

2020 Annual Review

Promise-Keeping, the Test of Our Tenacity

Reflecting on the challenge of
reinforcing and replenishing
community-centred care
during Covid-19.



*"There is no greater challenge
than standing face to face with
what you fear most, and deciding
that no matter the depth,
you remain committed to the overcoming."*

- H. E. Toyin Ojora Saraki



A message from Her Excellency Toyin Ojora Saraki

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In 2020, the power and determination of people around the globe were faced by an unprecedented set of circumstances - the coronavirus pandemic. Reflecting on the challenges that arose, and remembering the many lives affected and tragically lost during this turbulent time, I can conclude that the moving parts of my programmatic and advocacy strategy had intuitively developed the key resilience, innovation and agility required to face the many variations of each day, head on.

To arrive at a place of strength following a journey through unpredictability, shows that we've come a long way. From my own personal experiences that structured my philanthropy, to applying learning and knowledge everyday. I continued to take every opportunity to advocate for better maternity and health conditions of women, newborns, children and adolescents, and my Wellbeing Foundation Africa reached over 96,000 families, and 62,800 frontline health workers - even during the pandemic.

Armed with decades of frontline experience and informed by the everyday stories of the beneficiaries of the Wellbeing Foundation Africa, I am guided by the core themes of **WASH, improving the social determinants of health and wellbeing, poverty alleviation, economic empowerment, promoting global public health advances, the rise of women and girls, and harnessing the promise of technology** which underpin my broader goal and that of the Wellbeing Foundation Africa, in working to reduce maternal and newborn deaths (SDG 3.1 and 3.2).

I continue to advocate for greater innovation in tackling pressing contemporary topics such as beating non-communicable diseases, improving access to STEM education, maintaining the momentum behind the women's equality movement, and the call for radical new ways of rebuilding sustainable economies and cleaner environments. As we navigate the coronavirus pandemic, we continue to prioritise our targets to end hunger and malnutrition through our Stronger Together collaborations to improve SDG 2.

I reflect on 2020 by expressing my appreciation for the Trustees, Global Advisory Council, Vice President and entire Wellbeing Foundation Africa management and frontline teams in Nigeria and Ghana. Our consistent purpose in implementing our mission to end preventable deaths of mothers and children, improving nutritional outcomes, increasing access to WASH, supporting families through the reproductive health and education journeys, promoting gender equity for all, is actualised - daily.

As myself and 1500 global leaders open the 2021 development calendar at the virtual World Economic Forum's Davos Agenda under the theme of "A crucial year to rebuild trust", we reflect on learnings from the last 12 months, and take every opportunity to emphatically frame the need for increased primary health care, with increased WASH resources in LMIC countries to improve the prospect of Healthy Futures for all.

In the interest of improving the management of infectious disease prevention and control mechanisms globally, the world strives to respond to the covid-19 crisis, boost vaccine confidence, prioritise workplace mental health, mitigate collateral health damage, and craft a great new contract for health and healthcare. It is in building crisis-resistant healthcare systems towards a post-COVID world, that we can hope to see synergistically harnessed improvements in WASH investments to combat much neglected tropical diseases.

The 2021 Year Of Health And Care Workers finds us in our 17th year of dedicated philanthropic focus, extensive frontline programmatic actions and significant global, national and sub-national partnerships. I am pleased to share my 2020 Global Office & Philanthropy Annual Report.

Her Excellency Toyin Ojora Saraki



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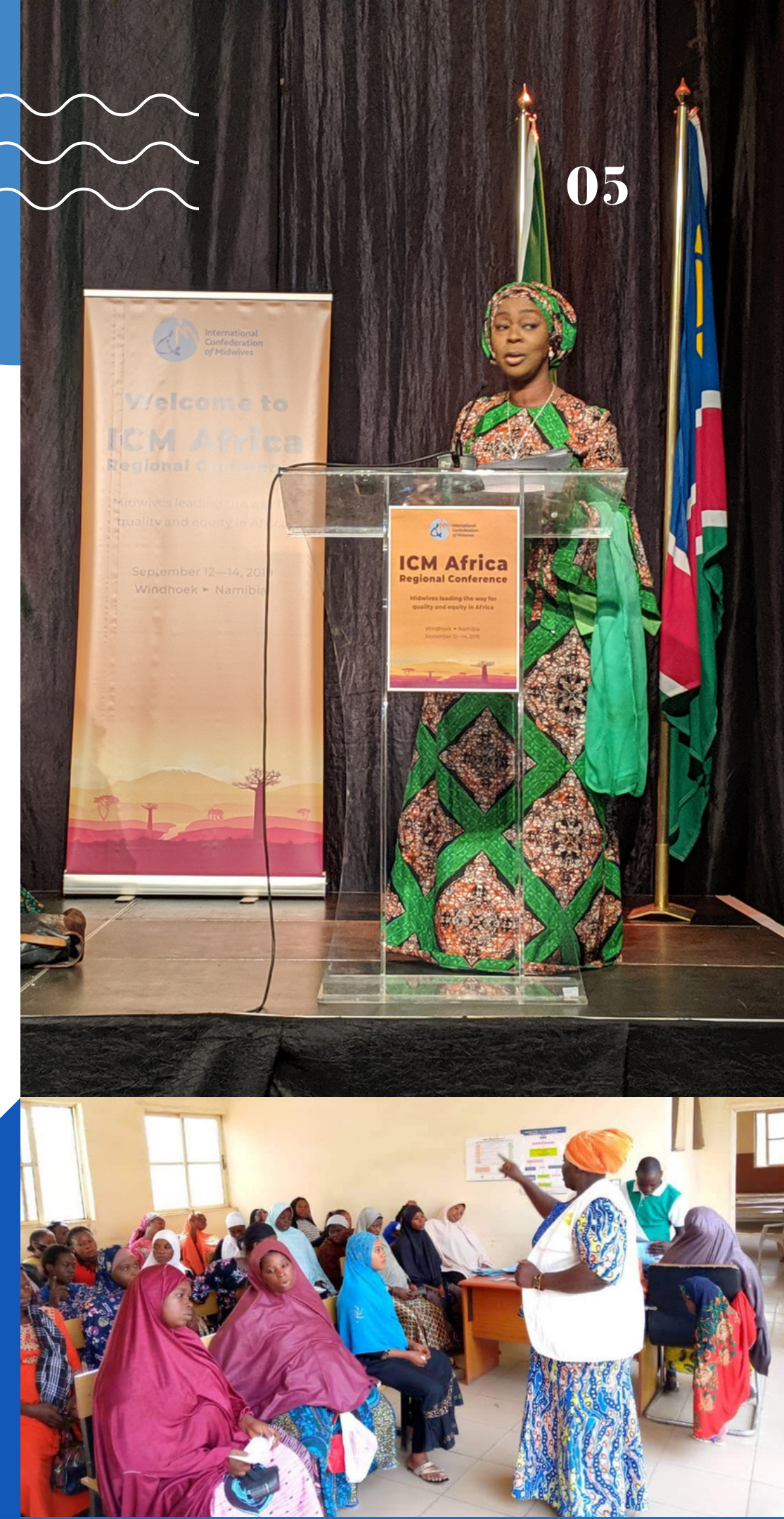


Reflecting on the challenge of reinforcing and replenishing community-centred care during Covid-19.

Achieving the first-ever Year of the Nurse and the Midwife

In my crowning year of service with the International Confederation of Midwives as the Inaugural Global Goodwill Ambassador, I was delighted and honoured to welcome the much anticipated arrival of the first ever 'Year of the Nurse and the Midwife'. In 2014 I embarked on an ambitious journey as an African woman, advocate and mother, to highlight the recognition, rigour and robust performance of more than one million professional midwifery practitioners and their 113 country associations. The promise I made in Prague was to stand with midwives as they stand with women in their reproductive hour of need in delivering respected midwifery-led care, worldwide.

I am encouraged by the coverage of the Wellbeing Foundation Africa's community midwifery services and the national progress we have recorded in improving frontline health worker education and capacities to deliver Emergency Obstetric & Newborn Care (EmONC). My promise continues; to advance through the WBFA innovative simulation model training for 62, 800 midwives, nurses and doctors across Nigeria to date, and through my own WBFA community midwives and our Mamacare 360 maternity programs.







Global Public Health Advances

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January 2020 heralded the introduction of a game-changing medication - heat-stable Carbetocin - used to combat postpartum hemorrhage. I was delighted to address the international senior management of Ferrings Pharmaceuticals, delivering a keynote on the need for urgent interventions to be introduced during obstetric emergencies. The innovative strides made by the pharmaceutical firm will greatly enable increased optimal obstetric outcomes across Sub-Saharan Africa, and I look forward to my continued collaboration with Ferrings *Project Family*- building healthy families of every shape, colour and size.

*“Primary health care is where the battle
for human health is won and lost”
- H.E. Toyin Saraki*

The Big Push for Primary Health

At the World Economic Forum at Davos, I joined my partners UNFPA and Phillips in highlighting the need for increased investments for primary health coverage in Africa and Asia. My key mission promotes a tested and trusted paradigm for delivering comprehensive community care and diagnostic solutions at community level. In furtherance of the WBFA's WASH For Wellbeing - Global Water 2020 - World Bank Water Campaign which works to improve access to essential water sanitation and hygiene in health facilities, households and schools nationwide, I held important discussions with Reckitt Benckiser focused on supporting the Clean Nigeria initiative's goals to reduce open defecation in Nigeria.



Empowering the rise of Women and Girls

Standing up strongly with UN Women in promoting women's political leadership for the rise of women and girls, I welcomed the start of February in Addis Ababa for the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government High-Level Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Africa, for the launch of the African Women Leaders Fund , a flagship initiative of the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) whom I gladly serve as a Steering Council Member. Our global advocacy is shaped and propelled by the frontline impact of the Wellbeing Foundation Africa's Child and Adolescent Skills and Drills Programs in schools across Nigeria and Ghana, which engender the agency and autonomy of girls and boys through personal social and health education.

Combating the Challenges of Migration Health

I was delighted to join The Lancet's global leadership discussions at a novel convening addressing challenges and opportunities in migration health. Having long advocated the need for health-enhanced civil registrations and vital statistics within identity documents for displaced persons and refugees, I welcomed this focused multilateral initiative which will harness research and development techniques in guiding responses to providing migratory communities with equitable access to healthcare.

Her Excellency Toyin Ojora Saraki 2020 Annual Review







Championing Social Mobility and Inclusion for Women & Youth

Knowing that the gender gap health consequences have an affect on women and youth equally, ahead of International Women's Day I shared my thoughts with [Project Syndicate](#) on the importance of women leading health decision-making processes. Women comprise roughly 70% of the global health workforce, and perform the majority of the sector's most challenging, dangerous, and labor-intensive jobs, they only hold 25% of the health sector's senior positions, and are rarely represented equitably in policymaking. Instead, they are expected to remain passive actors, quietly finding ways to do their jobs in difficult – even impossible – circumstances throughout 2020.

“Women and youth in the workforce deserve equal recognition and equitable remuneration. In doing so, their voices are heard in the realities that we face today.”health is won and lost”
- *H.E. Toyin O. Saraki*

In a signal for youth empowerment in global development, I proudly welcomed the Wa Wimbi Report of my [Wellbeing for Women Africa's Youth Partners](#) who were on hand to lend a strong youth expert focus to the first Women in Development Conference. The [Wa Wimbi Report](#) - which researched the opinions of 239 participants across 18 African countries both on and offline- was one of the first of its kind to spotlight the voices of young women and shine a light on the realities of social mobility in the workplace. It details the cultural barriers faced by women seeking leadership positions in youth-led or gender focused organisations across the continent, from the grassroots through to larger organisations.

The Test of Tenacity in Combating Covid-19

During the widespread introduction of lockdowns introduced as one means to combat the global pandemic Covid-19, we matched continued services with the promise of technology, increasing virtual capacity to build frontline resilience within our community of maternal and child health practice. By continuing to enable women to access antenatal and postnatal care with confidence, and providing safe space SRH referrals to mitigate inevitable tensions faced by the more vulnerable households and communities we allowed for many of our ethos to remain actualised.

In light of the changing climate, I immediately explored how global thought leadership and philanthropy can drive the transition to sustainable business and society, and how individuals, trusts and foundations can galvanise and shape our response. At the first Water and Climate Summit 2020 - I joined WaterAid, HRH The Prince of Wales and His Serene Highness Albert II, Prince of Monaco in urging world leaders, global experts, government ministers and high level stakeholders in accelerating the urgent actions required to address the climate crisis and significant water and sanitation challenges. With a particular focus on the water heroes at the frontline of the fight for the safe, clean water we so urgently needed to deliver WASH, the WBFA's engagement with Nigeria's National Economic Summit Group (NESG) and Wateraid Nigeria teams, achieved consensus to escalate existing efforts to reach every last mile with the key knowledge to scale a clean water community of practice.

Fittingly, as the first cases of Covid-19 were being recorded by the Federal Ministry of Health in Nigeria, my WBFA midwives committed to delivering uninterrupted community midwifery services. We widened the scope and coverage of our key WASH instructional assets for infection prevention and control in conjunction with our Global Handwashing Partnership commitments to schools and health care facilities. We launched a new and targeted global mission, to Teach Clean hygiene and promote Safe Surface Science, with our partners at the London School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene.

In order to reach as many Nigerians as possible with a practical tool to self-assess for Covid-19 symptoms, we worked rapidly with our partners PocketPatientMD in delivering our covid19.wbfafrica.org symptom checker, as our Wellbeing Foundation Africa's contribution to the Nigeria Private Sector CACOVID effort that would enable tracing and monitoring of Covid-19 cases nationwide.





Standing with Women During the Coronavirus Pandemic

At the start of April, the International Federation of Midwives expressed concern that the human rights of women, their babies and their midwives are being violated by the introduction, in many countries, of inappropriate protocols for management of pregnancy, birth and postnatal care in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a woman, as a mother and grandmother, as Inaugural Global Goodwill Ambassador to the International Confederation of Midwives since 2014, and as Founder/President of the Wellbeing Foundation Africa – conceived to ensure safer births – I share, endorse, and give my support to the grave concerns expressed by the ICM; that Women's Rights in Childbirth Must be Upheld During the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Responding to the United Nations Secretary General's , Call-To-Action on WASH, and working towards Nigeria's adherence of the WHO Resolution of WASH in HCF nationwide, and in affirmation of the Stockholm Declaration, we conducted a rapid assessment of a selection of health facilities for the Global Handwashing Partnership, identifying the lack of appropriate infrastructure for WASH and, together with GlobalWater2020, Unicef and WHO, we launched the Wellbeing Foundation Africa WASH for Wellbeing COVID-19 strategy featuring ten immediate WASH actions in healthcare facilities for COVID-19 response.

"I share, endorse, and give my support to the grave concerns expressed by the ICM which represents over one million midwives and 600 country associations in more than 130 countries, that Women's Rights in Childbirth Must be Upheld During the Coronavirus Pandemic"

- H.E. Toyin Ojora Saraki



Ramping Up WASH

WASH, risk-evaluative communication and community engagement initiatives became a central focus in April as we targeted key communities with our handwashing and hand hygiene programming. Welcoming the opportunity for purposefully established handwashing stations, along with the escalated training in best practice we wish to impart, we commissioned and installed hand washing stations at participating MamaCare clinics reaching an approximately 8,000 women monthly, a timely and practical investment which met women and health-care practitioners directly at their point of need in their communities, and created an opportunity for further sensitization around the importance of hygiene in such an unprecedented time.

These interventions complemented the Wellbeing Foundation Africa's WASH For Wellbeing frontline program and corresponding WASH Wednesday advocacy campaign by supporting public and private sector health facilities and their patients, with programming and information counselling and training to improve health, immunisation, reproductive health, malaria, prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV, paediatric HIV care and treatment, family planning, infant and young child nutrition, and water sanitation and hygiene practices.

In times of crisis, the most vulnerable among us will be hit the hardest. The covid-19 pandemic highlighted the unequivocal suffering of Women and Girls who were and are victims of gender and sexual based violence and human rights violations following enforced social restrictions and exacerbated and weakened access to health and protective services.

On April first, increasing regional and national reports of sexual assault and violence were combined with growing international concerns for the human rights of women, their babies and their midwives being violated by the introduction, in many countries, of inappropriate protocols for management of pregnancy, birth and postnatal care in response to Covid-19. In this casted shadow, our zeal was renewed, as our MamaCare classes were able to continue - upholding a continuum of care and support for women and their families.





Redeeming the Promise of Multi-Lateralism

Throughout our responses to COVID-19, we have relied upon the guidance and leadership of the WHO and WHO Africa Regional Office, whom I serve as a special advisor. As I highlighted in NewsWeek responding to the USA's withdrawal of support for the WHO, I continued to insist that the global community must unite behind a strong institution designed to address exactly this type of global issue. The WHO is the standard-bearer in these unprecedented times, for an unprecedented virus.

"Now more than ever, the world needs a well-functioning global organization designed to facilitate international coordination. The global community must unite behind a strong World Health Organization, an institution designed to address exactly this kind of global issue, our standard-bearer in these unprecedented times for this unprecedented virus." - H.E. Toyin Ojora Saraki

Applauding Midwives and Nurses with WASH

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As May turned in, we continued to lead the Africa focus of the Global Handwashing Leaders Partnerships. On the International Day of the Midwife which coincided with World Hygiene Day, the Wellbeing Foundation Africa joined forces with the Global Water 2020 community, ICM and WHO to launch our SAVE LIVES: Clean Your Hands and Applaud With WASH campaign. Handwashing with clean water and soap rightly remained the basic frontline solution as the global pandemic heightened.

In Nigeria, we heralded the launch of our Social Mission Focus: Mothers Program, an initiative specifically tailored to garnering support for women and their children, via WBFA Mamacare maternity classes facilitated nationwide. Healthcare facilities and schools were welcoming of wash basins and educational information regarding sanitation. The increased access to our strategic resources and tools enable optimal hygiene practices within 'around-the-clock' care.

Having supported efforts to reinforce the importance of the midwifery profession in it being the heart of healthcare for women and children since 2004, the Wellbeing Foundation was honoured to receive a special commendation from the WHO Director-General Dr Tedros for supporting midwifery services and reinforcing the importance of hand hygiene.

“WHO appreciates and acknowledges the work of the Wellbeing Foundation in supporting midwives globally”

- WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, International Day of the Midwife, World Hygiene Day, 5th May 2020.

The Wellbeing Foundation Africa is proud to work in collaboration with the WHO, the ICM, and the global, regional, and national midwifery and nursing communities.

At the 73rd WHO World Health Assembly, the decision-making body of the WHO which held virtually, I emphasized the need for solidarity in standing with vital health workers at the frontline of COVID-19 care. Joining the Prime Ministers of Jamaica and Canada for a high-level discussion regarding financing development in a pandemic era, I took the opportunity to re-commit, and more decisively facilitate global solutions during a global economic crisis, urging world leaders to continue routine primary health, immunisation and maternity services even as nations braced up to the challenges of providing isolation nursing and care for the coronavirus pandemic.





Meeting Global Nutrition Targets for Healthier, Happier Lives

In a new global initiative, the WBFA and Fortify, announced our formal partnership to address iron deficiency and improve maternal survival. Iron deficiency is the major underlying cause of maternal deaths during childbirth in developing countries, and the most widespread public health disorder in the world, affecting at least one-third of the global population. In developing countries, the main cause of iron deficiency is low iron bioavailability within the diet, which can lead to premature labor, intrauterine growth restriction, low birth weight of the infant, birth asphyxia, neonatal anemia, and death of both the mother and the child. The consequences of iron deficiency not only affect personal health and early childhood development, but the economic health of communities and countries too.

In the absence of adequate interventions, Fortify works to drive innovation in the private sector, guiding companies to add iron to everyday meals through the fortification of simple, healthy foods consumed by most families.

“When we began discussions with Fortify, I was struck by how elegant yet practical a solution this is for iron deficiency anemia in that tomato paste is already built into the food supply and is a big part of meals every African eats. According to the World Health Organisation, food-based approaches represent the most desirable and sustainable method of preventing micronutrient malnutrition.”

- H.E. Toyin Ojora Saraki



Midyear: A Melting Pot That Highlighted Vulnerabilities Around the World

In June, I led the Wellbeing Foundation Africa's Trust Campaign to promote trusted and verified information as countries and their citizens sought to track, trace, treat and flatten the curve of COVID-19. An essential part of this focus was launching the Stop Think Twice Campaign to create a safe space for women and men to discuss mental health strains induced by the social isolations imposed by the pandemic.

The mid-year highlighted vulnerabilities in Nigeria, and worldwide. From the widespread outrage that followed victimisations and deaths of innocent young girls, Uwa and Tina in Nigeria as we confronted the weaknesses that were failing our women and girls, to the social injustices that took the life of George Floyd in the USA, I joined policy makers and advocates in working harder to strengthen the voices of the unmet and oppressed.

Globally, the BAME reports amongst others unveiled shocking statistics of institutional discrimination adversely affecting the health outcomes black, brown and minority ethnicities, providing food for thought and the need for intentional actions to promote equity for all.

Later in June, Devex World 2020 focused on global health security with opportunities to discuss the future of health, and how technology has the power to advance development, as well as sharing the progress of midwifery-led care in Nigeria. I emphasized the benefits that a well-designed civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) system would have on developing and maintaining a successful healthcare system for mothers and children alike.



Desk-based Advocacy Leadership Can Move Mountains



As the pandemic reached its peak, virtual adaptations for advocacy and leadership closely followed working collaboratively with world leaders, to renew commitments, spearhead advocacy campaigns, lending my voice and experience accordingly I collaborated with ICM President Dr. Franka Cadée and Neha Makani on a pivotal piece which positioned ICM's 6 Calls to Action as a key to providing short and long-term protection for women affected by COVID-19, a jolt that actualised the sustained morale of midwives worldwide.

We have garnered resources and refined policies, protocols and many of the key components that our programmes consist of, in order to continue actualising a continuum of care for all. Access to WASH has remained a priority, with efforts to ensure clean water for all.

We have done this together, all while maintaining an undercurrent that progresses the journey from 'surviving to thriving.'

In the month of June I applauded the phenomenal achievements of world midwives and member associations of the International Confederation of Midwives during my Valedictory Address to the ICM Council as the Inaugural Goodwill Ambassador, a unprecedented role, for an unprecedented two-term tenure, which afforded me the opportunity and privilege to lead, advocate for and amplify the unparalleled efforts and stories of birth practitioners worldwide.

From Prague in the Czech Republic, to Paranamibo in Suriname, from the Washington DC in the USA, to the UK, and Windhoek in Namibia, from Mexico to Brazil, from my native Nigeria to the ICM Headquarters at the Hague, the voices and realities of midwives have found a place in my heart and mission, as the most trusted hands and eyes to deliver new lives.

It was thus the start of a new youth-focused beginning to end my inaugural ambassadorship of the ICM in joining my partners at Johnson & Johnson global health to mentor ICM Young Midwifery Leaders working in their own communities.

Global Goals Unite: A Thunderous Clap for Global Health Security

Institutionally in the busy month of June, I welcomed the renewal of my WBFA's global commitments to Every Woman Every Child, the WHO-PMNCH, United Nations ECOSOC and Global Compact respectively, endorsing the promise of reduced child and maternal mortality through SDG's 3.1 and 3.2. Looking to the future, I contributed to high-level strategy dialogue with Reckitt Benckiser and friends regarding the effects that Covid-19 had on treatment approaches for Sub-Saharan Africans living with HIV.

As a Global Citizen, I observed that perhaps the only good news to come from the coronavirus pandemic was that the handwashing that the WASH community has so long advocated for came out of its echo chamber and became a thunderous resounding clap for global health security. COVID-19 made "wash your hands" a daily adage and has reinforced the need to invest in safe and dignified health care. This renewed urgency called us to ensure that the WASH and health communities unite indivisibly to activate, actualise, and accelerate WASH investments to match the behavioural change.

Ending the month with the focus on legislation as the foundation of long-term development so I was pleased to mark the International Day of Parliamentarians at a high-level convening regarding the role policymakers play in shaping education, universal health coverage and the betterment of maternal and child health. I saluted the pledges of the International Parliamentarians IPU 141 on their 2019 Doha commitment, designed to accelerate progress for universal health coverage for up to 5 billion people by 2030: an ambitious and especially important goal for the decade.

"In times of crisis, the role of parliament is more vital than ever to pass emergency laws, allocate resources and scrutinize government action, to meet the needs of citizens. With International Day of Parliamentarism, falling during a time of crisis, we affirm the fact that strong parliaments are a cornerstone of democracy."

- H.E. Toyin Saraki



Supporting Women with Evidence for Action

The findings of our partner UNFPA's State of the World Population Report released in July, reinforced our belief in the power and priority of upskilling the community midwife as a key interlocutor to reach women in their communities, improve immunisation coverage and provide a complete complement of routine and regular trusted reproductive and child health services.

As UNFPA Family Planning Champion for Nigeria, and as a member of UNFPA ICPD25 Global Steering Council, I appreciated the broad yet effective focus of the report in providing evidential basis and justification for intensified action.

Throughout July, my advocacy and WBFA's actions towards reinforcing progress, policies and practices ensured a continuous lens of focus remained on the key issues on meeting unmet needs. Participating in a webinar dialogue with the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) on how morale and team rapport can be upheld within a care-based approach.

Towards achieving universal access to hand hygiene the WBFA endorsed the UNICEF-WHO Hand Hygiene for All Initiative with key focal targets for interventions on the inadequate water supplies across Nigeria's health facilities. Consolidated this advocacy in joining Devex for a tweet chat, I shared the experience of how my WBFA frontliners were able to maintain a solid morale and team rapport during the height of the pandemic, and made particular reference to how we intensified our educational outreach, mamacare classes and engaged with hospital heads to install handwashing stations.

I joined respected leaders and partners from across a plethora of divisions for the launch of its 2020 Every Woman Every Child report during the United Nations High-level Political Forum event entitled, "From Page to Action: Accountability for the Furthest Left behind in COVID-19 & Beyond." Co-hosted by the Governments of Japan, South Africa, and Georgia and co-organized by the Every Woman Every Child Secretariat, the Independent Accountability Panel (IAP), International Health Partnership for UHC 2030 (UHC2030), and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH),

I reaffirmed the initiation, solution and fiscal appropriations for driving delivery and accountability of truly accessible health for all. It was a prime opportunity for knowledge sharing to deepen the efforts and engagement of my organisations, the Wellbeing Foundation Africa, and Wellbeing For Women Youth Voices towards promoting institutional accountability at national, regional and global policy tiers.

As July came to a close, the shadow pandemic of sexual and gender-based violence recorded a spike in recorded cases. I reiterated my call-to-action for SARC reporting and referral mechanisms to be made more accessible to at risk and vulnerable households .





Expanding Baby Friendly Initiatives to Fragile, Ill and Premature Infants

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I welcomed the commemoration of International Breastfeeding Week with my Wellbeing Foundation Africa partnering with Medela Cares in a research-based new commitment to improve maternal breastfeeding support specifically to premature and sick neonates in Nigeria. The partnership, launched in support of the Every Woman Every Child Initiative is focused on disseminating NICU-specific education and training on the administration of buccal colostrum, and value of mother's own milk, building and maintaining a sufficient milk supply and transitioning to breastfeeding.

With the WBFA having successfully implemented the Alive and Thrive maternal, infant and young child feeding program at facilities in Lagos and Kaduna States, and the Mamacare + Nlift program at xxx primary health facilities in FCT Abuja alongside our Mamacare360 Maternity classes nationwide, we welcomed the significant opportunity afforded by our partnership with Medela Cares to ensure that mothers of sick and premature infants are empowered to nurture and nourish their newborns.

It was in this month that Africa was congratulated with the title of being wild polio free - an accolade we have all set our sights on for decades. Thanks to 25 years of coordination and commitment by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa (WHO-AFRO), this promise was made a reality. My work on actualising access to individual personal health records across Nigeria continued, with paramount emphasis being placed on every woman being in possession of documentation regarding her pregnancy and postnatal journey.

September saw me joining Women In Global Health Nigeria as a board advisor, a poignant and timely assignment in light of the Universal Health Coverage Conference and the UNICEF report 'Levels and Trends in Child Mortality' report which concluded that Nigeria had overtaken India as the world capital for under-five deaths.

As global celebrations and recognition of Covid-19 combating and care continued, I advocated on the importance of making leadership opportunities available to female healthcare frontliners in particular, emphasising the need for a recalibrated culture that would welcome and celebrate them at a senior stakeholder level.

I convened with the UNGA for it's 75th session centred around WASH learnings from the pandemic so far, and enjoyed contributing from the standpoint of the implementations and adoptions of my WBFA - pre and during Covid-19. I later welcomed the WHO's global action plan to Strengthen collaborations among multilateral organizations in order to accelerate country progress on delivering the health-related Sustainable Development Goals.

I ended the month with a focus on global ingenuity, joining the Solve MIT Challenge Leadership Group of judges in selecting the 2020 Solvers Class featuring notable innovators from around the world developing commendable solutions to global challenges.

The Youthquake that Shook the World

The 1st of October marked 60 vibrant years of Nigeria's independence, a rich and energetic journey of nation-building, but who would have foreseen the harrowing events that would occur only days later? I surely did not, as I took this unprecedented juncture in our nation's history to celebrate our indomitable spirit but equally to cry for us to embark on a journey of inclusive and cohesive course correction, powerfully harnessing the transformative power of patriotism to do better as a nation. As Nigeria's COVID-19 related deaths remained comparatively low to its neighbours, our fortuitous resilience could not be mistaken.

I joined UNFPA leaders at further UNGA75 sessions in celebrating the role of frontline health-workers, specifically midwives and the importance of maternal health services throughout the pandemic as my Mamacare360 Antenatal and Postnatal Education, Nutrition Lift and WASH programs continued without interruption to reach mothers, newborns, families and health facilities with essential respectful maternity care and counsel, and trusted and timely information, despite all odds.

As Vogue Magazine shone their spotlight on my life's commitment and legacy in reaching every woman and child at the last mile to care, the publication also celebrated the promise of technology to democratise access to accurate information from conception to cradle to age. My heart was indeed full reflecting on our accomplishments to date. I later joined Women in Global Health Nigeria (WIGH Nigeria) as a patron to advocate for a deeper dive into global health specifically to increase the number of health workers in Nigeria and to improve on the number of women in positions of leadership in healthcare. Advocating for gender transformative leadership as part of WIGH Nigeria #9aijawomenat60" campaign, myself and 60 members from different career stages drew greater global attention to the gender equity or equality gap within the health sector - a fundamental stumbling block to any resilient national health care system.

Not long after these engagements, the cries of our nation's youth began to swell as increased incidents of injustice, police brutality and extrajudicial killing of the innocent caused clamour across the country.

Pulsating together, the feminist expressed heartbeat of a leaderless Nigerian youthquake that had galvanised in waves of peaceful protests across almost every state of the federation, spiked into reactionary civil unrest regarding the hoarding of covid-19 palliatives, only to be muted by brutal, inexcusable force and violence - the missing souls from the Lekki Toll Massacre will remain a scar in our nation's history and I like many others can and will never forget it.

I have said it before, and will surely continue to say: what affects one of us, affects all of us. The voices and experience of our young people represented more than a popular protest and angst. It embodied a deep-seated cry for and understanding of social justice. It represented the bravery, tenacity, and passion of a new generation in want of a nation that works for them and for each other: we must redouble our efforts in working towards a better system that can guarantee them better outcomes in health, education, economic livelihood, democratic power and social mobility.





Resolve, Purpose & Impatient Optimism

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With resolve, purpose and impatient optimism, I moved into the new month of November, joining Women Political Leaders in partnership with the Government and Parliament of Iceland and a host of female global leaders at the Reykjavik Global Forum to discuss how we've fared during the COVID-19 pandemic. The resilience, teamwork, evidence and policy-based impetus of my team and midwives at the frontline has meant that we have been able, despite stacked odds, to scale up existing efforts and ensure the delivery of a continuum of care for mothers and their babies, nor our programming spanning into WASH, SRH, PSHE, nutrition and beyond have ceased.

November saw our announcement of the WBFA Women, Girls and Gender Development (WGGD) targets encompassing 17 principles to guide our WBFA policy and our overarching commitment to take a cohesive and coordinated approach to support gender equality and the principles expressed in international agreements to which we will hold ourselves accountable as we continue to strive towards excellence in organisational and programmatic standards.

The month also brought renewed opportunities to celebrate our accelerated progress towards the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) +25 Programme of Action and three zeros agenda - marking a year after we stood in solidarity with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) at the 2019 Nairobi Summit to boldly declare our commitment to ensuring safe and equal sexual and reproductive rights, combatting sexual and gender based violence against women and girls and firing home the importance of inclusiveness for young women and girls.

As Founder-President of Wellbeing Foundation Africa, as a member of the International Steering Council of the ICPD25, and as UNFPA Nigeria's Family Planning Champion, I've led the Wellbeing Foundation Africa in committing to a programme of replenished advocacy and reinforced actions on a global and sub-national scale to accelerate progress towards the ICPD25 agenda of ending preventable maternal deaths, unmet needs for family planning, and gender-based violence and harmful practices.

I further elaborated on our progress to date at the Concordia Africa Initiative where I joined respective leaders spanning the global health, international development and advocacy landscapes, for important discussions focused on strategies for tackling health misinformation in Nigeria and how my leadership of Wellbeing Foundation centres women and girls beyond the pandemic as an ongoing priority. The later part of the month saw a shift in focus towards deliberating on and preparing for a post-COVID world by situating the healthcare system and its workforce front and center of our recovery efforts to build back our societies and communities with equity and resilience in mind. Centralising the importance of women health workers who remain instrumental in bridging cultural barriers to reach the commonly disregarded and most marginalised members of community.

I opened the Intrahealth International Women for Health Switch Point Virtual Exchange speaking on the power of Female Rural Health Workers in Nigeria. I was also delighted to join my dear friend Cherie Blair and other powerhouse women to amplify the 100,000 Women campaign seeking to empower women entrepreneurs who have persisted before and throughout the global pandemic.

Improving Access to Safety and Health Services in a Silent Pandemic

At the 2020 Concordia Africa Initiative I presented and discussed key gaps and shared strategies across health, energy democracy, family planning, SGBV-SARC referrals, supply-chain management and WASH, in dialogue with the expert voices. The convening assured me that the model we have been developing for comprehensive community care with the supply chain and diagnostics all under one roof at site, is going to be the way forward for all of us around the world. However, greater and more direct support and funding of women's groups would also be key to success moving forward - an argument I made at the Women in Global Health and Johnson and Johnson Global Health Action Lab 5 focused on SDG5.

Since the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic at the beginning of March 2020, the health crisis has not only highlighted glaring gaps in our healthcare delivery system as a nation, it has also pronounced the insecurity and fragile state of the rights and liberties of the people it is designed to serve. An alarming increase in multiple forms of violence against women and girls, especially physical, psychological, sexual and economic forms of domestic violence has been fueled by household economic and food insecurity and confined living conditions due to lockdown and social isolation measures.

This silent pandemic, a pandemic of violence against women and girls although an ongoing priority, distinctly commanded our attention and required further focus in the final month of the year as we zeroed-in on the role of multi-disciplinary stakeholders in recognising, reporting and ultimately, reprimanding perpetrators in cases of VAWG, and the need for isolated Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC). Our WBGA VAWG webinar brought together practitioners, policymakers, midwives, SRH education staff and members of the media to explore existing efforts and approaches adopted, tools and strategies for identifying cases, weighting of the percentage of women in their care who are or have been victims of S/GBV, as well as a collation of the experiences of women and children accessing midwifery-led. Collaborating to discuss new innovative protocols and pathways that would ensure SARC was accessible and effective was a heightened priority.

The pandemic itself amplified and re-prioritised many of the focuses that governing bodies, parliamentarians and policymakers had perhaps set as a precedent in past seasons. Today, many of us concur that systems, viewpoints and plans for the governance, recalibration and delivery of health care and health information in particular, has taken a swift but impressively-managed turn.



Governance & Collaborations





Policies

The Wellbeing Foundation Africa's work is anchored by the 10 Guiding Principles of the UN Global Compact with respect to human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption.

In 2020, I was been pleased to steward the Wellbeing Foundation Africa's increased strengthening of governance protocols, including updated policies and reporting mechanisms:

- WBFA Confidentiality Policy
- WBFA Equal Opportunities Policy
- WBFA Women, Girls & Gender Development Policy Goals
- WBFA Privacy Policy
- WBFA Know Your Donor Policy
- WBFA Financial Management Policy
- WBFA Whistleblowing Policy
- WBFA Conflict of Interest Policy
- WBFA Expenses Policy
- WBFA Risk Management Policy
- WBFA Procurement Policy
- WBFA Code of Good Governance
- WBFA Safeguarding Policy

Partnerships

I and the Wellbeing Foundation Africa are proud to be an active pioneer member of the NGO Partners Critical Core Committee of Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Health since its establishment in 2006.

We continue to honour and serve our longstanding and newer high multilateral commitments to:

- The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
- The Every Woman Every Child Initiative to support the Global Strategy On Women's Health
- The United Nations Global Compact
- The WHO Partnership For Maternal and Child Health
- WHO Implementing Best Practices Network

Awards & Recognition

Receiving awards and recognitions have been gratifying over the years, and 2020's Midwifery Star Award from the International Confederation of Midwives, and the special commendation of WHO Director General, Dr Tedros Adhanom was an encouraging boost to decades of dedication to our cause.

In a busy year as Founder of WBFA, Inaugural Global Goodwill Ambassador for the International Confederation of Midwives and continuing champion for midwifery and nursing services worldwide, Special Adviser to the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Africa Independent Advisory Group, Member of the Concordia Leadership Council and Concordia Action Alliance, MIT Solve Challenge Leader, Maternal and Newborn Health, UNFPA Family Planning Champion, Devex UHC Global Champion, Global Champion for the White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood and Patron, White Ribbon Alliance Nigeria, Social Good Moms Maternal Health Hero, and as a member of Fortify's Advisory Council, I was gratified to be recognised as AvanceMedia 100 Most Influential African Women 2020, and to receive the International Confederation of Midwives Star Award in recognition of my efforts to enable, elevate and empower midwives worldwide with whole system support.

- WHO WASH in Healthcare Facilities Focus Group
- The Independent Advisory Group of WHO Africa Region Office
- UHC2030
- The WHO Foundation
- The Maternal Health Task Force
- The UNFPA ICPD25 Global Steering Council
- The Africa Women Leaders Network
- The United Kingdom-France Consultation on Preventing Sexual Violence In Conflict Initiative
- The Stop TB Partnership
- The Global Handwashing Partnership
- Water and Sanitation Council Fund and Global Water 2020.

People are at the Centre of Progress

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I cannot enter the new decade of 2021 without expressing my admiration and appreciation for the Trustees, Global Advisory Council, Vice President and entire Wellbeing Foundation Africa management and frontline teams in Nigeria and Ghana. Our consistent purpose in implementing our mission to end preventable deaths of mothers and children, improving nutritional outcomes and access to WASH, supporting families through the reproductive health and education journeys, promoting gender equity for all, is actualised. As we enter our 17th year of dedicated philanthropic action, I am pleased to share the 2020 Wellbeing Foundation Africa Annual Report.

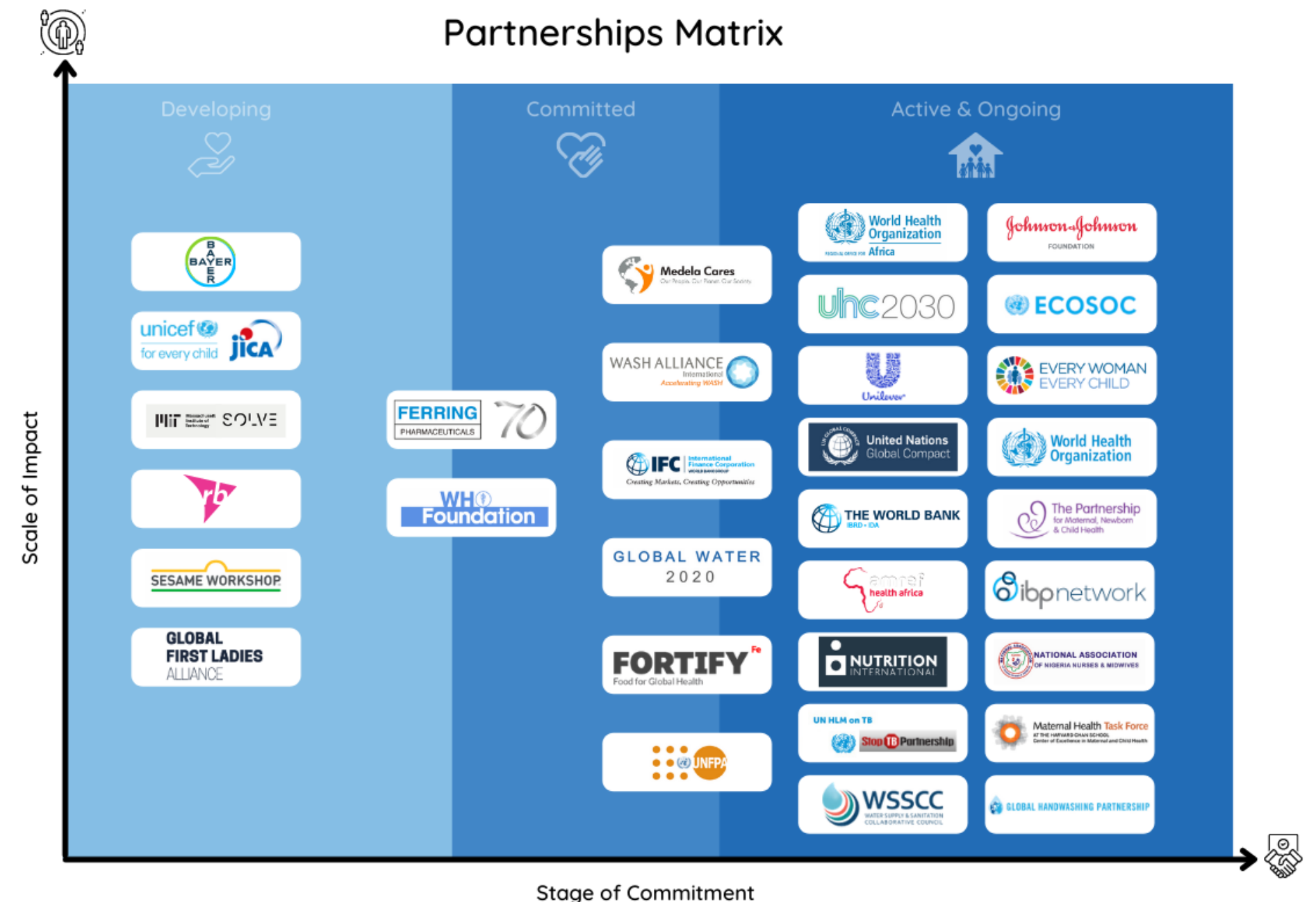
I also remain continuously appreciative to the Trustees of Wellbeing For Women Africa Youth Initiative, whose diligent and dedicated governance and steerage of the vision and mission to develop youth voices in global development, made it possible to mentor, support and publish the works of 66 Youth Partners in 34 countries, since 2016, many of whom have risen to commendable recognition as experts in their areas of interest.

In building youth expertise to bear on the global development issues on women and children's health, the Wellbeing for Women Voices Youth initiative insisted that while young people may categorise their age - youth should not limit their potential as we make greater room to house and promote the leadership qualities that our youth partners have so successfully developed and demonstrated - particularly throughout the momentous and unforgettable year we have just had. They and many more alongside them have begun on a journey to becoming the gatekeepers of the future.

Furthermore, I must appreciate my women leaders and volunteers of the Alaafia Kwara Community Development Initiative's women and youth groups, cooperatives and associations in Kwara State, always caring for the populace and quick to respond. From assisting with disaster relief and shelter materials, to assisting with prompt interventions, and supporting their communities in every range of household situations, they have been my eyes, ears, and an extension of my heart for the masses.

2020 was a year which also tested the strength and resilience of purposeful partnerships and strategic collaborations and I am pleased to say that we enter the rest of the decade with new energy and innovation to build on existing evidence, impact and a solid community of practice to deliver safer births, pursue happiness and meaning in a post-covid world, towards healthy futures for all.

To all our partners, and particularly our grantmakers and donors, we appreciate you and look forward to taking our impact to greater scale.



People are at the centre of this progress I seek to achieve. A strong collective can galvanise morale, effort and expertise to co-create unique and impactful solutions.

There have been many moments of collective humility and occupational equity shared, as the summits, events and commitments we'd once physically attended became more intimate, more purposeful and arguably, more fruitful. 2020 really was the year of the adoption and adaptation of a 'new normal' by all standards, with methods of connecting, communicating and convening reflecting the future we embrace today.

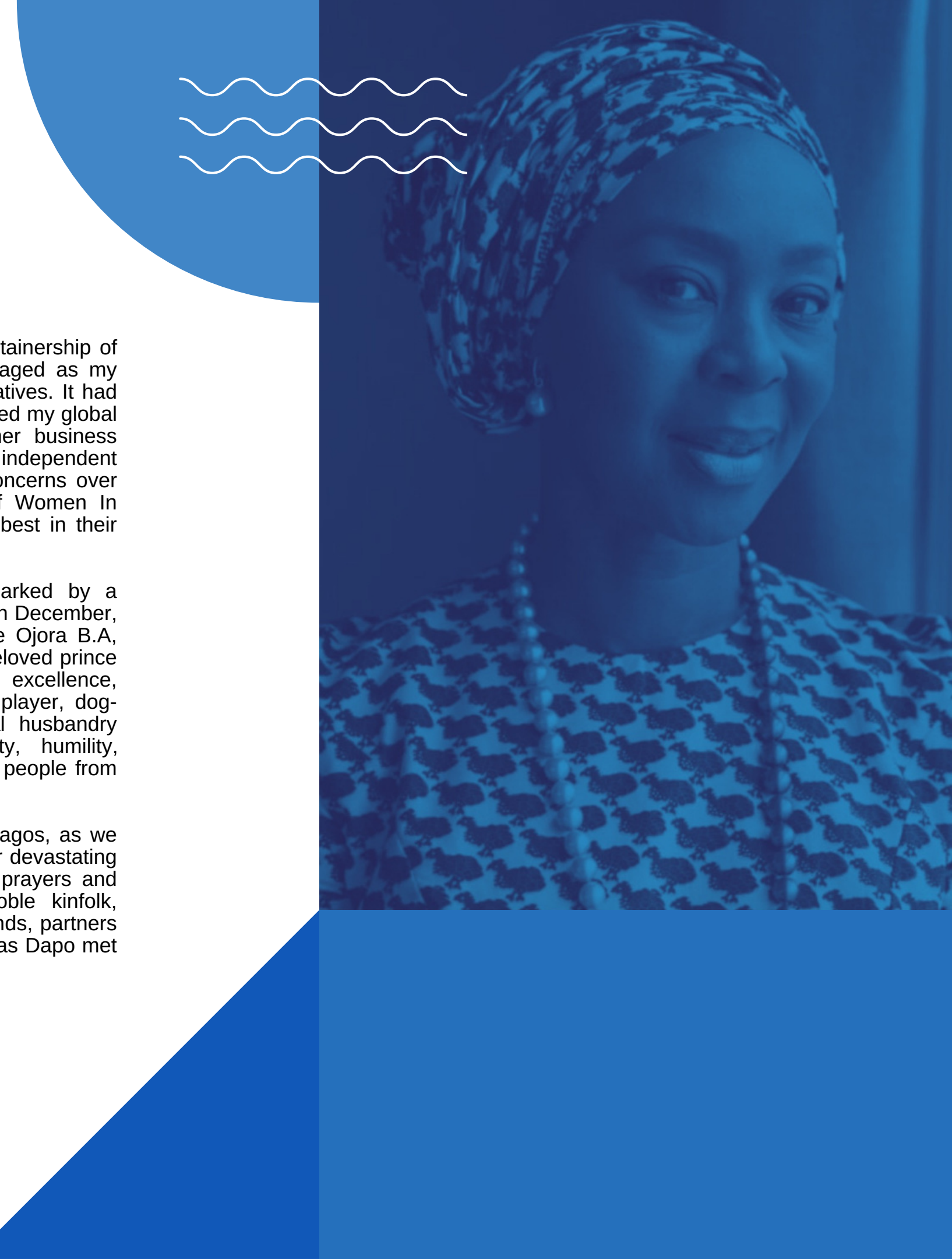
We have successfully evolved from "managing the probable": narrowing the possibilities until we find the solutions, to new approaches in the face of unexpected and novel challenges. As we shift towards "leading the possible": expanding our range of choices and programmatic offerings to realize significant benefits while avoiding calamities, we continue to build resilience in the face of the uncertainties we confront today.

2020 must be considered as a global turning point: the year when a lethal virus shook the global community. Within weeks, the pandemic severely affected our private and professional realities. Hundreds of thousands died. Millions lost their jobs. Entire industries slowed down dramatically. These fundamental changes to our lives and working models offered us unprecedented insights into our economy and its impact on the way we would engage with our mission.

In October 2020. I bade farewell to and ceased retainership of Global Office Consultants Limited, previously engaged as my United Kingdom and global professional representatives. It had been a pleasure to watch Rachel Firth who had joined my global team as an executive assistant in 2014, and her business partner Goli Nili learn, develop and grow their independent interests and skills in global health and gender concerns over the years, culminating in their London launch of Women In Development, in March 2020. We wish them the best in their future endeavours.

On a personal note, the end of 2020 was marked by a devastating personal tragedy in the sudden death, in December, of my elder brother, Omo-Oba Adedapo Adelanke Ojora B.A, M.A, ACL. A consummate gentleman and widely beloved prince of courage, valour and peace, sportsman par excellence, Nigeria's highest ranking plus-five handicap polo player, dog-whisperer and K9 working dogs expert, animal husbandry professional without compare, Dapo's simplicity, humility, kindness and generosity towards mentoring young people from all walks of life will never be forgotten.

For and on behalf of The Ojora Royal Family of Lagos, as we concluded the traditional forty days of mourning our devastating loss, I gratefully appreciated the kind messages, prayers and heartfelt condolences we received from our noble kinfolk, leaders of governments and the private sector, friends, partners and associates from Nigeria and all over the world as Dapo met our ancestors to rest in eternal peace.



2021 Global Office & Philanthropy Team

I close this 2020 reflection, which truly demonstrated that promise-keeping is the test of tenacity in introducing my 2021 Global Office & Philanthropy Team who are joining me on the journey to drive forward a renewed vision, in the Year of the Health And Care Worker, by replenishing and building on the Wellbeing Africa legacy in this new year, as we catalyze, shape and drive key actions in this decade of delivery towards the 2030 sustainable development goals.



Karen-Grace Siriboe

Global Communications and Advocacy Lead

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Karen-Grace is a celebrated PR & communications professional, with extensive experience spanning across consumer, corporate and international development. Holding a BA Hons in Journalism & PR, she has successfully devised and led strategies for a plethora of brands and thought-leaders worldwide. She now joins HE Toyin Saraki's Global Office and Philanthropy as Communications and Advocacy Lead.

Karen-Grace is particularly passionate about maternal and neonatal health having acquired clinical and theoretical skills in midwifery. She is enthused by the art of advocacy and commits to amplifying positive and progressive narratives for women and girls.



Catherine Omeresan Sutherland

Principal Secretary and Knowledge Manager

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Catherine Sutherland is the Principal Secretary - Knowledge Manager at HE Toyin Saraki's Global Office and Philanthropy. A research and C4D specialist, Catherine is passionate about leveraging data for social impact.

Catherine's cross-sector multi-disciplinary experience spans media, technology and innovation and international development sectors in the United Kingdom and Nigeria. Catherine holds a BA in Politics and International Studies from the University of Warwick and an MA in Media and Development from the University of Westminster.

2021 Global Office & Philanthropy Team



Dr. Elizabeth Peters

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Dr. Elizabeth T. Peters is a medical doctor, public health professional, project management practitioner and an award-winning lifestyle blogger. Passionate about Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and Universal Health Coverage, Elizabeth has worked with a number of International Organizations on these issues, constantly aiming to improve health inequalities, one community at a time. Alongside leading Global health partnerships for the Wellbeing Foundation Africa, Elizabeth also provides care to ill children as part of a pediatric medical team, and is the Editor-in-Chief of her six year old blog, www.ElizabethTPeters.com.



Lagun Akinloye

*Global Development Policy, Governance and
Innovations Manager*

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Lagun Akinloye is a seasoned political journalist, analyst & consultant who has recently joined the Wellbeing Foundation's Global Office as Governance, Policy & Innovations Manager. Lagun is passionate about development, democracy & Universal Healthcare Coverage. He is a graduate of the University of Leeds (BA Sociology & Social Policy) & SOAS, University of London (MSc-International Politics).



Leading the Possible in the Decade of Delivery

As we proceed through this decade of delivery to work more collaboratively, intentionally and strategically in order to support women and girls across the African frontline, we must share ongoing learnings. From our clinical practice approach, from the pandemic, and from the professional desires we have, classifying all of the former as tools in ending this silent pandemic. We continue to support midwives, nurses and general medical practitioners as they continue to support women - and one another on the frontlines - in order to truly ensure that health and wellbeing outcomes improve, more specifically, result in the three zeros of: zero unmet need for family planning, zero preventable maternal deaths and zero gender-based violence and harmful practices.

When a woman in a community has a voice, her voice guides our learning and actions. To me, this is the mark of true leadership- one who amplifies the sound of the silent community footstep in the global corridors of power by widening the conversation inclusively and first.

As we mark the start of 2021, during this second wave of the coronavirus pandemic, I am energised by bold and responsive human pillars erected across each and every nation; girls, boys, women and men alike, who have shone an uncircumspect light on a plethora of creative, solution-based, forward-thinking progressives, and as a result, have successfully led the way for themselves - and others, from research benches to bedsides, from hospitals to huts in communities, centred on the Wellbeing Foundation Africa's Ten Pillars of Care.

Truly we are strengthened by the knowledge and evidence that the efforts demonstrated by every citizen around the world who, by way of compliance to social distancing guidance, creative digital campaigns to amplify societal progress, culturally-sensitive disseminations and a truly holistic intention to combat the pandemic, have made the purpose and drive towards building forwards better, an actualised reality.' as I wish all our friends, supporters and partners a fruitful and happier new year.

About Her Excellency Toyin Ojora Saraki

As Founder-President of The Wellbeing Foundation Africa (WBFA), Mrs Toyin Ojora Saraki is a global advocate for women's and children's health and empowerment, with two decades of advocacy covering reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health; ending gender-based discrimination and violence; and improving education, socio-economic empowerment, and community livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa. Mrs Saraki is the Emeritus Global Goodwill Ambassador for the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM); special adviser to the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Regional Office for Africa (AFRO), was named by Devex as UHC Global Champion, is the Save the Children Newborn Health Champion for Nigeria; and is a Global Champion for the White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood.

Learn more about Her Excellency Toyin Saraki on www.toyinsaraki.org.

Her Excellency Toyin Ojora Saraki Global Office & Philanthropy

2020 Annual Review, "Promise-Keeping, the Test of Our Tenacity: Reflecting on the challenge of reinforcing and replenishing community-centred care during Covid-19."

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