

A young girl is the central focus of the image. She is wearing a bright yellow headwrap and a yellow and blue patterned sleeveless top. She is holding a wooden bow and a yellow arrow, aiming it towards the camera with a serious expression. The background is a soft-focus green landscape.

By World Kindness Movement  
& World Kindness Nigeria

Kindness in Nigeria

# Force, Faith and Future.

Text by Oke Stephen Iruobe  
Photos by Zsolt Repasy



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WORLD KINDNESS  MOVEMENT

*Gentle*tude

# **Force, Faith and Future**

*Text by Oke Stephen Iruobe*

*Photos by Zsolt Repasy*

# GentleBooklets

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World Kindness Nigeria  
c/o WKN Secretariat, 18, Hassan Street, off Ikosi Road, Ikosi- Ketu,  
Lagos State  
Nigeria.  
P. +2348055245453 +2348050529129 +2348023183717  
E. secretary@worldkindnessnigeria.org  
W. www.worldkindnessnigeria.org

Gentletude is a neologism composed of the words gentleness and attitude. It pursues the aims for a better world without violence, arrogance and rudeness. A world where caring and paying attention to others, common sense and balanced competitiveness are the most important things. Gentletude is a non-profit organization in Switzerland and Italy.  
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Curator: Cristina Milani  
Text: Oke Stephen Iruobe  
Photos: Zsolt Repasy  
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## World Kindness Movement.

The idea behind the World Kindness Movement (WKM) crystallised at a conference in Tokyo in 1997 when the Small Kindness Movement of Japan brought together like-minded kindness movements from around the world.

The WKM was officially launched in Singapore on 18 November 2000 at the 3rd WKM Conference. The mission of the WKM is to inspire individuals towards greater kindness and to connect nations to create a kinder world. The WKM encourages individuals of other nations to set up their own kindness movements.

[www.theworldkindnessmovement.org](http://www.theworldkindnessmovement.org)



## Kindness in Nigeria

Kindness is an act or quality of being kind, thus this quality is manifested in care for and about others. Gentility, friendliness, showing respect and generosity are visible fruits of kindness. Nigeria is regarded as the giant of Africa, and this status is derived from its enormous human and material resources. It is generally stated that one out of ten black people in the world is a Nigerian. Nigerians all over the world excelled in their various fields of endeavor, such as law, literature, engineering, social sciences, medicine, entrepreneur, commerce and banking etc. Nigeria is also endowed with abundant natural resources, such as crude oil, gold, iron ore, zinc, kaolin, lead, and many more. These enormous resources and proceeds therefrom were used by Nigeria for the advancement of act of kindness across Africa and the rest of the world.

It is noteworthy that act of kindness in Nigeria is not solely about education, but respect for human dignity, good neighbourliness, being one brother's keeper, assisting the needy, empowering the less privileged, provisions of social amenities, protecting the vulnerable, amongst others.

It also flowed from her good neighbourliness role in the heydays of anti-apartheid struggles in South Africa and the entire decolonization process in Southern







Africa. She was home to asylum seekers during the apartheid era in South Africa, and more recently the warlords from Liberia, like Yomi Johnson, Charles Taylor, amongst others.

Apartheid is a state of being apart; it is a system of government developed from 1948 to 1998, to foist a racial segregation where the white Afrikaans and black inhabitants were separated, the rights of majority black inhabitants were also curtailed while white minority rule was maintained. This led to the anti-apartheid struggles for the abolition of such draconian regime and ensured natural justice; equity and good conscience take its center-place amongst the broad based communities in South Africa. Nigeria, as a country, was in the vanguard of the struggles for the emancipation of South Africans, both the rich and the poor had immense contributions to the actualization of the goal of ensuring a united South Africa where the blacks and white will be given equal rights and privileges to excel and live in peace with each other.

Furthermore, in a bid to ensure that the crises within the western African sub region is abated, more particularly the Liberian civil war, Nigeria spearheaded the formation of ECOMOG, a military formation that participated actively to restore stability in the country; she also granted political asylum to Mr. Yomi Johnson and Charles Taylor, previous warlords, and their families,

ensuring that they enjoyed all the rights and privileges of bona fide citizens of Nigeria. This occasioned for the peace and tranquility enjoyed in Liberia today.

Nigeria, as a country, is a major stakeholder in the African regional and global peace and tranquility. Irrespective of her own internal challenges, she was always sending peace keeping forces to troubled spots across the world. These various acts of playing the role of big brother in Africa are enduring behavioural pattern of kindness among the people. Nigerians are hospitable, they can accommodate a complete stranger; vacate their bedrooms to ensure a visitor is comfortable, give the best meals and gifts to them, etc.

Like all human communities, the Nigerian society is stratified. There is a great dichotomy between the rich and the poor. The statistics of the poor are overwhelming. But there is a distinctive show of concern by the rich to the plight of the poor. Philanthropic gestures are such overt expressions of such concerns. These philanthropists fund non-profit organizations, give shelter to the homeless, feed the hungry, cloth the naked and dole out gift items and money to the less privileged in the society, particularly the orphanage homes, the aged people's homes, as well as the poorest of the poor. This account for the reasons why there are over 5,000 orphanage homes in the country. They are al-

ways a beehive of activities on weekly basis as people from all walks of life go there to extend kindness to the less privileged. Many of them do this to give back to the society that has been so kind to them!

Let me also say that periods of grief and misfortunes avail people the opportunities to show kindness. There is a communal approach to this. And it is because Nigerians live a communal life where problems are shared. This is also demonstrated in self-help projects to complement the efforts of the government or bridge the gap between what the government could offer as against the needs of the community.

## What is kindness in Nigeria?

In Nigeria, kindness is expressed by act of giving to the poor, empowering the widows and the less privileged in the society through various empowerment programmes. There are so many beggars on the street of Nigeria, begging for money and clothes, food shelter and employment; it takes a person with milk of human kindness to give unto the beggars. While the widows are empowered by retraining them in particular trades, such as tailoring, hairdressing, amongst others, some other less privileged people are on daily life support like feeding, free tuition schools, housing etc. These have positively affected people's dispositions to mak-

ing meaning contributions towards act of human kindness.

The government legislations encourage the formation of organizations involved in kindness, give enabling environment for the actualization of their set objectives, synergize with the various non-profit-organization in the provisions of basic amenities for the populace, more particularly the setting up of nomadic educational centers across the northern part of Nigeria to ensure the poorest of the poor have access to good and qualitative education, camp for beggars, orphanage homes, and the aged also have the support of the government through the supply of food items, clothing, amongst others.

Kindness is about rendering assistance to someone in need irrespective of their status or position, assisting a stranger who was to get to their destination, training and payment of school fees of indigent students, show respect to both elders and younger ones.

Nigerians can vacate their apartments for visitors or stranger to be comfortable, give the best meals and gifts to them. The motorist helps in saving life of accident victims by taking them to hospitals; the family system is communal thus the custom permit a community to make contribution towards the payment of tuition fees to assist poor members in higher institutions, sponsor projects to the benefit of the masses,

give alms to the needy, particularly the handicap. However, not everyone who renders such service is kind; some may render it for political gains, to be noted, as part of religious obligations or for their own selfish aggrandizement. Sincere act of kindness has become object of political showmanship except in some exceptional cases, based on the state of the nation where the poor are becoming poorer and the incidence of poverty is on the increase, thus people seldom express kindness through giving. This occasion warrants for the sustenance of kindness campaigns, through training, education, corporate brands, sport ambassadors, enlightenment vide electronic and print media to sensitize the public on the need to imbibe the act of kindness as a addressing distrust, disconnection and upheaval in the land in bid to have peaceful atmosphere in the country.

Notable blue chip firms are now involved in the campaign for kindness, for instance, the Nigerian Bottling Company, Coca- Cola Bottling Company, have a campaign slogan “crazy for Good” to sensitize the populace on the need for kindness among the people, share gifts, good neighbourliness, burden bearing, and or be involved in other acts that would foster kindness.

Whilst MTN a Telecommunication firm has incorporated a Foundation to cater for the motherless and

aged people as part of its corporate social responsibility, which includes executions of projects in communities to the benefit of the poor and the less privileged amongst others

The Rochas Foundation founded by a business mogul-turned politician and now the current governor of Imo State of Nigeria, Chief Rochas Okorocha, established six secondary schools in the six geographical zones in Nigeria for the less privileged, and has the intention of setting up tuition free university in Nigeria to cater for the children of the poorest of the poor. It is part of his contributions to make them useful to the society. The foundation is also involved in various kindness campaigns and community services.

There are other kindness based organizations such as Rochas Foundation, Rose of Sharon Foundation, Chari love, etc, involved in catering for the orphans, handicap, the aged people, the widows amongst others. These various act of Kindness are part of Nigeria culture.

## WK Nigeria's dimension to spreading Kindness

World Kindness Nigeria, as a non-profit organization, will get involved in integrative projects that fill







the void created by government's inactions or inadequate interventions in the life of the people. It must be appreciated that Nigeria has a large population of poor and under privileged.

For all the urban centres and cities, especially state capitals and even Abuja, the national capital, there are sprawling slums peopled mainly by the poor. Our primary role here will be to make life bearable for this category of people. Principally, we shall be involved in environmental cleanup through the mobilization of the people using sensitization programmes.

There are enormous security challenges caused by ignorance. We shall strive to create enough awareness about security consciousness. There is growing impunity among the members of the security agencies. This has led to worsening human rights abuses in the country. We shall enlist the support of heads of security agencies to curtail the proclivity of their men and officers. More importantly, we would support the civic education of the less privileged people for awareness creation.

Lifting the poorest of the poor through empowerment programmes will be our priority. Appreciating the limitation that could be imposed by paucity of funds, we shall partner with the relevant political authorities at the federal, state and local levels to get this set of people the needed assistance. Through corporate sponsorship,

indigent students and the motherless children will get deserved attention.

Based on the apropos, World Kindness Nigeria will use extensively the media to sensitize the Nigerian society to the need to re-kindle the flame of kindness. We are doing something along this direction on a low scale; however, in conjunction with friendly organizations, we shall scale up our involvement in programmes that will get more people covered.

World Kindness Nigeria in the spread of kindness will also seeks the use of corporate brands through sponsorship by corporate entities such as Coca Cola, Nigerian Bottling Company, 7UP Bottling Company, telecommunications companies like MTN, Etisalat, Aitel and Globacom for the endorsement of the spread, appointment of Kindness ambassadors from among the music industry, movie icons, media practitioners, captain of industries amongst others.

Top on our agenda is the sponsorship of a television programme to be called Kinder Television, The television programme, when it comes on stream, will bring the experience of each of the philanthropists to be featured to the fore to share with the audience the gains of being kind as well as showcase the World Kindness Movement in Nigeria.

## What we do is what needs to be done

In ensuring the spread of kindness bug across the nook and crannies of Nigeria, particularly in using acts of human kindness in fostering unity and conflict resolution in the northern part of Nigeria that has been pervaded by insurgency and terrorist attack.

The World Kindness Nigeria, prior to this moment, has been involved in counseling the youth on abstaining from social vices that are inimical to the attainment of their set goals, training on peace development and how to be self-reliant, and empowering the society's poorest of the poor through giving of token support in form of initial capital for small scale trading. She has initiated reconciliation among aggrieved parties, facilitated restitution, forgiveness and self-reliance vide the setting up of Pan African Reconciliation Center (PARC). These has in a little way enhanced the educational development of over 20 persons who are now a beacon of success in their choosing careers both in Nigeria and abroad.

The organization is on the verge of hosting its web site, equipping its national secretariat, and setting up of branches in the states of the country, schools, within the law enforcement agencies and other places where infringements are rampant.

The Organization has a dream of setting up a kindness village, where the abused will be rehabilitated, school

for the less privilege will be established as well as centers for skills acquisition, skills like shoe cobbling, hair dressing, fashion and design, craft work, furniture making, baking amongst others.

In the same vein, the organization has commenced the establishment of Kindness Club in the various institutions of higher learning, secondary and primary schools to inculcate the virtue of kindness in the pupils and students to curb bully, cultism and violence amongst the students with a view of building a kinder world.

## Our Dream for Kindness in Nigeria

Our dream is to ensure that the act of kindness becomes a pattern of life in Nigeria where people will live harmoniously without any fear, where lamb and lion will eat grass together, where World Kindness Nigeria will be a household name and World Kindness Movement is showcased as a global brand, which will be brought to the consciousness of all Nigerians in particular, and Africans in general.

This can be achieved through having kindness index and compliance in the various states of Nigeria.

## Author

OKE Stephen Iruobe, as an Attorney-at-Law and the Principal Partner of Divine Favour Chambers, is a member of the Nigerian Bar Association, engaged in the promotion and protection of human rights, of the Full Gospel Business men Fellowship, and has been part of “Pan African Reconciliation Centre (PARC)”, a community of people committed to the promotion of peace, social justice and passive resistance to all forms of violence and oppression. He is also member of the board of the World Kindness Nigeria and an Executive Member of the international Council of the World Kindness Movement.

## Photographer

Zsolt Repasy is a freelance photographer from Budapest, Hungary. He mainly focuses on the human side of photography (visual anthropology) because this is what he believes in as the special ingredient. He is a regular contributor to Corbis Images, NurPhoto and ZumaPress and sometimes also contributes to magazines. His works have been published in several online media and print magazines, including National Geographic. In 2014, Zsolt is among the finalists in the Travel Photographer of the Year contest and his image has been selected as one of the 10 most popular images on National Geographic Travel. Zsolt is a member of IFJ (International Federation of Journalists) and a contract photographer for Corbis Images and UNHCR Central Europe.

[www.zsoltrepasy.com](http://www.zsoltrepasy.com)

World Kindness Nigeria is the World Kindness Nigeria is a non-profit organization registered under the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria under the name and style of World Kindness Development Foundation, with programs aimed at cultivating kindness and creating greater understanding and co-operation amongst Nigerian society. It is an affiliate of the World Kindness Movement and the National Peak body of Kindness based organizations in Nigeria. Prior to the body was part of Pan African Reconciliation Centre (PARC), founded by Late Dr. Ade Adenekan in 1988.

## History

The World Kindness Nigeria (WKN) was an initiative of Late Dr. Ade Adenekan, who called for the people of Nigeria to develop an act of kindness towards another, thereby creating a kinder world. The PARC was initially set up to train young Nigerians on peace development and building a kinder world. In November 2011, World Kindness Nigeria was launched in Kwara State, present at the launching was the Wife to the State Governor, Mrs. Omolewa Ahmed, the Commissioner for women affairs, Ms Comfort Afolayan, amongst other dignitaries, the from different sectors were



also present, the flag of the world kindness movement was presented to the first lady. The fire of kindness was ignited at this epoch making event.

[www.worldkindnessnigeria.org](http://www.worldkindnessnigeria.org)

