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About

Fecundus is a 21st century magazine for creative and innovative thinking. The magazine aims at serving as a platform where people, especially young people can display their talents and creativity through writing, scientific/artistic exhibition, etc with a view to proffering solutions to societal problems. It also aims at bringing individuals and initiatives that are making positive impact in the society to the limelight. The word Fecundus is of Latin origin and means 'Fruitful'. Promotion of positive fruitfulness is what Fecundus seeks to achieve. In the words of Anekwe Kingsley Chukwuebuka the founder of Fecundus, "We hope that in the years succeeding the advent of the magazine, the society, especially the Nigerian society, will thrive in approbative fruitfulness, more than it has in the past."

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Editor's Desk

There is a saying that the snail is a slow, smooth, succulent and vulnerable creature, yet with its will, a wet and luscious tongue, it maneuvers its way across thorns and thistles without harm. By way of association, vulnerability as an attribute of the snail is also ascribable to humans, and this quality always comes to the fore whenever adversity rears its ugly head. It always comes forth whenever our paths are suddenly filled with thorns and thistles and we are left with no option than to either maneuver, like the snail, or be left gasping at the straws of destruction.

And so, the questions have always been, how do we maneuver our way across thorns and thistles that betide our paths? What better ways are there to thrive in a world that constantly reminds us of how fragile, how unimaginably breakable we can be?

It can be so daunting a task to keep up, especially after experiencing adversities like the Corona virus pandemic which came unexpectedly like a fifth ace in a poker deck. The virus ravaged the world and is still ravaging the world. According to statistics by World Health Organization, more than four

million individuals have lost their lives courtesy of this very pandemic, yet it would seem it is far from being contented. As such, we ought to be keen on looking for better ways to thrive in times like this, ways to brace up in anticipation of other disasters, ways to rebuild after we have been destabilized. We must be sure of what to blame the pandemic for and what to blame ourselves for and look for ways to amass strong will, wetness and lusciousness in the form of all possible human virtues.

In this maiden edition of Fecundus Magazine captioned "A World Rising from a Pandemic", you will find interesting opinions of young and great minds on how the world can move forward based on their various observations of what happened (especially in Nigeria) when the pandemic was at its peak. These opinions are expressed creatively and majorly in the form of articles and poems. There are also other thrilling contents which are geared towards promoting positive fruitfulness in line with the aim of the magazine. All you have to do is relax and flip through the pages.

The future is not ours to see, yet we believe it is bright. We will keep living and hoping on God for better days ahead. We must keep our focus on the bright side and lessons to be learned, for in the words of Shakespeare, "Sweet are the uses of adversity

which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,

wears yet a precious jewel in his head."

We plead that you tolerate our shortcomings as we hope to serve you better in subsequent publications.

Anekwe Kingsley Chukwuebuka,
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THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON DEMOCRACY

In this article, Chima Uzochukwu-Obi warns us to be "mindful of what we are willing to sacrifice when faced with grave emergencies."



The outbreak of COVID-19 has had a ton of negative effects and has resulted in a seismic alteration of the world as we know it. The impact of the virus has been diverse and unprecedented, and for the most part, has been exhaustively commented on. However, one consequence of the pandemic that has not enjoyed much attention is its effect on democracy across the world. The dearth of insight into this topic is what this article seeks to remedy.

I have chosen to discuss this topic at a rather great level of generality and I have refrained from limiting my commentary to the context of the Nigerian polity. This is partly because my observations and suggestions have transnational significance and partly because Nigeria is at best an imprecise model of a democratic state and has a demonstrated culture of disrespect for the principles of democracy. Consequently, I cannot in good faith blame the erosion of democratic principles in Nigeria on the coronavirus; I fear that will be an unfair attribution.

We as human beings are naturally inclined towards self-preservation. There are not many things that are more powerful than our desire for self-preservation and sometimes, in our efforts to defend ourselves against existential threats, we display our willingness to make significant sacrifices. Thus, very few were surprised when, following the outbreak of the coronavirus, billions of people across the world enthusiastically surrendered some of their most basic freedoms in an instinctual effort to avoid the scourge of COVID-19. Government-imposed lockdowns and restrictions in violation of fundamental human rights have been religiously followed, and in some places have even been enforced by the citizens themselves. Freedom of movement, freedom of association, freedom of worship, and freedom of speech are just a few of the freedoms that have become casualties of the coronavirus pandemic and the measures put in place to fight the virus. While these extraordinary measures are almost certainly reasonable given the situation, the single-

mindedness that comes with combating a pandemic of this proportion has the ability, as has already been manifested, to make other societal precepts and commonly held values seem expendable. Thus, democratic principles are put in peril because it is deemed expedient to do so. Freedom House, a democracy think-tank, reports that since the outbreak of the coronavirus, conditions of democracy and human rights have worsened in 80 countries. The proliferation of state-mandated lock-downs has rid people of their freedom of movement and in many cases, their right to work. Places of worship have been closed down in a direct assault on the freedom of association and worship. The press has been muzzled in a popularized 'campaign against misinformation'. Over 80 electoral events across the world have been postponed with the coronavirus cited as the reason for such postponement. And all these are done mostly by the instrument of unilateral executive decrees.

It may be helpful to keep in mind that the justifiability of these measures is not in question here, but their consequence for democracy is. After all, a man who sets fire to his house in an attempt to kill a rat is doing himself a disservice. The executive power to give extraordinary directives in times of emergency is sometimes shrouded in the legitimacy of a duly enacted statute or some other democratic procedure. In reality, this only makes things worse as it effectively legitimizes a dictatorship. Notably, in Hungary, the parliament voted to grant Prime Minister Viktor Orban the power to govern by decree during a state of emergency. In such a case, the intentions and knowledge of the acting executive make all the difference. A typical democracy is set up with checks to minimize the need to trust the intentions of the government. The powers wielded by the government in normal conditions are great enough and become exceedingly greater in times of emergency. Here is an aphorism that reflects a known political truth: *Emergency powers breed emergencies*. In many countries, the government rushed to declare an emergency and imposed great restrictions on civil

liberties even when the situation did not warrant it. There are numerous instances of governments abusing emergency powers and using the coronavirus as a cover for their anti-democratic indulgences. In India, the government applied the lockdowns discriminatorily against the Muslim population, and in Nigeria, the government banned public protests in the capital city, Abuja, claiming it was a measure taken to curb the spread of the coronavirus. All these could easily become the convention especially as the current state of the world is being touted as the 'new normal'. It may become mainstream to ban protests, or enforce lockdowns, or censor the press; all these are measures that will most certainly lead to the disintegration of democracy in any state.

I am not going to pretend that the problem posed is an easy one to solve; it is as hard a dilemma as one may encounter. However, there is, to my mind, at least one thing that can be done to preserve democracy in situations of emergency and that is to democratize the exercise of emergency powers. It is one thing to give a president the power to drive a nation's economic policy, it is a whole other thing to grant him the power to abrogate, even if only temporarily and for possibly good reasons, the fundamental rights of the people. Where such severe measures appear necessary, the decision to implement them should be made at the legislative level where representation is diverse and closer to the governed. A bare majority of votes in the legislative house will be a clearer indication of the consent of the people to the imposition of ultra-restrictive measures on them and will take into account any peculiar circumstances at the relevant time.

In the end, we have to be mindful of what we are willing to sacrifice when faced with grave emergencies because if in our fight against a threat we unconditionally lay down our liberties and forsake our adherence to democratic principles, we might emerge in a world that is free of that threat, but by all measures worse than the one which we remember.

Uzochukwu-Obi Chima is a graduate of the law program at Nnamdi Azikiwe University. He has, over the years, come to realize the immense importance of reading and writing and has sought to hone these skills by serving in various relevant capacities including as an Executive Editor for the Nnamdi Azikiwe University Law Review (NAULR).

Sixty

Going to Sixty One: What Kind of Giant is Nigeria?

In this article, Chisom Mbonu worriedly questions the status of Nigeria as the giant of Africa.



Someone said that the year 2020 came with a lot of crisis and that was because it was an overly anticipated year. Well, I think it's been the most interesting year so far. Our dear nation clocked 60 which clearly indicates that she's no longer a child. By the way, she's gradually advancing to Sixty one.

With the happenings of the year 2020, isn't it likely to be the most memorable year in our lifetime? First, the corona virus disease broke out and before we could say Jack, it metamorphosed into a pandemic, becoming a global issue. For the first time in my life, the world seemed so scary. It was as though the world was about to come to an end. Markets, Schools, Offices, even the Churches and Mosques were shut down. The streets were deserted and we all stayed home to curtail the spread of the deadly disease.

Most people, like myself, did not really think it would escalate. When the Federal Government declared that all schools be closed for a month, I smiled. I really needed a break and also, my thoughts were, if we could defeat Ebola in the year 2014, we could also defeat Corona in no time. I told all who cared to listen that it would not exceed two weeks and we'd be back to school. But things took a different turn. Every day, there was scary increase in the number of affected persons and we did not need a soothsayer to tell us that the lockdown would be extended. Even at that, it was extended longer than we

expected.

Since most of us were no longer going to work, hunger struck, thereby causing an increase in crime. The heartbreaking part was going to the market only to find out that the price of foodstuffs had doubled. All market women began to blame 'Corona' but was it really? Because people always try to grab opportunities like that to make more profit at the expense of others.

As the rate of hunger increased, we began to hold meetings to decide who and who were to go and have a talk with our government. Although we knew the lockdown was for our own good, we did not want to remain locked down. We had to eat to stay alive first. Our request was granted but on conditions that we would observe social distancing, have running water in our market places, put on face masks and always have our sanitizers with us. That was the first step we took in taking our fate into our hands.

Schools began to resume gradually with the exception of University students because FG and ASUU were still negotiating. The haggle between these two was relentless. Students and parents were not pleased with both parties at all. Why would the government owe them such amount of money in the first place? ASUU on the other hand was being too ruthless. They said they were fighting for the students but did they really have their best interest at heart? Someone raised a question "Are

their kids also studying in Nigeria?"

Furthermore, the way the Special Anti-Robbery Squad behaved that year brought about the #Endsars protest. It turned out to be a really peaceful protest and in fact, united us even more. On the protest grounds, we didn't care to know who was from this tribe or that tribe. We spoke out our minds, sang and ate together. Till the day of the Lekki toll gate massacre. They, whoever 'they' were, disabled the CCTV's and turned off the lights. They shot at our brothers and sisters and when questioned, they said they were only shooting into the air.

Bokoharam and Fulani herdsmen are still wrecking havoc till date, killing people as though they're fowls. Is it that we can't have things under control anymore? I shake my head as I recount these happenings. Are we really qualified to be called the giants of Africa? What kind of giants are we if we possess the bulky frame of an elephant but have broomsticks as feet?

I think it's time we all wake up from our slumber and try our best in any sector we find ourselves. It's not too late now to reform Nigeria. To do that, it mustn't just be the government. We, the masses have lots of roles to play too. The government has promised us change but the said 'change' really begins with you and I.

Chisom Precious Mbonu.

Mbonu Chisom Precious hails from Nnewi in Nnewi North L.G.A of Anambra state. She's a Radiographer in the making and currently a 200L student of Unizik. She enjoys writing stories a lot and sometimes, articles and poems.

The Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Nigerian Economy; The way forward.



Obichere Gilbert in his article explores the economic challenges faced in Nigeria during the pandemic and recommends some remedying strategies.

The COVID-19 pandemic which broke out in late 2019 in Wuhan, a city in China has already affected about 43 million people in more than 148 countries of the world, leading to more than 1 million deaths at the time of this writing this article, and can reach a larger percentage of the world population if no vaccine is developed soon enough and as the world is faced with the second phase of the virus.

With the cancellation of flights, furloughing of workers in several establishments and the fall in the value of stock, a global health crisis soon became a global economic crisis.

The economic impact of the outbreak on the well being of families and communities cannot be overemphasized. Most families lost their sources of income which translates to spikes in poverty, missed meals for children, and reduced access to health care far beyond COVID-19. According to the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the world published by the UN, the Corona Virus pandemic may throw more than 130 million more people into chronic hunger. In low and middle-income countries of the world like Nigeria, the economic impact is more felt.

The high rate of Unemployment

According to Ozili & Arun in their report titled, Spillover of COVID-19: Impact on the Global Economy, over 32 million people lost their jobs in Nigeria. The job losses came mostly from the private sector including schools, companies, construction sites, transporters, hospitals and markets. The Aviation industry was massively hit owing to lockdown restrictions on air travel. Most workers in the industry had to make do with menial jobs to make ends meet. The closure of the markets left so many traders with nothing. It also left farmers without an avenue to buy quality hybrid seeds for cultivation nor sell their farm produce.

Small and medium scale businesses which have been said to be the drivers of the economy closed shop. They couldn't keep operating due to the lockdown and the ones that managed to be open at the time lost most of their revenues to low turnout of clients.

Food Security

The term food security was defined at the 1974 World Food Conference as the "availability at all times of adequate, nourishing, diverse, balanced and moderate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices". Food security has been at its lowest ebb since the pandemic found its way to Nigeria. The period during which nationwide lockdown was imposed surprisingly coincided with the beginning of the farming season making food largely unavailable for Nigerians.

Nigeria in the year 2018 was declared to be the poverty capital of the world by the World Poverty Clock, with over 40% of its citizens living below \$2 a day. Most Nigerians live on daily income and without savings to fall back on during the lockdown. These people are mostly artisans. With the harsh effects of COVID-19 on their jobs, the resultant impact on food security can only be devastating. More people became hungry; this is more evident in the looting of warehouses stored with COVID-19 palliatives by the citizens of the country. As dire as the situation was and maybe still is, the government failed to evenly distribute the palliatives to relieve its citizens of biting hunger. It is surprising how people were able to get by as the government wasn't so responsive to the plight of the citizens.

Policy Recommendations

According to Giasor et al., in their work titled, "An Economic Analysis of COVID-19 Pandemic and The Rising Global Unemployment, some notable policy recommendations towards revamping Nigeria's economy post-COVID-19 are as follows:

1. Government must encourage the development of new skills that correspond to labour market needs, enabling workers' productivity and employability to be improved. It is incontrovertible that the 21st-century labour market is skill-based, and as such government at all levels should provide vocational education centres and also provide adequate funding for them.
2. Government at all levels should unleash competence in the younger generation through student loans and scholarships.

3. Tax rebates should be made available to SMEs to boost production and create additional employment opportunities.

4. Sick leave and death benefits should be provided to those who are affected by the pandemic. At the same time, other entitlements should be made available to the living population to help cushion the severe effect on the welfare of the people. The government should give COVID-19 relief funds to those who need it.

5. Awareness should continue being created on the spread, effect and contagion of the pandemic to aid in containing the virus.

6. The government should restructure its budget towards revamping productive economic activities. It is only by boosting output production that the need for additional employment would be economically justified.


7. There is a need for continued international cooperation in defeating the pandemic through vaccine development for a more healthy population. A healthy population is more productive and employable than a disease ravaging population. On this note, international organizations such as the WHO should not relent in supporting Nigeria and other developing economies in their fight against the pandemic.

8. Lastly, Nigeria must resist the temptation of weekly or monthly borrowing of monies whose impact on the economy is not clearly articulated. The authorities must sit and consider all the economic issues involved before securing money for any purpose.

Conclusion

The economic effects of COVID-19 on Nigeria's economy cannot be overemphasized. That is not to say that the Government of Nigeria cannot work the economy back up. Careful and consistent implementation of the policy recommendations outlined above will go a long way into revamping the economy. The policy recommendations geared towards the acquisition of skills and the funding of small and medium scale businesses are apt to give the economy a turnaround.

Gilbert Obichere is a law graduate at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. He is an avid reader and researcher who has taken on internship roles at White&Case and Latham and Watkins, however virtual. He is also a writer and has embarked upon and completed articles and papers on a variety of topics. Gilbert is moreover, a tech enthusiast who holds the certificate of completion of the course, The Fundamentals of Digital Marketing, sponsored by Google as part of its Google Digital Skills for Africa program.



Our Own Chains

by Obiagwu Uchechukwu Godstime

When we must have transcended
the claws of the pandemic
that pinned us down without fetters,
we'll be bound, then, by our own chains:

chains of inflation
that'll bind us head and feet
from our greedy manufacturers
just to pacify their insatiable pockets,

chains of economy crash;
countries trampling upon countries,
currencies devaluing others
and pitiable, will be the developing
countries,

chains of trade restriction
imposed by the same that thrive
on imported elements;
restrictions made for the poor,

chains of abject poverty;
who will help who?
who will come to the aid of who?
Poverty will be a wallowing field,

chains of prospective poverty;
the few with a little remaining penny
will shun investment to meet daily bread.
Pitiable enough, it'll end in exasperation.

Chains of nurtured corruption;
then the evil we nurtured will grow
and when we stand to fight it,
It'll fight back irresistibly,

chains of distrust
in the institutions of religion,
which instead of saving it's members
extorted them, religiously.

Even when the pandemic ceases
the chains will remain, rather sadly, unto
posterity.

Obiagwu Uchechukwu Godstime hails from Umuchu in Aguata LGA of Anambra. He is an English student in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He is a growing writer with several articles, poems and essays attributed to him obtainable in blogs, journals and on social media. His love for poetry has earned him several awards in the University which includes but not limited to; Writer of the Year Award, AESA Dinner/Award Night among many others.

Poetic Corner



by Chisom Mbonu

Twenty Ten Twenty

Twenty ten twenty,
we woke up from our slumber,
came out in our numbers,
to speak our minds; to make our voices heard.
Little did we know it would take our heads.

Twenty ten twenty,
we came in peace, unarmed,
save for the national symbol we proudly held
up high.
It was said we'll never be harmed if we held it.
But wasn't it with that we restrained the gush
of blood?

Twenty ten twenty,
The weather of the cool eve changed instantly.
We didn't see the dark clouds form.
It rained bullets and we scrambled for safety.
We watched our newly made friends draw their
last breath.

Twenty ten twenty,
the blood of innocent citizens bathed the
streets,
our national flag was soaked in blood.
Fear gripped our larynx.
Some decided to go back to slumber,
instead of fight for a hopeless cause.



BLACK LIVES MATTER PROTEST:

Do Black Lives Matter only Outside Africa?

In this article, Oranye Chidubem censures the Black Lives Matter protest, considering the dispiriting state of Africa. Hence, do black lives matter only outside Africa?



By Oranye Chidubem Promise

The issues of racism and discrimination towards blacks consolidate the white supremacy ideology which dates back to when man realized the reflection of the two distinct colours (black and white) on their skin. Throughout the history of mankind, blacks have always been despised because of their skin colour. Meanwhile, I personally believe that the present day racism is not based on skin colour, but the unending regime of underdevelopment in the whole of black Africa.

Brutality towards blacks in the past ranged from slave trade and colonization to the complete demonization of the African culture and tradition. There is no doubt that these racist acts vividly show that the white man sees a black man as being a lesser creature.

I do not intend to delve into the history of the terrible racist acts of whites towards blacks in the past to avoid stirring up, in the soul of a black man, the emotion of bitterness.

The terrible history of subjugation towards blacks is really an abomination before man and nature. But this is in the past and we can't teleport ourselves to the past and change things just like in Marvel movie industry's fiction.

The recent Black Lives Matter protest emerged as an aftermath of the police brutality towards blacks in America. This was after the video of the black man named George Floyd had gone viral. George was killed by a police man who placed his knee on his neck. Everyone who watched the video reacted in bereavement and grief after seeing a grown up man cry for his life like a baby. This was not the first act of police brutality towards blacks in different parts of the world and in America especially.

This Black Lives Matter protest which took place all over the world amidst the corona virus pandemic was an interesting but misguided cry for a black revolution.

Putting sentiments aside (as I also am a black boy) I don't think that blacks deserve to be respected in the countries that they have 'escaped' to. The reason why modern racism against blacks persists is because of the terrible mess that Africa is in and the situation of most blacks. Besides, blacks are not the only race or colour in Europe and America. Blacks are not the only race that was colonized by the Europeans. There are Asians in America for instance, and a curious mind may wonder why such level of discrimination is not meted out on them.

Collectively, Africa is down and underdeveloped and the world sees all blacks as the same. Yes, there may be individual and exceptional great feats that may help a black man escape the curse of racism at a personal level: Who would be racist towards Barack Obama, Dr. Ben Carson, Mohammed Ali or any other great black athlete all over the world?

How will a white man respect blacks when they know that most blacks living in their lands were sold out by their fellow blacks as slaves centuries ago?

Why will they respect a black man when they know that most black people living in their lands are running away from their own home just to survive abroad due to the stench of poverty and corruption in Africa?

They know that most black people living in their lands are there to survive and not to 'live'. Some smuggle themselves into Europe through the deserts. Many of them are jobless in

these countries that they run to. Many roam the streets dealing on drugs and carrying out illegal activities. Do they really deserve respect In another man's land?

Africa itself needs to be developed to overcome racism. Racism won't just end pursuant to protesting on the streets of America. I will use Nigeria as a reference because it is the country I live in, and I know the issues on ground to an extent.

Nigeria was amalgamated and created by the British Government in 1914. Do we expect a young British student receiving a lecture on History about the British colonisation of Nigeria in Oxford University for instance, to retain his respect (if there was any) for his course mate who is a Nigerian at the end of this lecture?

Why would a white man respect subjects of his own creation when he sees a black man walking along the streets in his own land? This clearly shows the need for the destruction of institutions of colonization before fighting racism in the modern times.

Moving back to the issue of the Black Lives Matter protest, how is the life of a black man in America more valuable than that of a black man in Africa?

Africans die in thousands inside Africa because of poverty, malnutrition, bad governance only to mention but a few. Does it mean that black lives matter only outside Africa?

In conclusion, the strength of blacks in Europe or America depends on the strength of Africa as a continent. indeed Africa should awake and shake off the shackles of white colonization in the continent. I draw the curtain with this reflective question, Which way Africa?

Oranye Chidubem Promise hails from Atani in Ogburu LGA of Anambra State. He is a Medical student in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. He is a young writer who have written articles and opinions in newspapers, magazines and his social media handles. His passion and love for music reflects in the variety of musical instruments he plays.

BROKEN MIRROR

by Chinazaekpere Agbaizu

Chinaza Agbaizu in this article likens the pandemic and its effects to the case of a broken mirror.

Once I had a mirror, shiny and spotless. It stayed in my possession for long and I developed a special fondness for it. But one day, I held the mirror in my hand and suddenly the mirror slipped, fell on the floor and broke into pieces. It was a mirror which I have always held to admire my being. I did not anticipate that it would break that day. It was not foreseen. But I looked and on the floor lay the shards of the broken mirror. For a moment, I was lost in introspection. How suddenly endeared things can be shattered!

The Corona virus pandemic (covid-19) came to us suddenly and everything which seemed to revolve around our lives came to a halt. The number of deaths reported worldwide and number of victims escalated. Fear and insecurity took their toll on us. We feared coexistence: as communities, as relatives, as friends and as people bound by the tie of love. The social gatherings like weddings, child ceremonies, birthdays, etc were postponed and some performed low-key within a small circle of friends because of the instructions against large gatherings. In fact, most of these ceremonies took place on the internet through platforms such as Zoom. We readjusted to things we never imagined or thought would come our way.

Activities in virtually all the sectors came to a halt: the church, schools, market places, malls,

eateries and restaurants, government institutions/parastatals, mosques, airports and the rest. These sectors which we have always considered indispensable to our existence were practically shut down, much to the bewilderment of many.

The market woman or man who woke up in the morning with hope of making better sales was plunged into dismay. The government official that always went to work, the churches and mosques that were filled to the brim on religious days to encourage our spiritual beliefs, the school children and educational institutions that had conducted their activities all year round were all handicapped. These sectors have always been the mirror through which we see the world and they have been what we have thrived on. Alas, we never expected that they would break down; that we could go on for weeks without actually visiting these places of our livelihood.

Was the coming of the pandemic anticipated? Was the lock down foreseen? I doubt. However, I do not doubt that the ruins of this pandemic have taken a toll on us. And now, what next? Are we to fold our hands and cry over what has happened? Or find a way of rising from the situation?

The broken mirror on the floor I believe still has some pieces left of it, shards if I may call them. The

big shards can still be used to see one's reflection, the smaller shards more capable of causing injury can be swept off and put away in bin. There is no need crying over spilled milk.

And so, these words I have come with: whatever we find ourselves doing, no matter how much we think we have lost, there is somewhere we can start from to rebuild. Some might begin with salvaging what's left of the situation just like the mirror, some might totally sweep away the shards on the floor and decide to replace the mirror. Others may as well cry and complain over spilled milk. However, the ball is in our individual courts.

Finally, hope must be our watchword. As the age old saying goes, 'where there is life, there is hope'. In the company of hope, we shall rise and this pandemic shall take its rightful place: where all failed attempts to annihilate humanity are recorded in the books of history.

Chinazaekpere Onyinye Agbaizu, hails from Ora-Eri in Aguata LGA of Anambra State. She is a law student of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. She is a growing writer, enthusiastic and passionate of x-raying her thoughts and opinions through words.



– International

Vaccinate Against Exams

by Dylan Winward

Our guest writer, Dylan Winward, strongly believes exams ought to be vaccinated against and not just the virus. His thoughts, influenced by the UK environment, are shared in this article.



One of the things that surprised me the most about the lockdown was the reaction from the educational community. Rather than worry about the implications of school closure for mental health or long term learning, teachers, parents and other prominent child haters rushed to mourn for their precious exams, wondering how the children of today would be quantified and branded irreversibly with numbers that they neither earned nor deserved.

I am talking here about exams.

It is a fact that our generation is over-examined, over worked and under-taught. The main objective of testing us is to grasp what we really know and understand. But exams have turned into a competition over who can spend more time cramming while shunning their other obligations whether social, family or to their own mental health. Instead of genuinely testing ability or knowledge, the increased use of rigid mark schemes has turned the exercise into anti-learning.

Rather than striving to get an answer that is correct, the young people are filling the storage drive in their head with answers that are applicable to the mark scheme. Often, these mark schemes will include questionable answers ranging from over-simplifications to outright falsehoods. Because of this, correct answers (that are either newer than the syllabus or a more advanced understanding) are rejected by the powder monkey unqualified markers. This is an outright injustice causing a deficiency in our learning. Rather than exams measuring education, education seems to be measuring exams. This is a classic case of the tail wagging the dog.

Although there are some who might say that this is the fault of the syllabus or mark scheme, I believe that this is an inescapable problem stemming from the idea of examinations themselves. The idea of testing in a way that can be quantifiable automatically leads to an importance being placed on these tests. As a result, there are always those who will complain, meaning that exam schemes that are already an inconceivable niche become even smaller for the sake of objectivity. Because of this, exams are not a practical way of testing genuine ability.

This competitive atmosphere also places even more adverse effects on people today. In the generation which is described as the most troubled in terms of stress, sleep deprivation

and mental health (yes, even more so than those during the second world war) it is simply unethical to add unnecessary pressure. Generation Z already has 13% more stress than the adult average. Here in the UK, the new 1-9 grading system for GCSEs was designed to make exams more competitively pressured. In fact, exams are now listed as a major cause of teenage anxiety, depression and suicide. Exams kill people both through the immediate stress and bias against slow starters in later life.

This isn't just the case for sixteen year olds and older children who have to be prepared for the stress of a workplace environment. Even the ten year old class I teach once a week complain of being constantly stressed about their "sat" test to the extent where some of them are on the verge of tears worrying about their futures when this is administered. Even the most baseless immoral corrupted Department of Education bureaucrat must realise that this is completely wrong. Threatening Year Sixes with consequences if they fail to pass an assessment is objectively immoral. This is a disgrace.

There isn't even a credible argument that this is good for our learning. The general secretary of the national teacher's union said that being "taught to the test" has a devastating impact on us. Instead of covering what will be useful in our lives, we are going over the same theoretical content repeatedly. Just think: how much learning have you done that is outside of the curriculum of our next exam? We could spend the time learning to file taxes or incorporate our first business.

The timescale of examinations is an additional problem for us. Despite countless studies showing that own paced learning is the most effective way of delivering a quality education to all people, exams enforce everyone to work at the wrong speed. Fast learners and early starters are forced to slow down leading to stagnation of educational enjoyment, personal development and intellectual progress.

For a moment, I would like to address the maniacs who have decided to schedule assessments even during the lockdown: as soon as there are inevitable suicides and long term effects because of the suffering you are needlessly inflicting you need to remember that the blood is on your hands. I hope that your conscience never lets you sleep again if you stood by when today's children needed you.

However, it is not all bad. There are clearly

some benefits of examinations: just ask the shareholders at Pearson Education, a key exams administrator in the UK and around the world. They can boast of a record £1 billion revenue in the UK alone. The shareholders of this get £40 million shared between them each year from the UK alone. The top employees who write exams that are known to parents, teachers and students to be dysfunctional earn £100,000 more a year than the Prime Minister. Surely they should be hung, drawn and quartered rather than rewarded for their incompetence.

But hey, at least the economy and fat cat bankers are reaping the results of the lives and futures lost in exams. At least someone sees the benefits of our unjust depression and anxiety. At least someone is making money off exams.

On a serious note, we need to take back control.

Education needs to return to being in our interests. I would like to present to you a better way and a brighter future. Although common counter argument to this proposition is to say that standards would fail to be upheld, in the most successful education system in Europe (that of Finland) outlaws any formal examination until one turns 18. Due to the lack of competition, there is a happier, healthier and more productive learning environment. If we emulated this, our entire country would be more a better place. This is the change that we need to fight for now. This is the change that we need to ensure happens for our children. This is the change that we need to make.

Our teachers are more than capable of making evaluations based off day to day conversations. We don't evaluate in real life using writing in timed conditions, so why should we when deciding real life futures.

Believe it or not, our teachers are quite intelligent, and they should be able to decide what is best for us. To conclude, I believe that schools should be made back into places where we can learn. We have a unique opportunity today to throw out exams along with all the other things that we are getting rid of after Coronavirus. Praise be to the gods and goddesses who recognised the chance we have to kill the beast in the Guardian earlier this month. For once, I fully support their ideas.

Education needs to be in our interests. Exams need to be abolished. Futures need to be better.





A new Beginning

Once, all things went smooth,
All humans happy and hearty,
Then, men were lord over all,
Until suddenly, calamity befell.

Silently, a lioness prowled
Upon the face of mother earth.
She brought a strong pause
To the earth, far and wide.

Slowly and steadily,
She took away helpless souls.
She made kings and slaves bow to her feet.
She established equality between the rich and poor.

But lo! Be it known unto man,
That their killer has begun to loose hold of them,
As though she felt pity within her.
Backwards she moves, watching silently her disaster.

Morning after morning,
The old place upon their jaws
Their large shaky hands,
Thinking of their 'ruined' lives.

The young, as though without a plan
Trudge along the empty streets
Desperate and depressed,
Making one think if they're truly alive.

But yea, let hope rise among men.
A hope of great restoration.
For though there was a tremendous downfall,
There also can be a tremendous rise.

Let unity speak amongst men,
For there lies the bedrock of a new beginning and progress
For there lies the strength of this great generation,
To overcome the havoc caused by the pandemic

Let men rise with strength and work as one
Though it'll be a herculean task, to restart life afresh,
Bear in mind,
That slow and steady, wins the race.

Ndukwe Chukwunonso.

Ndukwe Chukwunonso Stanley hails from Ideato South LGA of Imo State. He is a law student of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Chukwunonso is a young man whose love for literary works has led him into writing many poetic works. He has also co-written an article which will be published in no distant time. He is currently writing a novel which he intends to publish thereafter.



While There's Life.

Though there's no more peace,
and we're surrounded by nothing but
disasters,
our imaginations needing soothing,
our tears cascading down in messy
rushes,
tears for ourselves and our unborn kids,
yet we hope for the best,
striving more and weeping less.

Though there's no more hope,
and we know not how long the pains
would last,
we know not how much long we can
cope:
for awhile or for a lifetime;
we are ready to demonstrate sobriety,
and pray that the Source should look
down on us,
and make peace the next pandemic.

And now you see, it's the rain,
washing away the sorrows and the
pains,
and that's the joy ripening and the peace
blooming.
The air is fragrant with happiness and
laughter.
Let's start over again with renewed
hope,
in mind bearing that,
while there's life, there's hope.

Nella Dirim

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This Pandemic

By Anekwe Kingsley Chukwuebuka

Anekwe Kingsley Chukwuebuka in this article shares some interesting thoughts about the pandemic.

As it can be with times of great peril and decay, when death began a horrid feast and the streets began to get empty, the world began to face up to the fact that evil has added yet another offspring to its vile array; an offspring so minute that it is invisible to the eye, yet so powerful that it held the globe in great terror. It became resounded, rather unfortunately, the certitude of the varied shapes and sizes adversity can come in; the fact that fierce adversity can come branded with ordinary names like 'virus', 'Covid-19', 'the pandemic', 'this pandemic.'

A couple of months earlier, we continually woke up, everyday, to the gory realizations of what this pandemic could be; what unimaginable harm it sought to achieve. News of the numerous human lives that were extinguished everyday flustered us. We faced the compulsory closure of schools, markets, workplaces, worship places, compulsory use of face masks, and so on. More and more people died of hunger as the days went by and the world kept waning into deeper darkness. Filled with apprehension, many (especially those who profess the faith) wondered if this was the end that was long foretold.

In Nigeria, the situation presented itself as confusion. The figures given of the infected persons increased on a daily basis, yet we found it very difficult to see people coughing heavily and having difficulty in breathing. We only saw people dying of insecurity, people dying of lack of basic amenities, people striving to survive in the face of hardship. We only saw a fire consumed accountant general's office and records about public funds that burnt into ashes or rather, grew wings and flew away. The type of fight we put up about with a scepticism that tarried even though there were formal announcements by the media of people who really contracted and died of the virus, a situation not quite strange in a land which has suffered endless years of deceit, misdirection and maladministration. We still stayed safe in our own way, many of us thriving in that subtle belief borne out of helplessness and monumental primitivism—the belief that what a man does not know about cannot harm him.

Meanwhile, as we keep up the fight against everything that this pandemic still holds out to be, we must know that there are

many things it isn't, many things it cannot be. For one, this pandemic brought about social distancing, but it did not bring about racism; it did not have a hand in the reason for the 'Black Lives Matter Protest'. This pandemic brought about heightened temperatures but did not bring about the hike in the price of food, especially locally produced food. This pandemic brought about coughing and sneezing but did not bring about acts of violence like rape, robbery and gruesome murder. It brought about fear but did not bring about the dearth of conscience, the dearth of goodwill. Above all, this pandemic did not bring about itself. And so, what is left to be said? The unscathed truth remains that mankind is its own enemy.

Anekwe Kingsley Chukwuebuka is a writer, leadership enthusiast, classical musician, entrepreneur and graduate of the law program at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. He is passionate about using his creative abilities in bringing about positive change to the society. He is a lover of music and several sports. He is also the Founder/editor-in-chief of Fecundus magazine.



“Give Her Wings”

Period in Pandemic: the Beginning of a Sanitary Pad Drive.

From the Desk of Modester Chinonyelum, the founder of Girls Focus Initiative; an initiative geared towards the provision of sanitary pads for girls, especially in rural areas.

Pease started seeing her period at 13. For years she has struggled to manage her period on her own. She never had "the period talk" with an elder sister, mother, father or any adult. No one explained to her what was happening in her body. The only knowledge she had to go through was what she learnt in primary school.

Peace was ashamed to talk to anyone about her period because to her it must be an abominable act as no one talked about it. To stop herself from staining her clothes, Peace cut out pieces of clothes from one of the old rappers lying around and used for her period. With time, her mother found out that she was menstruating and encouraged her to use materials during her period.

Peace, in her junior secondary school realised that there is something called pad through her friends in school after being taunted by the boys for staining in class. Through her discussions with friends in school who use pads, she discovered that sanitary pads should be used for periods instead of old pieces of wrappers. From that day she learnt to ask her father for money for sanitary pads. Peace started using disposal pads but not all the time. This is because of the high cost of pads and her father rarely gives her the money to buy it. She still had to improvise sometimes with pieces of clothes. On days she will go to school she uses sanitary pads when she is at home, she sticks to her usual pieces of clothes.

For this young girl, using the pieces of clothes wasn't easy. This is because of the stigmatization revolving round period. She had to spread the pieces of clothes under a wrapper, a practice that helps build bacteria. Sometimes she spreads them on the wood in the backyard away from the eyes of others.

The pandemic worsened the situation for this young girl. Her father refused to further give her even the occasional

money he does for pads. According to him, she had to choose between having food to eat or buying sanitary pads. She chose the former, relying only on her pieces of clothes...

The story of Peace is that of most Nigerian girls especially those living in rural areas. They do not understand safe menstrual hygiene practices and how to manage their periods. Most importantly they do not have access to sanitary pads and rely on unhygienic and unsafe means to see their periods. Some of them use tissue paper which breaks and leads to stains. Other times the particles may enter into a girl's body and cause her health issues. Some use pieces of paper which don't absorb liquid. A greater number of the girls rely on pieces of clothes. When washed, they are ashamed to spread this on the rope for it to dry properly. They end up spreading it on wood in the backyard where eyes would not see it. The story of using tissue paper and pieces of clothes for periods ends in stains and "shame" due to ridicule and isolation by mates, especially the males.

Meaning of period poverty

Period poverty "occurs when someone cannot afford proper menstrual hygiene products, including tampons and sanitary pads". Health experts have labeled period poverty as the cause of why students, girls in particular, routinely miss school

Some of the girls miss school due to menstruation. According to reports by UNICEF, one out of ten girls miss school every month due to period poverty (<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/health/health-news/331979-period-poverty-how-menstruation-makes-nigerian-girls-miss-school.html>). They do not want to be ridiculed or stained in school. They prefer to stay at home for the duration of their period. When compared to their counterparts, they miss lessons that are important to their academics. Moreover, this affects their performance in school.

What are the causes of period poverty?

The major cause of period poverty is the high cost of sanitary pads which makes it unaffordable for girls from poor homes. Poverty is also another challenge. Most families are struggling to survive and do not have



money to spare for pads when the girls can supposedly find an alternative.

There is also a lack of good water and toilet facilities. Most schools and communities do not have good toilets for the girls to wash up during their periods.

Meanwhile, the stigma surrounding menstruation makes it difficult for girls to freely spread their menstrual kits under the sun. This is because they hide during their period. Also, menstruation is not discussed enough, thus young girls do not have access to the necessary information on how to manage their period.

It has over the years become a hard nut to crack, especially for international organizations who have done so much to provide young girls with sanitary pads. The reason why this is so is

because period is something that occurs every month for girls and women. While they have made efforts to teach girls and women how to sew reusable sanitary pads for themselves, the challenge remains that they cannot visit a lot of places at once. Nigeria is a large country with 36 states. This means that it would be hard for one organisation to provide sanitary pads for girls in the states. Thus they still need the support of private individuals and local organisations to help reach girls in some parts of the country.

In the light of the pandemic which made it worse for more girls like Peace to get access to sanitary pad drive, I started a campaign against period poverty. Believing strongly that



sanitary pads should be provided for young girls as menstruation is not a choice, I did a lot of research to understand the challenges young girls face and how to help them manage their period better. I checked the cost of sanitary pads and how it's literally unaffordable for these girls. A pack of disposal pads is sold on an average of

350 and contains 7-10 pieces. For girls with heavy flow, one may not be enough for one month. All these inspired the 2021 sanitary pad drive. Though the thoughts of starting this have been in my mind for two years but it didn't happen. Aside from the fact that I needed motivation, I didn't want to provide pads for girls to use at once and go back to square one. I needed something more affordable, sustainable, safe and hygienic. Thus we opted for reusable pads.

What are reusable pads?

Simply defined, these are sanitary pads that are not disposable. They are washable pads which can be reused by young girls for their period. They are sewed with absorbable clothing materials. However, a poly material is added to ensure leakage doesn't occur which may lead to stains. It is also designed in the same shape as disposable pads with wings to keep it in place. The pad also has a hook on the two wings and closed under the pants to prevent the pad from shifting it's position.

"Generally they are made from layers of absorbent fabrics (such as cotton or hemp) which are worn during menstruation, post-birth bleeding or any other situation where it is necessary to absorb the flow of blood from the vagina, or to protect underwear from regular discharge of vaginal fluids. After use, they are washed, dried and then reused". (Wikipedia)

Are they safe?

Contrary to what people think, these pads are perfectly safe. They are just like wearing clothes and washing them. However, the proper instructions should be followed. They can be washed with soap, detergent, or both. Also you can use disinfectant in the right quantity if it's available. Wash thoroughly in warm water then soak for five minutes then wash again to remove any bloodstain. Reusable

pads should not be spread on wood or inside the house. Please spread it on a rope preferable where the sun will touch it directly. This will help save you from getting any bacteria.

Reusable pads save money for families especially those with more female children. Some of them have a minimum lifespan of one year and maximum of 3 years(like the Pad-up creation washable pads used for our pad drive). Moreover they are easy to sew once you get the right materials, and will help a long way in providing pads for these young girls.

Impact of the pad drive

Exactly 224 sanitary pads were shared to girls in the rural area of Ebonyi state. These girls were also spoken to on career part, overall general health, breast cancer awareness and menstrual hygiene. The "Give Her Wings" sanitary pad drive was held in two locations; one was at Girls High School Abakaliki on 22nd June while the second was held at Ekumenyi Secondary School, Okpuituimo, Ebonyi State on July 15th.

All expenses for the pad drive were made through donations gotten from people majorly in my contact list. Together we raised slightly above 200 thousand naira. The pads were bought at an affordable price of 850 naira for one pack, from pad-up creation, a social company that produces sanitary pads.

While the pad drive came with its lessons and trials, I am grateful for the opportunity to affect lives and make impacts. We hope that this event will in the next few years grow bigger and transcend to other things.

By Modester Chinonyelum
Founder Girls' Focus Initiative



A Moment With Ambassador Timothy

An interview session with Ambassador Timothy Nwachukwu

Last year, during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic, Fecundus Magazine had a virtual interview session with Ambassador Timothy Nwachukwu, a youth leader. He is the Convener and Director General, Campaign Against Crime Initiative, (CACI) Founder Youth Advocates For Peace, Justice And Empowerment Network (YAPJEN). He is also the founder of 'Stand Out Africa Magazine' and is popularly known everywhere as 'The People's Advocate'.



Fecundus Magazine: A lot of people call you 'The People's Advocate', why is that so?

Ans: Thank you very much for the question. They do so because of my passion to speak up for the downtrodden, the depressed and people whose rights have been trampled upon or relegated to the background. I do it passionately and I have done it over time and because of that, friends gave me the name. Also, I founded The Youth Advocate For Peace, Justice and Empowerment Network and we have been into advocacy, trying to speak up for the people, especially the voiceless. So, most people who have seen all these like to refer to me with that appellation.

Fecundus Magazine: As a youth leader, what do you think should be the attitude of the youths towards the negative socio-economic changes in the country?

Ans: I have a strong belief that young people should be the solution they crave for, the change they desire and the answer to the society's problems and challenges. I don't subscribe to the idea of our young people complaining and blaming the government, family and private sector over their failure to take care of them. Rather, I usually urge young people to rise up right where they are and begin to take positive actions: actions that will affect the lives of people positively, actions that will contribute meaningfully to the society, actions that will add value to the society. You, a young person reading this, don't just complain about the bad socio-economic standards in Nigeria, think of what you can do to make Nigeria a better place.

Fecundus Magazine: What do you think makes a good leader one?

Ans: The first quality a good leader should have is understanding. A good leader should be able to understand the people he is leading. If, as a leader, you don't understand your followers, their strengths, weaknesses and peculiarities, you will keep on having problems with them. Secondly, a good leader should be a good listener. You cannot lead people if you are not a good listener. Thirdly, a good leader must practice what he preaches, i.e. He should lead by example. Fourthly, a good leader should be at the fore front, not at the rear, depending on the people you are leading or the purpose of the organization. If it's something that requires that you stand out and speak up for your people, you do it without fear. Also a good leader takes the welfare of his people seriously. As a leader you should know when your followers are not physically or psychologically stable and know how to manage that because it will definitely affect their followership.

Fecundus Magazine: Is there such a thing as 'Nigeria of your dreams'? If yes, how would you describe that?

Ans: The Nigeria of my dreams is that Nigeria that Americans, Germans, UK citizens, French citizens, etc, will be earnestly eager to hold the passport. The Nigeria that is prosperous and works for all. The Nigeria where basic amenities are provided. The Nigeria where people do not need to pray to God for health care, good roads and other basic amenities. Where the government works for the people. I believe it is possible. Between 1960-1966, Nigeria's economy was the best in the whole of Africa. In fact, the economy of eastern Nigeria alone was the 5th largest and fastest growing economy in the whole world, just eastern Nigeria, not even the whole of Nigeria. The major problem with Nigeria is the failure in leadership. Once we get the leadership right, Nigeria will rise again.

Fecundus Magazine: What do you think are the best ways to control crime in the society?

Ans: First thing is to get the young people involved in advocacy against crime. By addressing the root causes of crime: unemployment, underemployment, ostentatious lifestyle by those in authority. When these young people look at them, they tend to emulate them. Bad company, peer pressure, parental pressure and so many other factors which if tackled properly, crime will be a thing of the past.

Fecundus Magazine: Looking at your works in the quest for justice, what are the challenges?

Ans: Basically, the first is attracting people with like minds. Some people come to join with ulterior motives just to make the money or to be seen. Unfortunately when you start a good cause in Nigeria, there are people – criminals who want to hide under that good cause to tarnish your good name. So it's about gathering the right personnel who are not after money but who are ready to build a name for themselves. Second is finance. Most times there are beautiful projects to undertake but because of finance, they die natural deaths. Another challenge is failure of the government to support organizations who are actually doing their best. Then of course, there is chief of them all: corruption which is a challenge as well in Nigeria because sometimes, to get what is due to you, it proves really difficult but with God's help, we'll surmount them.

Fecundus Magazine: What is your advice to very young persons (children) who will be youths in no distant time?

Ans: My advice for young people is to seek for knowledge. Knowledge is light, knowledge is empowerment, knowledge will give you everything you desire for. Ideas rule the world. Secondly, seek for mentors. Look for people who are true role models. People you'll follow their footsteps and learn from them and be able to actualize your dreams.

Fecundus Magazine: You are the founder of 'Stand Out Africa Magazine' which is a successful magazine in Nigeria, what advice do you have for start-up magazines in Nigeria?

Ans: Being consistent and focused is the key. Don't be discouraged, go for good content and try thinking out of the box, getting areas that are unique and different from the general things common in magazines which will distinguish you as a start-up magazine.

Fecundus Magazine: Are there any challenges you are facing as a youth leader? How do you cope with these challenges?

Ans: Being misunderstood by people. That is the major challenge. People sometimes think you have an ulterior motive, sometimes they think you are doing it for the money involved or see it as an avenue to become rich.

Fecundus Magazine: This year's international youth day theme says 'Youth Engagement for Global Action', how can you explain this theme? In what ways do you think the theme can be applied to real life situations?

Ans: Youth engagement for global action I think, is a theme that contemplates the provision of opportunities for young people to contribute meaningfully to the development of the community, the state, the nation, Africa i.e. the continent and the world at large. The theme for the day was actually chosen so that the young people can take actions. There are so much the young people can do. They can volunteer their skills, they can volunteer their ideas, they can volunteer their time, they can volunteer their knowledge, they can volunteer anything. So, if you're good at writing, good at advocacy, good at speaking, good at any skill at all, you can actually volunteer in making the world a better place. So that is basically what it is all about.

Fecundus Magazine: What are the greatest virtues you think a youth, especially a Nigerian youth, should possess?

Ans: Are there greatest virtues? Well, a good name is better than money. If there's anything I would advise any young Nigerian to have, it's to have a good name. You can have all the money but when you don't have a good name nobody wants to associate with you. So integrity must be the Hallmark of anyone who wants to go far. Maintain a good name. Integrity, that should be the greatest virtue anyone should have. Be honest, be a person of integrity, let people know you for who you are and that you can stand for what you say. People must not know you as a double standard person.

Fecundus Magazine: As a lawyer in equity, how do you think the justice system in Nigeria can be improved?

Ans: The justice system in Nigeria can be improved, first, by changing the way judges are appointed. Presently, the constitution provides that a judge can be appointed by a sitting president or a governor.

Most times when a High court Judge is appointed by a president or governor, his loyalty tends to tilt towards the person who appointed him. So if we must make progress, we must have a situation whereby judges are appointed by the civil society, the house of assembly, state level or the national assembly at the federal level, based on the recommendation of the National Judicial Council (NJC) or State Judicial Council (SJC) as the case may be. This will in turn guarantee the autonomy and independence of the judiciary.

And also considering fiscal independence of the judiciary, they need to control their own finances. These are basic things that we can do to actually strengthen our judicial system.

And of course we need to amend some of our laws so that there will be expedition of justice. For instance, we should have a special anti-corruption court where corruption cases would be expended on time and not as the case is today where corruption cases last up to 5 or 6 years or more. So we need a special court for that. And our laws should be amended to strengthen the judicial process.

Fecundus Magazine: How would you define courage?

Ans: Courage is the ability to keep going when there are reasons why you must give up. You have every reason to give up but you keep going, that is courage.

Fecundus Magazine: You have awarded scholarships to many people even as a youth, what is your take on 'giving' and 'philanthropy'?

Ans: Well, speaking of giving and philanthropy, I believe it's all about the passion. It's all about your heart. Personally, I believe in making the world a better place. I believe that I have just two assignments- service to God and service to humanity. And as a christian, the best way to show that you're a christian is to be a Christ to your neighbour. So I believe in making the world a better place which entails helping other people to rise. We all depend on one another to survive. We are interconnected so we depend on one another to rise. So, that is my thought. Philanthropy shouldn't be something to show off, rather, it should be something to challenge and encourage other people to equally support the downtrodden, the less privileged and the people who are not well to do. In that manner, when you encourage them, they too will in turn, be able to encourage and support other persons.

Fecundus Magazine: What is your take on the concept of 'live and let live' in the light of contemporary social issues like racism, religious bigotry, etc.?

Ans: Yes, we have the duty to make our world a better place. I've always advocated for that. If we destroy our world, no other person will build it for us. So they are the reasons why we should live in peace. We should live in harmony amongst ourselves, appreciate and support one another. We don't have reasons to tear and pull one another down. There are more things that bind and unite us than the things that divide us. So, it's paramount. It's important. It's in its place that we must imbibe the spirit and attitude of tolerance, enduring one another's faults, understanding the weaknesses of one another and that way, we will be able to make our world a better place.

Fecundus Magazine: What are your last words for this session?

Ans: I want to commend the people who conceived this vision, this idea. It's a laudable one and requires support and encouragement. My words for you are: do not give up, do not be discouraged even when people do not believe you. Be focused and remain focused and in no distant time you will be celebrated. Be consistent in what you are doing. There are challenges, don't think there won't be challenges. Also don't think that everyone will buy into your idea immediately. But be consistent and focused, and the sky will be your starting point.



COVID-19

A Nightmare For Poultry Industry

From the desk of Ernest Onyedikachi an Anambra farmer and Agriculturist

The Aftermath effect of the virus ravaging the world cannot be overemphasized.

Virtually all the sectors of humanity have been hit by the Covid-19 pandemic- the education sector, the financial institutions, the Religious and agricultural sectors amongst others.

As a farmer, whenever I try to imagine the unfortunate conditions young and startup farms like mine have been exposed to, I can't help but feel pity. It took us unawares.

Even at some point when most parts of the world were experiencing decrease in the number of infected cases, my country and some other African countries were still experiencing geometric increase in the number of confirmed cases daily.

This write-up is not to draw sympathy from the public, but to share my experience of how the pandemic has adversely affected my agribusiness enterprise and proffer possible solutions to the best of my knowledge on how young and startup farms like mine can cope during and after unexpected disasters like the pandemic.

Reminiscence:

Sometime ago, just few weeks into the lockdown, we had over 500 broiler birds of 2kg – 2.5kg live weight hoping to make a bountiful easter sale from it but no better sales came throughout the Easter period.

We begged fast food/restaurants to buy our birds on credit for #900/kg dressed weight but none came through.

We slashed feeding rations, and completely stopped administering

medications just to minimize our cost of production and the thoughts of stocking for replacement batch were miscarried(what a painful miscarriage). In fact most of us gave quitting this agribusiness a deep thought.

Weeks after that, we only managed to sell about 60% of the flock at giveaway prices so that we would be relieved of the cost of feeding them without any sales.

We had over 15% mortality, gave out almost 10% freely and the remaining were on a free range to cater for their food.

A family that normally bought 5 broiler birds before slashed their budget to two birds, the ones that bought two settled for one and some none, some suddenly remembered that our indigenous fowl with lesser weight was a worthy delicacy for celebrating Christ's resurrection.

One of our major up takers, the Churches were on lockdown.

COVID-19 pandemic made us experience raising Broiler birds for 8 weeks without seeing buyers.

Most of us especially the newbies have been eased off from the business because of the cold impact of the virus.

Having experienced all these, I wish to share my own little tips to successful farming activities and how young farmers can bounce back after the pandemic.

Stock your day old chicks (DOC) in relation with the status of your market; always monitor your market before booking your DOC. Don't be quick to increase your production because your last batch was bountiful. Many

families might slash their budget after the pandemic because of its impact on the economy.

Most of the small scale broiler farmers are not registered and this hinders them from accessing any package from the government and NGOs. In a time like this, small scale farmers are meant to be supported by the NGOs and government but their farms not being registered might disqualify them from these package. So always remember that you will likely not get any support from anybody so don't expect any, that way, you won't be disappointed.

But whenever you can, register your business with the right commission so that you will be recognized and partake whenever help comes to farmers.

Farmers should follow a healthy medication/vaccination program from day one till maturity; this will go a long way to mitigate the effects of disease outbreak and losses.

Be familiar with time and season; as a farmer you should know when, where and how to produce to maximize profit.

Keep your customers close. Always interact with them, know what they want and work towards satisfying their needs.

I believe these points will go a long way, although opinions of experts may slightly differ.

It's my aim to contribute towards achieving the second and third Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-being respectively. Together we can.

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Little disclaimer: This is not an attempt to lampoon or undermine the gravity of the corona virus or the consequences left in its wake. Rather, it's a personal, light-hearted approach to a period most will agree was as challenging as they come. Why? Because there are important lessons to be sifted from the experience, and because it can't hurt to think of it with a little smile, something which was largely missing in 2020.

I didn't see it coming. The pandemic. Before that unprecedented turn of events, a lot of us would say our lives were pretty "ok". Some might even call theirs "great". It felt like reading a very engaging book, and then stumbling upon a really dark plot twist. In 2020, that book was our "ok" or "great" lives. The plot twist might have been someone's plans to finally travel overseas or have an extravagant wedding being ruined by the national lockdown mandate.

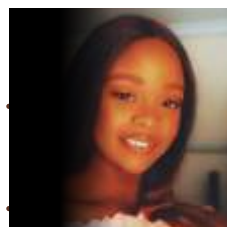
For me, it was as simple as graduating from the university. Pretty basic, some might say. Well, it was one of my plans; to finally cop a degree that had mentally tasked me for years. To put an LL.B to the name. I slugged through the manic lectures and lived on fewer hours of sleep than a doctor would recommend. The days past in a blur but even then, the news was hard to miss.

A novel virus was giving the world a run for her money.

Corona virus or Covid-19, it was called. In no distant time, this disease was sweeping through nations without the hassle of a Visa.

Like many, my skin prickled with fear whenever I saw the news. It was everywhere; blog posts, social media etc. Like some, I never wavered that it was going to hit Africa or Nigeria so soon! One morning, it was just a bad news on tele. By nightfall, it was at the corridors of power in the very nation I lived. I had barely three weeks to be done with my degree exams. It might have been a selfish and trifling concern at the time, but I was so close to the finish line. The corona virus was closer, faster. It made many countries of the world go on lockdown shortly after its arrival.

The main challenge however came when I stopped watching the pandemic, and lived it. Life was on pause for a lot



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Life Changing Tips

To Every Survivor of the 2020 Pandemic: If You Are Still Making Any of These 3 Mistakes, Then Think Again Before Calling the Corona Virus your Major Setback!

by Deekor Precious

of us. We had to stay cooped up indoors. And outside?

Empty streets coated with fear, hunger and shelved dreams raged with the pandemic. Some unique individuals did doubt the reality of the situation. Most called it a hoax and everytime they sought to test their immune systems outside, security personnels popped like wine corks out of the blue, caught a few and had them carted off to isolation camps.

I bet you have your own stories to tell. They're probably more horrific than mine. Horror however is relative. For students, it may have been the extra year that knocked the wind out of their graduation sails. For businesses, it was the loss accruing with each passing day they were inoperable. For parents, horror may take the form of the dreadful thought of watching their kids starve. More generally, horror was the fear of contracting the dreadful covid-19, and possibly dying before the world got around to finding a cure! Sad.

While I sat poised each day. I brain stormed possible business ideas I could initiate, because as my tertiary education was nearly completed, I had one leg on the labour market and the other on a banana peel. Yikes!

However, this line of thought got me pondering. With the coronavirus, a lot of people fell victim to tunnel vision. All they saw was a problem eating away at our continued survival. However, there were other layers to the horror story. Other inconspicuous yet equally truthful aspects of our common problem, like the fact that the pandemic pointed out the failings of our plans, business structures amongst other concerns.

It's said that there's always something to be learned from every negative situation. The coronavirus did leave us with a few lessons such as our unleashed potential in medicine, the importance of family, the need to be prepared for uncertainties etc. Now that the worst of it has blown over, many people and businesses have run into a terrible pitfall. They have returned to their scheduled programming a.k.a "business as usual".

Thus:

They run their brick and mortar businesses as just that. They are yet to find creative ways to adapt their business models for contactless service or sales. May I remind you that this is one of the

major strategies employed by nonessential businesses that managed to stay afloat during the pandemic? If you still run your business this way only, it needs a facelift as you might be setting yourself up for financial strain in the near future, when legal or political inconveniences easily cripple your business and income.

They are not lateral thinkers. They still approach problem solving in a logically linear thought process. Thinking outside the box is beyond them. Breakthroughs in medicine usually comes after years of research. In the past, it's taken 4 to 20 years to create conventional vaccines. For the new messenger RNA (mRNA) from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna, it took a record setting 11 months! Imagine the potential in lateral thinking.

They take time for granted: This entails time with family or loved ones as well as one's youth, both of which are fleeting. These people are living their lives on a whim, without actionable plans. It's said that when one fails to plan, they have already planned to fail? Sound familiar?

These three mistakes might seem inconsequential but they could be insidious if left unchecked. Why? This is because the very things which are centric to our peace of mind and primal need for survival (Our family, time and our mind) are involved.

It goes without saying that if you survived the pandemic unscathed but came off without inculcating lessons learned, you're prone to relive, consciously or unconsciously, the horrors of the year 2020, with the exception of a deadly virus. To this end, the corona virus was never solely to be blamed for whatever setbacks you might have had. Without it in the picture, you're still headed for the same or more egregious errors in business, life in general etc. The REAL problem was always YOU.

My unsolicited advice? Cut down on the excuses you give. That's so last season. Don't be in a hurry to apportion blame on external factors like the coronavirus. Look inward for a change. Take responsibility for your life as a survivor. Learn to see opportunities and/or lessons even in difficult times and run with it. That's a few steps in the right direction.