



# New Deal, New Game, for Women in Africa

OPUS 4

## Rewarding the women of tomorrow

Roland  
Berger



WOMEN IN AFRICA CLUB  
GLOBAL LEADERS COMMITTED TOGETHER FOR AFRICA

September 2017

An infographic with a teal background featuring three white circles stacked vertically. Each circle contains a large teal number. To the right of each circle is a corresponding text label in white. The first circle contains the number 260, the second contains 16, and the third contains 6.

**260**

**#  
applications**

**16**

**#  
guests at the  
Entrepreneurs'  
Hub**

**6**

**#  
winners**

**1 Gold Award  
5 Revelations Night**

# Rewarding the women of tomorrow

## Aude de Thuin and Charles-Edouard Bouée

Behind a success story there is, first and foremost, an adventure. Obstacles, challenges and successes also, sometimes unexpected. All of these women entrepreneurs at the Women in Africa annual summit have been tenacious in building a business that has changed the lives of thousands of people. They are undoubtedly the living forces of Africa for tomorrow, and even the day after tomorrow.

Education, Health and Nutrition, Energy, Agriculture, Digital & Tec... The WIA annual summit has highlighted successes in all these sectors. This event is also an occasion to gather in one place company leaders coming from all parts of the continent. Their journey is unique, their story is exciting.

Roland Berger and WIA have met with three of them, and went through their adventure. If today their business is booming, nothing was played in advance a few years ago. The road ahead was full of obstacles, but their determination was unflinching.

Negotiating with a corrupt government, combating counterfeit medicines because a relative is gone because of those, improving the daily life of children and adults by offering them high-quality and safe transport ... All these stories are chapters of these women's lives: Doreen Kessy, Vivian Nwakah and Damilola Olokesusi.

All women at the WIA annual summit are influential people who have decided to take the power in Africa. These women should become role models for all young African girls who will soon have a decisive role to play. Not only in Africa. There are several regions around the globe where women are despoiled of their rights and their equality flouted. Cultural change must come from women themselves first, and from their confidence in their ability to become the leaders of tomorrow.



**Aude de Thuin,**  
Founder & President of  
Women In Africa Club



**Charles-Edouard Bouée,**  
CEO of Roland Berger

# Interviews

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**Vivian NWAKAH**, co-founder of MedSaf

MedSaf is a US founded company that utilizes technology to make the process of buying and managing medications easy, and efficient. We provide value added services to hospitals and pharmacies; medications, inventory management applications, credit facilities and tech enabled logistics. We aggregate data from medications sales, scarce and in-demand medications, as well as locations and purchasing habits to help manufacturers increase their offerings to the African public. This results in cost-effective and safe medication to the public.

**Doreen Kessy**, COO in charge of business of UBONGO

Ubongo is a social enterprise that creates interactive edutainment for kids in Africa, using technologies they already have. We entertain kids to LEARN and LOVE learning.

**Damilola OLOKESUSI**, co-founder of SHUTTLERS

Shuttlers is a multi-staff bus company set up to assist professionals in the Lagos metropolis and its environs to resolve the daily challenge of commuting to work - such as driving stress, hustling for buses, queuing for fuel, long waits for BRTs, and so on. Shuttlers aim to improve the quality of life of professionals by transforming the daily commute time to a relaxing and comfortable time where they can read, snooze, or continue work. This is possible because Shuttlers operates buses and mini-vans that are air-conditioned and wifi-fitted and our drivers are professionally trained, cautious and courteous.

# "Prevent and improve the conditions of the pharmaceutical industry across Africa".



## Vivian NWAKAH, co-founder of MedSaf

### How did you come up with the idea of creating MedSaf ?

My first entrepreneurial experience was in the United States. I helped start home health care agencies that expanded from Illinois across to Indiana. After they became stable, I traveled the world and went to business school.

I came to Nigeria just to do an internship and was immediately confronted with challenges within the health care industry. Initially I had my own personal challenges finding quality healthcare or even finding the medications that I needed. I noticed that friends and family would bring suitcases full of medications for themselves and others. In my second month, my friend's brother died from taking a fake malaria pill. I realized that not only could anyone suffer from this issue but that it affects everyone equally. I felt a calling to try and help contribute to the country and solve this issue. I realized early on that technology could be utilized to prevent and improve the conditions of the pharmaceutical industry across Africa.

### What difficulties have you encountered in developing MedSaf ?

There are difficulties every single day like government regulations, infrastructure, talent, and logistics. It was important for me to create a strong team that could think

outside of the box, be creative and find a way over and under any difficulties that we faced. I also know the value of forging strong relationships and partnerships to get support in areas that we need help. Medsaf is a collective of people driven by the concept that every human being should have access to safe and cost effective medication.

### What do you expect of the WIA annual summit ?

I have paid close attention to Roland Berger's publications and how they highlight the role of women in Africa. I am quite excited about the topics that will be discussed at the WIA annual summit: entrepreneurial spirit, women empowerment.

Each time I went to an event with CEO's or entrepreneur event, there is rarely another female face, especially in my business sector. It's not only an opportunity to build a network for myself but also an opportunity to help others who are starting their own business.

### How do you imagine the role of women in Africa in 20 or 30 years ?

Firstly, women have always been running things as taking care of their family. They already have the entrepreneur spirit especially in Africa. I think the difference in 20-30 years will be access to financing to really fuel these businesses into global conglomerates. I feel that women will continue the role in Africa they had for centuries. But with technology and awareness, women will be able to do more and be more visible around the world.

# "I was always upset whenever I tried to use the public buses (...) I decided to do something about it".



## Damilola OLOKESUSI, co-founder of SHUTTLERS

### How did Shuttlers begin their adventure? A personal event? A report on the supply of transport in Nigeria?

After graduating, A short visit to Dubai was my first time travelling outside my country. During the short stay, I saw what it meant for a city to efficient transport system, although its not a fair comparison given the population in my country, I was still blown away. It changed the way I saw things when I got back to Lagos especially our own transport system.

I was always upset whenever i tried to use the public buses, but because I could now imagine a more efficient system, I decided to do something about it. I reached out two of my friends, Busola and Lola who both studied abroad and had moved back to the Nigeria and were also facing this same problem. We combined our experiences, educational background and skills from Engineering, Economics and IT and created a company called "SHUTTLERS". Shuttlers allows professionals shuttle comfortably in groups thereby reducing their commuting stress, reducing the number of privately driven cars on the road and increasing productivity in metropolitan cities

### At the beginning of Shuttlers, did you encounter any difficulties in developing this service? Technological Difficul-

### ties? Logistics? If everything went well, tell us an anecdote that marked you?

Yes, we faced a couple of challenges just like every other startup in Africa; challenges around funding, finding skilled team members (especially developers) and infrastructural issues.

Apart from the general challenges, we had a challenge around customer acquisition. Customers need the service but didn't understand why they should drop their car while going to work to share a bus with a fellow colleague because its not so "prestigious" bus-pooling work, every startup or business that has to do with a change in behavior is always harder to adopt by customers initially. Shuttlers calls for a change in lifestyle, for people to drop their cars for bus-sharing or pay premium for more comfortable buses.

### Do you have any expectations about the Women In Africa annual summit? Meet competitors? Other?

The education, exposure and networking opportunities that the Women In Africa annual summit will give me access to and other resources will help me develop my business skills, amplify my resources and also increase my capacity towards achieving my goals of providing efficient transport systems across Africa. The network of successful like-minded female entrepreneurs in Africa could lead to collaboration to make an effective change across Africa.

### How do you project the role of women in Africa in the next 20 or 30 years?

Women in Africa will have a network of great women that will play a major role in transiting their country from "developing" to "developed" by taking up roles in public sector, business, corporate world to tackle problems impeding their country's social and economic growth. WIA will also influence the younger women to dream big, and believe in the ability to course change in their community.



# "We create edutainment content for learners in Africa".



## Doreen Kessy, COO in charge of business of UBONGO

**Founded in 2013, Ubongo has grown in Tanzania and now in many African countries. How did you succeed in developing your business ?**

At first it was an adventure with 5 co-founders. Each one brought specific skills, including media, animation, computer programming, and teaching. They saw a huge gap in education that could be filled by leveraging technology and entertainment. They opted to use existing mass media technologies such as TV, Radio and Mobile in order to reach millions of Kids in Africa. At Ubongo, we create edutainment content for learners in Africa.

We produce two shows, Ubongo Kids (7-14 yrs) and Akili and Me (3-6 yrs) in which we use strong animated characters, stories and fun original songs to teach Math, Science, Life Skills (such as Curiosity, Confidence and Grit), English as a Second Language, Counting, Letters and Social Emotional Skills. Our shows are in Kiswahili, English, French and Kinyarwanda. We are currently reaching over 6 million households weekly in East Africa and are broadcasting in over 30 countries in Africa.

**What were the difficulties encountered during the first steps of Ubongo?**

In business, challenges are guaranteed, but in our organization we have seen them evolve over the years. We have had to change our business model a few times. The markets in which we operate are all diverse, some are more mature than others, but we are learning to navigate round that and now have a refined strategy that we working with which will believe will get us to sustainability. Another challenge is that most broadcasters have small budgets for content and it takes up to six months or more to launch on new TV and Radio stations across the continent.

**Do you have some expectations at the Women in Africa annual summit?**

I am very excited about it. I love the fact that African women entrepreneurs will be coming together to share their ideas, experiences and connect. This doesn't happen everyday, so I see it as a unique opportunity and look forward to building new relationships and learn as much as possible from the women leaders attending. At Ubongo, we are always keen to collaborate with other people and organizations in various ways. I think WIA is a perfect community to do that with.

**How do you picture the role of African women in 20 or 30 years?**

I hope it doesn't take us 20 to 30 years to achieve authentic equality. I would like us to get to a place where this is not even a question that people ask. Just like no one today asks about where we see the role of men in the future. It should be a no brainer to everyone that women have equal abilities to men, and they can run companies, innovate and invent things just as well if not better than men.

Unfortunately, right now women still have to fight for equality and prove themselves capable. I dream of an Africa where men are partners in promoting and protecting equality. I dream of a day when we will not just legislate away gender discrimination, but achieve an authentic equality underlined within our core societal belief system.

## 1 A NEW DAWN FOR WOMEN

As an introduction to this series, we will start by showing the multiple faces of African women, as well as their roles in the numerous circles they influence. Although Africa is a diverse continent, one commonality can be observed: women are the backbone of society, the fundamental basis that makes everything work. We will deep-dive into the **various roles and responsibilities women have in Africa**, and we will mirror it with the rest of the world. We will explain what women's empowerment stands for in our minds.



## 2 TOGETHER WE CAN END INEQUALITY

Episode 2 of the series will emphasize the contribution of women to the economic growth and development of Africa in a more quantitative way. With different angles – demographics, formal and informal activity, representation in business institutions and civil society, social and cultural impacts – we will size the **enormous contribution of women to the African society**, outline its evolution throughout the past decades and try to determine how much greater it could be if we were to unleash their potential.



## 3 INSPIRING WOMEN IN AFRICA AND BEYOND

Helped by a conjunction of positive factors, African women have seen their situation improve over the past decades. However, to reveal their potential, there are still several hurdles to overcome. Our third part will identify the **key challenges** that continue to prevent women from contributing more to the development of Africa, and will suggest **potential solutions** to empower them, with practical actions on some key topics, from education to jobs and social structures.





## 4 REWARDING THE WOMEN OF TOMORROW

There are **great success stories of influential women** who have decided to take the power in Africa. These women must become role-models for all the young African girls who will soon have a decisive role to play. Cultural change must first come from the women themselves and from their confidence in their ability to become the leaders of tomorrow. They will be instrumental in the emergence of a new African development model. Thus, our fourth part will be dedicated to these inspiring African women, who have various backgrounds and very different profiles.

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## 5 BACK FROM MARRAKESH

This first WIA summit, which took place at the end of September 2017 in Marrakech, highlighted women who have embraced an entrepreneurial success story, rewarding those who have most marked the spirits. This event has created, with our hopes, a new impetus that will perhaps inspire other women to follow this path. Back from the Red City, let's take a closer look at what this summit has already done for women in Africa.



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# ABOUT US

Roland Berger, founded in 1967, is the only leading global consultancy of German heritage and European origin. With 2,400 employees working from 34 countries, we have successful operations in all major international markets. Our 50 offices are located in the key global business hubs. The consultancy is an independent partnership owned exclusively by 220 Partners.

Women In Africa Club is a global network of leaders, both women & men, committed together for a better governance in Africa. WIA Club aims at delivering actionable solutions to governance and development issues through the economic empowerment of African women.

Women In Africa Club articulates its actions around two pillars:

WIA CLUB MEMBERS, an international membership organization composed of members representing various fields in the public, private and non-profit sectors and diverse in terms of gender, age, origin and background.

WIA CLUB PHILANTROPY, a non-profit structure aiming at supporting and funding businesses led or managed by African women, through two main projects: the Women in Africa Entrepreneurs Hub and the Women in Africa Revelations Night.

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## Links & Likes

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# The 1<sup>st</sup> WIA Club summit is taking place in Marrakesh, Morocco"

## September 25-27, 2017

Ideally located, Marrakesh is one of Africa's main gateways for visitors from Europe, the Middle-East and the rest of the world.

The presence of highly-developed infrastructures combined with the economic and cultural activities of Marrakesh make this major hub the perfect place to host big economic summits and political meeting.



WIA Philanthropie Partners

