

LEADER

PROFILING 2021 MANDELA WASHINGTON FELLOWS



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE!

BOUNCING BACK!

"It's still a whole lot of journey ahead. When I 'arrive' you will get to know. For now, I'm focused on growing my business and impacting more lives."

POWER WOMAN

Award winning entrepreneur, Veronica Agana talks about her work in healthcare and waste management.

VERONICA AGANA



WELCOME

Please read this before take-off!!

The 2021 Cohort of the Mandela Washington Fellowship is virtual due to covid-19. This means that networking this year has to be unconventional. **The Leader** digital magazine is a tool that has been created to aid this unconventional networking process. Each issue will profile one of the **2021 MW Fellows** by highlighting their work & interests. This creates new avenues to network & collaborate between fellows. It is also an exciting way to keep in tune with each other. This magazine is **not** an official product of The Mandela Washington Fellowship nor its partners. The views & ideas expressed herein belong to the respective individuals. As such they cannot be attributed to the fellowship. We encourage you to contact the profiled fellow to learn more about his/her work. For more information on the Mandela Washington Fellowship, please contact the fellowship directly on: www.mandelawashingtonfellowship.org

We hope you enjoy this one. Tatenda,
Siyabonga!

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NIGERIA

1. PLEASE TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF.

I am the Co-founder and Product Lead of SOSOCARE a fintech social enterprise that offers healthcare access to millions of Nigerians who do not have insurance using Recyclables as a financial resource.

2. How did you choose your path? Tell me more about the past few years.

So I have about 10 years working experience in the telecommunication sector where I served as a Human Resources Executive with focus on talent acquisition and also worked in Customer Relations at MTN Nigeria before venturing into community development sector in the last 5 years. I have led many social and environmental interventions targeted at mitigating health risks in communities, improving sanitation practices amongst children, amplifying the voices of women & youth and inclusive education. I also volunteered with Voluntary Service Overseas on 2 projects. Through my work, SOSOCARE emerged winners of the 2019 Health Meets Tech Hackaton by Nigerian Health Watch & EpiAfric. We also won 3rd place at the World Bank Youth Summit 2019 and 9th place out of 20 #WasteWiseCities innovative solutions. We were also featured in 2019 UNHabitat on World Habitat Day sustainable solutions. Qatar foundation, Ocean Community Challenge and so many others. I chose this work because Healthcare Access in Nigeria is quite expensive, less than 5% of Nigerians have Health Insurance Cover and

5. What would you say was a defining moment in your life or career?

I will say when I had to loose my job for the second time in a span of 2 years due to downsizing. That was the year 2017. I was off work for about 6 months and friends and family were like "what do you want to do again". I was like I don't know but I do now I wanted something different from what I was currently doing, I belong to the streets hahaha! I'm more inclined to community engagement with interest in Waste management and Advocacy.

6. Hahaha, have you bounced back? What does the future look like from here?

Have I really bounced back? Well it's still a whole lot of journey ahead. When I 'arrive' you will get to know. For now, in focused on growing my business and impacting more lives. I'm travelling now and from what I'm seeing on the road, I wish to do a Plastic Mop Up challenge that is: to mop up single use plastics off our streets. I'm also looking at setting up a Youth Skills Centre to curb migration challenges here in my country. Again, creating safe spaces for kids in their learning environment. This has been a great challenge we are battling with, given the upsurge of abduction of school children from schools.

3. What motivates you?

I will say, Africa's development rate. There is so much work to do. Africa has huge human capital and abundant natural resources. Yeah. We keep hearing that every time. But I will say, it's not about Africa having abundant human and natural resources but our inability to efficiently allocate these resources to the 'pie'. Again I will say in Africa, we have more of people who complain about our 'lack' than those who are willing to take the initiatives to drive our development agenda. And in reality, movements start with no one ever having the clear picture of the end goal in mind rather you get started and keep pushing even if no one believes you. In the long run other persons begin to connect with it. Again in my leadership journey I will say, Nigeria and by extension the whole of Africa has not done enough to equip or empower it's teaming young population who have the key to the future. It's hurting our development. I will say more of the support I have enjoyed in my development work has been more from outside the Shores of Africa than within. Again we have so much bottlenecks but as we keep saying we move!

4. How have you managed to navigate challenges in your business?

Being a Nigerian kind of comes with an inbuilt resilience. From growing up to adulthood, this has kind of shaped our outlook to life and business. Despite the challenges faced daily ranging from lack of youth inclusiveness in policies that affects youths, to ease of doing business, corruption, insecurity, inflation and so much more, we keep navigating the puzzle that comes in the daily life of an entrepreneur in Nigeria. Despite the challenges, we create strategies to help navigate the terrain rather than join the bandwagon who complain and do nothing about the situation. It's a matter of choice. I chose the former. I must say here that business support I've received over my entrepreneurship journey so far is more from outside the shores of Nigeria than within. Despite this, we have received support from some banks in Nigeria Like FCMB, Tangerine Life, and others.

Scan code to connect with Veronica Agana



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