FUTURE OF GHANA
2015 DELUXE PUBLICATION
INCLUDES: INTERVIEWS, ARTICLES & TOP 30 U30

MEET GHANA’S TOP 30 U30
THE STORIES BEHIND GHANA’S PIONEERS INFLUENCING THE WORLD

LOTTAINE WRIGHT
28, CORPORATE DIRECTOR AND ENTREPRENEUR
HOW SHE BECAME DIRECTOR WITHIN 3 YEARS
A Message from the Editor

SO WHY THE FUTURE OF GHANA?

“In less than 3 generations 41% of the world’s youth will be African” and “By 2035, Africa’s labour force will be larger than China’s” (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2012).

That’s some statement right? When I analyse this statement two things become apparent. Firstly, Africa will have the highest concentration of young people in the world in the future. Secondly, because of this, the continent will be hugely influential particularly in the labour market.

The future is African, thus Me Firi Ghana presents the Future of Ghana project, an annual initiative dedicated to showcasing and nurturing Ghana’s leading young talent from around the world. We believe now is time to celebrate, mobilize and invest in young people of Ghanaian heritage at a critical time in Africa’s growth. But who are Ghana’s Future leaders? Who are the young people out there innovating and creating change? … I think it’s about time we found out!

When you turn the page you will discover a publication showcasing the top 30 under 30 year old emerging Ghanaian talent from around the world, as well as forward thinking articles and interviews highlighting key industries, innovators and organisation’s vision for Ghana and Africa.

But it won’t just stop there! This publication will act as a catalyst for greater change. By annually organising and mobilizing a generation of future leaders for the development of Ghana through the publication and followed by a number of follow up projects, we will one day realise our vision of seeing a ‘self sustaining first world Ghana’.

The future of Ghana is a responsibility! And we are all accountable…

Ben Anim-Antwi
Editor/Director of Communications, Me Firi Ghana
About
Me FiRi Ghana

Me FiRi Ghana is a members network specialising in providing routes to engage with and invest in Ghana. We provide an advisory service to members by recommending, developing and implementing tailored strategies to help individuals, brands and organisations connect and engage with Ghanaian and African communities living on the continent and within the Diaspora.

Timeline of key events and activities

2009:
- Me FiRi Ghana incepted as an identity campaign

2010:
- Winner of the Ghana UK Based Achievement Award for Enterprise

2011:
- Registered as a Limited company
- Founder invited to be part of a delegation that met Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace
- Founder interviewed Virgin Group founder Sir Richard Branson around Entrepreneurship and represented Ghana for MTV Base Africa’s MEET’s TV Show

2012:
- Founder wins INDIAFRICA Young Visionary Award on behalf of Me FiRi Ghana and presented award from India’s Minister of Commerce
- 1 of 3 initiatives chosen to feature on MTV Base Africa’s MEET’s second season TV Show
- Part of a youth delegation invited to meet UK Prime Minister David Cameron at No. 10 Downing Street

2013:
- Founder presents Me FiRi Ghana’s story during the World Economic Forum in Davos
- Me FiRi Ghana products stocked at Ghana International Airport’s Duty Free
- Founder invited to share the company’s story at a TEDx SOAS event
- Founder selected to be part of the Commonwealth Secretariat youth delegation invited to meet HRH The Queen at Buckingham Palace

2014:
- Developed a 360 multiplatform Campaign in support of the Ghana Black Stars during the Brazil 2014 World Cup. The #LetsGoalGhana Campaign directly engaged 3 million+ individuals within 21 days!
- Me FiRi Ghana contributes to the WAM Campaign Charity’s Diaspora Youth policy brief which was handed to the President of Ghana
- Me FiRi Ghana Blog recognised as the second most Innovative Online Blog throughout the UK by the UK Blog Awards

Website: www.mefirighana.com
About

The WAM Campaign

WAM is a UK registered charity (1148382) established to advance the education and training of children and young people living in marginalized communities in Ghana.

As a charity we believe in ‘people helping people’ and we have a vision of seeing a world where children & young people are not limited to the opportunities they receive in life based on where they grow up. We do this by delivering capacity development programmes that CONNECT, EMPOWER and MOBILIZE stakeholders to be part of the development process.

WAM was just an idea originally birthed during the early days of inception of Me Firi Ghana. Like most ideas, it was not fully realised until conversations with like-minded individuals with the same passion for development decided to be proactive and travel to Ghana during the Christmas period in 2010 to work with two organisations to see how we could act as a resource to help!

The trip pushed the founding members out of their comfort zones to develop programmes with the little resources they had; pushing their need to be creative. By being put in a position to think and act creatively, revealed a greater sense of enjoyment, achievement and relevance both for the founding members, the volunteers and the children. The founding members never thought that trip would act as the catalyst to pave the way to facilitate over 1,100 hours of volunteering in Ghana for two weeks every December since 2011, for over 80 young people residing in Ghana and from 7 countries in the Diaspora.

Yes, Ghana has a way of challenging and inspiring you to want to give back and do more and The WAM Campaign has recognised the need for this and aims to provide a gateway to connect YOU with platforms to volunteer and give back in an easy, fun and practical way. Your role as a volunteer, fundraiser or supporter, is to contribute your skills, gifts and talents in the best way you can, to empower the lives of others, because as we say here at WAM “The best of YOU, comes out when YOU give your best to others…”

To donate, partner or volunteer with the WAM Campaign, please connect with us via:
Email: info@wamcampaign.org
Website: www.wamcampaign.org
The driving forces behind the Future of Ghana initiative are young Ghanaians passionate about mobilising and inspiring young Ghanaians to use their creativity, skills and talents for the development of Ghana.
Arnold Sarfo-Kantanka  
Chair & Founder of Me Firi Ghana

is a social entrepreneur and advocate for youth participation with development within Africa. He is Chair of the Future of Ghana project and founder of multiple award winning company Me FiRi Ghana & sister charity WAM Campaign.

The impact of the company & charity’s work has permitted Arnold to represent Ghana during the 2013 World Economic Forum, speak on platforms such as TEDx SOAS and interview Virgin Group’s Founder Sir Richard Branson on entrepreneurship, for MTV Base Africa. He was recognized as INDIAFIRCA’s Young Visionary Award Winner for Ghana and was invited to Buckingham Palace to meet HRH The Queen of England and Prince Charles for his contributions to the Ghanaian community.

Ben Anim-Antwi  
Editor & Director of Communications

is a creative thinker, someone who strongly believes in the empowerment of young people and the development of Africa through Diaspora engagement.

Since leaving university in 2006 where he graduated in BA (Hons) Law & Politics he has embarked on a career in central government within the UK specialising in foreign affairs and local government specialising in service improvement.

Ben is also a freelance journalist and the Editor/ Director of Communications for Me Firi Ghana . His aspirations for the future are to publish an as yet untitled book and ensure the Future of Ghana initiative has the kind the kind of impact that is felt for decades to come.
Andrea Amaning-Okyere
Administration Assistant (Intern)

is a 17 year old student from London. She was chosen to intern on the Future of Ghana project because of her unique insight, knowledge and aspirations for Ghana's development. In her own words “Ghana has so much potential that has been shown throughout many years and it only takes one generation to make this flourish, this generation”.

Andrea believes Ghana is heading in the right direction and feels that sooner rather than later young and older people alike will have a suitable place to live and a stable job, leading Ghana to be a first world country with a good economic system. She is confident in the years to come the Future of Ghana initiative can be the catalyst for this.

Samuel Mensah-Bonsu
Creative Director

is a designer that has created and been credited in crafting Award-Winning Campaigns and artistic treatments globally for clients such as: BFI, Renault, MTV, Virgin & Nike. His Personal work has also been featured on prestigious platforms and magazines such as Creative Review, Adobe.com, Abduzeedo, & DesignYouTrust to name a few.

Samuel is Currently a Designer at AKQA London on the Nike Global Team. Having Worked on Global Football campaigns during the 2014 World Cup as well as Nike NTC and Nike Running Campaigns.

Samuel holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Graphic & Media Design for Advertising from University of Arts London.

An active member of the Art directors Club and maintains a Practice maintaining Self-Initiated works under the personal outfit SMBStudios, committed to exploring new ways of creating innovation and visual storytelling for various industries.
is strategist and qualified PRINCE 2 Project Manager with a track record working in high profile organisations and programmes. Her current role at the Mayor’s Fund for London as a Portfolio Performance Manager means she is responsible for managing performance and contractual agreements across various delivery partnerships.

Prior to this, Sandra worked as part of the Security and Resilience planning team at the London 2012 Olympics Committee, contributing to the deployment of 23,000 security personnel.

Born and raised in East London, Sandra has been proactive in seeking international pursuits. She volunteered in remote villages across India where she taught in community schools and advocated development policies around Health care and Education.

Sandra enjoys project consulting and has a passion for Africa’s advancement. She considers it a ‘responsibility’ to give back what she was given - an opportunity to progress.
Meet the Patron

James Barnor

With a career that spans six decades, it is a travesty that for most of his career his work was not widely known. In his street and studio photography he represents societies in transition: Ghana moving toward Independence, and London becoming a multicultural metropolis. Moreover the legendary James Barnor is credited with introducing colour processing to Ghana!

His photographs have been collated by the London-based charity Autograph ABP during a four-year project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and in 2011 became part of the new Archive and the Research Centre for Culturally Diverse Photography.

In 2011, Mr Barnor was honoured with a GUBA (Ghana UK-Based Achievement) special “Lifetime Achievement” award. On receiving it, he revealed that it was the first award he had ever been given.

Barnor had work included in the show Another London: International Photographers Capture London Life 1930–1980 at Tate Britain in August 2012, with his 1967 photograph of BBC World Service reporter “Mike Eghan at Piccadilly Circus, London” featuring on the cover of the catalogue.

His photographs are represented in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, Tate and Government Art Collection in the UK, as well as in numerous international private collections.

A true pioneer and living legend, Mr Barnor’s knowledge of Ghana’s past and his enthusiasm for its future makes him an exemplary patron.
Meet the Judges

The task of deciding on the final 30 pioneers for the publication fell to five individuals who are pioneers in their own right and represent Ghana with distinction in their various careers.

It was only right that the pioneers of today decide on those under 30’s who are making an impact now and/or will be in the future...
Dentaa Amoateng

is the founder of non-profit organisation the Ghana UK Based Achievement (GUBA) Awards. Dentaa decided to set up the awards as she felt that there was nothing out there promoting and enriching the Ghanaian heritage.

The first awards ceremony took place in October 2010, London, England. GUBA was the first ceremony of its kind to specifically recognise Ghanaian achievement and has since been endorsed by dignitaries and organisations including The Ghana High Commission to the UK & Ireland, The British High Commission in Ghana, The Ghana Ministry of Tourism, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair and wife Cherie, Lord Paul Boateng, Diane Abbott MP and FIFA President Sepp Blatter.

Dentaa’s achievements with GUBA were acknowledged in 2011 when she was announced as one of the “Young Social Entrepreneurs of the Year” in the annual Future 100 Awards. In June 2012, Dentaa helped the Arthur Wharton Foundation present a statuette of Arthur Wharton — the first professional black football player — to FIFA President Sepp Blatter.

July 2013 saw Dentaa win the Most Innovative African Woman in Europe Award at the prestigious African Women in Europe awards which was setup to reward and acknowledge influential African women in Europe. Organisers described her as an “icon and role mode” to all African women living and working in Europe!
Andy Ansah

is a former professional footballer who after retiring from the sport set up his company Sports on Screen, who are now known globally as the number one go to company for sports related films, commercials and TV programs.

Through the success of Sports on Screen Andy has been able to create and offer working opportunities to young people using sport as a platform.

Andy has been involved with some of the world’s best award winning sporting action commercials that have been rewarded with the Grand Prix at the Cannes International Festival. He has worked alongside the world’s greatest football players, including Messi, Ronaldo, Wayne Rooney, Ronaldinho, Kaka and Pele.

Andy is also well known for his catch phrase “Unbelievable Tekkers” meaning ‘great skill’. This inspired Andy to set up a high-end clothing line called Tekkers - a brand which has become a firm favourite of sports people all over the world.
Charlene Nyantekyi

Is the hospitality director of AEG Europe where she leads the VIP division working with Artists, Promoters and Venues to create amazing experiences throughout Europe.

Ms. Nyantekyi prides herself on her attention to detail. On a daily basis, she is responsible for planning and proposing the strategies of European tours, as well as tour and hospitality package sales and hospitality delivery.

She attributes her success to having genuine passion for hospitality. She became involved in her profession because she started out in the hospitality industry in the front of house and developed a love of the industry.

In 2013 she was named a VIP member of Worldwide Branding. This special distinction honours individuals who have shown exceptional commitment to achieving personal and professional success.
Official FOGH Judge

Ameyaw Debrah

Is a mainstay in the journalism and social media sectors in Ghana, he garners the kind of respect in this field more akin to a veteran over his half age. His potential shone through early when he won the award for best publishing student whilst studying at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in 2005.

The award provided a platform for Mr. Debrah to work with Ovation International Magazine whilst striking an agreement with the NSS (National Service Scheme) doing his national service. After his service he stayed on at Ovation and began contributing to the Star Newspaper as a columnist.

In 2007 Debrah became the entertainment editor for Ghanaweb and was in this position until 2009 when he decided to create his own website. Since its inception it has gone from strength to strength and has solidified Debrah as among the top celebrity/entertainment news bloggers in Ghana. His work has taken him all over the world to cover events where he has interviewed some of the biggest names in entertainment and beyond such as Kofi Annan, Belle Rose, Trey Songz, Amber Rose, Ludacris, Coptic, Wyclef and Mario. He has gained recognition from the Ghanaian Diaspora in the UK when he was nominated for a GUBA Award in 2012. In 2013 he won the Ghana Social Media Awards for Best Showbiz and Entertainment Blog and the City People Entertainment Awards for Best Blogger or online reporter (Ghana).
Alex Boateng

Commonly known as Twin B - is the A&R/Marketing Manager at Island Records; a record label that operates as a division of Universal Music Group. Alex role is two fold. He is responsible for scouting, signing and developing new and emerging talent, but quite uniquely, is also involved in the branding/marketing element of artists too.

Alex has always been into music. Growing up with a family that loves music, djing with his twin brother Alec on pirate radio and being immersed in the East London music scene in the early 00’s when the industry was flourishing with young emerging talent, are all contributors to his career.

A key point in his career was when he and his Twin Alec (Twins Alex & Alec Boateng) released their mix tape in 2004 entitled ‘Split Mics’. Which featured then up-and-coming artists such as Estelle, Donae‘o, Kano, Klashnekoff, Lethal Bizzle and So Solid. Soon after this he and his twin attended the BBC for an interview for Ras Kwame’s Radio 1xtra show and were offered jobs. This all happened whilst Alex was in his final year of University where he was studying Marketing. Despite the distraction he still managed to get a 2:1!
We are the future
(An Epistle poem) by Adwoa Asiedu

Ladies and Gentlemen, Boys and Girls,
On this iconic day the 6th March 2015 is Ghana’s Independence Day.
I would like the nation of Ghana and all those of Ghanaian descent to
Take a stand as a nation and declare:

We refuse to sit in darkness any longer
Forgetting the past, today marks a new story.
  Picture a new generation on fire
  Burning to inspire you!
  You the politicians! You the economists!
  You the media! You the world!

With everything we have, we will rise!
  Rise above the setbacks
  Rise above the hardships
  Call us the future of Ghana
  We will not be silent!

Make your pledge of allegiance with us
  Let us run this race with one accord
     With one mind, with one heart
        We are the future...

All rights reserved. Adwoa Asiedu is a published poet and blogger for Me Firi Ghana. Her debut ebook “From Within” was released in October 2014
The Legacy of a Visionary

The notion of Ghana positioning itself as a self-sustaining country is not new and spans back 50 years. One man set to transform culture and identity, not only within the boundaries of the Gold Coast but across the entire continent. He is Ghana’s first president and Africa’s first liberation advocate, Dr Kwame Nkrumah.

1951 welcomed a pioneer and visionary that the Gold Coast, as Ghana was named at the time, had not seen prior. He emerged onto the world stage with a plan to transform the Gold Coast into a modern industrial utopia and led the drive towards economic and political dominance across the continent.

Following his release from prison, as a result of a mass youth movement rally that initiated campaigns of nonviolent protests, strikes and non-cooperation with the British colonial authorities, Nkrumah became Ghana’s leader of Government Business and, in 1952, the first black Prime Minister in Africa.

Nkrumah’s modest beginnings are a true testament that vision and leadership belong not to one distinct group or individual but rather to those who are willing to stand for the greater good of a people, nation and generation. Born as Francis Nwia Kofi Ngonloma in 1909 to a goldsmith and retail trader in Nkroful, Gold Coast, Nkrumah studied to be a teacher but was later drawn to politics. Gaining an opportunity to study in the United States at Lincoln University, Nkrumah returned to the Gold Coast after 10 years, spreading an emerging philosophy around Socialism, Pan-Africanism and Black Freedom - an ideology that Africa was ready to ‘self-govern’ and bear its own unique identity.

Facing growing international protests and domestic resistance, the British decided to leave the Gold Coast, and at 12 noon on 6 March 1957, Nkrumah declared Ghana free from foreign rule and became the leader of the first independent African nation.

The leader’s first priority was to transform Ghana into a metropolis of science and technology beginning with the giant Volta River dam, one of the continents greatest natural resource suitably situated in the heart of the country.

The Volta River dam became the project Nkrumah would strive for throughout his rule and saw it as a key solution for Ghana’s leap into the new age. The dam would produce vast amounts of electricity to build an industrial state within a generation. Nowhere in Africa had a project of such scale and sustainable value been considered, yet Nkrumah’s conviction assured him that without this power, Ghana stood no chance of development.

Nkrumah wasted no time forging partnerships with the American government to get the project rolling. However, with Nkrumah’s increasing rise to power and unwavering dedication to see Ghana advance, many of his decisions led to a growing resentment from the people and international stakeholders. Some of which included declaring Ghana a one-party state and significantly funded a growing number of projects extending Ghana’s debt.

Alongside this, a sharp fall in cocoa prices resulted in an unfortunate decline in the economy, deepening the frustration of many. During a visit to Beijing in 1966, Nkrumah’s government was overthrown by the Military armed forces. This move has been described as one of the boldest ventures in the history of the country. Nkrumah never returned to Ghana, but continued to push his vision of African unity from his new residence in Guinea.
Once labelled the ‘Messiah of Africa’, Nkrumah served as an inspiration to many African countries and propelled Ghana into a central role in the fight against imperialism. Simply put, Nkrumah was a force to be reckoned with, and his legacy did not conclude there. During his 15 years of leadership, he focused his efforts around reducing dependence on foreign capital, technology, and merchandise in order for Ghana to become truly independent. However, he believed that independence across Africa would only become a reality when joint policy was operating at continental level. He called for a commitment towards a unified currency, common defense system and internal trade markets across Africa. This, he believed would give Africa a new confidence and power over their own resources – the rise of a New Africa!

In a remarkable speech led by Nkrumah in 1963, at the congress of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa, he asserted his dream to an audience of 32 newly independent African States:

‘It is said... that [Africa] has no capital, no industrial skill, no communications, no internal markets, and that we cannot even agree among ourselves how best to utilise our resources for our own social needs... Yet all the stock exchanges in the world are pre-occupied with Africa’s gold, diamonds, uranium, platinum, copper and iron ores.’
Nkrumah (1963), Addis Ababa

This, in his view was the world’s assessment of Africa. Thus, he stressed that without unity of all Africans, African countries would remain weak.

Despite Ghana becoming a radiant model for what Africa was to become - singular in its modern appeal and occupied by an educated population, considerable infrastructure, academic institutions and a skilled workforce of doctors, lawyers and service men, Nkrumah feared that any African state (including Ghana) that stood by itself would struggle to follow an independent course of economic dominance and would return to the fold of former colonial rulers.

Over the years, his fears had become evident across Africa in the form of ‘foreign aid’ which placed foreign governments in the position where they were able to influence African policies. One may also note that towards the end of his rule, western journalists travelled to Ghana frequently to report the results of his ‘industrial experiment.’ Their reports established a new myth of Africa – A continent unable to handle the complex pressure of industrialisation.

Nkrumah left Ghana with a legacy of monumental buildings, infrastructure and projects that was to showcase Ghana’s leap into the age of technology and industry as well as demonstrate Africa’s technical ability. Below are just a few examples of the projects built under administration of Nkrumah; some of which remains untouched today:

- Independence Square (2nd largest city square in the world after Tiananmen Square in China)
- Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Government building
- Accra Tema Motorway
- The Volta Rive Authority/Akosombo Dam
- Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
- Nationalised Ghana Football Team – Black Stars

Although, the state of Ghana still reveals physical remnants of Nkrumah’s legacy, since his reign, Ghana has struggled to resuscitate the dream of economic independence that would give Ghana a major role in the global markets. His vision of a ‘United States of Africa’ coming together to form a viable unit and world power and creating a core of visionary leaders who wish to see Africa’s true potential realised, is still alive in the hearts of many today. In 2000, he was voted Africa’s man of the millennium by BBC World Service listeners, being described by the BBC as a “Hero of Independence,” and an “International symbol of freedom as the leader of the first black African country to shake off the chains of colonial rule.

Sandra Osei-Asare
Project Manager, Future of Ghana
FOG: How did you stay focused on your ambitions in life whilst studying and having already achieved so much at such a young age, what keeps you motivated now?

LW: I constantly surrounded myself with like-minded individuals, those who had visions for their lives. As they say, you are the average of your 5 friends and thus knowing who to stay close to and who not to, was something I tried to master very early on.

Furthermore, my upbringing fostered a culture of succeeding. I knew what my parents had been through to bring us up and they always encouraged my siblings and me to focus on education.

Lastly my faith kept me motivated, knowing that in the scripture it is said, “You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth” (Deut 8) and “Trust in the Lord with all thy heart and Lean not on your own understanding but acknowledge him in all thy ways and he shall direct your path” (Prov 3 v5). These verses became prevalent in my life as I began to acknowledge a lot of things I was achieving was not by my own strength but by the grace of God. Acknowledging that and professing that kept me going! In the present day, all of the above still keeps me motivated.

FOG: In your opinion, what five key characteristics will enable young people with a similar drive and ambition as you to be taken seriously in business and their professional career?

LW: Interesting question. I don’t believe anyone can really put their finger on what really helped them to get to where they are, but some things I’ve consciously tried to do are as follows:

1. Be Patient
2. Stay close to decision makers
3. Become a shareholder (where possible)
4. Take yourself out of your comfort zone
5. Get involved

FOG: Aside from your professional career, you founded University Gospel Choir of the Year (UGCY), why did you start this and what is your vision for UGCY in the future?

LW: I was part of the gospel choir at university and it was during this period I realised that as a choir we needed a platform to perform outside the walls of our university to use our talents to spread the gospel and inspire others. The vision was solidified Christmas of 2009, as I watched the final scenes of the Whoopi Goldberg classic’ film Sister Act 2, where it dawned on me… why not recreate this in the UK?

I remember crying to a friend telling him that the Lord had a laid a big vision on my heart but I did not know how to make it happen. He told me: “Write down the vision and make it plain” (Habakkuk 2), which I did! I created a proposal, formed a team, wrote to government officials for support, drafted up a list of possible gospel and corporate supporters and met with them. Two influential mentors of mine really helped as they believed in the idea - Andrea Encinas (British Gospel Arts) and Muyiwa (Muyiwa and Riversongs) I owe them and the UGCY team the credit for where UGCY is today.
For us, to see choirs from other nations taking part in a God given dream will definitely be an accomplishment, more importantly the message of the Gospel being shared and sung in more than one language/dialect. UGCY is currently planning for UGCY West Africa! Stay tuned!

FOG: In what ways do you feel youth can contribute to be a part of the development of Ghana?

LW: The development of Ghana, dare I say it lies in policy and political development. I believe having the youth find ways to lobby government on policy reforms is what is required. They can contribute by finding innovative ways to have their voice heard like setting up their own radio/TV stations, newspapers, magazines, statement fashion lines – you name it, it can all contribute.

I’m a firm believer of education. Youth should do all they can where possible to educate themselves. Youth who have the ability to do so, can set up libraries to facilitate self learning of those who may not be able to get through state supported education, organise networking events, workshops, whatever can be done to broaden one’s knowledge!

For those who have the education and those from the Diaspora, we should feel empowered to make a difference. Pushing forward with careers and aspiration in an effort to somehow leverage this with Ghana’s development. The IT market for the large part of the western world is dominant and if Ghana can emulate this to an extent, we will soon see a Ghanaian Silicon valley! Youth could also use disposable income to invest in start-up firms and help increase the profile of Ghanaian businesses.

FOG: What is your message of advice to all the aspiring young Ghanaians?

LW: Change only comes with action. For those who wish to achieve something or become a change agent, going against the grain is sometimes the only way. Surround yourself with like minded individuals and at times creating your own opportunity is what will bring success.
Ghanaian Politics:
Who is represented?

One of the longest standing debates surrounding British politics is the notion that those sitting in the House of Commons are debating about issues on behalf of the country, and yet are not reflective of the people they supposedly represent. Over 3000 miles away from Westminster, the issue is not much different in Ghana.

Last summer, I was in Ghana running a project that encouraged young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to use enterprise as a means of escaping poverty. I visited Ashaiman, a slum that neighbours Tema and home to one of Ghana’s major income centres, Tema Seaport. As I spoke to people about the opportunities available for their youngsters, I noticed many linked the lack of these to the neglect their area experienced from the government. They felt that their hometown was considered insignificant; other towns in Ghana received more attention from those in power. For many of the people of Ashaiman, they felt disconnected from the people in power.

I also visited a group of private school students approximately three miles away. There was a distinct difference; they could see themselves becoming the next John Mahama, Nana Akufo-Addo or Hanna Tetteh. This contrast hit me with a sad reality: the mind-sets of many people are influenced from an early age by their social-class.

Young people in private school’s could relate to the people running the country because their backgrounds are similar. Whereas young people from slums across Ghana feel they’re not represented when decisions are being made; essentially because no one in Parliament can identify with their struggles.

I believe it is beneficial that the leaders of Ghana are well educated. Some have gone to the world’s finest institutions and the cultural capital they have inherited is valuable. However, one of the main aims of any parliament is to be a representative of its constituents. If this is merely theoretical, we must question whether the political system of a nation is failing.

This is not a problem for Ghana alone. Many countries in Africa and the Western world have the same issue. Nonetheless, this does not make it right.

If Ghana is to fulfil its potential as a leading light not only to Africa, but to the world, I truly believe that the people in power must be able to represent the country’s citizens. The best way to start with this is to ensure young people from deprived backgrounds are offered more training and education on their nation’s political system. Kofi from Nima may not have the luxury that Adjoa from East Legon has in terms of exposure to information and networking opportunities. Yet, the people of Nima need someone like Kofi to be their voice as their experiences are likely to have been very similar.

This year, I am excited to be launching the Young Pioneers Network - a social enterprise focused on developing the political capacity of young people - and we are starting in Ghana. Part of the vision is to provide training and mentoring on the political process to school children from low-socio-economic backgrounds.

We have had many young leaders benefit from training on Barack Obama’s Young African Leaders Initiative. Even in Ghana, it has been refreshing for me personally to brush shoulders with young pioneers from institutions like Ashesi University.

One thing that has been promising about these people is their willingness to help those less fortunate than themselves.
There is no doubt that there are exceptional young Ghanaian leaders throughout the world; the most important thing now is that they all distribute the knowledge they have acquired to those that may not have had the same opportunities as them. I am optimistic that this will happen, and with this, we can be sure that future of Ghana is in good hands.

Elorm Haligah

(Elorm is the regional manager of Elevation Networks in the East Midlands, which organises the largest debate tour in the UK, The Great Debate. He is also an official 2015 Future of Ghana top 30 pioneer)
Meet the Pioneers
Rosina St James
24 years old (UK)

Rosina St James has been actively involved in the community. At 17 she started her own social enterprise, TIA (The Inner Attitude) which helped young women develop their self-esteem, confidence and identity during a 13-week course. She has recently set up an organisation which works with young adult offenders to help them resettle into society post a prison centresentence.

In 2014 Rosina received a British Empire Medal (BEM) Honour from the Queen of England for her services towards the to for services to Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People. She currently sits on the board of trustees for V inspired and the National Youth Agency. Rosina was also the first Black Chair of the British Youth Council.

She also received the Rare Rising Star Award for being one of the top ten most outstanding black students in the UK after. A graduatinge from the London School of Economics, with a degree in Social Policy, and where she also received an award for her ‘Outstanding Contribution’.

Rosina recently was recently selected as a runner up for the Queen’s Young Leaders; - an awards body which seeks to recognise exceptional people aged 18-29, who are taking the lead in their communities and using their skills to transform lives.
Meet a Pioneer

Jason Sarfo-Annin
27 years old (UK)

Since graduating with two degrees from the University of Oxford, Jason Sarfo-Annin has worked towards developing a healthcare system that provides safe and effective care.

In his first year as a doctor he was highlighted as an Emerging Leader and has undertaken leadership positions in the British Medical Association (BMA) and Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management (FMLM).

As well as campaigning for safety for doctors, he has written articles and presented work on improving patient safety in hospitals at national and international conferences.

He was awarded the 2014 Teale Prize by the UK Royal College of Physicians for his views on how to improve healthcare organisation and delivery.

He was recently in Ghana working as an intern at Ministry of Health developing clinical indicators for the health sector review.

He hopes that universal healthcare, free at the point of need, becomes the international standard for healthcare delivery.

Despite the above and the night and weekend shifts as a doctor, Jason also volunteers as a mentor to sixth form students (16-19 years) from disadvantaged backgrounds and is a school governor. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) for his services to education.
Nina Oduro is an entrepreneur, advocate, writer, and speaker. She is the founder and President of AfricanDevJobs.com, a platform for Africa-based development job opportunities and career advice as well as co-founder of Dine Diaspora an organization that brings African Diaspora leaders and change agents together for a dynamic dining experience aimed at fostering lasting connections and relationships.

A youth employment and education advocate, Nina has worked as an education advisor, trainer, and facilitator for programs and initiatives aimed at positive youth development in the US and throughout Africa.

She is a catalyst for the International Labour Organization’s Global Working Group on Decent Work for Youth and serves on the Learning Metrics Task Force Global Citizenship Education Working Group convened by UNESCO, the Brookings Institution, and the Global Education First Initiative’s Youth Advocacy Group.

As a Global Youth Ambassador for A World at School, Nina advocates for improving education curriculums to address job market needs and provide a pathway from school-to-work in Africa.

Nina was honoured as the 2013 DAWNer of the Year by the Diaspora African Women’s Network (DAWN) and has been featured in The Guardian, Afro Elle Magazine, and on Impact Africa Radio Show.

Nina’s writing has also been featured on BlackEnterprise.com. She received a Master’s degree in African-American Studies from Columbia University and an undergraduate degree in Political and Social Thought from the University of Virginia.
Alloysius Attah is the CEO and Co-Founder of Farmerline. At five years old, Alloysius’ moved to stay with his aunt, who was a small-scale farmer in rural Ghana. While staying there, he experienced the challenges small-scale farmers go through to produce food and support their families.

Upon making it to college, Alloysius became determined to give back to the people who supported him.

This led to the founding and working at two start-up organisations: Alloyworld, a photography and video production company and iCottage Networks, a Web and Mobile start-up. In 2013, Alloysius launched Farmerline Ltd in partnership with Emmanuel Owusu Addai in order to support small-scale farmers.

Alloysius is committed to empowering small-scale farmers like his aunt who are facing similar challenges across Africa. Alloysius has spoken about his work at the 2013 Social Capital Markets Conference and Mobile World Congress 2014 in Barcelona.

He was a finalist at 2014 HRH Prince of Wales and Unilever Sustainable Living Young Entrepreneur Awards at the Cambridge Institute of Sustainable Leadership (CISL) and is also a 2014 Echoing Green Fellow.
Joanna Abeyie is a multi-award winning showbiz and entertainment journalist and broadcaster. Having worked for some of the UK’s most reputable titles including the Mail Online, The Sun newspaper, The Mirror, Cosmopolitan Magazine, ITN, ITV London news, Sky news, BBC and US publications to name a few, Joanna has built a reputation as a hard working young showbiz journalist. Joanna’s journey in journalism has permitted her to interview some of the most renowned names in showbiz including the likes of Beyonce, Denzel Washington, Janet Jackson and Victoria Beckham.

In 2009, Joanna took it upon herself to launched her social enterprise business entitled Shine Media. Shine Media is now a multi-award winning social enterprise that works to increase diversity within the media industry by providing mentors, industry training and recruitment support to diverse people aged 14-35 years.

To date, Shine Media has successfully placed more than 500 young people in the media industry, with Shine Media’s Alumni students currently working at the Sun newspaper, Bloomberg, Oxford Scientific Films, ITV news, London Live, China Daily, Reveal.co.uk and Wonderland Magazine.

Shine Media’s current exclusive training and recruitment clients include ITV, Channel 4, Bloomberg, News UK, Mediacom, The Guardian, ITN, BBC and Sky.

Aside from Joanna’s career in journalism and social enterprise endeavours, Joanna’s also a visiting journalism lecturer at Leeds Trinity University, Roehampton University, Kings College London and the Camden Roundhouse. Her exploits in media have won her multiple awards and accolades including Black British Business Award, Precious Award, Nubian Times Award, Women for Africa Award, Powerful Media Future Leader Award and a GUBA Award for contribution to media, arts and diversity.
Lorraine Wright is Director at UBS bank (Wealth Management/Investment Bank) and founder of the multi award winning University Gospel Choir of the Year (UGCY). At the age of 28 she has not only rapidly climbed the career ladder but has established a UK wide competition celebrating the talents of university students across the country. Having grown up in South West London, Brixton, Lorraine now splits her time between Zurich and London working full time for UBS in Switzerland whilst fulfilling her passion in running the University Gospel Choir of the Year organization.

Following her graduation from University Lorraine went on to work in project management, working for the likes of Volkswagen head office and Accenture. Based on this and her community achievements during university, Lorraine was named as Powerful media’s top 10 Future Leaders.

Not satisfied with working in the UK, Lorraine ventured to Chicago, USA to work for a distribution company managing their IT projects. Upon returning to the UK, Lorraine landed a graduate position with one of the top management consultancy firms (Accenture) where she was quickly promoted to a consultant within a year.

In her client-facing role, she was subsequently head hunted by her client at the time – UBS. Three years later Lorraine was promoted to Director whilst on a secondment in Switzerland leading one of the banks high profile and strategic group wide IT programs with a 50 million CHF budget.

Lorraine runs University Gospel Choir of the Year, together with a team of 12; they seek to provide an unprecedented platform for UK university gospel choirs to showcase their talents on a national scale.

Whilst at University she identified a gap in the market for University Choirs that needed opportunities to perform outside of their rehearsal rooms. In 2010 Lorraine created a platform for University Choirs to perform and showcase their talents.

Five years on, the Multi Award Winning UGCY (University Gospel Choir of The Year) is a manifestation of a dream and more. The annual competition is a fast growing profile backed by the Mayor of London and the shadow Higher Education Minister - David Lammy.

Since its creation, UGCY has held four annual competitions, celebrating the talents of 1300+ individuals from various universities across the UK, with presence at over 30 universities.

Lorraine has been recognised for her achievements by winning the 2014 Black British Business Rising Star Award in the Financial Services Category, 2012 Ghanaian UK Based Achievements Community Champions Award, the 2012 Black Youth Achievements Award and as a nominee of the Shell – “Our Hero” award.
Carl Konadu
22 years old (UK)

Carl Konadu has a passion for exploring the role sport plays in diplomacy and in the development of young people around the world. Having played football at a semi-professional level Carl has been a direct beneficiary of the benefits and positive impact sport can have on an individual’s life.

After finishing his A’ Levels he was stuck with the dilemma as to whether he should pursue football or education, Carl decided to match the two passions in his life and embark upon a journey to build a career within the sporting sector.

After achieving an Internship with the Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council (CYEC) in which he was tasked with project managing the ‘Games Without Frontiers’ seminar in Glasgow, Scotland. Carl went on to become the Coordinator of the Commonwealth Youth for Development and Peace working group (CYSDP) and has represented the Commonwealth at the Commonwealth Youth Forum held in Sri Lanka, November 2013 and the Commonwealth Local Government Youth Forum in Kampala, Uganda in May 2013.

More recently, Carl was appointed the Chair of the Spirit of 2012 Youth Panel – the Spirit Of 2012 is an organisation with the responsibility of administering grants and supporting all legacy projects of the London 2012 Olympic Games in the areas of sport, volunteering, arts and culture.
How digital start-ups are contributing to the development of Ghana?

For the past three decades development in Ghana has been concentrated towards agriculture and industries. However, agriculture and industry development success is directly dependent on the availability of basic infrastructure such as roads, energy, water and property rates. These infrastructural challenges coupled with the huge initial capital demands makes these path to national development quite problematic and at times unattractive to typical institutional and angel investors, who are very critical on timelines towards recouping their investments.

In 2002, when Ghana signed up for the World Bank’s ICT for Accelerated Development policy, there was barely any significant technology integration within the country’s economy. Computer, mobile phone and internet penetration rates were below 20%. The entire technology landscape of the country was untapped. Telecommunication was still struggling with infrastructure deficits, due to the fact that banks could not expand their networks quickly. Basic services such as SSINT contributions, insurance renewal, passport application, school fees payments, making and receiving international phone calls and access to ATM banking just to mention a few were still not digitised and people had to queue hours just to access these basic services. Logically, the situation contributed immensely to the slow growth rates Ghana recorded in those years.

Fast forward to 2009 and some major transformations have occurred. There is now over 100% mobile phone sim card penetration rate recorded by the National Communication Authority (NCA), the introduction of 3G triple play (Voice, Data, Video) services by telecom operators, the increased number of new banks (acquisitions, mergers, and creations) both local and international who have ATMs, mobile banking and SMS services. Ghana has also seen an increased awareness on entrepreneurship especially within the technology space and the rapid adoption of basic technologies (projectors, computers, & digital record keeping) within schools and classrooms.

These indicators although very basic are the real differences that have opened up the frontier for today’s digital start-ups. These start-ups are mainly filling in the gaps that have been created by these major but modest transformations necessitated through the ongoing implementation of the ICT for Accelerated Development Program. Such programmes are linking both extremes (the have and have not) by introducing software and other technological innovations that leverage on the existing technology ecosystem in order to stay relevant. In filling these gaps, the traditional challenges relating to lack of capital and poor infrastructure which characterised the development of agriculture and industry, were removed overnight which has made it a lot easier to accommodate digital start-ups.

Today you can start a technology based company in Ghana with as low as 100GHs annual hosting space in the cloud. To give you a deeper understanding, let’s run through some typical use case scenarios:

**EDUCATION:** In 2005 Ghana could not accommodate distance and/or electronic learning because the basic infrastructure (Computers, Smart Phones, 3G Internet connectivity, and Content digitisation technologies) were not readily available to startups and schools. Today this can be done as easily as creating a free blog page on the web.

**HEALTHCARE:** 2005 saw nurses climbing ladders just to pull out patient files. Today computers are largely used to keep and on
**AGRICULTURE:** In 2005 farmers were challenged with not knowing how much to sell their produce for due to the fact they were detached from mainstream information access points and hence were making huge losses whilst the middlemen was making huge margins. More disturbing was the issue of agro produce going bad on the farm due to the lack of pricing information to farmers. Today there are close to five Ghanaian technology applications that are able to share basic pricing regime change information with farmers in real time via SMS or Internet right to their cell phones.

These scenarios are just a snippet of what is happening on the ground with regards to how digital start-ups are contributing to development within Ghana. Although at a slower rate compared to other emerging markets in Asia, it is still very significant.

Nonetheless, for technology to positively impact development in Ghana what we need to understand and appreciate is technology is just a tool. It’s not the end we should be seeking but the means to the ultimate end called national development. Technology should not be limited to computers and smart phones. As far as I’m concerned, the Mortar and Pestle is a technology for making fufu, the needle is a technology for making dresses and shoes, the gongon is a technology for getting peoples attention for announcements, and the screw diver is a technology for working with screws. Technology is that simple, it doesn’t get any simpler than that. It does not have to be complex to be appreciated.

Sir Richard Branson once said “Any fool can make simple stuffs look complex, it takes a genius to make and keep things simple”. My point here is, in order to make technology positively impactful to Ghana’s national development we need to start by demystifying technology and making it seamlessly affordable. And it should start from the classrooms, street corners, slums, and public sector offices (civil servants) that employ more than 70% of the nation’s work force. People need to know and understand that without their primitive application of various technologies, those technologies will be irrelevant in their lives.

Of what significance is a smart phone to my grandmother if all she cares about is calling to find out if I’ve found a wife yet? Of what use is a geographical inspection system (GIS) to a tro-tro or taxi driver when he already knows his way around Ghana’s unmapped landscape which costs him nothing? Technology alone cannot produce development, but allowing people to use technology the way they understand it’s application in their day-to-day activities is what will get Ghana ahead. Thus, the current trend of importing technologies from other parts of the globe and forcing people to use it as it is without any direct relations to their existing way of life is only pushing Ghanaians further away from adopting technologies. This is where digital start-ups are required to develop and customise technologies to be relevant to the way of life of everyone regardless of their upbringing, exposure, educational background, or status.

Cecil Nutakor

Cecil Nutakor is a multi-award-winning, entrepreneur with a BSc in Entrepreneurship and SME management for Greenhill College Business School of the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA). He founded Equinox Intercom Limited (EIL) in 2006 to provide electronic learning application services to educational institutions and corporate organizations.
Feature Interview

Future of Ghana Interview
with Cecil Nutakor

For the past three decades development in Ghana has been concentrated towards agriculture and industries. However, agriculture and industry development success is directly dependent on the availability of basic infrastructure such as roads, energy, water and property rates. These infrastructural challenges coupled with the huge initial capital demands makes these path to national development quite problematic and at times unattractive to typical institutional and angel investors, who are very critical on timelines towards recouping their investments.

FOG: What motivated you to learn how computers operated back in the 90’s, when computers to most were not seen as cool or as a necessity as they are today?

CN: Honestly, I did not really know how until in 2008 whilst interviewing my grandmother to get her input into my first book (Destiny: A path for the pathless) that I was able to connect the dots. According to my grandmother, I’m always asking questions. Questions such as why are all fuel pump stations in Ghana either Shell, Mobil or Goil? Why can’t we have something like Nutakor Oil? So my grandmother would just tell me to study hard in school and so when I grow up I can have my Nutakor Oil. So clearly it showed that I was more interested in creating things than just learning about things and accepting the status quo.

Fortunately for me and unfortunately for my family, I was not doing very well in school, and when my parents followed up to enquire, they were told I refuse to answer exam questions with the exact answers I was taught in class. I always preferred to create my own answers based on my understanding of the subject matter. Eventually, I could not cope with the traditional educational system so I had to drop out of Senior High School, where I rewrote the West African Examination Council exams twice and still failed. I had to do something else and it had to be something new, something people do not really understand or find to be cool, something nobody can ask me to write any exams on, something that its ok to make mistakes and learn from. For me at the time, it was computers and technology.

Two months after I manage to beg my mother to get me my first old compaq desktop computer, I developed a database system for the Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority hospital where she works; my first pet project. The administrator loved it and the authority gave me my first job at the head office MIS department in Takoradi to help digitize all the vessel and captain records from the 18th Century.

FOG: What three things you know now, do you wish you knew when starting your business?

CN:
1. Do not ever assume people should support or buy into what you are doing, even if it is evident that’s the way to go.
2. Learn to say and accept NO for an answer, and move on without any emotional attachments.
3. Never sell a product, only sell services.

FOG: What key characteristics make a start up appealing to an investor?

CN: The characteristics vary depending what kind of investor is sitting in front of you. For me there are five major kinds of investors start-ups should have a pitch deck for:
1. Employees
2. Customers
3. Angel Investors
4. Institutional Investors and
5. Family and Friends.
Despite the diversity one key feature is required for all of them, consistency. To be taken seriously even in the animal kingdom you’ve got to be consistent. Consistency breeds trust and loyalty, to me that is all that matters. Consistency means being honest with your deliverables, ready to make and learn from mistakes, having a servant approach to life and constantly adapting to changes around you, while going forward with your vision.

FOG: How do you see technology being used in Ghana in 25 years?

CN: In the year 2040, I see two conflicting pictures of technology usage in Ghana:

1. If the current trend is not discontinued, Ghanaians will have access to all the most sophisticated technologies under the sun, but usage will be below 20%. The same rate at which Ghana had limited or no access to most of the technologies the country enjoys today a decade ago before the implementation of the ICT for Accelerated Development Policy. This will put us in a vicious cycle after 25 years.

2. When we begin as a country to learn, unlearn and relearn about technologies and their application in direct relation to the way of life of the ordinary Ghanaian, then the picture looks bright. I see people having equitable access to high speed internet services not just because they can afford it but because it becomes a constitutional basic human right.

I see businesses recording high social impact not just because their profit margin have increased but because they have adopted cheaper and renewable energy sources; not have to rely on the national grid as their only source of energy. I see ordinary Ghanaians checking and paying attention to their health status not just because healthcare has become cheaper or free, but because they have access to wearable technologies that checks their real time health status.

I see road accidents reduced drastically, not because there are self-driven cars on our roads but because drivers now have access to technologies that tells them about traffic conditions and the improved nature of our roads. I see students learning at their own pace not just because education has been made it cheaper or free, but because they have the technology to learn about anything; including things outside of mainstream educational curriculum.

FOG: What is your message of advice to all the aspiring young Ghanaians?

CN: “It is not because no one sees the truth that it becomes an error” - Ghandi
Keep doing you and do not focus on making money, instead focus on creating services and money will locate you. Life was originally designed to be simple, stop complaining about life and people around you. In every dispensation or narrative of creation including religious ones, there was no mention of
Meet a Pioneer

Kwesi Boakye
15 years old (USA)

Kwesi Boakye is a Hollywood actor who was born in Los Angeles, California, and is the great-grandson of a highly respected Ghana West African Juaben King. Kwesi is best known for his role as ‘Manny’ in Tyler Perry’s #1 box office hit I Can Do Bad All By Myself. Boakye has also appeared in numerous films including Disney’s Princess and a Frog and Toronto Film Festival selection 40, the compelling drama Unconditional, which also stars Michael Ealy and earned the cast an NAACP Outstanding Independent Film nomination. Currently “Pocket Listing” which comes out later this year.

On the small screen, Kwesi has made a huge name for himself lending his incredible talent to top rated television shows.

He was a series regular on TNT’s Men of a Certain Age opposite Ray Romano and has guest starred on hit shows like Hawaii Five-O, where he played the son of famed Hip-Hop mogul turned actor Sean P-Diddy Combs.

Continuing to build upon his already vast acting portfolio, Kwesi has also added voice acting to his repertoire. Kwesi currently voices the role of ‘Darwin Watterson’, the lead character in the Cartoon Network’s new hit animated series The Amazing World of Gumball, which has won multiple BAFTA’s Annie Awards and recently earned an International Emmy’s Award. Kwesi took on one of the most powerful roles of his career playing a 13-year-old autistic boy in the 25 minute independent short film, Sketch.

Picture: Shot by Geezy Productions
Styled by Eric Newton
Meet a Pioneer

Emma Amoafo
24 years old (UK)

Emma Amoafo is a driven young woman who has successfully combined a demanding medical degree at one of England’s top institutions with some valuable philanthropy work for her Homeland. She has developed a fashion brand ‘Friday Born Designs’ (she was born on Friday) to make and customise clothing using African traditions and fabric, with all proceeds going to charities in Ghana.

So far, she has provided safe, clean water to an orphanage in Kwahu and helped them to equip a computer room that they have been using to teach the children IT skills; which is also used as an Internet cafe for the public to provide revenue as a source of self-sustainability.

Additionally, she has also donated hundreds of pounds worth of food items, provisions and personal care products. When in Ghana, Emma also volunteers at a local hospital to gain experience as well as pass on any knowledge to the staff.

Balancing a high-powered medical degree with a demanding pursuit such as Friday Born Designs has not been easy. Emma’s time-management skill has been cultivated over the years and she has learned to delegate and build a flagship which is the sum of its parts. Initially making all of Friday Born’s clothes herself, she now has seamstresses and tailors in Ghana.

Friday Born Designs has opened some incredible doors for Emma, allowing her to style two music videos (Sneakbo – Her Name, and Lola Rae feat. Iyanya – Fi Mi Le) as well as costumes for the first afrobeats musical to show in the West End, Oliva Tweest! Friday Born shows no signs of slowing down – and Emma’s success is made all the more special by the fact that she has never had any formal fashion training.
Meet a Pioneer

Kwam Korsah-Acquah
25 years old (UK)

Kwam Korsah-Acquah aka Dum-Doodles is a cartoonist, character designer and animator based in London. Kwam’s artistic talent started when he began drawing and animating sequences on his computer in 2005 on Windows paint and posting on MySpace.

Since then, Kwam’s went on to produce his first ever music video for UK Urban Rap artist Bashy’s remix video of the Amy Winehouse track Rehab.

This was his first taste of success having racked 55,000 views on YouTube in just five days. The buzz surrounding his work rapidly spread and caught the attention of the R&B singer Chris Brown. Subsequently Kwam was able to publish some his work on Chris Brown’s website, for his project called Young G’z, which celebrates young talent.

Through word of mouth, UK girl band Stooshe contacted Kwam and he did some doodles for their video ‘Ain’t No Other Me’.

Soon after this Warner Music discovered his work and he was commissioned to work on Stooshe debut album ‘London with the lights on’ cartooning the girls in the deluxe edition lyric poster and in their music video for their single “Slip” which was directed by acclaimed US director Bryan Barber.

In 2013 Kwam debuted his “Shady Past Exhibition” where he visited 13 UK locations with 13 different art pieces each with its own topic. The exhibition tells the tale of a shocking forgotten history of banned cartoon shorts that stained the reputation of some of the world’s most loved characters and have since been hushed worldwide....Until now.
Meet a Pioneer

Akosua Afriye-Kumi
28 years old (Ghana)

After interning and working with fashion designers such as Peter Pilotto, Matthew Williamson and William Tempest in London, Akosua Afriye-Kumi embarked on her own path in 2013 to set up A A K S in Ghana after seeing a gap in the market for beautifully handcrafted woven bags.

The brand’s core values can be summed as a critical attention to craftsmanship, authenticity and ethical values in their production while having a strong sense of identity and quality.

The brand reflects her profound commitment to sustainability and ethical practices throughout the production chain. The pieces incorporate the use of raffia and leather to create bags handcrafted by the best artisanal local weavers. It is envisioned that A A K S will become a major African brand in the fashion accessories business globally.

Akosua has showcased her work internationally in Milan and London, and the A A K S brand tells an exciting story of Ghana, offering a different perspective of Africa as a whole. The visual inspiration behind every design is reflected through the images of Ghana and the crafters as they create these handbags shared by A A K S on social media. Akosua is building an African brand ethically and conscientiously one handbag at a time.
Meet a Pioneer

Prince Adu Appiah
25 years old (Ghana)

Prince Adu-Appiah is a young and passionate African Leader, Social Entrepreneur, Youth Activist and an Inspirational Speaker. He is the founder and Director of 1Billion Africa — an amazing problem solving movement and organization in Africa that is mobilizing people in Africa, especially the youth of the continent and influencing them not to only talk about the problems around them but to turn the problems into projects and social actions. 1Billion Africa currently has presence in 9 other African countries, led by 1BA Country Ambassadors.

Prince made two key discoveries early in life; that leadership is his passion and that Africa’s major way forward is good leadership.

He thus decided to stay committed to leadership development and good leadership practices, beginning with his sphere of contacts. He has led and volunteered in many youth empowerment and leadership development groups, committees and organizations including; the Human Empowerment & Living Potentials Group, Oxbridge Africa Mentorship Programme and Hult Prize at the University of Ghana.

Selected as a young delegate to represent Ghana and 1Billion Africa at a Global Youth Forum in Russia, Prince connected with many other young Africans who are now working together to advance their countries.

Prince Adu-Appiah was awarded a Humanitarian award in New York; the People of Distinction Humanitarian Award in 2014 and was also recognized in Gordon Tredgold’s 2014 TOP 10 FAST Leaders list, being the youngest and only African on the list.

The confirmed TEDx Accra 2015 Speaker has influenced 1000’s of youth and children in Ghana and other African countries through his leadership roles and commitments, social media advocacies, public speaking and article publications (E.g. IUEMAG Inspirational platform in India).
Deborah Ahenkorah
27 years old (Ghana)

Deborah Ahenkorah is the co-founder and executive director of Golden Baobab, which is renowned for its annual African Literary and Illustrators’ Prizes. She is passionate about reading, and about bringing African children compelling stories that will encourage a life-long engagement with books and literacy.

Putting her passion into practice, Deborah created her organisation with one mission in mind: to inspire African writers to create stories for young readers. In the past six years, the Golden Baobab’s literary awards have inspired the creation of over 850 children and young adult stories from 15 countries.

In 2011, she was identified by Playing for Change as one of Ghana’s leading social entrepreneurs working to make the world a better place for children and youth. Deborah studied political science at Bryn Mawr College and pursued her passion for global issues by gaining experience in the European Union Parliament and The Global Fund for Children.

Her current mission is to ensure that in the next ten years young people in Africa and the African Diaspora have a consistent supply of stellar African literature.

In 2012 Deborah was named by the Echoing Green Fellowship as one of twenty-two of the most “game changing social innovators in the world today.”
"Your Network is your net worth"
The story of Re-Connect Ghana...

As postgraduates considering the move back to Ghana after living abroad for one's entire life or most of one's adult life, we realized one important thing we didn't have the network to survive in a country that thrives on one's social network. In Ghana, as in most other countries your network is your net worth. Most develop a strong network through school or family circles but for some in the Diaspora considering the move to Ghana, their network might consist of one or two far removed relatives and that makes the move very difficult to make, yet alone sustain.

So we decided to create a networking event that would assist people develop a stronger network in Ghana, outside of school and family relationships, but based on professional interests. Each year, ReConnect GH organizes a networking event connecting the most innovative and sought after young minds on Ghana's development discourse globally.

As Ghana’s youth and Diaspora have begun to take an emerging role in the development paradigm, one’s network and need for effective collaborations is becoming crucial to achieving shared development goals. We started Re-Connect GH desiring to connect people with job opportunities in Ghana, but it’s grown to become much more than that as we realised everyone doesn’t just return for a job. Thus it was important for us to highlight such individuals and entrepreneurs who exemplify the innovative spirit of Africa.

You’ll find that every single story is unique and there isn’t a universal roadmap or guide to returning or “making it” in Ghana. Throughout the years, we have seen moving stories of the Diaspora returnee experiences. The successes, failures, dreams realized and those yet to be realized meshed with the practical experiences and lessons learned of those established business and public leaders in Ghana. These stories and experiences are harnessed to seek effective collaborations, to encourage and foster new innovative ideas.

Re-Connect GH recognizes the contributions of Ghanaians committed to nurturing local talent, while promoting deeper engagement between Ghanaians based locally and the Diaspora.

Through our capstone networking event, we leverage the number of individuals returning to Ghana for the holidays and host a carefully tailored event that not only showcases young leaders driving social and economic growth, but also celebrate Ghanaian entrepreneurs and homebred brands; fusing local innovation with global orientation. The success of our capstone events are solely woven by the immeasurable dedication of our partners who like us, believe in the power of this generation to help shape the course of Ghana’s future.

We know that bridging the gap, creating alliances, and being the best advocates for Ghana’s interests wherever you are, starts with having a better understanding of what the needs are in the country and who is already effectively pushing a positive agenda for Ghana’s development. Social media is a great way of identifying such players and creating opportunities to collaborate, but having the opportunity to directly connect and engage is even better.

It’s been quite a blessing that Re-Connect is known as one of a few events that allows for great minds to meet and strives to move past discussion points to actually support and actualize the ideas and individuals of those in Ghana and the Diaspora. We have always believed that greater impact is achieved through collaboration and we continue to offer a platform that encourages the sharing of ideas, skills and experiences. We are no experts on the “return”.
As we continue to emphasize the importance of collaboration and celebrate young innovative Ghanaians around the world, we have realized that everyone's journey is unique and each story is a source of encouragement and motivation. Much of what can be learned is through the experiences of others, but ultimately, what you chose to do and how you do it, will be defined in your own journey.

Stephanie Dei & Maame Boakye

Stephanie and Maame are the founders of Re-Connect GH with a vision of strengthening ties and deepening engagement between young professionals in Ghana and the Diaspora they host carefully tailored annual networking event that highlights the aspirations, innovations and expressions of young leaders driving change.
Feature Interview

Internationally Known and locally accepted
The Interview with Kow Essuman Esq

Kow Essuman is an international lawyer in every sense, who specializes in corporate and commercial litigation and arbitration. He is qualified to practice in three different jurisdictions – England and Wales, New York State and Ghana. In 2013, Kow was selected as a Global Shaper and is currently a member of the Accra Hub of the Global Shapers Community of the World Economic Forum. He serves on the Projects and Fundraising Committee of the Hub. Kow is passionate about development in Ghana and has spoken extensively on socio-political and economic matters affecting the youth and Ghana.

FOG: What motivated you to want to become a barrister?

KE: This is such a common question posed to law students and lawyers, and most of them have cliché answers to it. Unfortunately, I do not. This is how I ended up studying law – I performed well during a pre-law course in college and received the Best Student Prize in Criminal Law that I proceeded to apply to read law at the university. I obtained a first class in my first year and during the vacation, I worked at the Crown Prosecution Service as a vacation intern. During one of my court attendance, a case officer at the Crown Prosecution Service said to me whilst pointing at a black female barrister walking down the corridor of Inner London Crown Court, “you should become a barrister. We don’t have many black barristers.” I took her advice and attended a talk by a barrister when university resumed and found out that it was a much easier route to a legal career. I proceeded that path and ten years later, here I am – a lawyer qualified to practice in three jurisdictions with a Master of Laws degree from an Ivy League institution.

FOG: To what extent did studying and working abroad, shape your career aspirations?

KE: Working and studying abroad shaped my career aspirations a lot. Besides the knowledge I acquired I was convinced where I wanted to practise law. I did a lot of internships, work experiences and volunteered in different settings of legal practice and at the end of it all, I made an informed choice that I wanted to be part of shaping the commercial jurisprudence of my home country, Ghana. The exposure abroad also instilled in me a sense of responsibility towards my fellow Ghanaians – the responsibility to be part of building a nation that our children can live in and be proud of; a nation where indigenous problems are solved with indigenous solutions.

FOG: What three things you know now, do you wish you knew when starting your career in Law?

KE: Firstly, the diversity of clients that you have as a lawyer is one thing I wish I knew prior to starting my career in law. Aside from the legal problems of the client, you have to deal with different personalities, which can sometimes be overwhelming; if you’re not prepared for that. Thankfully, my upbringing and exposure to people from all walks of life prepared me for this aspect of my career. Secondly, the long hours and almost no social life you have as a lawyer. When you watch legal drama or television shows involving lawyers, you get a sense that it is little work, big money and more action in court. And, as a law student, you would think the long hours in the library would be over once you qualified to practise. Interestingly, the long hours and deadlines actually prepare you for the real world – client deadlines and court deadlines. You have to aim to meet all those deadlines hence the long hours and sacrificing social life. However, a good lawyer knows how to maintain a balance. And that is what I have tried to do. Thirdly, the satisfaction you get when you guide a client through a legal problem to a successful conclusion. That feeling that a client is very happy with the outcome of the situation is something I never anticipated when I started my career in law.

FOG: In your opinion, is it important for young people to engage in socio-political and economic issues? Please explain...

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FOG: In your opinion, is it important for young people to engage in socio-political and economic issues? Please explain...
KE: I think it is very important for young people to engage in matters and discussion bordering on socio-political and economic issues. It is easy for young people to be disinterested in such matters; perhaps because we are usually under the impression that those matters are either for the older and very accomplished people in society or are abstract to young people. That is a worrying approach because those issues actually affect young people. When young people ignore issues such as reckless government spending and consistent borrowing without any development to show for, the country would be left a huge debt, which the same young people would have to pay off. I believe young people today are the future leaders of tomorrow, and with that in mind, young people ought to be engaged in the very issues that affect the future they hope to be leaders of.

FOG: In what ways can youth contribute and be a part of the development of Ghana?

KE: The youth can contribute to the development of Ghana in many ways. Currently, there are quite a number of young people who have been hit by the winds of entrepreneurship blowing across the African continent. These brilliant young people are creating jobs for other young people through their businesses and are contributing to the economy of Ghana. Other young people are engaged in social enterprises and are giving back to the community that raised them through teaching and other volunteer works. Young people should also participate in the democratic process and ensure that politicians address problems facing the young generation with practical solutions. They should suggest more creative ways of solving the problems facing Ghana and the youth in Ghana.

FOG: What inspired you to set up K.A. Essuman Consultancy?

KE: I set up K.A. Essuman Consultancy when I was moving back to Ghana. I needed something to keep me busy whilst I figured out whether or not to practise law in Ghana, and which firm to join. The Consultancy was a vehicle to continue what I was doing in London, which was representing Ghanaian nationals living in the U.K. with immigration and other related problems. Since I was going to be based in Ghana, my focus was on the application process because that was where many of the problems arose. I therefore assisted persons who wished to apply for entry clearance visas to prepare a strong application and include strong supporting documents. I also assisted those who had been refused to appeal the Entry Clearance Officer’s decision.

Another aspect of the Consultancy was to prepare students who were taking the University of London’s External LL.B. course as well as candidates from all over the world preparing for the New York Bar Exam.

FOG: How do you envision Ghana’s legal system operating in 25 years?

KE: The Ghanaian legal system is growing and very fast too. We have quite a number of lawyers who have been exposed to very big international transactions and corporate related matters. As an emerging economy, I expect this exposure to continue. In my practice area, which is commercial litigation and dispute resolution, I expect there to be more disputes. There have been quite a few interesting cases in recent years that have ended in the Supreme Court of Ghana, and I expect that there would be more commercial litigation and particularly, arbitration. This is because international transactions are getting complex by the day and with many people understanding the rights they have under such transactions, they are likely to resort to the courts than to take matters into their own hands. This would be good for the development of our legal jurisprudence and business practices.

FOG: What is your message of advice to all the aspiring young Ghanaians?

KE: My message to aspiring young Ghanaians is simple – there is nothing in this world that you cannot do. Everything is possible with determination, commitment and a lot of hard work. Since I am Christian, and believe that the grace of God, which is free for all who believe, is a key factor in being able to doing everything you put your mind to. I will also add that, you should seek and listen to advice, even if you do not act on that advice. People would always want to advise you and usually out of the one hour of advice, only one minute will be useful. You will not get that one-minute if you do not listen to the one-hour. And, all the best in whatever you aspire to do or become.
Mrs. Mawuena Trebarh is the CEO of the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC). In this insightful interview Mrs. Trebarh exposes the lessons learnt throughout her career and dispels some of the misconceptions about investing in Ghana.

FOG: In what way has studying in Nigeria & USA shaped your career and/or outlook on Ghana?

MT: In my role as the Chief Executive Officer of the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre, I have come to realize that understanding the socio-economic and corporate cultures of potential investors is central to your ability to motivate them to invest in the country.

My experiences in Nigeria and the US and indeed brief stints in continental Europe have enabled me, and by extension, the GIPC, to better appreciate the perspectives and expectations that potential investors have. Those experiences have allowed me to gain comfort in quickly identifying similarities that highlight all that is positive about Ghana and addressing realistically the challenges that our country is taking and turning into opportunities.

FOG: What three things you know now, do you wish you knew when starting your professional career?

MT: I wish I had known much earlier that all the things I was learning in formal academic environments would be equally weighted by the things I would learn outside the classroom to support my career growth and development. I wish I had known not to feel too distressed when I had professional challenges as those were critical times of preparation for the next stage of growth professionally. As I have grown professionally I am now very comfortable with challenges at work as I recognize them as opportunities to think more innovatively about how to turn them into success. In my very early years of professional growth I did not know the difference between work and a job. I now appreciate that a job is what I have to do, I job is what I love to do and so when making career choices I now know that I should be looking for work, (what I am called to do by my Maker and now what I have to do to survive,) Indeed, I now understand that of I don’t make that distinction, I will be very unhappy, unfulfilled and unsuccessful doing a job where if I take my time and chart a path for excellence in my work, I will leave a legacy that I will be proud of.

FOG: What motivated you to become the first female underground exploration geologist, amidst a 10,000 strong male-workforce for Ashanti Goldfields Company Ltd?

MT: In truth I had no intention of pursuing a career in Geology and Mining. I had my sights set on a career in medicine. It was very providential that I wound up studying the subject as a first degree only because the places for medicine for foreign students at my chosen University were full. Having completed the course and wanting to come home, I did not know that there had been no women in such a role when I sought work at Ashanti Goldfields. I believe GOD was ordering my steps and so when the offer was made I took it.

FOG: What are some of the most common misconceptions about investing in Ghana?

MT: It has been interesting for me in my role to come to the realization that misconceptions about investing in Ghana are fueled by the quality, quantity and consistency of information available. Because we understand this, we rather seek to be proactive as an Investment Promotion Agency when we respond to concerns about corruption, economic challenges and bureaucracy.

Proactively highlighting the strength of our laws, the sophistication and growing strength of technologically driven controls have helped us to address some of those perceptions.

We have situated the economic challenges we have faced in the broader global context and I am delighted to say we have been successful in demonstrating that the plans to address the immediate issues are viable and will protect medium and long term prospects. This accounts or the sustained interest in investing in Ghana as we continue to host major investor delegations.
from all over the world looking for partnerships to share in Ghana’s economic transformation story. One of our mandates under Ghana’s investment legislation is to facilitate and sustain investments in the country. We have devised a strategy as a Centre to execute “customer-focused” service provisions tailored to each sector. Our interfacing scope with various other government and other key stakeholder groups has made us the first point of contact for the business community. Through these service provisions we are continuously rebranding the image, experience and therefore the results in the ease with which investments can be rolled out in Ghana to roll out the red carpet and put away all red tape. We are excited about the prospects.

FOG: What inspires you to encourage and promote investments in Ghana?

MT: Two things inspire me in my work to promote investments in Ghana, 1. My family background and 2. A profound personal professional experience. I believe my own family background has been a strong source of inspiration and encouragement to me in my work. My grandfather Michael Dumor, served communities across Ghana for many years even prior to Independence setting up primary schools for the Ghana Education Service. My other grandfather, Philip Gbeho, wrote Ghana’s national anthem. My parents, Professor Ernest Dumor and my late mother Cecilia Dumor have been long standing public servants. My siblings, the late Mr. Komla Dumor and my youngest brother Dr. Korshie Dumor have served the country in various ways. My husband has served in the Ghana Armed Forces. I also recall a personal professional experience I had with a group of women in one of our country’s rural communities. The women had raised concerns about an impending new mining project that no one had discussed with them. I was asked to meet with them and as I sat and listened to their worries for their livelihoods and the future of their children, I was struck by how important informed investments for development are to our country’s growth and prosperity. I recall the discussion with the women ending with one very elderly woman asking me to “speak for them when I go back to my office” because “most times there is no one to speak for us.” I was personally very moved by that experience and have since hoped for the opportunity to speak through my work for all those whose circumstances deserve a change.

FOG: In what ways can youth contribute and be a part of the development of Ghana?

MT: I believe young Ghanaians can make a significant contribution to the nation’s development first, as individuals by pursuing excellence in their chosen profession. If they desire to be the best they will deliver exceptional work consistently irrespective of what they do. Secondly, as parts of teams, they can make informed contributions to development through participation in associations that expose them to new personal and professional learning experiences that will enhance their impact as collective groups of young people. Finally, young people have the greatest potential of all our citizenry to drive entrepreneurship. I invite all young people to consider entrepreneurship in their chosen field as they apply innovation, new efficiencies and new ideas to keep driving the nations’ continuous improvement.

FOG: Please describe how you envision Ghana in 25 years?

MT: In 2040, I envisage a highly industrialized Ghana, built on successful businesses that took advantage of the partnerships that we are building now. I see a Ghana that will have an export-led economy, be self reliant and resistant to external economic shocks. This is my anticipation for Ghana in the next 25 years. However, perhaps above all others, I see a Ghana in which the majority of its citizens enjoy a life of individual and national prosperity in which there are opportunities for everyone and the future generations.

FOG: What is your message of advice to all the aspiring young Ghanaians?

MT: I have come to appreciate that everything you do now will benefit you in some capacity in the future. To the youth of Ghana, it is my blessing to say to you - Know that hard work pays and that there are absolutely no shortcuts in life. Do not let go of your dreams and be perpetually guided by integrity. Embrace change and take opportunities. Your destiny is greatness because you come from a great nation called Ghana.
Donald Ward
29 years old (Ghana)

Donald Ward is an Entrepreneur, Start Up Consultant and a Social Change Agent who is very charismatic and focused on success, while inspiring others to reach for their goals and aspirations. Donald is a passionate youth activist who has served on several platforms that promote and focus on the development of the African youth.

He strongly believes the development of Africa lies in the future of her youth. He also believes by empowering young people with education and entrepreneurship principles will help to make the world a better place.

He founded Era Global LLC which is a budding private equity firm with holding in 3 tech companies. Donald also founded Start-up cafe Africa which is committed to improving the start-up ecosystem in Africa through data and analytics that can influence policy at government and international agency levels, while empowering the African entrepreneur with knowledge about the start-up ecosystem.

Donald is the Google business groups champion for Ghana and Anglophone West Africa (Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Gabon). He also serves as Marketing Chair for Ghana Think foundation, a Ghanaian think thank focused on identifying and developing talents for the benefit of Ghana and Africa as a whole.

Donald is also an advisory board member for Renewable Energy for Africa Project, which is piloting in Nigeria at the moment.
Michelle Owusu is a woman who constantly faced with stereotypes and negative depictions of who she is makes it her mission to ‘challenge perceptions’ and show people a different side to the story. Leading the marketing on BWNG TV, Michelle works to showcase positive stories that fight against stereotypes while providing a platform for diverse talent.

As the marketing and business development representative for web series company BWNG TV, she has been pivotal in encouraging the business to move from a text based blog into the web series as she believed in the potential of the writers as well as recognised the public need for content that told non-stereotypical stories.

Her role involved assisting the casting process, advising on content, completing award submissions, forming competition partnerships with the likes of Sony Pictures and generating media coverage.

To date, their YouTube channel has over 1million views and 18,000 subscribers and has been featured in the likes of The Guardian, The Voice, Complex US, Vibe and on the cover of Jet. Subsequently Brothers With No Game series 1 and 2 picked was picked up by new television channel London Live in 2014.

As the director of SceneTV, she uses her networks and digital platforms to support new television and film talent while pushing the diversity in TV agenda. She has demonstrated perseverance in this regard by securing a role in the television industry at a channel that is known for its remit to give diverse stories a voice. SceneTV has also been highlighted as key resource by the Creative Diversity Network - an industry wide body dedicated to diversity.

Upon graduation in 2008 Michelle was awarded membership to Beta Gamma Sigma after achieving a high first class with honours degree from Aston University. Beta Gamma Sigma is an honour society awarding high achieving business students worldwide. She also managed the promo campaign for the first series of a popular show on top UK TV channel. The launch was the channel's biggest ever since it began in 2001.
Meet a Pioneer

Mac Jordan Degadjor
29 years old (Ghana)

Mac-Jordan Degadjor is an award-winning Ghanaian blogger and co-founder of New Africa Media, a digital media company that focuses on promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in Africa. As an active member of Blogging Ghana, he helped orchestrate online coverage of the 2012 Ghana’s Presidential elections through the Ghana Decides Project with funding support from USAID, EU & DFID.

He is also a contributor to Global Voices Online, where he works to aggregate citizen media content from the sub-Saharan region in Africa.

As part of his efforts to increase online connectivity, Degadjor helped organized Barcamps, a series of workshops that teach young Ghanaians how to use the Internet, developing ideas and connecting them with like-minded peers across the country through networking.

A tech-evangelist Degadjor blogs and regularly speaks at conferences, workshops and seminars on Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship & Start-ups in Africa.

In the past, this has included TEDxYI - Accra, TEDxSummit – Qatar, Barcamp Ghana, Africa Gathering -London, Deutsche Bank Innovation Forum – Berlin, New York Forum Africa – Gabon, Google Forums (Accra, Lagos & Nairobi), UC Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism and others.

Having travelled and worked in different parts of the world especially in US, sub-Saharan Africa and some parts of the MENA region and also volunteering as a Youth Ambassador for Africa, he promotes opportunities from the African continent through his Social Media channels.

Mac believes in the African dream, human resources and potentials and the future of Ghana/Africa is NOW!
Meet a Pioneer

William Senyo
27 years old (Ghana)

William is a driven Ghanaian entrepreneur with previous professional experience in Finance, Telecoms and Non-profit development. His unique experiences from both corporate Ghana and non-profit organisations led to a personal evolution into Entrepreneurship, specifically in Youth Business Development, Innovation and Start-up Ecosystem support.

As CEO of SliceBiz, a micro-investment platform for early stage companies, William works to increase capital flow to innovative high-growth start-ups in Africa by aggregating small investments from the African Diaspora.

SliceBiz also acts as an investment holding company with a portfolio of 4 early stage start-ups. Under his leadership, SliceBiz has raised capital from a mix of investors, including the Rockefeller Foundation and the Tony Elumelu Foundation as part of the first cohort of the Impact Economy Innovation Fund.

In June 2013, William was named one of top 100 global innovators and invited by British Airways and IDEO to participate in UnGrounded - the first Innovation Lab in the Sky-focused on solving the global problem of STEM talent misalignment on a flight from San Francisco to London.

William is also a Co-founder of Hub Accra, Ghana’s first 24-hour innovation/co-working space designed to inspire innovation through collaboration. William is a Kairos Global Fellow, a 2012 winner of the US Department of State-backed Apps4Africa and serves on the Africa 2.0 Governing Council.
Meet a Pioneer

David Asiamah
26 years old (Ghana)

David Asare Asiamah is founder of Agro Mindset Group of companies principally working to facilitate youth engagement in agriculture in a sustainable, industry relevant manner. David spent 52 weeks at different periods between 2009 and 2014 as an intern on a farm in the UK.

This was a significant eye-opener for him as he appreciated first-hand the scale of mechanised commercial farming, and more importantly the involvement of the youth! After finishing his postgraduate studies at the University of Reading, David turned down many job offers in international development to start a farm in Ghana.

Specifically, Agro Mindset is an organisation which is leading the development of outreach programmes in thematic areas of agriculture, agri-business, and entrepreneurship for sections of Ghanaian youth and tertiary students.

David believes that, the combined contribution of these products in the medium to the long term will significantly raise the profile of agriculture in Ghana, underpinned by a strong and active participation of the youth. David is confident of the critical role that his leadership of youth in agriculture plays in sustaining the fragile sector.

In 2013 the work of Agro Mindset was recognised when they were recipients of the GUBA “Invest in Africa” Sustainable Business Award in recognition of innovation and best practice in corporate sustainability.
Fred M. Deegbe is the CEO / founder of Heel The World— a luxury leather lifestyle brand with a personal affinity towards African excellence. Despite not having any real knowledge about the shoe market, Deegbe, who was a banker at the time, decided to take on the world’s leading shoe brands. Soon after, he teamed up with a friend and started Heel The World (HTW), a high-end shoe making company based in Accra, Ghana.

That was in 2011, and one year later Deegbe quit his banking job to dedicate himself fully in his new ambitious venture.

In 2012, Fred was inducted into the World Economic Forum as a Global Shaper, and later became a member of the African Leadership Network as well. In 2013, HTW spearheaded the biggest ‘Our Day’ event ever by bringing together 10 start-ups to feed and inspire 10 junior high schools in 10 different locations at the same time, impacting over 2000 kids that day.

2014 saw Fred featured on both CNN and BBC for his work with HTW. Over the past few years he has used the popularity of the brand to inspire and empower young Africans through the famous black and gold HTW Empowerment Beads—black is for the hard work, gold is for the ultimate reward.
“Starting to feel closer to home“

They ask me my origins  
Because of the colour of my skin  
My answer comes from within  
I am a woman of clay and soil  
This man made tin foil doesn’t fit me at all  
The People smile  
The People fall  
I start feeling closer to home

When I am alone  
The sun on my back  
The chill on my side  
The Love in my heart  
I start feeling closer to home

When I hear them talk  
Wearing the clothes I bought  
They represent me  
I represent them  
Clay and Soil  
Man made foil  
The designers of Life  
I start to feel closer to home

I look at the start  
Dreaming of Black Stars  
Clay and Soil  
Darker than Oil  
I love who I am  
Feeling closer to home

My Forefathers I thank you  
For blessing me  
With all my opportunities  
To be Humble, Courageous and Strong  
Never forget our power  
Never forget your power  
Empires  
Empires powerful  
Empires destroyed  
Be Limitless  
Be Fearless  
You speak the same language as me  
And I can’t reach you  
But I start to feel closer to home

Red  
Yellow  
Green  
Black  
The power of pain  
The golden stool and coast  
The pastures and animals  
The deep hues of my People

Sha Osei

Known by the nickname Sha, Akosua Osei is a writer, publisher, and public relations and events owner residing in Paris, France.

Raised in the UK, in a West Indian household, but dreaming of returning to Africa (she is Ghanaian on her Father’s side) Sha has enjoyed studying and travelling internationally, which has given her the thirst and drive to live and work abroad.

Working within the Fashion Industry for over five years, she has developed great rapport with industry insiders and clients who have enabled her to live her dreams of running her own magazine and creative agency.

Sha plans to visit Ghana for the first time this year in association with Me Firi Ghana.
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Feature Poem
The original and principal concept about architecture has not changed. From antiquity, the inclination to design and construct buildings must and always remain the same, a commitment to fulfill the basic needs of shelter. Any ideas, desires, ambitions and personal gains in contradiction of the premise why we build are a violation of the original truth about what architecture should be.

The quest for commodities, firmness and delight are essential prerequisites.

- **Commodities**: because a well-constructed building is obliged to and must address the issues that are prominent to the functionality of a building! The building must be designed to provide and meet the needs of the users and, from the neighboring community, the building must be systematized and arranged to form a proficient framework for its envisioned purpose.

- **Firmness**: because a well-built structure, using material with high grade properties, are essential. An architect’s goal is to design a building that will stand and not collapse. It should be built to protect itself and its occupants with satisfaction and, most importantly, it must be built with strength to endure the elements and the forces of nature.

- **Delight**: which denotes the aesthetic and the sensuous qualities of architecture, even though the eye is persistently seeking after beauty, many will conclude that beauty is subjective and reflects personal taste, grace and culture. However beauty is achievable “Beauty is produced by the pleasing appearance and good taste of the whole, and by the dimensions of all the arts being duly proportioned to each other”.

I strongly believe in the great talents that are in Ghana, including in the architecture scene. However, the last multiple misfortunes of collapsed buildings such as Accra’s Melcom department, Dormaa-Ahenkro, in Brong Ahafo Region, SCOAN Collapse, Grand View Hotel and its annex, raise numerous questions on the understanding of the builders and what is being built. The problem is that we are asking ourselves the wrong question. After reading countless articles pertaining to the reasons to why buildings are collapsing in Ghana, the answers offered stated that those buildings were not issued permits.

These buildings are failing to stand not because the buildings were not issued permits. Issuing permits for a design is extraneous if one does not acquire the necessary understanding of what they doing. The fundamental questions that should be asked are: how knowledgeable (acquisition of information) is the designer and builder? What are their understanding of what’s being build (comprehending of the information) and what is their wisdom of what it being build (The application of the information comprehended).

You cannot label yourself as a designer or builder and cut corners (personal gains) because you have to contribute to the world around you positively. You have to be a solution to the problem at hand and not to be adding to the problem. It is absurd that in the 21st century we are constructing buildings
that are collapsing and it is shameful if one provides such a service. Admittedly not all designers and builders in Ghana are categorized like this. However, words cannot express the behavior of those who devalue their lives and those of others.

In addition, I think one of the challenges and/or problem is that many of the designers and builders have not mastered their craft as a designer or builder. They have not mastered the basic component of architecture, which is the use of concrete, wood, stones, rocks, glass, plaster, light proportionately. Quite frankly, I do not know who should be blamed for this.

Ghana is blessed with many resources that can be used to design wisely. For instance, I am intentionally going to talk about the use of timber. We have it in abundance so why are we not maximizing its usage? Excuses of because of fire and wood-destroying insects are unacceptable because these are controllable.

Yaw Tony
Meet a Pioneer

Elizabeth Patterson
30 years old (USA)

Elizabeth Akua-Nyarko Patterson is the founder and executive director of the Girls education initiative of Ghana. GEIG’s mission is to provide academic and financial support for girls including applicants with special needs so they may access secondary, higher education, and professional opportunities.

Ms. Patterson holds an MPA, masters in public administration from NYU Wagner School of Public Service where she specialized in non-profit management.

Her research includes but not limited to Education of Marginalized People: access to education for disabled/differently abled students in K-12 institutions in South Africa, A comparative qualitative study on single sex and co-Ed schools in New York City, Strategic Planning: City Year New York, and Performance Measurement and Management: Junior Achievement of New York, JA-New York, A more diverse Workforce: the fire department of New York City.

Prior to her work with GEIG Ms. Patterson served as the Director of Communications and Marketing for The Council of Young African Leaders, CYAL and communications and marketing associate at Junior Achievement of New York, JA- New York.

Ms. Patterson holds a BA in Political Science and Business Management where she graduated cum laude in 2009.
Meet a Pioneer

Einstein Ntim

24 years old (UK)

Over the past 10 years Einstein Ntim has worked with young people in gangs and people with disabilities through the Croydon Youth Development Trust, Connexions, Croydon Council’s Golderest, Timebridge youth organisations and Methodist Churches; supporting and encouraging youths to focus on education and social unity. Here he spends his time teaching, mentoring and working with a lot of young men and supporting them through the difficult periods, school life, university applications, entrepreneurship and social concerns.

After completing his studies at school, Einstein gained an Academic, Sports and Art scholarship to study at Trinity School (Whitgift Foundation) – then the LSE. Here he helped organise the largest global conference for Alternative Investments (Hedge Fund, Private Equity) – LSE AIC and LSE Microfinance Society.

He recently set up a social enterprise, Enabled Health which seeks to improve health systems, through equipment, software, healthcare, fitness. This is after his spending months helping rehabilitate the elderly, and people with learning disabilities & mental health issues through fitness and nutrition.

Einstein is also a qualified Local Preacher for the Methodist Church. He has been preaching for over 4 years at several churches across the London circuit and district, he is also currently a Tutor of the Methodist Course to train preachers.

Last year he released his poetry book “A New Way”, a synopsis of the uniqueness and dimensions of humanity, and idea generation.

Einstein’s social influence and network stems beyond the UK. His overall objective has been to understand the systems that encapsulates and structures our society.

Learning from an early age in Ghana how a lack of systemic infrastructure can cause destitution. His vision is to expand enabled health to enabled systems to impact Ghana from grassroots through smart enterprise.

Last year he attempted to deliver thousands of disposable medical supplies to tackle concerns about Ebola and witnessed how poor the technical and database systems
Edwin Broni-Mensah is a social entrepreneur who started GiveMeTap — a free water refill network in the UK. For every bottle that they sell, they are able to help another person get access to clean drinking water.

Edwin started Give Me Tap whilst at University. At the time like many 24 year old guys, the dream of a “six-pack” sent him on an epic training journey, which had him drinking 5 litres of water every day.

But like most students, he couldn’t afford to buy plastic bottled water & cafes made him feel awkward when he asked for water.

On the other hand, millions of people around the world (like Edwin’s parents in Ghana) grow up with no access to clean water at all. Edwin is on a mission to make clean water easily accessible to every human in the world.

He has begun creating a water refill network, where people can get free water refills from cafes/shops that participant in the scheme. This will help combat the over-use of plastic water bottles, and reduce the numbers that get tipped into landfill.

He created a stylish reusable water bottle and partnered with cafes and shops where the public can get free water refills on the go. Simultaneously, for every bottle purchased, GiveMeTap can give one person in Africa access to clean water.
Aba Abekah-Mensah
27 years old (UK)

Aba Abekah-Mensah is an educator by profession, currently studying a PhD in comparative education focusing on the combination of music and learning. This is inspired by her background in classical piano training; she complements this through teaching science, maths, piano and music theory to a wide array of students including working with a specialist group with speech and language difficulties.

She has spearheaded a successful guidance, counselling and career development initiative through her Inspire Ghana charity foundation in Ghana.

The maiden event has seen successful clinics ran for young students and school leavers in Ghana to compare notes, receive guidance and get expert counselling in shaping career choices and paths.

Aba has a vision to stimulate development oriented ideals in Ghanaian youth who are undoubtedly the future of the country through shaping their perceptions, developing IT orientation, bringing them up to speed in trends pertaining in the first world, ethics and most of all time consciousness.

Aba is also the creator and host of a specialist education and career focused radio show called The Inspiration Corner, targeting 14-25 yr olds. The show discusses education news from around the world, jobs on the market and guest talks which focus on developing and educating listeners in different aspects of career and education. The show currently broadcasts on Firelive radio in London to a global internet based audience each Friday from 6-8pm GMT.
Gordon Dogbe
19 years old (Ghana)

Gordon Dogbe is the founder CEO of StartUp GH, which promotes entrepreneurial leadership skills whilst connecting the youth with transformative opportunities and training. Gordon is an enthusiastic and passionate gentleman with a unique style of leadership.

He aims to inform and educate the Ghanaian youth on how to be entrepreneurs and the benefits this has to both themselves and the nation and Africa as a whole.

His ultimate personal goal is to become Africa’s Youngest most successful entrepreneur and change maker and he is confident that he is gradually placing himself on the right path to make this goal a reality.

Over the past 2 years he has dedicated his time and resources in building his organization StartUp Gh which has hosted a number of workshops in Accra and he has no plans on stopping there.

Gordon believes in the power of youth and is an advocate of young people can dreaming big, taking action and change the world.
Elorm Haligah is a young man that has been active in supporting the next generation of leaders. He is the Head of Diversity for Elevation Networks where he advises on the diversity strategy of the various organisations.

He is currently working on helping the Civil Service strengthen the representation of people from ethnic minorities on their graduate scheme.

Elorm has overseen the largest debate tour in the UK – The Great Debate Tour, and he has been a member of the Ghana Council in the East Midlands. This year Elorm is launching “The Young Pioneers Network”.

This is a social enterprise geared towards developing the political capacity of young people, with a strong focus on (although not limited to) people of African Heritage. They will be having our first programme in August 2015 in London.

A former ACS President at Nottingham University, Elorm has worked in Parliament, and has held a number of leadership positions previously.
‘It’s Time to be heard’
Amplifying the Voices of Ghana’s Future Generation from an early age

As a British-born Ghanaian, I sometimes recall my primary school days in Ghana with fondness. Aside from the beatings I got, (sometimes deserved but most times not), I had fun, and the time I spent in school definitely played a role in shaping the person that I have become today. I learned the importance of hard work, and from an early age, the idea that education was the key to a successful future was drummed into me. Therefore I took my studies very seriously. However the fondness from these memories came from reminiscing about the shenanigans my classmates and I used to get up to – the truth of the matter was I hated going to school.

The threat of the cane always hanging over one’s head was one reason I hated school; the other was boredom. A typical school day went like this: go to class, be quiet, listen to the teacher, copy whatever was written on blackboard. There were few occasions to ask questions, express opinions and take part in activities that summoned one’s creative faculties. The only class I looked forward to was art – I loved to draw and there I could let my imagination run wild. Teachers did very little to alleviate this boredom. They just explained whatever was written in textbooks and we dutifully sat, listened and wrote it down. Teachers taught in a way that did very little to encourage my interest in the subjects taught. I have never once recalled a time in school where I felt challenged and inspired by something I had learned.

And that is a big problem.

The education system in Ghana is by no means a bad one in fact when teaching the fundamentals of a subject this is arguably done better than it is in Europe. However I believe there are two major problems that if addressed will make a massive difference in the kind of future generation Ghana raises. First of all, if teachers change the methods in which they teach, the future generation of Ghana will be all the better for it.

Lessons are currently taught in a way that that doesn’t encourage inquiry or discussion. The method of solely explaining what’s in the textbook to students is outdated. Getting an education should not comprise of just learning as many facts and techniques as you can in order to pass examinations. Students must be challenged.

The second problem that needs to be tackled is lifting the barrier that is placed on our mental capabilities at a young age. In Ghanaian society, children are expected to observe the world around them quietly - from an early age we are discouraged from questioning, inquiring and especially voicing opinions on what we see and deduce around us. There’s a saying in Ghana that children are to be seen and not heard. At home, children are forbidden from joining in adult conversation. Even if what the adult is saying is wrong, a child can never chime in and correct the adult as it is seen as disrespectful. An inquiring mind is never welcomed. From that early age this idea that we must never question authority is instilled within us, and this practice is extremely harmful as children then grow up to be timid in the face of authority.

The two problems I’ve mentioned above are linked: teachers believe that that it is the duty of the student to sit and listen to whatever they have to say. As children when we start school we are told by our parents to listen and do what the teacher tells us. This attitude is linked to the Ghanaian mentality of children being seen and not heard. In Ghanaian culture, there’s an almost patronizing feel to the way adults treat children – as if children’s thoughts & opinions don’t matter.
As a child in Ghana if you possess an inquiring mind, and perhaps display knowledge and wisdom deemed to be above your age, you are labelled as being ‘mpanisem’ - and this ‘undesirable’ characteristic is promptly disciplined out of you.

This manner in which children are treated by adults is then further compounded by teachers when children start school. In class, the teacher is the master – what he/she says is absolute, and students are expected to take lead. Opportunities to express original ideas or engage in discussion are few.

Even if you have an idea or theory that goes against what the teacher is saying, you are afraid to speak out because from a young age you’ve been told that adults are right and one must not question them. One vivid and constant memory I have of my primary school days in Ghana was walking down the corridors and hearing the sound of scribbling of pencils and pens superimposed on a background of silence. I seldom heard students and teachers engaging in discussion. There was no talking – just copy what’s on the blackboard and memorize the notes to pass examinations at the end of the year. So in the end students may pass examinations, but their independent and critical thinking skills are severely underdeveloped.

Teachers therefore need to change the methods in which they impart knowledge on their students. First of all they can start by creating a welcoming environment that gives their young students the confidence to speak up and express opinions, not just answer questions from textbooks. In fact, teachers must challenge their students through activities and exercises that will develop independent and critical thinking skills among them; skills they can employ in their social, family and employment life. Also more discussions should be included in lessons, where students get the opportunity to show an understanding of what has been taught, express opinions and engage in problem-solving skills that will stimulate their thinking capabilities.

In addition, teachers should acknowledge the fact that all children learn differently and try to incorporate different learning methods in their teaching. If teachers bear in mind that students may prefer an auditory (hearing), visual (seeing), kinesthetic (moving) or tactile (touching) way of learning and try to cater to those preferences, then their students will learn better and more quickly, increase their self esteem and even improve their relationship with their teachers as they become more interested in what they learn.

If Ghanaians were to change their mentality regarding children (to be seen and not heard), I cannot underestimate the impact it will have on the future generation Ghana raises. If parents welcomed and even encouraged their children to have an inquiring mind (encouraging the notion that it is okay to express ideas and opinions), then they’ve already laid beneath their children’s feet an excellent foundation for them to prosper in the world around them. By extension, if teachers fostered the idea within their young students that it is okay and perhaps even expected of them to ask questions express opinions, then I believe Ghana will raise a bold and fearless generation who are not afraid to go against the status quo and break barriers, challenge injustice they see around them and demand better from their leaders and superiors in society.

Yaa Nyarko

Yaa Nyarko is currently News Assistant at ITV. With a strong background in media and her passion for Ghana, she enjoys nothing more than debating the issues that matter to Ghana.
Derek Williams is the Director and founder of Williams Mining. He established Williams Mining with a clear vision to eliminate fatalities in the Ghanaian mining sector. In this lively interview Derek takes the Future of Ghana through his own personal evolution and why the mining industry is so important to Ghana and Africa.

FOG: Describe Derek Williams in 3 words?

DW: Derek Offei Williams!

FOG: What inspired you to establish Williams mining?

DW: After three years of failure working for three different recruitment companies where I was fired for under performance from all three, I decided to start my own recruitment company. At the time I was 24, relatively broke, living at home and realised that my situation hadn’t much changed since I started my recruitment career at 21.

This was a perfect time to start a new business venture with the skills and experience I had learned over the past 3 years. I had nothing to lose, literally nothing to lose. 3 years later my life is barely recognisable. I have a business, staff, office in Kings Cross (Central London), donated to many charities in Africa, live in a middle-class area, have clients from Ghana to Kazakhstan.

FOG: Where do you see Williams mining 10 years from now?

DW: I try not to plan more than a year ahead with Williams Mining. The exploration of possibilities is what I enjoy most about this company. We can go this way, we can go that way. We try and be receptive to the market whilst making our own rules.

FOG: How important is the mining industry to Ghana?

DW: Ghana has a long standing rich history in mining within Africa. Mining in Ghana has helped establish many platforms of trade, investment and acknowledgement with multinational organisations and governments. Mining was one of the first industries in Ghana to accept Foreign Direct Investment and in my opinion it has really helped consumer confidence for further investment in Ghana’s other sectors.

FOG: What role can Ghanaians in the Diaspora play in the development of Ghana?

DW: I think we have a huge responsibility to first listen to Ghana and understand Ghana before Ghanaians in the diaspora play an active role in it’s development. The best place to start is the infrastructure of Ghana.

FOG: If you could change one thing about Ghana what would it be?

DW: I would go back to 2010 and ask Asamoah Gyan to score that penalty against Uruguay. I still can’t talk about that game and have never seen that game since.

FOG: As a young entrepreneur yourself what advice do you have for budding ones?

DW: It’s strange I still don’t consider myself an entrepreneur. Advice to young ‘entrepreneurs’ never be afraid to fail. You probably can’t fail in your teens or twenties this is a period of learning and development (Understanding what you are good at, what you like and what you don’t like, what works, what doesn’t etc). Be patient with yourself and your development. As young people, we tend to want everything yesterday, but if we had it yesterday it’ll probably be enjoyed today and gone tomorrow. Take time and
learn your craft/skill/gift and be ready to use it at the opportunities life presents.

If you don’t believe me watch car adverts for Mercedes, Porsche, Jaguar, etc... it’s a bunch of middle aged men driving them, because you’re supposed to achieve when you reach 40/50 not in your 20’s. This is the period of building so that you can have these nice things later down the line when you have knowledge, wisdom and experience. Not like these rappers who have Aston Martin’s in their 20’s and then they’re broke in their 30’s.

FOG: What does the Future of Ghana look like to you?

DW: Ghana is full of possibilities and wonder. Ghana remains one of Africa’s key figures in economic development, peace and prosperity.
The Power of African Fashion
with Shasha Osei

Looking back to my days at boarding school, and all the magazines I would buy (such as Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, etc.), I would become mystified by the process of creativity. I would be awe-struck as I considered the make-up artists, the stylists, the garments, and of course the intriguing models. ‘How did everything come together?’ I would tear images from magazines and post them on my bedroom wall, only to subsequently send myself off into a dream world where I would meet all these beautiful rare beings, discover their mystery & genius; and most pertinently, I would question them on the lack of designers from Africa...

Clicking my fingers to the present day, you will find that I have been working freelance and creating my own companies with a focus on Fashion. I remember chance meetings which developed into interviews for my very own bilingual magazine that I created in 2008.

This involved meeting photographers, working on storyboards for shoots, selecting models.

I danced amidst the whirlwinds of creativity until the Fashion Industry had almost swept me up in its glistening couture garments and its unique language. Fashion's undoubted illusion made it almost unperceivable for me to softly place my Nine Wests back on the ground. But I did.

I did, and as I looked around, as I started to read about all the International Fashion Weeks and the hordes of press travelling to review them, I wondered...What About Africa?

This is not to say that African designs or people cannot be found within the industry. African print, jewellery and a standardised stereotype of all things African have been shown on some of the most famous designer catwalks in the world! However what was missing was African Fashion by African Designers.

More recently, when I created my PR agency in Paris (Sha Osei PR), I started to receive interest from designers from French-speaking former colonies, as well as fellow Ghanaians, asking me why I could not do what I was doing for African designers.

At first, I was pleased to receive the feedback... then I questioned it. Fashion takes from everywhere, speaking no language, mixing cultures and topics and history - meaning that it simply expresses itself.

Galliano, Margiela, Louis Vuitton, Balenciaga, Marc Jacobs, Tom Ford, Max Mara, Manolo Blahnik, Prada, Paco Rabanne... do you know where they all come from? Do you even care? Or do we just focus on how exquisite the creations are?

Why, therefore, must ‘African Fashion’ be labelled in such a way?

A collaboration that I am currently working on with a French team called Moon Look has managed to source designers from Africa and showcase them in one of Paris' Fashionable districts, Le Marais. The aim of our collaboration is to assist with sales, and to attract more people from within the Fashion industry -those of the kind who had mentioned their admiration for ‘African styles’, yet could hardly give a list of African designers. The closest they came to was Stella Jean (who is half-Haitian, half-Italian). Numerous stores seem to be crying out for African designers, but when buyers were asked, they said that they could not go to Africa and source the items themselves, claiming that African designers did not know how to sell to the Fashion Industry.
Do not get me wrong; there are some brilliant designers in the UK and the Americas who create beautiful African clothing – this transcends the idea of African clothing simply being created and worn only by African people.

The site shopdoku is proof of that, with designers such as the acclaimed ZAAF Collection, Birdie Num Num or Akakpo! The power of the colours, cuts and creativity excite me so much and I believe that the market can go from strength to strength. However we need to develop a strong vision and brand, be supportive, business-minded, create and promote events and most importantly think with a view of longevity.

My hope is to promote designers from Africa prominently over the next few years, so that young people will tear out from the pages of magazines beautiful African designs by African designers. Posting them not just on their bedroom walls, but across their social media accounts, helping them to feel a sense of culture and feel personally represented within the Fashion Industry.

Shasha Osei
Crystal Debrah is a trainee solicitor advocate and a social entrepreneur. As a trainee solicitor, she represents the most vulnerable people in society at tribunals to seek obtain justice for her clients. In 2014, Crystal was recognised as a rising star at her law firm in London, being the only first-year trainee to receive an award for her significant contribution.

Furthermore, Crystal noticed how young people had little assistance coping with the transition between school and university.

She resolved to author a university self help guide named ‘What They Don’t Tell You about University’ to assist undergraduates to manage their time at university effectively.

Crystal also runs an annual conference, with the Mayor of London’s Peer Outreach Team and Student Loans Company, for new university students with an emphasis on developing life skills. Additionally, she has advised the masses via major media outlets such as ‘The Telegraph’ and ‘BBC Radio’ as well as conducting presentations to customers.

Crystal is currently growing her brand through writing new material for future books and is continuing to provide sessions for clients.
Stephen Yeboah is currently a Research Fellow at the Africa Progress Panel; a non-profit organization which advocates at the highest levels for equitable and sustainable development in Africa, chaired by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.

As part of the work for the APP, he engages in policy research and media communications. His areas of research include agriculture, natural resources governance and sustainable development.

Mr. Yeboah is a trained journalist and has published more than ninety articles, op-eds and blogs on migration, aid, agriculture, mining, and oil and gas. He is also the Head of Research on Oil and Gas for Center for Social Impact Studies (CeSIS), a non-governmental organization based in Ghana.

In 2014, his brief paper “Crops or carats’ Interaction between gold mining and cocoa production and the livelihood dilemma in Amansie Central District of Ghana’ was selected as a runner-up in the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) Young Scholars Think Piece Series on Extractive Industries and Social Development.

Mr. Yeboah completed his undergraduate programme in Development Planning at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Ghana and holds Master of Arts in Development Studies from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID), Geneva.
Prince Boadu
28 years old (Ghana)

Prince Boadu's co-founded a non-profit, EVOL V.Africa, in 2009 primarily to equip young people with leadership and entrepreneurial skills through workshops, seminars and interactive conferences. To date, they have trained more than 600 young people through their programs with some attendees going on to start their own companies, CSOs, NGOs etc.

Prince is also the founding curator of TEDxKNUST and TEDxKNUSTChange; both satellite TED-like events with the latter co-organized with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

This event brought together young innovative Ghanaians whose ideas and creative confidence are making headlines globally. Prince is a TEDx Gates Foundation Scholarship recipient, and the first Ghanaian to have been on this list.

In 2014, he worked as the Logistics and Supply Chain Analyst for one of the most innovative sanitation companies, Clean Team Ghana Ltd., which provides affordable, reliable solution to the problem of inadequate sanitation infrastructure in countries that are struggling to provide for the basic needs of their burgeoning urban populations.

His work at Clean Team included developing, implementing and evaluating transportation models, managing warehouse operations and optimizing logistics and supply chain activities within the strategic framework of the company.

Currently, Prince works in a management consulting firm he co-founded with his college professor. The firm provides bespoke performance management solutions for both private and public sector clients.

He also co-founded Maptech Logistics to develop GIS based decision and executive support systems to effectively manage logistics & supply chain operations of firms.

Prince has written the following two academic publications:
Meet a Pioneer

Wolfgang Mac Din
28 years old(Ghana)

As the founder and Executive Director of Help the African Child (HAC) Wolfgang Mac Din’s vision of breaking the cycle of deprivation among youth in Accra is fuelled by the unalienable rights he believes should be afforded to all children: protection, opportunity and education.

Mac-Din is a product of the same conditions that affect the youth that he works with - and understands that without the support of dedicated larger community, these kids will continue to go unnoticed and their talents and potential untapped.

Wolfgang uses his organization as an active platform to help bring awareness and change to less fortunate children and teen mothers in Ghana and in other African countries such as Togo. He offers support to young people to help them attain and fulfil their purpose in life through mentorship. He works closely with an international team of development, education and health experts to design projects that can be effective in every aspect of a child’s life.

In its first 5 years of existence, HAC has helped thousands of children who were victims of child labour, by providing better access to education and healthcare. Though they are still limited in capacity, in 5 years Wolfgang hopes HAC will be operating in every region of Ghana, and looking to expand scope to other areas in Western Africa.

Working to improve the lives of Africa's under-privileged youth is Wolfgang’s main passion in life and is something he plans to be doing far into the future.
Kofi Yeboah
26 years old (Ghana)

Kofi Yeboah is a graduate of University of Cape Coast (UCC), studied Economics and Sociology, a blogger and a member of a vibrant youth organisation GhanaThink Foundation. Kofi is the coordinator for Barcamp Ghana, one of GhanaThink Foundation’s programmes that is focused on bringing together young people in Ghana to brainstorm on solutions to local problems.

Barcamp Ghana executes its vision by organising youth focused events across the 10 regions of Ghana and has trained over 3000 youth in various fields. Kofi is an active member of the Global Voices Online – an international community of bloggers who report on blogs and citizen media from all over the world. He writes stories about the emerging technology development in Ghana and Africa.

In 2013, he was selected among “50 young Africans to watch”, a list released by Marieme Jamme; one of the most powerful young women in Africa.

Kofi currently works as the Communications Officer for Clean Team Ghana, a sanitation company that provides innovative sanitation solutions to the urban poor in Kumasi, the second largest city of Ghana.

Recently Kofi was selected among 10 young Africans by the Disaster Risk Reduction division of the United Nations to spearhead the involvement of youth in disaster risk reduction.

He was selected to be a part of a panel of bloggers and social media savvies on “The Stream”- on the Aljazeera news channel for a discussion on the effect of social media on the Ghanaian 2012 election. He has also Freelance for IQ4News – an online news agency based in the UK that writes and reports on Africa.
AVAILABLE NOW AT
WWW.HOUSEOFMFG.COM
We are privileged to live in an era when we can celebrate young Ghanaians. We live in a time when many young Ghanaians are free to build on their skills and expertise and become anything they want to be. We live in an age where we are free to celebrate our heritage and this publication is a manifestation of that freedom.

This should be duly noted because in the case of our forbearers, they were from an age where they had to fight in order to ‘claim that freedom as their own.’ Organisations that exist to help Ghanaians in the Diaspora maintain their cultural heritage and traditions also ought to be applauded to the extent that they help prevent many of us from being ‘lost in translation’.

We are able to maintain a firm and deep sense of affiliation and love for Ghana our homeland. In our current times, Africa is said to be a continent whose time has come. Ghana is among the countries making progress. Its recent discovery of oil is certainly not the least of the country’s resources that could help it pivot towards greater economic independence.

The extent to which this resource proves to be a blessing or a curse to the nation is very much dependant on how the nation’s leaders manage it and to what extent it is used to benefit the people.

It is clear that at such a crucial point in any nation’s history, it needs to have available the best skills and knowledge necessary to maximise the use of its resources.

By virtue of our geographic happenstance, many of us in the Diaspora have acquired skills, knowledge and talent that will greatly benefit Ghana. We thank Providence who sent us this way. But with this comes a responsibility.

It is not enough to just be known as a proud Ghanaian in the Diaspora. It is not enough that on the 6th March we proudly stand with our flags in hand ... ready to celebrate that independence so dearly fought for with the lives of our forbearers.

At this stage in our country’s history, a newer and deeper aspect of Diaspora engagement ought to take place. We in the Diaspora - with the skills and knowledge that has brought us who are the beneficiaries to that claim to freedom spoken of by our nation’s very first leader bear a great responsibility. We bear the responsibility of ensuring that in this age our nation is furnished with the greatest skills that is needed to move it forward.

‘Democracy rightly lived requires a commitment no less than “our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honour”’. This statement was made in relation to the American declaration of Independence, but an application of it can be made to any democratic society. We cannot stand on what seems to be the threshold of our country’s success story and suppose that it will require nothing of us. It will require the very best skills and knowledge that we can bring to it.

Closely related to the talent needed in this season is the character that is needed in moving Ghana forward. From the earliest beginnings of western Civilizations, it has always been noted that knowledge had to be wedded to virtue. ‘Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains on their own appetites.'
Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere; and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters.' (The Works of the Right Honorable Edmund Burke, vol. 4)
Feature Interview

Michael Amaning
Of Invest in Africa

Michael Amaning is the Senior Account Manager at Invest in Africa and is in charge of Stakeholder Relations. We caught up with him to discuss his current role and his outlook on Ghana.

FOG: Who is Michael Amaning, what do you do and why do you do what you do?

MA: I am a Ghanaian who has had the privilege of living and visiting a number of countries around the world from Senegal, Gambia, Yemen, UK, US and Ethiopia to name a few. Having an early exposure to Africa’s rich culture and vast economic potential and comparing this to the perception of Africa in the West, often made me question why a continent blessed with so much seemed unable to put in place the structures to convert natural wealth into real development for its people.

A search for answers led me to a career in African development. Currently I work for Invest in Africa, a private sector organisation focused on creating solutions to the common challenges faced by both local and international businesses. These challenges are too big for a company to tackle on their own, but too important to ignore. Currently we have partnered with EY, Tullow Oil, Ecobank, Guinness Ghana Ltd, UT Bank, and AB & David to launch the African Partner Pool, Ghana’s first cross sector online business directory connecting international investors with local partners efficiently and linking Ghanaian firms with better access to new clients, finance and skills.

FOG: What three things you know now, do you wish you knew when starting your professional career?

MA: I wish I identified my natural talents and gifts much earlier on in my career and worked on developing them fully. The importance of finding both role models and mentors to guide, encourage and challenge me in all areas of my life.

After all we can only be the best we can be when the body, mind and soul are all nourished.

How important the question ‘why?’ is. Understanding our history is key to putting our lives in context. One has to understand what came before in order to build on our predecessors’ achievements whilst avoiding the things that limited their success. Most important is knowing that I can make a difference by creating a future that is beneficial to both me and my community.

FOG: What are the most common misconceptions about starting a business in Ghana and within Africa?

MA: The common misconceptions are ones based on assumptions. Even if you have family in Ghana and you visit every year, starting a business is a completely different challenge. One needs to be on the ground to really understand the Ghanaian mindset. You have to get a clear picture on what consumers want, can afford and how to overcome the many business challenges you will face, be it access to permits, getting your goods from Tema Port to shops or dealing with the Accra Traffic. To overcome these challenges it is so important to work in partnership with other companies and organizations to get a good grasp of how to overcome common challenges. This is the focus of Invest in Africa - to facilitate the ‘how to do business in Africa’ question.

FOG: In what ways can youth contribute and be a part of the development of Ghana?

MA: Simply put in every way! If you look at Ghana now, 58 years after independence and illiteracy, extreme poverty, infant mortality and accessible healthcare is still a problem.
To answer your question the youth have everything to do, they need to look at the economic progress of a country like Rwanda in 20 years and realise that to achieve development they have to get rid of systems, mindset and ideologies that have achieved little over the past 58 years. It is important to keep those that do work, but build proper systems and structures that not only bring monetary wealth to Ghana, but equality, sustainability and development to each coroner of Ghana. I think 58 years is long enough for the youth to realise that something isn’t working and they have nothing to lose in trying something new and innovative, but most importantly a system where success is judged on the number of Ghanaians able to access, healthcare, shelter, education, food and social mobility.

**FOG:** Please describe how you envision Ghana in 25 years and what do area?

**MA:** Ghana has the unique position of having great PR internationally, I hope that Ghana understands the role it can play and the leader it can be on the continent and globally. I envision Ghana having a detailed development plan of where it wants to be in the next 50 years, agreed by all political parties and what sets them apart are their implementation plans rather than short term policies that achieve very little for the average Ghanaian.

I envision Ghana taking the lead in implementing Kwame Nkrumah’s vision of an integrated Africa, starting with ECOWAS, after all united we stand - divided we fall.
“Wealth is nothing without health”
with Dr. Jermaine Bamfo

Jermaine Bamfo is a Foundation Year Two Doctor at the Antrim Area Hospital in Northern Ireland who regularly blogs for Me Firi Ghana and displays his passion for the development of Ghana.

When John Atta Mills’s administration came into power in 2009, health was placed at the heart of the government’s developmental agenda to transform Ghana into a middle-income country by 2015.

A daunting prospect perhaps. However let’s consider Ghana’s healthcare system at present. A well-established national, regional and district system of hospitals, clinics and health delivery centres. The public health infrastructure has achieved full immunisation coverage. The government health service delivery structure is supported by a robust non-governmental sector that provides preventive/curative services and a private healthcare sector that provides emergency services.

Despite the successes, challenges remain: insufficient health care providers, poorly distributed in parts, broken equipment or insufficient supplies. Healthcare financing is tackled by the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), but NHIS is underfunded and needs revamping to increase viability.

Keeping the above in mind, how can we create a brighter, more dynamic healthcare system in Ghana?

Bill Gates, visiting Ghana in 2013, was impressed by ‘an effective health system in action – from the decision-makers at national level to nurses…in the villages.’ Information tracking which enables healthcare workers to closely measure progress in delivering services (e.g. immunisations) was highly-praised by Gates. Ghana is one of few African nations to attempt a broad roll-out of electronic records in the public sector, with a national e-health policy published in 2012.

In January 2014, President Mahama inaugurated the first phases of a multi-million expansion of Tamale Teaching Hospital (new CT scanners, 400 bed capacity wards, intensive care units), funded in partnership with the Netherlands government. More projects of similar ilk would be encouraging, helping build higher-quality facilities and bump up the disgracefully low numbers of particular pieces of equipment/investigations we have nationwide.

Healthcare delivery to Ghana’s most vulnerable remains inadequate. Horror stories about pregnancy/labour unfortunately present regularly. The rich-poor divide rears its ugly head, with wealthy women three times more likely to deliver at a healthcare facility with a skilled birth attendant than their poorer counterparts. The Coalition on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health reported that 1012 Ghanaian pregnant women died in 2013 due to pregnancy-related issues - a 13.83% increase over 2012.

Eritrea, Tanzania and Botswana have better infant mortality rates (another key indicator of health system performance) than Ghana, with UNICEF reporting under-five mortality of 82 deaths per 1000 live births (MDG 4 target for 2015 is 41 per 1000). Ghana with UNICEF created a National Newborn Strategy & Action Plan for 2014-2018 to address this. In January 2015, the Canadian government announced efforts to scale up the SickKids-Ghana Paediatric Nursing Training Program to help Ghana succeed in training 1,500 paediatric nurse specialists over the next 15 years, to boost capacity to deliver child survival interventions.

Quality healthcare largely relies on the number of practitioners available to deliver it. The system needs more soldiers. To plug
the gap, in an era where many artists and fashionistas are returning home, maybe we need more doctors of Ghanaian heritage to make the jump back home too? This should be actively encouraged by the State via palatable initiatives and projects, to tap into the expertise of Ghanaian doctors highly-trained abroad with no direct cost to Ghana.

However let us not forget those who are training in Ghana. We must review our education of doctors and nurses at every level, emphasising ethics, empathy, respect, patient rights, responsibility & confidentiality – encouraging holistic care and enabling trainees to be future leaders on their units, creating a workforce dedicated to provide excellent care. Great doctors make great things happen, regardless of the resources available.

Training must be wider-ranging. Former Minister of Health Sherry Ayittey disclosed in 2014 that there are approximately 74 ophthalmologists in Ghana attending to over 24 million people, with about 50% practising in Accra and three operating in the three Northern regions. Incredibly disproportionate distribution! The government must also ensure emergency services are available not just in the big cities, but in rural areas as well, so nobody has to travel too far for life-saving treatment.

There must be a greater sense of accountability and responsibility amongst healthcare workers. Standards are maintained in the West largely because there are so many governing bodies setting standards of practice – and the public have powers to launch malpractice lawsuits. Such an environment doesn’t exist in Ghana, where god-like doctors can refuse to acknowledge limitations in their abilities without fear of repercussion. When doctors understand they are not above the law, and that gross malpractice carries threat of heavy sanction, maybe baseline standards of care will improve.

The UN implored Ghana in 2013 to resolve deep concerns regarding mental healthcare, calling for urgent reform of psychiatric services. Our psychiatric patients need quality care, not primitive shackling.

The healthcare discussion should not be an afterthought but a forefront discussion. It shouldn’t just be the responsibility of lawmakers hidden in the corridors of power to dictate the direction of healthcare, but also those who engage daily with the demands of the system. The discussion must be public, to demystify issues, encourage greater trust, generate practical ideas and identify the true needs of the people – making real differences and empower patients to get those needs satisfied.

In January 2015 former US President Jimmy Carter commended Ghana for achieving elimination of Guinea Worm, and certification by the World Health Organisation as a ‘Polio Free’ nation. “Ghana’s triumph...reminds the world...that the greatest challenges can be overcome with hard work, political commitment, and the support of the international community”. Ghana is doing well. However Ghana must do more to match Western standards in providing optimal care.

Development partners need to fill funding gaps to enable Ghana to get as close as possible to the UN Millennium Development Goals by the end of 2015. Policymakers must understand that improving healthcare is crucial to Ghana’s development. To conclude, we must all insist on improving the quality of healthcare in Ghana. We need our people to be as our national anthem States ‘great and strong’, in order to build towards a brighter future and an even brighter Ghana.
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