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# Living in Darkness

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A photo book on the challenges in Nigeria's power sector



*Edited by Motunrayo Alaka and Gbile Oshadipe*

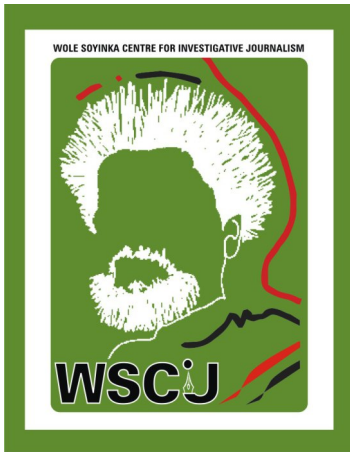


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## **Living in darkness**

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**Foundation**

# Acknowledgements

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We Acknowledge the contributions of Olajide Adelana, reporter with Legit.ng; Kunle Ajayi, Photo Editor with Independent Newspapers; Akintotun Akintomide, Online Editor with The New Diplomat; Justina Ashishana, Niger State Correspondent with The Nation Newspaper; Olanrewaju Elegbede, freelance photojournalist with The Sun Newspaper; and Saheed Olugbon, Photojournalist with Punch Newspaper to the report.

Special thanks to the editorial team Motunrayo Alaka, Executive Director/CEO, Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ), who initiated the idea for this photo book, served as editor-in-chief and led the design of the book, and Gbile Oshadipe, Director, Picture Perfect, who served as the photojournalism expert for the book.

We are thankful to our team for their invaluable role. Many thanks to Adeolu Adekola, Senior Programme Officer, for supporting the design; Yakubu Afuye, IT Officer, for leading the compilation of the photographs and graphic design for the book; and Samson Ademola, Programme and Research Officer, who sorted the photograph and did the preliminary proofreading of the book.

## **The Regulators Monitoring Programme (REMOP)**

The Regulators Monitoring Programme (REMOP) is conceived as a media initiative geared at following and reporting activities of government agencies, ministries and institutions that have the responsibility to perform oversight functions on particular sectors and or issues. REMOP is founded on the hypothesis that the failure or success of any sector depends on the vigilance of the regulator in charge. The pilot phase of the programme, which focuses on the basic education and electricity through the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), is implemented with support from the MacArthur Foundation. The argument here is that the status of basic education and electricity in the country would improve if the regulators are better monitored and made to be proactive, transparent and accountable in the discharge of their oversight functions. Activities lined up for the pilot include; a three-month monitoring of the twelve newspapers, the publication of status and annual reports on UBEC and NERC, stakeholders' meetings, capacity development activities for reporters and students of journalism, investigative reporting projects and social media campaign. The plan is to eventually extend REMOP to other major regulatory establishments in the country.

## **About the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation**

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation supports creative people, effective institutions, and influential networks building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. MacArthur is placing a few big bets that truly significant progress is possible on some of the world's most pressing social challenges, including over-incarceration, global climate change, nuclear risk, and significantly increasing financial capital for the social sector. In addition to the MacArthur Fellows Program, the Foundation continues its historic commitments to the role of journalism in a responsible and responsive democracy, as well as the strength and vitality of our headquarters city, Chicago. In 2017, the foundation approved a \$5million grant to nine media organisations to advance anti-corruption efforts in Nigeria by seeking to create a new atmosphere of accountability, transparency, and good governance in the country through the strengthening of locally-led anti-corruption efforts and reducing retail or “petty” corruption in key sectors. The Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism was one of these.

## **About the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism**

The Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ) is the pioneer organisation focused on promoting investigative reporting in Nigeria. The Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ) is a non-governmental and non-partisan organisation with a vision to see a just, inclusive, transparent and accountable Nigeria stimulated by an ethical and sustainable media, using the tools of investigative and accountability journalism for exposing corruption, regulatory failures and human right violation. Initially known as the Wole Soyinka Investigative Reporting Award (WSIRA) at inception in 2005, the change in name became necessary in 2008 to reflect the intentions of the coordinators to embrace a more robust line of activities that have greater capacity for engendering the right values of investigative journalism in the Nigerian media. The Centre is named after Professor Wole Soyinka in recognition of his life-long work in support of the freedom of expression, freedom to hold opinion, and freedom to impart them without fear or favour and without hindrance or interference.

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# Shedding light on broken infrastructure and the cost of darkness in Nigeria through visuals

One of the greatest threats to Nigeria's growth and development is the lack of electricity supply despite the billions of US dollars spent by successive governments. Notwithstanding the technicalities akin to the sector and political statements of improved generating capacity, the collection of pictures from this photo book shows vividly that Nigerians are paying dearly for darkness. The price Nigerians pay comes in different form from self-help solutions through provision of generators for home and industrial use fueled by diesel and gasoline to environmental pollution to the steep cost of doing business in Nigeria, just to mention a few.

It beats one's imagination that after the first electricity generation which was a 60 KW installation mainly for colonial officials in Marina, Lagos, in 1898, just 17 years after the world's first public electricity supply in Goldaming, England, less than half of Nigeria's population is connected to grid electricity and Nigeria today, with a mostly privatised electricity industry, is only able to deliver less than 4,000 MW. An installed generation capacity of 12,910 MW leaves per capita electricity consumption in Nigeria at a measly 145 kWh, therefore, even the population on the grid is without electricity most of the time.

For several decades, there has been a supply crisis of the power sector to providing adequate electricity to meet both the domestic and industrial needs. The result is that the society and the economy is paralyzed, the agricultural processing sector, the industrial and manufacturing and indeed the educational sector is comatose.

We believe the images not only narrate the poor infrastructure, safety hazards and effect a nearly absent electricity supply is having on Nigerians but emphasise solving the issues is not rocket science. Nigeria's proven reserve of natural gas stands at 202 trillion cubic feet. The country is estimated to have about 600 trillion tcf in unproven gas reserves, making Nigeria among the top 10 gas producers in the world. This vast gas resource – added to the other immense renewable resources such as hydro, wind and solar – means Nigeria has more than enough sources to generate the electricity its 190 million people need for economic prosperity and development.

Constant electricity is achievable in Nigeria as it approaches its 60th independence anniversary. Vision, competence, accountability and the political will are key ingredients to having light at the end of the tunnel.

**Motunrayo Alaka & Gbile Oshadipe**

# What are you seeing? And what is implied?

*In an analysis of the images presented, we are confronted with stark revelations of failed structures and neglect of the rights of the children who contend with poor or non-existent facilities or are out - of - school, and of an ignorant mass who daily risk their lives through living under power lines. One thing though is the interpretation of the images which correspond to all the relevant facts pertaining to the pictures. These interpretations make much sense in themselves. These are hypothetical arguments, though they are backed by evidence of what is within the photographs, which we can relate with as reality of existence.*

*What do these photographs mean? As we look at them, is our understanding of the society better enhanced with the dysfunctional governance architecture? Are the images honest and accurate renditions of the social reality that found no values in funding education and provision of regular electricity? Our understanding of these dynamics to a great extent will generally explain the psychology of perception and the need to urgently find a solution to them.*



# Infrastructural Decay



Transformer and feeder pillar at Babatunde Jose junction, Samuel Manuwa Street in Victoria Island overgrown with weeds

Photo credit: Kunle Ajayi



Exposed electric cables at Babatunde Jose junction, Samuel Manuwa Street in Victoria Island, Lagos

*Photo credit: Kunle Ajayi*



A man walks past unfenced transformer at Bishop Aboyade Cole, Victoria Island, Lagos

Photo credit: Kunle Ajayi



Moribund transformer at Sofunde, Agege, Lagos

*Photo credit: Kunle Ajayi*



Damaged pole and clumsy cable at Unity Street, Off Toyin Street, Ikeja, Lagos

*Photo credit: Kunle Ajayi*



The transformer in Chiri community, Gwada, Shiroro Local Government Area overridden by grasses

*Photo credit: Justina Asishana*



One of the two newly procured step-down transformers to restore power supply to Mokwa town

*Photo credit: Olajide Adelana*

**Playing with fire**



A woman turns an unfenced transformer into a stand for selling fish at Oke-Koto area, Agege, Lagos.

Photo credit: Kunle Ajayi



A woman turns unfenced transformer to stand for roasting plantain at Oki Junction, Iyana-Ipaja, Lagos.

Photo credit: Kunle Ajayi



A shop directly under high tension cables on Sojuolu Road in Ifo, Ogun State

*Photo credit: Saheed Olugbon*



Buildings under high tension cables on 32, Ezekiel Olubi Street, Omiyale, Iyana Ejigbo in Lagos

*Photo credit: Saheed Olugbon*



A residential building and a shop under a high tension tower on Bakare Street, Idimu in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos



Buildings under high tension tower on both sides of Bakare Street, Idimu, under Alimosho Local Government in Lagos

Photo credit: Saheed Olugbon



A resident has her hair done beside high tension tower on Bakare Street, Idimu in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos

*Photo credit: Saheed Olugbon*

# **The Alternatives**



Shop owners use generators to power their shops at Computer Village, Ikeja, Lagos.

Photo credit: Kunle Ajayi



A petty trader relies on a small generator to light up her wares at Pen Cinema, Agege, Lagos.

Photo credit: Kunle Ajayi



Bread seller lights his stand with a small generator at Iyana-Ipaja, Lagos.

*Photo credit: Kunle Ajayi*

# Torchlight City



A roadside corn seller brightens her space with battery powered torchlight in Igbusi community in Ilogbo, Ogun State.

Some students discussing their homework with the aid of torchlights in Igbusi Community in Ilogbo, Ogun State



Photo credit: Olanrewaju Elegebede



Chisom James, a popular raw food seller in Igbusi Community, lights up his shop with torch lights.

A petty trader along the main route of Igbusi Community lights up his shop at night with torch lights,



Photo credit: Olanrewaju Elegebede



A group of young people on their way home with the aid of torchlight, in Igbusi Community in Ilogbo, Ogun State, under the Ibadan Electricity Distribution Company (IBEDC)

*Photo credit: Olanrewaju Elegebede*

**Waste. Waste.  
Waste.**



Insulators and other installation materials wasting away inside a dilapidated store house in Irogun Akere, Yewa South, Ogun State. The project was started in the year 2000. Now, locals can't trace the project contractor again.

*Photo credit: 'Dotun Akintomide*



A armoured cables and distribution transformers covered by weeds in Irogun Akere, Yewa South, Ogun State

Photo credit: 'Dotun Akintomide



Twenty Six distribution transformers rotting away in Ologiri, near Oja-Odan in Ogun State

Photo credit: 'Dotun Akintomide



Two of the fallen electric poles in Ungwabawa, near Birnin Kebbi, Kebbi State. The electrification project had been abandoned for nine years.

*Photo credit: 'Dotun Akintomide*

# Bios of contributing reporters

**Olajide Adelana** has over 7 years' experience working for and contributing contents to different media platforms. He has attended several journalism training and accessed grants from several organisations, including the Institute of War and Peace Reporting and the International Centre for Investigative Journalism, to investigate some development issues.

**Kunle Ajayi** is the Photo Editor at Independent Newspapers Limited, publishers of Daily, Saturday and Sunday Independent titles, based in Lagos, Nigeria. Ajayi is a recipient of many awards, including the Wole Soyinka Award for Investigative Reporting, 2014 and 2016; Promasidor Quill Award, 2015; and Photoshare Contest, USA, 2015 and 2016.

**Akindotun Akintomide**, an engineering graduate of the Petroleum Training Institute (PTI), Effurun, Nigeria, has a strong passion for sparking positive social change through writing. He is the Online Editor at The New Diplomat Multi-Media Limited, where he currently coordinates online activities and contributes to daily publications.

**Justina Asishana** holds a bachelor's degree in mass communication from the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). She lives and works in Niger State as the State Correspondent for The Nation Newspaper. Asishana is a 2019 fellow of the ReportWomen Female Reporters Leadership Programme implemented by the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism.

**Olanrewaju Elegbede** freelances for The Sun Newspaper in Lagos, Nigeria. He is always happy to capture the colours and the moment of the day. He is also interested in shooting portraits and occasionally landscapes. Elegbede is a graduate of the Ladoke Akintola University, Nigeria.

**Saheed Olugbon** is a photojournalist with Punch Newspaper. The Mass Communication graduate from Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, started his journalism career at the Nigeria Television Authority, Lagos. Olugbon has some photojournalism awards to his credit, including Diamond Awards for Media Excellence, DAME, which he won in 2012 and 2018.

# Editorial team

**Motunrayo Alaka** initiated the idea for this photo book served as editor-in-chief, led its design and implementation. She has worked in journalism, media innovation, communications, investigative reporting, civil society engagements and social entrepreneurship since 2005. She is one of the pioneer advocates for the development of investigative reporting and accountability journalism in Nigeria. Her leadership has enabled capacity development for over 1050 reporters and led the implementation of over 210 reports. Motunrayo is a John S. Knight Journalism Fellow.

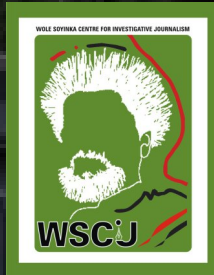
**Gbile Oshadipe** served as the photojournalism expert for this project. He is the Director of Picture Perfect, a Photo outfit. He is a historian and journalist. In 2001, he was a participant/instructor of the first-ever United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) training of Photojournalists in Nigeria. Gbile is a Master Class Trainer, certified by the World Press Photo Institute in The Netherlands and the Poynter in St. Petersburg, Florida, United States.

**Adeolu Adekola** supported the design of the book. A Senior Programme Officer with WSCIJ, he has a wealth of experience cutting across Information Technology and Project Management.

**Yakubu Afuye** led the compilation of the photographs and graphic design for the book. He has over fourteen years' experience managing data, developing websites and designing information resources.

**Samson Ademola** sorted the photographs and did the preliminary proofreading of the book. A Programme Officer with WSCIJ, Ademola has extensive experience working in the media.





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*Investigative reporting is the vital force for the restoration of human dignity - Wole Soyinka*

