

DECEMBER 27 - 28, 2025



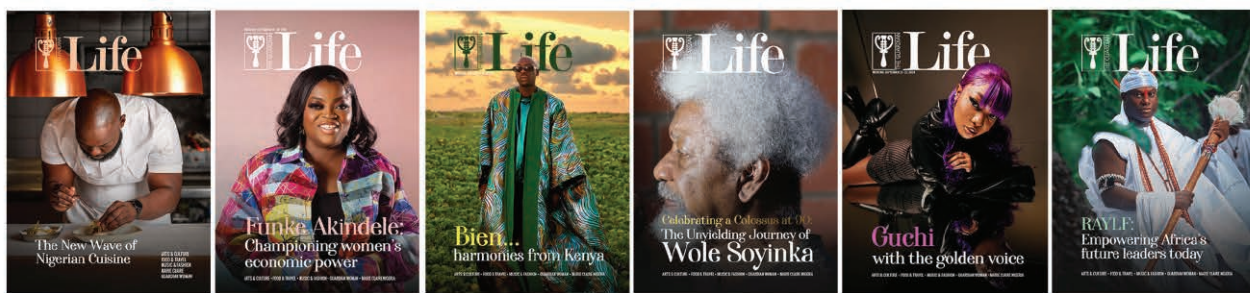
Life

INSIDE:

A Royal Tribute by
THE OLU OF WARRI

Transforming lives through
ELEVATE AFRICA and the
ROYAL IWERE FOUNDATION

Beyond the Crown:
OLORI ATUWATSE III
on Faith, Identity, and Impact



EDITOR'S NOTE

Chidirim Ndeche

Grace, intention, and what life holds next

As the year draws to a close, this edition feels like a full-circle moment.

Throughout 2025, Guardian Life has experimented, questioned, stretched, and refined what it means to live well. We explored fashion as expression, beauty as care, culture as memory, and wellness as both discipline and grace. We told stories about women finding their footing, communities navigating change, and individuals learning how to build lives that feel intentional rather than hurried. Each edition was an invitation to pause, to reflect, and to grow.

It feels fitting, then, that we close the year with a special edition featuring Her Royal Majesty, Olori Ivie Atuwatse III of the Warri Kingdom.

She represents a rare convergence of faith, leadership, tradition, and modern responsibility. Beyond the crown, she is a woman deeply committed to service: to women, children, families, and the long, patient work of community building. In profiling her fully through this cover story, tributes, and the initiatives she leads, we honour a kind of leadership rooted in grace, clarity, and impact.

As we turn our gaze to 2026, one thing is clear: we are only getting started. The coming year will see us deepen our focus on how to live, and live well with even greater intention.

But before the pace quickens, this season calls for rest. Find time to pause, to reflect, to create space for joy, and to prepare your mind, body, and spirit for the year ahead.

From all of us at Guardian Life, we wish you a restful holiday season and a year ahead filled with purpose. We look forward to walking into 2026 with you, focused, energised, and ready.

Enjoy the read, and enjoy the holidays!

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Her Royal Majesty, Olori Atuwatse III, Queen Consort of Warri Kingdom

On this day, and in this season of reflection, I acknowledge and honour your work, your service, and the steady commitment you have brought to your role as Olori of the Warri Kingdom.

Leadership reveals character. It tests conviction. It demands clarity of purpose. Walking this journey with you, I have seen leadership shaped not by display, but by discipline; not by noise, but by consistency; not by title, but by responsibility.

You have carried the weight of your office with grace and resolve, grounding every assignment in faith and a deep sense of duty to our people. Through your work with women and children, through education, advocacy, and institution-building, you have demonstrated that service is not an abstract ideal, but a daily commitment that requires patience, structure, and courage.


I have learnt from you that strength does not always announce itself. Sometimes it is found in preparation. Sometimes in restraint. Sometimes, in the quiet determination to do what must be done, even when the work is unseen or misunderstood. Your commitment to building systems that endure has strengthened not only the initiatives you lead but the broader vision of leadership we share.

As Olori, you have brought thoughtfulness, modern insight, and moral clarity into spaces where tradition and progress must coexist. You have helped reaffirm service as responsibility, and leadership as stewardship, anchored in faith, guided by wisdom, and executed with integrity.

I recognise and honour your labour, your partnership, and your enduring contribution to service and legacy within the Warri Kingdom and beyond. May your path remain guided, your strength renewed, and your impact lasting.

Ogiame Atuwatse III
Olu of Warri
Warri Kingdom



A close-up portrait of Olori Atuwatse III of Warri Kingdom. She is wearing a red turban with a large red flower on top. She has a soft smile and is looking directly at the camera. She is wearing a red garment with white pearl-like details and a pearl necklace. The background is filled with red flowers and green leaves.

“You do not need
an office, a title, or
a crown to make
change.”

— Olori Atuwatse III of Warri Kingdom

Beyond the Crown: **OLORI ATUWATSE III** on Faith, Identity, and Impact

From faith and identity to leadership, service, and Africa's future, Olori Atuwatse III speaks candidly about life beyond the crown, and the responsibility that comes with being called to serve.

Olori Ivie Atuwatse III occupies a unique space in Nigeria's cultural and leadership ecosystem, one shaped by heritage, faith, and a clear sense of purpose. Known to many as the Queen Consort of the Warri Kingdom, she is also a daughter, a wife, a mother, and a committed advocate for women, children, and human capital development across Africa.

In this wide-ranging conversation, she reflects on identity beyond titles, growing up between Lagos and England, the weight of leadership, and the work she continues to do through the Royal Iwere Foundation and Elevate Africa. Speaking with clarity and conviction, Olori Atuwatse III shares what it truly means to serve, not through glamour, but through responsibility, grace, and a deep-rooted belief in Africa's people and potential.

1. So, who is Olori Atuwatse III? And how has she transitioned from Captain Idahosa Wells Okunbo's daughter to the Queen Consort of Warri Kingdom?

I am, first, foremost, and always, a daughter of the Most High God. So, when the question is framed as, "How have you transitioned from Captain Idahosa Wells Okunbo's daughter to the Queen Consort of Warri Kingdom?" I understand what is being asked, but I also want to say that, truthfully, my identity does not change. It is the one God has always given me. What changes are the assignments, the spaces, and the offices He ordains for me to function in? Being Captain's daughter and being Queen Consort are not competing identities; they are different places where the same woman is called to serve.

So, it has not been a "transition" in the way people often imagine—like shedding one life and becoming someone else. I am a woman with one immutable foundation: loved by God, called by God, rooted in Him.

2. What was growing up like, especially having to leave Lagos for school in England? My parents worked very hard to give their children a strong education, and they were intentional about the "why" behind it. They always made it clear that opportunity is not simply something you enjoy; it's something you steward so you can contribute well to society.

Leaving Lagos for school in England did come with its moments of culture shock. You're stepping out of what is familiar—your language rhythms, your community, your food, your sense of ease—and into an environment where you have to learn new codes quickly, often while you're still becoming yourself. As a young person, that can be stretching.

But the moral grounding my parents gave me helped me adapt without losing myself. And now, years later, I can see how those experiences worked together. Lagos gave me a deep sense of belonging and strength; England exposed me to difference, broadened my perspective, and built resilience. Together, they helped equip me for the kind of service and impact I'm committed to today as I move between worlds, connecting people.

3. Was it worth losing your lifetime friends, your hobbies, your livelihood, your close relationship with your family to be the Queen Consort?

I think sometimes people imagine traditional leadership in Nigeria as something rigid

and limiting, but that is not always the reality. My husband is deeply committed to our values, culture, and heritage, and he is equally passionate about progress and modernity. Serving as Queen Consort alongside a King with that vision has not required me to shrink. If anything, what I have gained is responsibility—greater responsibility and a clearer mandate to use this platform for impact, service, and meaningful change.

Becoming Queen Consort was not a death sentence, and it is not a life defined by loss. My friendships have remained a strong source of support over the years because the people who truly know you do not love you because of your position, and they do not disappear when your responsibilities grow. They love you because of who you are, and they stay committed to doing life with you. I've been blessed with the best community of true friends.

4. Can you share your feelings of the moment you first understood what the crown would mean for your life?

Even before we ascended the throne, my husband and I have always tried to live prayerfully, with a deep sense that purpose is not something you chase, it is something you steward.

So, when we began to understand that it was time to step into this new office, the question for us was not simply what it would mean in title, but what it would mean in responsibility. In his usual way of thinking about impact, His Majesty made a deliberate decision to institutionalise the office of the Olori by establishing me as Queen Consort. He did that because he understood my heart for women and children, and he saw that this was not just ceremonial. It was a pathway for generational impact, the kind we have both always believed God has called us to make in our community and in the lives of people.

So, the moment I truly understood what the crown would mean for my life, I did not feel glamour. I felt weight. I felt responsibility. I felt the sobering honour of being trusted by God with work that is foundational, work that can re-engineer minds, expand opportunities, and shape futures. That awareness has kept me returning again and again to God for wisdom and guidance, because you cannot carry something this significant on reputation or strength alone. You carry it by grace and with a continual dependence on Him.

5. What was on your mind when your husband, Ogiame Atuwatse III, was first denied the opportunity to be king in 2015 and the intrigues that erupted in 2021, when he came up again for s(e)lection? My husband and I have always entrusted our lives to God. So, in moments when others were focused on timelines, speculation, or what they call "intrigues", my posture was much simpler. God, have Your way, in Your time, and in Your manner.

When your confidence is rooted in God, you do not panic when the path is not linear. You stay steady, you stay prayerful, and you let purpose unfold the way God wants it to.

6. You have been involved in several endeavours targeting women and children, including the Captain Idahosa Wells Okunbo STEM Innovation Centre, which

you established in honour of your father, and the major one, Elevate Africa. What led to all these?

I am driven in all I do by a desire to make impact that changes lives, strengthens families, and builds communities that can thrive long after I am gone.

That is what led to my work with women and children through the Royal Iwere Foundation. RIF exists to build people by expanding access to opportunity, strengthening education, and equipping families with the tools to thrive. At its core, it is about human capital development. It is about helping people see what is possible and then giving them practical pathways to get there. Within that broader vision sits initiatives like the Captain Idahosa Wells Okunbo STEM and Innovation Centre, which I established in honour of my father.

That same commitment, to expand opportunity and unlock potential, is also what informs the wider work I do through Elevate Africa. I have always believed that Africa's greatest resource is its people. When we invest in people, in their education, in their confidence, and in their capacity, we change not only individual lives, but

entire communities. Elevate Africa exists to connect leaders and changemakers, to strengthen collaboration, and to help reshape the narrative through tangible work that expands opportunity and unlocks solutions.

At the heart of it all is one consistent vision: to prepare people, widen access, and help build the Warri, the Nigeria, and the Africa that we are proud to hand to the next generation.

"Africa is not a problem to be solved. Africa is a continent of brilliant people, rich resources, and real solutions."

— Olori Atuwatse III of Warri Kingdom





“Being Captain’s daughter and being Queen Consort are not competing identities; they are different places where the same woman is called to serve.”

— Olori Atuwatse III of Warri Kingdom

7. Olori Atuwatse III is an advocate for children’s rights, particularly the empowerment of female children. You have endowed hundreds of children with scholarships, including a 2022 scheme for 100 children from the Nana Model Girls College, Warri, Delta State. What has been the challenge in doing all these?

The challenges are real, and they come in a few layers.

One is cultural. Even today, there are still mindsets we are actively working to change around the value of the girl child, what she should aspire to, and whether higher education is truly “necessary” for her. When a girl is brilliant, but the expectations around her are small, your work is not only to fund opportunity but to widen imagination.

Another is resources. Scholarships are important, but they are not a magic wand. Many families genuinely want more for their daughters and all their children, but economic constraints make even basic education difficult, especially in a climate where the cost of living keeps rising. Sometimes the challenge is not willingness, it is capacity.

That is why our work does not stop at supporting girls. We also invest in women. Because when you strengthen a woman, you often stabilise a whole household. I always say to women, your time is not gone. You may no longer be a young girl, but your life can still change. Your skills can grow, your business can be accelerated, your confidence can be rebuilt, and your income can expand.

We address both by opening doors for girls and by strengthening the women who hold homes and communities together, because children thrive best when the ecosystem around them is also rising.

8. Let us look at your programme, Elevate Africa. Why did you choose that name, and how challenging has it been to elevate Africa?

We chose the name Elevate Africa because we do not believe Africa is a problem to be solved. Africa is a continent of brilliant people, rich resources, and real solutions. So “elevate” is not about inventing value that is not there. It is about shining a light on what already exists, amplifying excellence, and creating the visibility and connections that allow African ideas to travel further and scale faster.

Has it been challenging? Of course. Africa is vast, complex, and often misunderstood, including by Africans ourselves. Elevating

Africa means confronting old narratives, building trust across borders, and doing the patient work of collaboration. But it is the kind of challenge that gives you purpose, because every time one door opens for an African changemaker, it creates a corridor of possibility for many more.

9. Do you think that the desired change in narrative is actually being achieved? Yes, I believe it is being achieved, but not in a neat, instant way. It took generations for some of the current narratives to harden into “truth” in people’s minds, so I do not deceive myself into thinking they can be undone in a year or two, or by one organisation.

What I have learnt is this. If you wait for the loudest global headlines to announce that Africa’s narrative has changed, you may miss the real shift happening quietly on the ground. I see it in growing pride, in bolder self-belief, in Africans choosing partnership over rivalry, and in opportunities we are creating for ourselves. The narrative changes when mindsets change, and when people begin to live from a new story about what is possible.

10. How does Elevate Africa actively reshape the African narrative, and what unique approaches do you use to connect leaders and changemakers?

Elevate Africa actively reshapes the narrative in two connected ways: through what we build, and through what we broadcast.

On the one hand, we are action-oriented, not just inspirational. We convene leaders, innovators, and changemakers across the continent and diaspora. We do not just gather people to exchange business cards and take photos. We curate conversations around shared priorities, bridge gaps across sectors and countries, and use fellowships alongside media initiatives to move ideas towards impact. In simple terms, we connect people who can help each other build, then we make sure the world can see the Africa we know: creative, capable, collaborative, and rising.

On the other hand, we take the media work seriously because visibility matters. We intentionally use media to amplify African solutions, spotlight excellence, and tell our stories with dignity and accuracy. If you do not tell your story, somebody else will, and they will not tell it well.

11. How do you leverage Africa’s rich heritage to promote advancement and reshape global narratives?

I see Africa’s heritage as soft power. Our culture, creativity, values, and history are not ornaments for special occasions; they are assets that can drive advancement.

We leverage heritage by telling our stories with dignity and accuracy, by celebrating excellence in our arts and traditions, and by grounding modern innovation in a strong sense of identity. When people know who they are, they negotiate differently, they create differently, and they lead differently. Heritage gives confidence, and confidence fuels progress.

Globally, it also reframes how Africa is seen, not as a minor character in someone else’s story, but as a continent with depth, intelligence, beauty, and contribution.

12. How would you appraise the just-ended conference in Botswana?

I would appraise it as a landmark convening.

“When your confidence is rooted in God, you do not panic when the path is not linear.”

— Olori Atuwatse III of Warri Kingdom



Over two days, the conversations were illuminating, the ideas were demonstrated in real time, and you could feel partnerships forming in the room. Botswana also set a standard for hospitality and partnership. They embraced us, and that spirit made collaboration feel natural, not forced.

What stayed with me most was the sense of possibility. From governance and collaboration to culture and creativity, the message was consistent. Africa's future is bright, and when Africans and the diaspora gather with purpose, we do not just talk about change; we start building it.

13. What are some key outcomes or success stories from Elevate Africa that you are particularly proud of?

Some of our key outcomes have been the partnerships and collaborations that have emerged through Elevate Africa, because they translate shared vision into tangible opportunity. When we can bridge governments, private sector leaders, investors, and innovators in ways that unlock trade, investment, and practical solutions, that is success.

But even more than partnerships, I am proud of the people outcomes. I am proud of the fellows and changemakers who have come through our pipeline and left with stronger networks, greater visibility, and a clearer pathway from ideas to impact. I am proud of the way relationships formed through Elevate Africa have led to new projects, new mentorship, new cross-border collaborations, and renewed confidence in African excellence.

For me, the most meaningful success stories are the ones where someone says, “Because of this platform, I met the right partner, I found the right opportunity, I gained the courage to build bigger, and I am no longer doing this work alone.” That is what Elevate Africa exists to do.

14. What are your future plans for both Elevate Africa and the Royal Iwere Foundation?

My plans for both Elevate Africa and the Royal Iwere Foundation are straightforward and purposeful: to persist in doing impactful work that transforms lives.

15. How much of support do you get from

the king on this?

I receive strong support from His Majesty. He believes deeply in impact-driven leadership and in the power of investing in people, especially women and children, so our work is aligned in values and vision. As I said earlier, he purposefully established the office of the Olori so I could execute. That tells you he is my biggest champion.

16. How do you define your primary duty to the people you serve?

My primary duty is service. To use every platform I have to protect dignity, expand opportunity, and help build the kind of community where people can thrive. It means listening closely, leading with integrity, and doing the kind of foundational work that improves lives, not only in one moment, but across generations.

17. How important is it for women to be represented in leadership positions within government and the private sector?

It is essential. When women are absent from leadership, we do not just lose fairness, we lose insight. Women bring lived experience that shapes better decisions in education, healthcare, economic policy, family wellbeing, and community development. Representation is a practical necessity if we want solutions that truly serve society.

18. What strategies do you believe are most effective for advancing gender equality and women's rights in Africa?

First, invest in education and skills, because empowerment without capacity is fragile. That is why so much of our work focuses on learning, training, and creating pathways for girls and women to build real competence and confidence.

Second, expand economic opportunity through access to capital, markets, and mentorship, because financial independence changes a woman's choices and her voice. We see this clearly in community-based interventions that support women to grow businesses, learn new skills, and increase household stability.

Third, change mindsets through culture and community leadership, because laws can protect rights, but beliefs determine

whether those rights are lived. This is why we do work that tackles what people think is “normal” for a girl, for a woman, and for a family, and we replace limiting ideas with possibility.

And finally, build systems of accountability in both public and private sectors, so equality is not an idea we applaud, but a standard we enforce.

19. What early experiences most shaped your approach to leadership, mentorship, and role modelling?

Two things shaped me early. First, the values my parents instilled in us: that opportunity is a responsibility, not an entitlement, and that you must use what you have to serve others. That framing made leadership feel less like a position and more like stewardship.

Second, my mother has been a profound influence. Watching her build businesses with excellence, love and raise her children with intention, and still make room to support wider networks and family was my first real mentorship in leadership. She showed me that leadership is not always loud. Sometimes it is consistency. Sometimes it is sacrifice. Sometimes it is the quiet strength of showing up, building, and carrying people with you.

20. What private habit or routine helps you remain grounded during royal functions?

Prayer. Quiet moments with God before I step out, and brief moments of inner stillness even during the most public occasions. It helps me remember that I am not performing, I am serving.

21. Which domestic issue do you consider the main priority for the next five years, and what concrete steps are you supporting?

For me, a key priority for the next five years is human capital development, especially education and economic opportunity for women and children.

The concrete steps I am supporting focus on strengthening learning outcomes for children, investing in skills development for young people, and supporting women's economic empowerment, because when women rise, households stabilise and communities grow stronger.

22. What message do you love to communicate to leaders and changemakers through your engagements at prestigious platforms?

I remind leaders and changemakers that Africa is not waiting to be saved. We are already rich in solutions. What we need is collaboration, courage, and the discipline to do the foundational work that outlives us.

23. Can you share a defining moment or experience in your life that significantly impacted your approach to leadership?

One defining season for me was my postpartum experience.

It was a moment that stripped away performance and reminded me that leadership begins with identity. I had always understood purpose in principle, but in that season, I understood it in my body and in my spirit. I realised that strength is not pretending you are fine. Strength is telling the truth, receiving help, and returning to God for wisdom one day at a time.

It reshaped how I lead because it made me more human, more empathetic, and more intentional about building systems of support for women. It taught me that impact is not only about what you can carry, it is also about what you can create for others so they do not have to carry life alone.

24. And are there any other matters worth sharing with our esteemed readers?

You do not need an office, a title, or a crown to make change. Too many people are waiting to be “chosen” before they begin, but the truth is that influence starts wherever you are planted.

You can transform your community through the way you raise your children, the way you run your business, the way you serve in your faith community, the way you treat people at work, and the way you show up for those who have less power than you do. Do not underestimate what consistent integrity can do in a society that is hungry for trust.

So, my encouragement to every reader is simple. Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can. The world does not change only through the actions of the famous; it changes through ordinary people choosing to live with purpose.





Olori Ivie Atuwatse III: Living a life of grace, compassion, fulfilment

by Gregory Austin Nwakunor



Elevate Africa represents a bold reimagining of African leadership, narrative, and collaboration. Founded by His Royal Majesty Ogiame Atuwatse III and Her Royal Majesty Olori Atuwatse III of the Warri Kingdom, the institution uses convenings, fellowship, and media to amplify African solutions, empower leaders, and shift global perceptions of the continent.

A NAME IN MEANING AND PURPOSE
Ivie, in the Edo language, means ‘coral bead’ or ‘precious bead’. Olori Ivie Atuwatse III, no doubt, is not only a ‘precious’ being, but many things to many people. A visionary woman with a heart for humanity, social enterprise, education, and capacity building for women and children.

Olori Atuwatse III hails from one of Nigeria’s most respected families. Her father, the late Captain Idahosa Wells Okunbo, was a business magnate and philanthropist.

Born into a lineage of strength and vision, Olori Atuwatse III has gracefully stepped into her role not only as the wife of Ogiame Atuwatse III, the Olu of Warri, but also as a cultural custodian and a champion for community empowerment.

Her marriage to Prince Utieyinoritsetsola Emiko in 2014 marked a turning point in her journey, and when her husband

ascended the throne as Ogiame Atuwatse III in August 2021, Olori stepped into a role steeped in centuries of tradition, a role which changed her compassion and empathy towards the less privileged in society, a trait she obviously inherited from her late father, Wells Okunbo.

Her reign as Olori is marked by quiet power, rooted in faith, and fueled by a passion for progress, particularly for women and children. “My identity does not change. It is the one God has always given me. What changes are the assignments, the spaces, and the offices He ordains for me to function in,” she says.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Olori Ivie Atuwatse III earned a law degree from the London School of Economics and was called to the Nigerian Bar in 2010. She is a member of the CIARB Nigeria and has certifications from the Nigerian Chambers of

Commerce and the Chambers of Maritime.

From the fashion label, Colour Couture, which she co-founded with a friend while at the university, to Breakfast in Bed, a first-of-its-kind breakfast delivery company in Lagos, Nigeria, which she established after graduation, her life has always reflected both creativity and entrepreneurial flair. She stands as a reminder that true influence is measured by impact.

Yet, despite her embrace of modern strategies, she remains rooted in tradition. As Queen Consort, Olori Atuwatse III takes part in age-old Itsekiri ceremonies, often adorned in coral beads and traditional fabrics.

Locals call her “Mama Iwere,” and not just out of courtesy. In a kingdom once defined by hierarchy and distance, she has built an image of warmth and accessibility. She has been spotted reading to children under trees, distributing sanitary products to girls, and encouraging local artisans to pursue global markets.

Olori’s influence has extended far beyond Warri. Her recent tours to the United States and the United Kingdom were not only diplomatic; they were deeply personal. In cities like Atlanta and London, she met with African diaspora communities, forging new alliances and exploring ways to connect global Africans to their roots.

Her grace is not just in how she carries herself, but in how she lifts others. In a world where royal titles often conjure images of tradition and protocol, Her Majesty Olori Atuwatse III, Queen Consort of the Warri Kingdom in Nigeria, is redefining what it means to wear the crown.

With poise, intellect, and a deep spiritual foundation, she stands as a beacon of modern royalty, one that blends heritage with heart and tradition with transformation.

REDEFINING AFRICAN QUEENSHIP

In October 2024, Her Majesty Olori Atuwatse III became the first African Royal woman to receive the Freedom of the City of London. In the grand Guildhall, before British dignitaries and African well-wishers, she accepted the rare honour with poise. But for the Queen Consort of the Warri Kingdom, it was more than ceremonial. It was a call to continue uplifting communities, particularly across Africa.

Whether addressing women’s empowerment, spiritual renewal, or youth development, Olori Atuwatse III is known for her eloquence and clarity of purpose. Her words are laced with wisdom that resonates far beyond palace walls. She embodies a rare combination of regal dignity and compassionate activism, earning her admiration across social and generational lines.

As a mother of the Iwere people domiciled in the Southern District of Delta State, her campaign for their healing and revival is noteworthy, and she has thus established initiatives targeted at alleviating poverty, illiteracy, and infant mortality in the Warri Kingdom.

A philanthropist of no limit, she founded Abba’s Jewels, a community of over 60 women who, together, raise funds to impact the community through outreaches, food drives, and hospital and prison visits. She is also the convener of The Love Drive, a free yard sale that started in Lagos, Nigeria.

As the President of RIG Africa, a prophetic training organisation, she trains people to hear God for themselves and move

closer to Him in ways that are practical and applicable to everyday life and work.

PHILANTHROPY AND COMMUNITY IMPACT
Her primary avenue for impact is the Royal Iwere Foundation, a vehicle for social intervention projects that target health, education, and economic empowerment.

Through the Royal Iwere Foundation, she brings medical care, skills training, and educational outreach to hard-to-reach riverine villages in the Warri Kingdom. These communities, often lacking basic infrastructure, now benefit from periodic visits that deliver hope, healing, and opportunity.

At the heart of her mission is the empowerment of women. The EstablishHER programme, founded under her guidance, offers grants and mentoring for female entrepreneurs across Nigeria.

Through her various charitable efforts and developmental initiatives, Her Majesty has become a voice of hope and healing. She is especially focused on restoring the family unit, encouraging kingdom values, and nurturing spiritual growth. Her message is simple yet powerful: true transformation begins from within and radiates outward into families, communities, and ultimately, nations.

One of her initiatives, Wuwu Ore, was officially founded in 2021 with the primary aim of providing free healthcare, education, and skilling for indigent children in the remotest parts of the kingdom, as well as empowerment, sensitisation, and training for women and youth in the communities to improve living conditions and trigger socio-economic development.

The Captain Idahosa Wells Okunbo STEM and Innovation Lab is another of her initiatives, in partnership with CleverMinds Educational Foundation.

The initiative, located in Iyara Community, will groom orphans and indigent children in Warri and environs to reach their full potential by exposing them to the innovative world of STEM-based quality education, entrepreneurial skills and psychosocial support.

The Royal Iwere Foundation (RIF) is the Chief Project of Olori and Ogiame Atuwatse III that seeks to transform the socio-economic conditions of indigenes through formal and informal education, mentorship programmes, and funding for upcoming and fresh entrepreneurs.

The Foundation also provides disaster relief packages to all the communities within the kingdom prone to flooding and other critical situations.

‘A LEGACY OF EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT’

A builder at heart, Olori Atuwatse III is determined to leave a legacy of education and empowerment in the Iwere Kingdom, Nigeria and beyond.

In an age where influence is often measured by followers and trends, Olori Atuwatse III stands as a reminder that true influence is measured by impact. Her grace is not just in how she carries herself, but in how she lifts others.

To the women of Africa, she is a reminder that royalty is not just inherited, it is lived daily in purpose, prayer, and service. To the world, she represents a new era of African queenship: bold in faith, rooted in heritage, and limitless in vision.

Her Majesty has a strong entrepreneurial



“My identity does not change. It is the one God has always given me. What changes are the assignments, the spaces, and the offices He ordains for me to function in.”

— Olori Atuwatse III

drive and has, among other lifetime achievements, founded several businesses across industries. Her proficiency is well recognised on the boards of the Wells Property Development Company, the Wells Carlton, and Wells Bakehouse, where she sits. Her passion for coaching young people and mentoring them at various learning phases with practical skills, through education and vocational training, is legendary.

ELEVATING AFRICA

Together with her husband, Olori Atuwatse III co-founded Elevate Africa, a programme designed to nurture young leaders with funding, mentorship, and access to global networks. By supporting innovation, the Olori sees herself as investing in the future of the continent. She once stated, “Progress is not a betrayal of heritage, it is the highest expression of it.”

She says, “Elevate Africa actively reshapes the narrative in two connected ways: through what we build, and through what we broadcast. On the one hand, we are action-oriented, not just inspirational. We convene leaders, innovators, and changemakers across the continent and diaspora. We do not just gather people to exchange business cards and take photos. We curate conversations around shared priorities, bridge gaps across sectors and countries, and use fellowships alongside media initiatives to move ideas towards impact.

In simple terms, we connect people who can help each other build, then we make sure the world can see the Africa we know: creative, capable, collaborative, and rising.”

Instructively, Elevate Africa stands on three cardinal points: governance and leadership, trade and investment, as well as tradition and culture. These cardinal points are products of constructive engagement and deep thinking with a view to finding pragmatic solutions to challenges holding down Africa. For instance, the governance and leadership crisis has been one of the hindrances to development in Africa, so when we get governance and leadership right, its effects will be evident on the citizens and society.

LEADERSHIP, TRADE, AND CULTURE

As regards trade and investment, statistics have shown that between 8% and 12% of trade happens within the continent among countries in Africa, so Elevate Africa is encouraging more trade and investment opportunities on the continent.

And of course, tradition and cultural preservation encourage the government to

get traditional institutions more involved in governance, because Africa is a continent of Kings, and also our culture is our identity that can be transformed, celebrated, and exported rather than neglected.

Olori Atuwatse III says, “We take the media work seriously because visibility matters. We intentionally use media to amplify African solutions, spotlight excellence, and tell our stories with dignity and accuracy. If you do not tell your story, somebody else will, and they will not tell it well.”

She sees Africa’s heritage as soft power. Her culture, creativity, values, and history are not ornaments for special occasions; they are assets that can drive advancement.

“We leverage heritage by telling our stories with dignity and accuracy, by celebrating excellence in our arts and traditions, and by grounding modern innovation in a strong sense of identity. When people know who they are, they negotiate differently, they create differently, and they lead differently. Heritage gives confidence, and confidence fuels progress.

Globally, it also reframes how Africa is seen, not as a tiny character in someone else’s story, but as a continent with depth, intelligence, beauty, and contribution,” the Queen Consort reveals.

Expatriating further, she says, “Some of our key outcomes have been the partnerships and collaborations that have emerged through Elevate Africa, because they translate shared vision into tangible opportunity. When we can bridge governments, private sector leaders, investors, and innovators in ways that unlock trade, investment, and practical solutions, that is success.

“But even more than partnerships, I am proud of the people outcomes. I am

proud of the fellows and changemakers who have come through our pipeline and left with stronger networks, greater visibility, and a clearer pathway from ideas to impact. I am proud of the way relationships formed through Elevate Africa have led to new projects, new mentorship, new cross-border collaborations, and renewed confidence in African excellence. For me, the most meaningful success stories are the ones where someone says, ‘Because of this platform, I met the right partner, I found the right opportunity, I gained the courage to build bigger, and I am no longer doing this work alone.’ That is what Elevate Africa exists to do.”

A QUEEN IN SERVICE

Her plans for both Elevate Africa and the Royal Iwere Foundation are straightforward and purposeful: to persist in doing impactful work that transforms lives.

“It is essential,” she says. “When women are absent from leadership, we do not just lose fairness, we lose insight. Women bring lived experience that shapes better decisions in education, healthcare, economic policy, family wellbeing, and community development. Representation is a practical necessity if we want solutions that truly serve society.”

In a country where traditional institutions often clash with contemporary values, Olori Atuwatse III represents a rare bridge. She is deeply spiritual, openly Christian, and often speaks about how faith grounds her in both purpose and patience. In doing so, she has carved a new path, one that honours the past while embracing the promise of the future. Through it all, she remains a Queen in service, not just to a throne, but to a people.

Educate. Empower. Restore:

Inside the Royal Iwere Foundation's mission in Warri

Founded by His Royal Majesty Ògíam Atúwàtse III (the Olu of Warri) and Her Royal Majesty Olori Atuwatse III, the Royal Iwere Foundation (RIF) is a social-impact platform designed to expand access to education and socio-economic opportunity for vulnerable people in Warri Kingdom and surrounding communities, turning service into structured, long-term development.



“At its core, it is about human capital development.”

— Olori Atuwatse III of Warri Kingdom

vocational training, skills development, and income-generating pathways, RIF supports women to improve economic stability and independence. The aim is not empowerment as rhetoric, but capacity-building as practice, enabling women to earn, grow, and contribute more securely to household and community life.

This dual focus — girls and women — is deliberate. When girls are supported in education, and women are supported economically, families are better equipped to withstand social and financial shocks.

PARTNERSHIPS THAT EXTEND IMPACT

Partnerships play a critical role in extending the Foundation's reach and effectiveness. Collaborations with organisations such as Junior Achievement Nigeria and Plan International align RIF's community-level work with established development frameworks around youth entrepreneurship, girls' education, and leadership.

These partnerships allow the Foundation to combine local cultural understanding with tested programme models, ensuring interventions are context-sensitive while remaining robust and scalable.

FROM INTERVENTION TO INSTITUTION

What distinguishes the Royal Iwere Foundation is its emphasis on structure. Scholarships are paired with mentorship. Facilities are paired with programming. Advocacy is paired with implementation. This layered approach reflects an understanding that goodwill alone does not create lasting change; systems do.

Although many initiatives struggle to move beyond symbolism, RIF's quiet focus on education that leads somewhere, skills that generate income, and support that stabilises families is intentional. Its work is designed not for momentary visibility, but for cumulative impact.

As the Foundation continues to expand its programmes, its focus remains steady: preparing people, widening access, and strengthening the social foundations that allow communities to thrive. The Royal Iwere Foundation's story is not one of rescue, but of preparation, a long-term commitment to building people in places where opportunity has too often been limited.

In Delta State, as in many parts of Nigeria, the numbers tell a sobering story. Millions of Nigerian children remain out of school, with girls disproportionately affected by poverty, early marriage, and limited access to quality education. In riverine and semi-urban communities around Warri, these challenges are often compounded by unemployment, fragile household incomes, and the absence of structured pathways from schooling into skills and work.

It is within this reality, not in abstraction, that the Royal Iwere Foundation (RIF) operates.

BUILDING PEOPLE WHERE IT MATTERS MOST

Founded by His Royal Majesty Ogiame Atuwatse III and Her Royal Majesty Olori Atuwatse III, the Royal Iwere Foundation was established with a clear intention: to invest in people in ways that are practical, structured, and sustainable. The Foundation's work focuses on education, skills development, and family stability, driven by the belief that meaningful development begins with human capacity.

Rather than positioning itself as a charity responding to emergencies, RIF was designed as an institution, one that builds systems capable of supporting individuals and communities over time.

EDUCATION AS A FOUNDATION, NOT A FINISH LINE

Education sits at the heart of RIF's work, but the Foundation approaches it with nuance. While access to schooling remains a challenge for many families, retention, quality, and relevance are equally pressing. Across Nigeria, learning poverty, where children attend school but lack basic literacy and numeracy, continues to undermine long-term outcomes.

“RIF exists to build people by expanding access to opportunity, strengthening education, and equipping families with the tools to thrive.”

— Olori Atuwatse III of Warri Kingdom

RIF's response recognises that keeping a child in school is only part of the equation. The greater challenge is ensuring that

education translates into confidence, competence, and possibility.

This thinking underpins one of the Foundation's flagship initiatives: the Captain Idahosa Wells Okunbo STEM and Innovation Centre in Warri. Established to expose children from underserved backgrounds to science, technology, and problem-solving at an early age, the Centre responds directly to Nigeria's broader STEM gap, particularly for girls.

In Nigeria, where women remain underrepresented in science and technology careers, early exposure matters. Beyond technical skills, the Centre works to expand imagination, showing children what futures can look like before limitations are internalised.

STRENGTHENING WOMEN, STABILISING HOUSEHOLDS

RIF's work does not stop with children. In many Nigerian households, women carry the economic and emotional weight of family life, often with limited access to formal employment or capital. National labour patterns consistently show women clustered in informal, low-paying work, with fewer opportunities for skills upgrading or business growth.

The Foundation's programmes reflect a clear understanding of this reality. Through



Elevate Africa: Rewriting a continent's story

Elevate Africa represents a bold reimagining of African leadership, narrative, and collaboration. Founded by His Royal Majesty Ogiame Atuwatse III and Her Royal Majesty Olori Atuwatse III of the Warri Kingdom, the institution uses convenings, fellowship, and media to amplify African solutions, empower leaders, and shift global perceptions of the continent.

Elevate Africa stands at the intersection of vision and action, a pan-African institution dedicated to reshaping the way Africa sees itself and how the world perceives the continent. Born from both conviction and urgency, it brings together narrative power, leadership development, and collaborative action under one platform.

A MOVEMENT FOR NARRATIVE, LEADERSHIP, AND IMPACT

Founded jointly by His Royal Majesty Ogiame Atuwatse III, CFR, the 21st Olu of Warri Kingdom, and Her Royal Majesty Olori Atuwatse III, Queen Consort of Warri Kingdom, Elevate Africa emerged from a conviction that Africa's story should be told by Africans, rooted in dignity, heritage, and strategic agency.

The initiative's founders recognised that persistent negative narratives about Africa, often focused on poverty, conflict, and dysfunction, have constrained investment, stifled self-confidence, and overshadowed the continent's immense potential. Elevate Africa was conceived as a holistic response: not merely to contest misconceptions, but to replace them with narratives of ingenuity, leadership, and tangible solutions.

At its core, the movement is founded on a radical premise: *Africa must define itself through its own voices, heritage, and leadership.* This philosophy underpins all of Elevate Africa's work, positioning narrative as strategy and identity as infrastructure in the continent's development journey.

“Africa must define itself, through its own voices, heritage, and leadership.”

— Olori Atuwatse III

MISSION, PILLARS AND APPROACH

Elevate Africa has three core pillars that together drive its mission:

Narrative and Media: To tell Africa's stories with dignity and nuance, challenging reductive portrayals and spotlighting indigenous solutions.

Leadership Development: Through fellowships and convenings, to empower leaders who can navigate complexity, innovate responsibly, and catalyse cross-sectoral progress.

Pan-African Convenings: To create collaborative spaces where policymakers, entrepreneurs, creatives, and changemakers can work together toward practical, measurable outcomes.

The organisation's mission is straightforward yet ambitious: to spotlight and empower a new generation of African leaders and indigenous solutions for shared challenges, thereby enhancing collaboration within and beyond the continent.

A CONTINENTAL PLATFORM WITH GLOBAL REACH

Since its inception, Elevate Africa has grown into more than a media or academic project. It has become a movement that convenes actors from across sectors, countries, and generations. In 2025, its flagship convening, themed *Africa: The Next Chapter*, was hosted in Botswana, drawing policymakers, investors, innovators, and cultural leaders to a two-day programme focused on governance, trade, youth leadership, and cultural identity.

“We need to tell our stories, not just those of the outliers and unicorns, but also of the everyday innovators making a difference across our continent.”

— Olori Atuwatse III

This convening was not a ceremony for its own sake; it embodied the organisation's ethos of action over optics, with working sessions and strategic dialogues designed to produce frameworks, partnerships, and ideas with real potential to shift systems.

THE ELEVATE AFRICA FELLOWSHIP

One of the most tangible achievements of Elevate Africa is its prestigious fellowship programme, an intensive leadership development initiative that empowers mid-career professionals from across the continent. Participants are selected based on their track record of impact and potential to shape Africa's future across sectors such as health, agriculture, governance, technology, and the creative industries.

The 2025 Elevate Africa Fellows cohort was selected from thousands of applicants across more than 30 countries. These fellows represent a diverse array of changemakers: climate advocates, tech innovators, public health researchers, agricultural scientists, gender rights advocates, and community builders, among others.

For many participants, the fellowship has offered more than networking. It has provided strategic tools, cross-continental connections, and a shared sense of purpose that they can bring back to their communities. This creates a ripple effect of leadership capacity development with potential for lasting structural change.

VOICES FROM THE MOVEMENT

Voices within and around the Elevate Africa ecosystem reflect its real-world impact. At the 2024 convening, Olori Atuwatse III reminded delegates that: “We need to tell



our stories — not just those of the outliers and unicorns, but also of the everyday innovators making a difference across our continent.”

Across social media and partner networks, practitioners and attendees express appreciation for the platform's emphasis on dignity, cooperation, and forward-looking action. Global voices who have spoken at Elevate Africa events have described the movement as a catalyst for cross-border collaboration and shared imagination.

WHAT'S NEXT?

As Elevate Africa continues to develop its programmes, from media outreach and convenings to fellowship networks, it remains committed to reframing narratives, strengthening leadership, and building systems that create lasting socioeconomic impact across Africa.

As today's stories shape perception, and perception shapes investment, policy, and opportunity, Elevate Africa is positioning itself not merely as a presenter of ideas but as a writer of new chapters in Africa's shared story, one led by Africans, for Africa, and with global resonance.



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