



INNOCENT CHUKWUEMEKA CHUKWUMA

**ANNUAL
IMPACT & LEGACY
LECTURE *Series***



**LECTURE DELIVERED AT THE
INAUGURAL INNOCENT
CHUKWUEMEKA CHUKWUMA
ANNUAL IMPACT AND
LEGACY LECTURE SERIES.**

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LECTURE TITLE: INNOCENT CHUKWUMA: A LEGACY OF CHARACTER, COMPETENCE AND CAPACITY IN BUILDING INSTITUTIONS.

I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Good afternoon, distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen. It is an honour to be here today at the 2nd Year memorial events of Innocent Chukwuemeka Chukwuma as we launch the maiden edition of the **Innocent Chukwuemeka Chukwuma Annual Impact and Legacy Lecture Series**, hosted by Innocent Chukwuemeka Chukwuma Empowerment Foundation, ICCEF and CLEEN Foundation.

Today, we gather to celebrate the life and legacy of a man who made a tremendous impact in the fields of good governance, democracy and political systems, human rights, public safety and security, public accountability, social impact investing and entrepreneurship development with an unrelenting goal of service for our common good. Innocent was known for his brilliance, serial entrepreneurship and outstanding contributions to the promotion and protection of human rights, democracy, good governance, the rule of law, youth empowerment, gender equity and philanthropy. His life and work exemplified the qualities of character, competence, and capacity that are essential for building strong institutions.

Innocent Chukwuemeka Chukwuma was not just an ordinary man. He was an exceptional individual who dedicated his life to making a difference in the world. His legacy of character, competence, and capacity in building institutions is a testament to his unwavering commitment to excellence. As we gather here today, we remember Innocent as a towering figure in the Nigerian civil society movement, a tireless advocate for the rights of the downtrodden, and a champion of the cause of justice.

His legacy of activism and advocacy has inspired many in Nigeria and beyond, and his impact on the country's political and social landscape will be felt for generations to come.

Chukwuma's life and work serve as an example of what can be achieved when one combines a deep sense of purpose with a relentless drive to effect positive change. His unwavering commitment to the ideals of democracy, human rights,

and the rule of law, earned him the respect and admiration of many, and his legacy continues to inspire others to follow in his footsteps.

II. OVERVIEW OF THE LECTURE & MAIN POINTS

In this lecture, titled "***Innocent Chukwuemeka Chukwuma: A Legacy of Character, Competence, and Capacity in Building Institutions***," I will examine the life and work of this remarkable man, highlighting his contributions to the establishment and strengthening of institutions that promote human rights, good governance, and public accountability.

Legacy! What really is the meaning of Legacy? According to the Oxford Dictionary, it is "the long-lasting impact of particular events, actions, etc. that took place in the past, or of a person's life." An example is "he left us a rich legacy of buildings that are both innovative architectural creations and genuine works of art". I however like that Peter Strople, a renown business strategist thinks it differently choosing not to see Legacy in material terms. Strople writes that "***Legacy is not leaving something for people. It's leaving something in people.***" I absolutely agree with him because to me, Legacy is "***planting seeds in a garden you never get to see***" like the playwright, Lin-Manuel Miranda stated. It is living and doing things that you don't really know how they will turn out and that is because the individual's focus is not about themselves but lasting impact on others.

Now, what is my definition of "character, competence, and capacity"? I coined the term "character, competence, and capacity" to describe the ideal traits of a leader more than two decades ago. I see "Character" as the personal integrity, values, and ethics of a leader, while "competence" is the ability to apply knowledge and skills effectively. "Capacity" refers to a leader's ability to identify and mobilize resources to achieve their goals. Essentially, I believe that effective leadership requires a combination of these three elements - character, competence, and capacity - in order to achieve success and make a positive impact in society.

Today, we gather to celebrate the life and legacy of a man whose contributions to the promotion of human rights, good governance, and public accountability were unparalleled. Innocent Chukwuemeka Chukwuma's life was one of dedication, passion, and excellence. He was a man who epitomized the values of character, competence, and capacity in building institutions. Innocent Chukwuemeka Chukwuma's life was characterized by a deep commitment to building institutions that would serve the common good. His work in promoting and protecting human rights is a testament to his unwavering dedication to justice and fairness.

Chukwuma's impact on Nigerian society and beyond was immense, and his contributions to the advancement of human rights and good governance will be felt for generations to come. His legacy continues to inspire us to this day, and we have much to learn from his example.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR INSTITUTIONS BUILDING.

Institutional Theory posits that having a set of practices that govern how society is run enhances legitimacy. Institutionalization and legitimization are thus inevitably symbiotic in causality and correlation. Why is this so? It is because Institution Building is a process and not a typology. Institution building is the process by which predictable practice of a set of rules begin to transform the expectation of society that regardless of the passage of time and changes in individual roles, the commonly agreed “way of doing their thing” will not be subverted. The underlying processes are of course the three pillars of cognitive, normative and regulatory constructs which cannot be siloed but intentionally enabled to act comprehensively as a single and momentous force to influence behaviour for change.

At the heart of this institution building process is the citizen as a single entity and the citizens as a collective. Society exists because there are people. When society is organized in form, the people commence interacting in ways that problems and opportunities are resolved and realized. The public problems which require actions by the State often start to crystallize through the experiences of citizens. That stage of problem identification and clarity of definition and agenda setting for change never happens without the Innocent Chukwuma’s of our world. It takes the restless and fearless soul to dare speak up that the status quo is not acceptable. That was always Innocent Chukwuma. That will always be the spirit of Innocent Chukwuma through all he has left behind for us. Innocent’s understanding of the theory of change transformed him into a relentless researcher and protagonist of research and training for empirical pathways to advancing the common good.

I do not know anyone among our 90s generation of leaders in the civic space that understood and invested in collaborative actions for citizens collective action for change like Innocent. He was a force to reckon with in coordinating collective action for an agency to implement change. An agency remains a mere agency until citizens collective demand for performance and accountability gradually transforms it into an institution. Why? Institutions represent “the way a people do their things”. They epitomize the core values by which a people have collectively agreed to interact whether as people to people or people to state and state to people, people to business.

In the process over the years, decades, and centuries the people mature their agencies to fixtures they absolutely trust to predictably act in their common

good and never vulnerable to capture for private, personal, and narrow gains of anyone or group of people no matter how powerful they may be. We the people is my own simple definition of institution. The processes, systems, procedures, rules, and structures that represent the impersonal components work only to the degree that the individual collective is guided by the primacy of the essentials of character, competence, and capacity as nonnegotiable attributes in those who will have the privilege to serve society.

IV. ARTIFICIAL DICHOTOMY OF INDIVIDUALS VERSUS INSTITUTIONS

The issue of whether individuals or institutions are more critical for nation-building is a topic of ongoing debate. In Nigeria, this debate takes on added significance due to what is commonly referred to as "the Nigeria factor." The Nigeria factor refers to a set of complex and interrelated challenges that have historically made nation-building in Nigeria particularly difficult. These challenges include corruption, tribalism, lack of infrastructure, and political instability.

The artificial dichotomy of individuals versus institutions refers to the idea that there is a tension between the importance of individual actors and institutions in nation-building. Proponents of the importance of individuals argue that it is charismatic and visionary leaders who are most responsible for leading a country to success. They point to examples of leaders who have transformed their countries through sheer force of will, such as Nelson Mandela in South Africa or Lee Kuan Yew in Singapore.

On the other hand, proponents of the importance of institutions argue that it is strong and well-functioning institutions that are necessary for sustained success. They point to examples of countries with strong institutions, such as Germany or Japan, where a stable and predictable regulatory environment has allowed businesses to flourish and the economy to grow.

In the context of Nigeria, both individuals and institutions are important for nation-building. The country has had some visionary leaders, such as Nnamdi Azikiwe and Obafemi Awolowo, who were critical in the struggle for independence and the early years of the country's history. However, the country has also struggled with weak institutions, particularly in the areas of corruption and political instability.

To move forward, Nigeria needs a balanced approach that recognizes the importance of both individuals and institutions. It needs leaders who are committed to the common good and who have a clear vision for the country's future. But it also needs institutions that are strong, transparent, and accountable, particularly in the areas of governance, rule of law, and public service delivery.

The artificial dichotomy of individuals versus institutions is a false one. Both individuals and institutions are important for nation-building, and in the context of Nigeria, both are needed to overcome the challenges posed by the Nigeria

factor. A balanced approach that emphasizes both leadership and institutional development is necessary to build a strong and prosperous Nigeria for the future.

Innocent Chukwuma was a true institution builder. Throughout his life, he recognized the importance of strong institutions in promoting good governance, democracy, and development. He understood that institutions are the foundation upon which sustainable progress is built, and he dedicated his life to building and strengthening these institutions.

Chukwuma's work in building institutions was grounded in his character, competence, and capacity. He possessed a deep sense of purpose, a strong work ethic, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. These qualities enabled him to build institutions that were ethical, competent, and capable of driving change and progress.

Chukwuma's contributions to institution building were numerous. He founded CLEEN Foundation, a non-governmental organization focused on promoting public safety, security, and justice. Under his leadership, the Foundation became one of the leading voices in justice sector reform and police accountability. Innocent's work with the police, started from Civil Liberties Organization, CLO. Innocent was very committed and invested in transforming the Nigeria Police as an institution.

In addition to his work with non-governmental organizations, Innocent was a member of several government committees and panels. He served on the Presidential Advisory Committee Against Corruption, the National Human Rights Commission, and the National Security and Intelligence Reform Committee, among others. Through these positions, he was able to influence policy and drive institutional reforms.

Innocent Chukwuma's life and legacy serve as an inspiration to all those who aspire to build strong institutions. His unwavering commitment to excellence, his deep sense of purpose, and his tireless work ethic enabled him to make a lasting impact in the fields of human rights, good governance, justice sector reform and institution building.

Innocent's legacy reminds us that institution building is a long-term process that requires **character, competence, and capacity**. We cannot artificially construct institutions, but we can create an enabling environment that allows ethical and competent individuals like Innocent to initiate and drive the process of institution building.

His humble beginnings and upbringing played a crucial role in shaping his character. He was taught the values of hard work, honesty, and integrity, which he exemplified throughout his life. He was a man of great character, who always stood for what he believed in, even in the face of opposition and adversity. Chukwuma's early life and education laid the foundation for his remarkable career in human rights and advocacy. His unwavering commitment to social justice and good governance was evident in all his endeavour and became his legacy.

V. INNOCENT CHUKWUMA @CIVIL LIBERTIES ORGANIZATION (CLO), CLEEN FOUNDATION & FORD FOUNDATION.

We will examine Innocent's work at the Civil Liberties Organization (CLO); CLEEN Foundation and the Ford Foundation. We will analyze how his work at these organizations shaped his understanding of the importance of building institutions that promote human rights, good governance, justice sector reform, and public accountability.

Innocent Chukwuemeka Chukwuma was a man of great **character, competence, and capacity**, who dedicated his life to building institutions that promote human rights, good governance, and public accountability. From his students activism days at University of Nigeria, Nsukka to his work at the Civil Liberties Organization (CLO), CLEEN Foundation and later the Ford Foundation, Chukwuma demonstrated his unwavering commitment to the promotion of these values.

Chukwuma's work at the CLO, CLEEN Foundation and the Ford Foundation was instrumental in promoting human rights and strengthening civil society in Nigeria. During his time at the CLO, Chukwuma worked tirelessly to defend the rights of Nigerian citizens, leading the organization in its fight against police brutality and extrajudicial killings. He advocated for the release of political prisoners, fought against torture, and campaigned for the restoration of democracy in the country. He rose to become the Executive Director of CLO in 1994. The great character, competence and capacity Innocent displayed in internationally campaigning against the brutal regime of late General Sani Abacha and the sanctions it brought on the regime, led to him winning the Reebok Human Rights Award in 1996, at age 30. The award came with a \$25,000 cash award.

Innocent did not spend cash prize on himself and his family, he used the cash award to start CLEEN Foundation in January 1998. Originally called Centre for Law Enforcement Education in Nigeria, CLEEN, Innocent built CLEEN Foundation to be the leading justice sector reform institution that it is today, with offices in four (4) states – Lagos, Abuja, Owerri, Edo. CLEEN which can be correctly described as Innocent's greatest legacy, has in the over two decades of its existence, helped built the capacity of law enforcement agents in Nigeria. The growth and impactful work being done by CLEEN Foundation are a testament to Innocent's visionary leadership, character, competence, capacity, and unwavering commitment to building institutions that promote the common

good. CLEEN under Innocent pioneered the introduction of community policing under late IGP Tafa Balogun. The history of police reforms in Nigeria when told can not be complete without the mention of CLEEN Foundation and Innocent Chukwuemeka Chukwuma.

Through his work experience at the CLO and the founding of CLEEN Foundation, Innocent developed a deep knowledge and understanding of the importance of building strong and independent institutions that promote human rights, police accountability, good governance and justice sector reform. Institutions that can guarantee sustainable change; withstand political pressure and provide checks and balances to those in power. He believed that institutions should be built from the ground up, with the involvement of local communities and civil society organizations. He understood that change could not be imposed from the top down but had to come from the grassroots.

Innocent next port of call was Ford Foundation. He was the first Nigerian to be appointed Ford Foundation West Africa Regional Director – a position he held for eight (8) years before he passed in April 2021. As Regional Director, Innocent continued to do what he knows best – build strong institutions. He did this by supporting the work of civil society organizations and government institutions in West Africa in the areas of good governance, women’s rights, the arts, youth empowerment, the technology and innovation ecosystem; impact investment; election monitoring etc. Innocent’s competence and capacity enabled him to convene the first ever national discussion on the Biafran war.

An intelligent serial entrepreneur, Innocent played a pivotal role in the growth of impact investing in West Africa. He was able to leverage private sector resources towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, with his expertise and ability in forging meaningful partnerships that helped catalyse private and public sector entities to launch the Impact Investors Foundation, with the aim of promoting the growth and excellence of impact investing in Nigeria.

In summary, Innocent Chukwuemeka Chukwuma's life and work exemplified the values of **character, competence, and capacity in building institutions** that promote human rights, good governance, and public accountability. His dedication to these values has left a lasting impact on Nigeria and serves as an inspiration to us all. He was a true leader and a role model for all aspiring entrepreneurs. His entrepreneurial spirit, commitment to social justice, and dedication to building strong institutions that serve the common good continue to be an inspiration to us all. It is up to us to carry forward his legacy and continue to work towards a better Nigeria, one that is built on the principles of justice,

fairness, and prosperity for all. who demonstrated outstanding leadership and an unwavering commitment to social justice and economic growth.

I am indeed glad to learn from Innocent's dear wife of 23 years, my sister Josephine, a renowned women's rights activist and gender & development specialist, that she and the children have set up a Foundation to continue the good works of Innocent. The Foundation known as Innocent Chukwuemeka Chukwuma Empowerment Foundation, ICCEF have initiated this annual lecture in collaboration with CLEEN Foundation. I say kudos my dear sister. You and Innocent were a power couple. I pray GOD continues to guide and protect you and the children.

VI. CONCLUSION: THE LESSONS OF CHUKWUMA'S PURPOSEFUL AND IMPACT DRIVEN LIFE:

As we reflect on Chukwuma's life and work, let us not only be reminded of the importance of legacy but be even more pragmatic to imbibe the lessons of a rare individual who was once among us. Let us take note of the following:

Firstly the importance of families, communities and the nation-state embracing the inimitable role of education for individual citizens when they are deliberately nurtured and developed into persons of character, competence, and capacity. Value laden education has a primacy in commencing the value chain of activities required for producing the kinds of individuals that commence the building strong institutions.

Secondly one of Innocent's core attribute was fearlessness. That is some what lacking in civil society today in Nigeria. In the face of bad governance, corruption, insecurity etc, civil society must be fearless in speaking truth to power. The good thing now, is that technology has decentralized civil society activism and a lot of activism is happening via the social media. However DEPTH is needed. Deep knowledge of issues that can lead to productive engagement and social change the way and manner CLEEN has done and is still doing.

Thirdly, Innocent taught us the importance of cooperation and collaboration. No diva only cock -that-crows-at-dawn mentality. Small is no longer beautiful. No. The scale of the problem we must solve is way beyond "one great individual". We all can be great by all being servants of one another and all of society.

Fourthly, the aspect of focus of Innocent on public safety, security and justice has turned out over the cause of our 24-year-old 4th republic democracy to be the most critical determinant of whether Nigeria can hold together as a cohesive democracy in which those who govern understand basic concepts of the Rule of Law and Social Contract.

Fifth lesson is the example of idealism that Innocent taught us in believing that the Nigerian Police can be transformed. That CLEEN designed and has continued to implement what is arguably the foremost and long-lasting civil society collaboration with law enforcement agencies, regardless of the deep distrust that exist, is commendable and worthy of emulation.

Sixth, we can emulate the passion of Innocent to develop more talents for our country in civil society, government, and entrepreneurship. Leadership

Development is a task in which Africa and our country Nigeria in particular lacks. Not just normal type leadership programs but the kinds that build disruptive and transcendental leaders. As we commemorate the second year of his passing and have this inaugural Innocent Chukwuemeka Chukwuma Annual Impact and Legacy Lecture Series, let us continue to build on his legacy by promoting the values of **character, competence, and capacity** in our personal and professional lives.

We need to invest in building a different type of public leaders. We need the kinds of leaders that will inadvertently leave a legacy by building practices that over time transform to institutions. We must relentlessly work towards building institutions that endure and promote justice and democracy, just as he did throughout his life. He built new leaders. We must emulate him and build at scale to outnumber the present genre of leaders across Africa and Nigeria whose ignoble legacy is the subversion of the common good for their personal interest.

Seventh, we are celebrating the 2nd memorial of Innocent Chukwuemeka Chukwuma at a time the justice sector he gave his entire career to is at the centre of national politics. The first civil society collaboration towards monitoring our Democracy which is now institutionalized is the Transition Monitoring Group. Innocent was a core Co-founder of TMG. The Presidential Elections Tribunal is at the centre of national duty following an election that brought to fore the imperative for independent and strong institutions.

INEC already failed the institution's test in the minds of citizens when it failed to uphold the codified practices that it had assured would be implemented to implicitly build confidence in our political system and democracy for the foreseeable future. It is now left to the judiciary to redeem the legitimacy of the Nigerian -State by doing all that is necessary to uphold its independence by cantering the Rule of Law in our democracy. For one, it could welcome and grant the public demand for a live broadcast of the Tribunal's proceedings. If my brother Innocent were alive, he would be leading the campaign for the live broadcast like he did on polling unit transparency.

Finally let us honour Chukwuma's legacy by continuing the work of institution building and promoting good governance, democracy, and development in Nigeria and beyond. Innocent Chukwuemeka Chukwuma's legacy of character, competence, and capacity in building institutions is one that we should all strive to emulate. His unwavering commitment to the truth, his dedication to promoting justice and equality, and his efforts in capacity building initiatives serve as an inspiration to us all. As we work to build strong and sustainable

institutions, let us remember the example set by Innocent and ensure that we prioritize character, competence, and capacity in all our endeavour.

We conclude this speech in the way we started by preferring meanings of a purposeful life of impact to be beyond the acquisitions an individual passes on, some quotes are reminiscent of who Innocent Chukwuma has become in death as a rare human being who left us a meaningful legacy as described by the following people:

- **George Orwell** - *“The planting of a tree, especially one of the long-living hardwood trees, is a gift which you can make to posterity at almost no cost and with almost no trouble, and if the tree takes root, it will far outlive the visible effect of any of your other actions, good or evil.”*
- **Ralph Waldo Emerson** - *“The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honourable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well”*
- **Mahatma Gandhi** - *“In a gentle way, you can shake the world”*. This is what our Innocent did.

Our Innocent may be two years gone to GOD, and we can no longer see him in bodily form, but we all agree that his legacy continues to shake the world for our common good.

Distinguished guest, Ladies, and gentlemen, that after all is the simple definition of legacy and impact. THANK YOU.