the years, they stand strong, resilient, and never broken.

Through this drawing, I wish to spring forth hope for every black woman who feels like she is losing her sense of existence. I hope it reads a message of love, peace, and strength to everyone that comes across it.

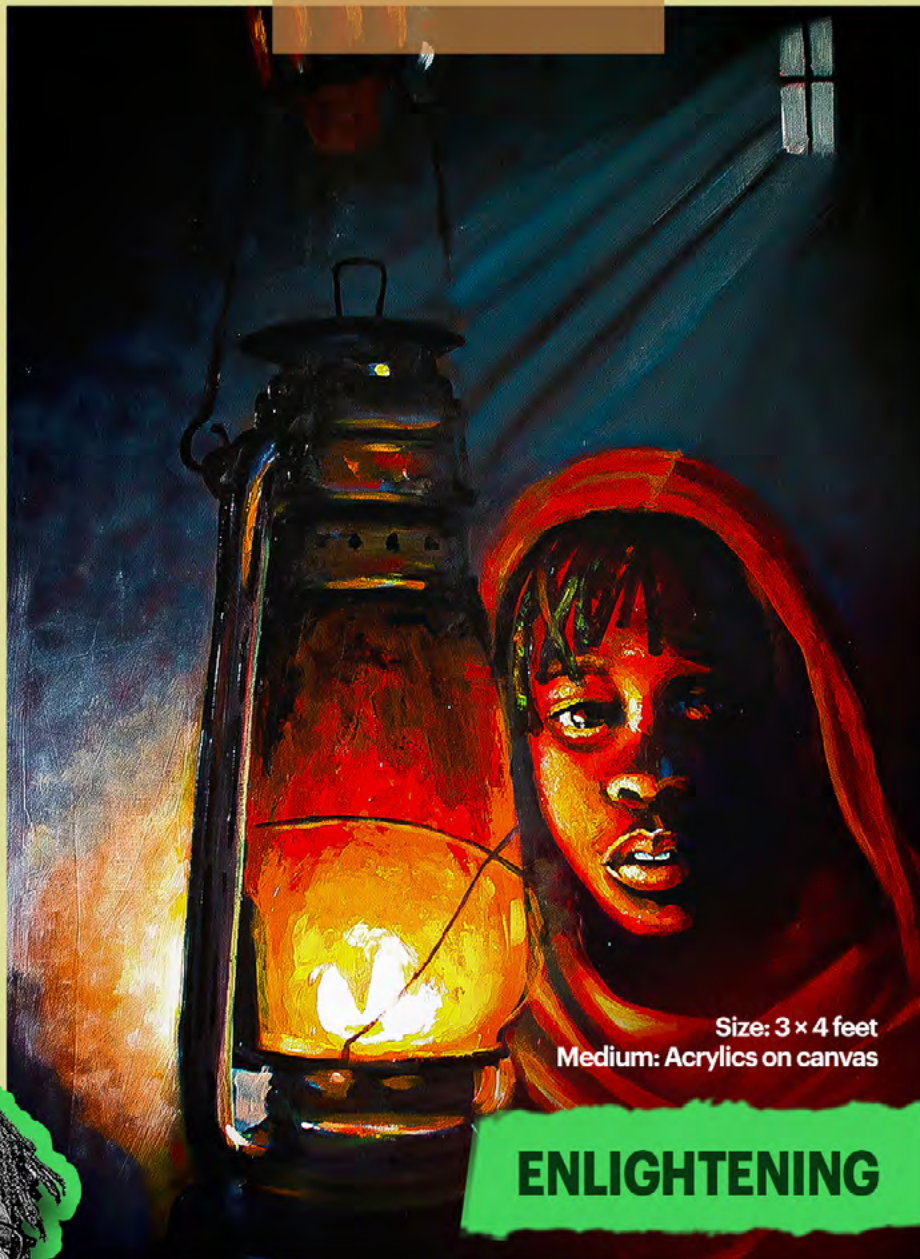
Oluwatosin Adepoju

(NIGERIA)

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African- Inspired Artworks




This artwork is inspired by Plato's allegory of truth and the need for the African to be enlightened.

Wilcox Bralatei Z.

(N I G E R I A)

  Wilcox Bralatei Bramixart

 www.cox-braartworld.com.ng/

HOW I
BECAME
AN

Avid Reader

My journey into reading started at a very young age. My elder sister bought books so much that she had about three leather boxes filled up with books. I got to see books everywhere in the house, and that encouraged me to pick them up to read. Truthfully, I didn't understand most of what I was reading since I was just in my primary school. I didn't know anything about self-development. My only understanding of being a better person then was about having good grades at school so that my mum could buy me clothes or shoes.

Gradually, my attention started drifting towards novels instead of reading only spiritual and motivational books. I started reading novels till I practically read almost all the art books of Shake-

ECHOGA BUKOLA
(NIGERIA)

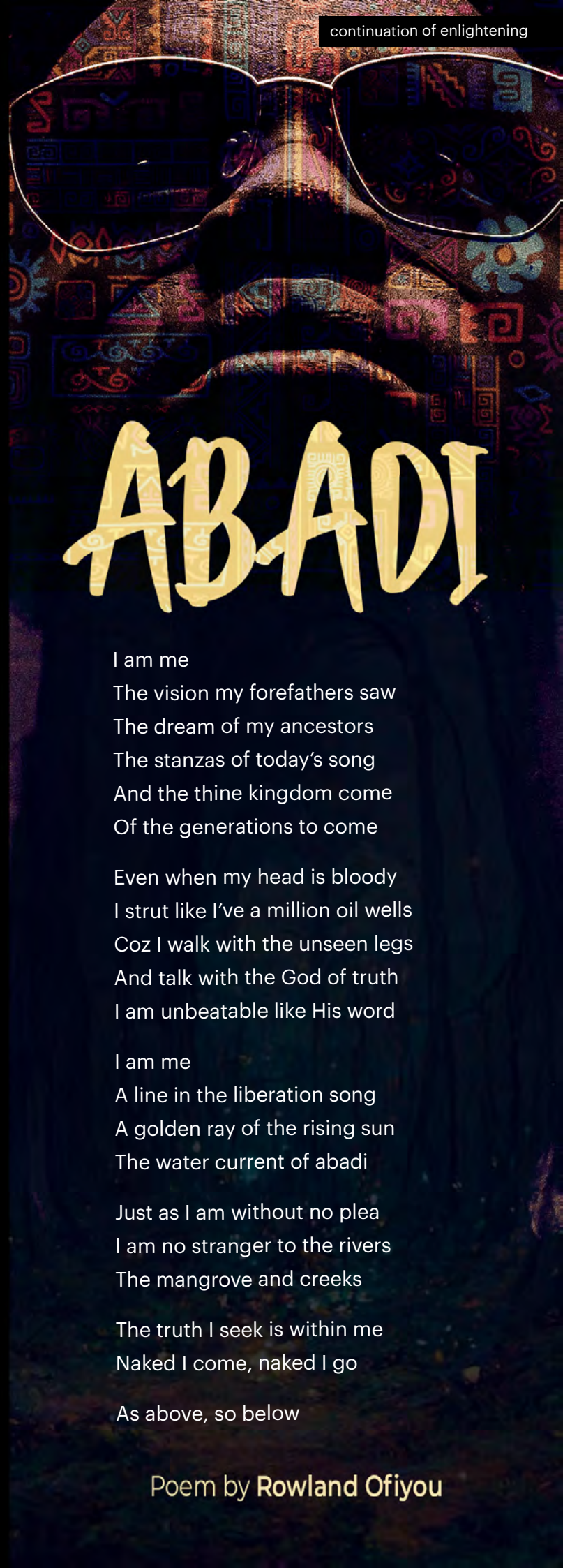
spare. People often say Shakespeare is hard to read, but I read them in primary school and really enjoyed them. It was so interesting reading Romeo and Juliet. My habit of reading novels was sustained into my secondary school days. I could read three to four books a month even while I was in the boarding school. Till I entered the university, I had never really read any book relating to personal development; I mostly read fiction.

In my third year at university, a friend told me about "7 Habits of Highly Effective People" by Stephen Covey, and that was the first time I could feel the power of books. I call the book my second Bible: it changed my life, perspective, and mindset. I couldn't believe that a book could communicate such powerful message. Then I started reading personal development books. At a point, I was reading almost 20 books a month (this was in 2018 when I was in my fourth year at university). There were times I read 7 to 8 books in 14 days.

I think I kind of grew in my desire for books, but the change in taste happened because of "7 Habits of Highly Effective People." After a while, I drifted from the habit of reading books. This was one of the reasons I joined Read to Impact: to spark that desire for reading again. The 5-Week Reading Challenge (2022) really helped me. I had accountability partners, people telling what they were learning and all, and that was it for me. It's just 12 days into the year 2023, and I'm already on my third book for the year. I am not surprised because I could read as much as 10 to 15 books then when I wasn't so busy, unlike now that I am working. So, I have actually loved books from a young age because of the environment I grew up in.

“ Then I started reading personal development books. At a point, I was reading almost 20 books a month

”



ABADI

I am me

The vision my forefathers saw
The dream of my ancestors
The stanzas of today's song
And the thine kingdom come
Of the generations to come

Even when my head is bloody
I strut like I've a million oil wells
Coz I walk with the unseen legs
And talk with the God of truth
I am unbeatable like His word

I am me

A line in the liberation song
A golden ray of the rising sun
The water current of abadi

Just as I am without no plea
I am no stranger to the rivers
The mangrove and creeks

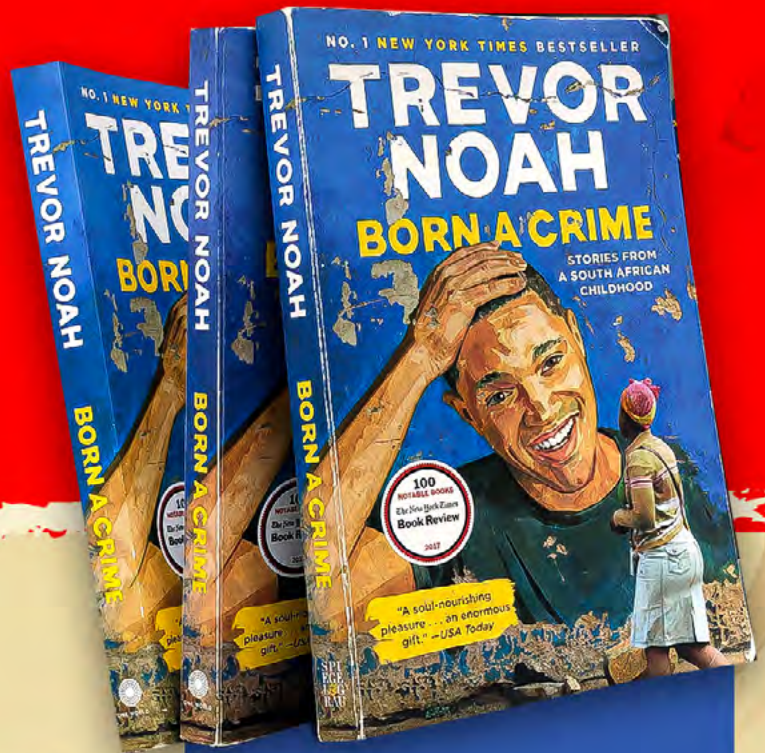
The truth I seek is within me
Naked I come, naked I go

As above, so below

Poem by Rowland Ofiyou

Book Review

ANGELA MURIGI (KENYA)



BORN A CRIME

AUTHOR: TREVOR NOAH

Born a Crime is about Noah's coming of age but it's also about South Africa, apartheid, and the period when Black people began to receive and exercise their rights as citizens. Noah is born to a white Swiss-German father and a devoutly Christian Black Xhosa mother. They choose to have a child through a mixed relationship, with a full understanding of the legal ramifications, as illicit carnal relations between a native woman and a European male are forbidden at the time.

Because of his parents' indiscretion, Trevor spends the earliest years of his life hidden indoors, a precaution his mother takes to keep him away from the prying eyes of the government. The end of South Africa's tyrannical White rule finally brings freedom for the family to move around freely and to different estates. This season sees his mother date and get married to Abel, a smart mechanic who takes advantage of her; they eventually cannot live together.

The relationship between Trevor and his mother is like that between a cop and a criminal: she is tough on him. His teacher complains that he laughs after taking a beating, but his mother only reveals that she is out of options of disciplining him. On one occasion, she denies him in a supermarket after he tries to shoplift. They even communicate through letters when not in talking terms. This tough love makes Trevor visit the Swiss Embassy for his father as a way of escaping from his mother; he succeeds in getting his father and reigniting their relationship until the father moves away.

As a young boy, Trevor is very cheeky and witty and tries to fit in with his peers to the extent of shoplifting for fun. He learns business from an

early age and makes money by selling pirated disks with his friends. The business grows, and they move to a new market in deeper slums where they make more money by introducing concerts. This, however, doesn't last, and he is back to zero.

Noah narrates all aspects of his life as vividly as possible, as well as all seasons, changes, and realities of apartheid South Africa. He manages to describe all the seasons without losing the reader in the process. The book narrates moments of joy, fun, sadness, bravery, and foolishness, which make it real and appealing.

His mother, Patricia, is an absolute character. She's a devout Church lady with great dreams for her son and a raggedy car that doesn't run dependably but ironically becomes the driving force behind several important events in the book. They have their ups and downs, Noah receives his fair share of punishments, but through it all his mom is always there for him. And because of being the only constant in each other's lives, the two become a bit of a team.

The book is more about Trevor Noah's life and the struggles of living in South Africa during the end of apartheid and the period of change that followed. From the start, something that pulled me into the book was that in addition to telling Noah's story, it also covers the history of apartheid and how various social and cultural systems were developed in South Africa. I hope RTI readers get to enjoy the book as much as I did.

African Delicacies



THE FAMOUS MATOKE WITH A TOUCH OF MICHIRI

MIRANDA MITCHELL AKOTH (KENYA)

Matoke is a famous east African food that is believed to have its origin in Uganda. It's also most popular among the Baganda people of Uganda, the Kisii people of Kenya, the Rwandese, Tanzanians, and Burundians. Michiri is most popular amongst the Kikuyu people of Kenya. Mixing matoke and michiri is a representation of the blend of the African cultures and how they have morphed throughout the years.

Ingredients

- 15 pieces of matoke (medium sized green bananas)
- 3 cloves of Garlic
- ½ of small Ginger
- 2 tsp cumin
- 2 tsp paprika

- 1 tsp turmeric
- Dhania (coriander leaves; at least 4)
- 1½ tsp salt
- 3 whole peppers
- A bowl of michiri (French beans)
- 3 medium-sized tomatoes
- 1 whole onion
- 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil
- 2 finely grated carrots

Preparation

1. In a pot of boiling water add the 15 pieces of washed matoke and let them cook on medium high heat.
2. Once the matoke pieces turn dark brown and become nicely cooked, place them in a bowl of cold water and allow to cool.
3. In a different pot, add in nicely diced onions, ginger and garlic paste, and vegetable oil and let the mixture sauté under medium low heat.
4. When it turns golden brown add in sliced tomatoes and finely grated carrots and let it simmer until it's a fine paste.
5. Now add in the chopped michiri and allow to cook under low heat for 10 minutes.
6. While it's still cooking, take out the peels of the matoke and cut them into halves.
7. Marinate the matoke with a mixture of cumin, paprika, turmeric, salt, and chopped chili pepper.
8. Now to the cooked michiri add in the marinated matoke and mix well.
9. Add 2 cups of water and bring to a boil for about 5 minutes.

Serve and garnish with the coriander leave.



UJUJU SOUP (Veronica Comforter)

EKPENISI NWAJES (NIGERIA)

“Food will always bring family together,” my grandmother would say. She also taught me that cooking is gender-neutral and that there’s magic in it when one’s hands know what to do and what ingredients to use even before one starts cooking.

Amongst everything she taught me, I learned how to make her favourite soup: the Veronica Comforter soup, also known as Ofè Ujuju (Ujuju soup) in my local dialect (Ika). It is common in the former Bendel State of Nigeria, now split into two states: Delta State and Edo State. However, it’s believed that the soup originated precisely from Ika, Agbor, one of the minority ethnic groups in Delta State. Unfortunately, the soup isn’t popular because it’s difficult sourcing for the vegetable (Ujuju leaves)—being the key ingredient—outside of Delta State.

The soup must be prepared with Ujuju leaves and no vegetable can be substituted for it; otherwise, it isn’t Ujuju soup. However, because of the sliminess of the leaves after being cooked, some people prepare it by adding okra or ogbono (*Irvingia/dika* nuts).

The comforter leaves are pinnately veined with palmate structures and are obtained from the *Myrianthus Arboreus* plant, a very small deciduous dioecious tree with extremely light wood. *Myrianthus* is a genus of flowering plants in the nettle family (*Urticaceae*).

It’s believed in my town that the soup was nicknamed Comforter by a White man, one of the colonial masters, who enjoyed its sweet taste and the chilling effect of the soup on the stomach.

Apart from making one salivate and bringing an aroma of comfort and a stab of nostalgia when properly cooked, it is medicinal, rich in vitamins, and easy to prepare.

Ingredients

- Fresh and soft comforter leaves (Ujuju leaves)
- Grounded crayfish
- Seasoning cubes (2 to 3 cubes)
- Palm oil (1½ or 2 cooking spoons)
- Stockfish
- Beef or goat meat
- Cow tripe (generally known as shaki in Nigeria)
- Snail
- Dried fish (mangala) or smoked fish
- Salt
- Onion
- Pepper
- Mushroom (optional)

Note: The soup is prepared with fresh, soft comforter leaves—a bit brownish green in colour—not the “hard or almost-dried ones”

Preparation

1. Place the leaves in a tray and carefully pick them by removing the midrib.
2. Wash the leaves thoroughly and put them in a cooking pot. Pour into the pot enough water that would cover the leaves and then place the pot on the fire to boil.
3. Wash the meat and the tripe properly and set them aside in a different pot. Dice in your onions, add seasoning cubes, pepper, and a cupful or two cups of water. (Add onions and pepper to your taste.)

4. Break up the dried fish and extract the needle-like bones before setting them aside.

5. Wash the mushrooms and the stock-fish properly.

6. Crack the shells of the snails with a blunt object and remove the tiny pieces of shells and intestines. After un-shelling the snails, wash off the slime with alum twice and rinse, and then put the snails in a bowl and continue washing with clean water for residual slimes before dividing the snails with a knife into a butterfly split. (Any method can be used to un-shell the snails; the important thing is that the slime is thoroughly removed.)

7. When the leaves boil and become wimpy and soft, strain—filter the leaves—and transfer them to a mortar or blender. Mash gently.

8. Add one-and-half or two cooking spoons of palm oil to the leaves and continue mashing until the leaves become a bit pulpy. Set the mashed leaves aside.

9. Put the pot containing the meat and tripe on fire.

10. When they are almost cooked, add the snails, mushrooms, crayfish, stock-fish, and de-boned dried fish and allow to cook for 10 to 15 minutes.

11. Add the mashed leaves and stir. If it's too thick, you can add your desired quantity of water, but not too much. Cook without covering the pot to prevent the soup from losing its goo.

12. To taste, spice it up with a pinch of salt and a seasoning cube as necessary. Leave it to boil for 10 minutes.

Your soup is ready! You can serve the soup with desired morsel—fufu, pounded yam, semo, etc.

GA MES

PRIZE

The winner of each game will receive

- A cash prize of five thousand naira only (**N5,000.00**) (or the equivalent in your local currency)
- One free copy of a book from the Harmattan Collection to be released by Gemsread Publishing in June/July 2023

RULES

- Play **ONLY ONE** game (if you play more, we will only consider the first one)
- Where there is a tie in any game, the first submission wins
- Send snapshots of your solutions for Games 2 and 3
- All solutions should be sent to info@readtoimpact.org
- Only answers sent in on or before May 14, 2023 (GMT +1), will be considered
- Winners will be published in the next edition but announced and rewarded in May

GAME 1

BOOKISH SENTENCE

Form a single complete sentence with at least five (5) book titles.

Only African books published from 2010 to date count.

Use only the book titles (subtitles are not allowed).

The longest sentence wins.

GAME 2

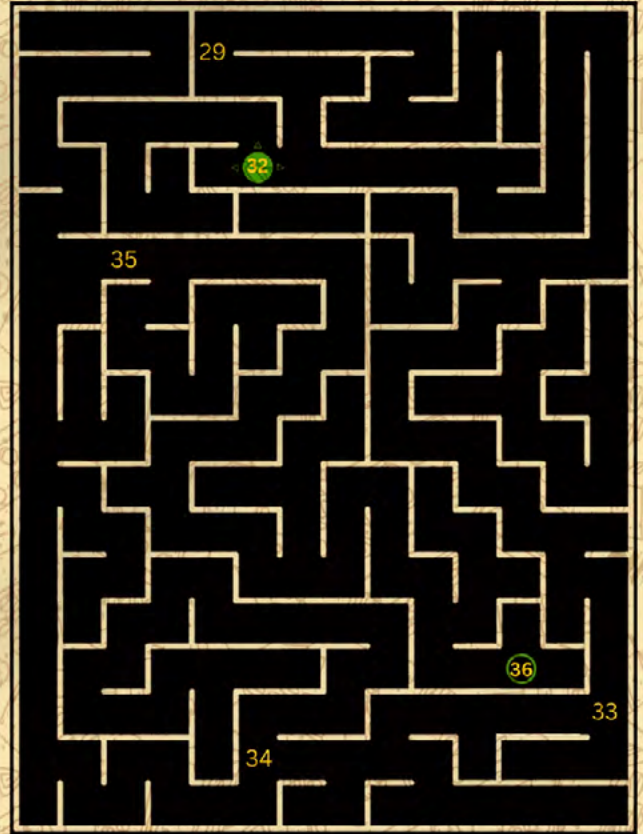
AUTHOR PUZZLE

A	D	N	A	M	A	M	I	H	C	I	Z	O	G	N	E
U	E	L	O	W	A	K	N	I	Y	O	S	B	K	G	I
N	A	B	T	Z	M	H	H	L	H	T	G	A	J	U	H
I	T	S	Y	M	Q	B	W	O	S	B	N	M	A	G	C
H	T	A	E	P	R	R	O	N	W	N	O	A	R	N	I
C	A	B	E	L	I	X	F	K	B	B	I	I	R	A	D
E	N	C	T	U	J	P	K	X	J	W	H	R	Y	W	A
B	I	D	P	N	G	U	G	I	W	A	T	A	M	O	A
E	M	Q	C	N	E	B	I	R	K	O	H	M	H	G	R
H	A	K	J	Z	Z	A	T	B	W	M	X	C	F	N	Q
C	A	N	R	O	F	W	P	S	F	V	T	H	I	O	B
A	K	R	N	A	L	C	W	L	F	K	P	O	V	N	O
W	J	M	A	M	A	I	R	A	M	A	B	V	K	N	P

Identify the full names of seven (7) African authors on the board. Only backward spellings count. For example, the name "LIONEL RONALDO" should be identified on the board as "LENOIL ODLANOR." You can move from left to right, right to left, top to bottom, and bottom to top.

GAME 3

IMPACT MAZE



Find the correct path from Atomic Habits to The Richest Man in Babylon without hitting a wall.

32 = Atomic Habits

33 = The 5 AM Club

34 = Millionaire Fastlane

35 = Startup

36 = The Richest Man in Babylon

BOOK Recommendation

BOOK

PRODUCTIVITY
AND TIME
MANAGEMENT



CREATIVITY
AND MENTAL
DEVELOPMENT



BUSINESS
AND FINANCE/
MONEY



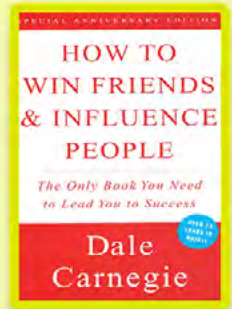
CAREER
DEVELOPMENT



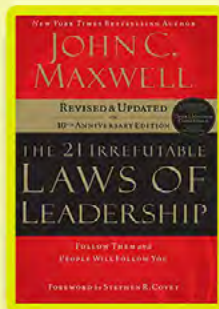
RELATION-
SHIPS



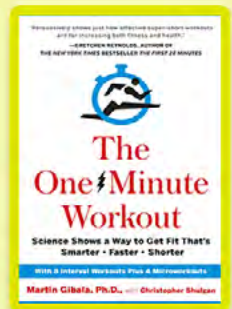
COMMUNICA-
TION



LEADERSHIP
AND MANAGE-
MENT



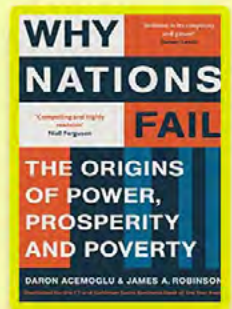
HEALTH



FICTION



POLITICS AND
SOCIETY



Gemspread Publishing

Gemspread Publishing is a sister arm of Read to Impact (non-profit), both brands of Gemspread Limited®. We are on a mission to amplify talented African voices worth hearing.

Every month, we run an exciting **flash fiction contest** with a **cash prize of \$30** (more benefits coming soon).

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