

P R O J E C T



A PLATFORM FOR INTERNATIONAL
CULTURAL EXCHANGE

PRESS RELEASE

WSICE 2023 holds July 13, explores challenges and prospects of Good Governance and Nation Building

The 14th edition of the annual **Wole Soyinka International Cultural Exchange, WSICE**, holds July 13 in hybrid format – virtual and on-site.

The general Advocacy theme for the edition revolves around *Good Governance & Nation Building*.

The thematic thrust is to reflect the mood of the Nigerian nation and, indeed, many nations of the world, dealing with the existential problem of navigating the challenges of Nation Building through the prisms of good governance, individual and national interests and national development, according to WSICE's Executive Producer, Dr. Teju Kareem, Managing Director/CEO of the lead promoters of the project, Zmirage Multimedia Company, ZMC.

The youth section of the edition will focus on the central motif of the project: mentoring and grooming the new generation of thinkers and eventual leaders who would work for the overall national interest of lifting their country and their society to greater height of human and material development.



Dr. Kareem, also hinted that the 2023 edition is a prelude to the 15th edition, which is being schemed to mark the 90th birthday of Soyinka in July 2024. The working theme for the 2024 edition would be *E.N.I.O.G.U.N*, which though sets out as acronym, is the renowned alias of Soyinka, encapsulating his character traits and essences as a patriot, global cultural icon and humanist. A series of events including competitions and public promotion and campaigns will preface the edition.

The 2023 edition

The main activity of the 2023 edition will be the annual Essay Writing which features Secondary School students drawn from across the country writing on the theme: ***WOLE SOYINKA: HUMANISM, ARTISTRY & NATIONALISM***.

The idea, as had been the tradition of the WSICE since inception, is to explore the ideals of Soyinka, whose life-career trajectory has manifested as an irrepressible patriot, committed nationalist and adherent advocate for good governance as a condition for effective and meaningful nation building. The objective is to use his life and career example as a template for understanding the dynamics of nation building, especially reflecting on the intellectual and material resources required to offer the necessary sacrifices towards accomplishing the ideals.

Theme: Raison D'etre

Nation Building has been the main thrust of the objective of the project since inception, and it has been serially explored in the context of the ideals that have shaped the vision and practice of the “patron saint” of the project, Wole Soyinka, the thinker, writer, rights activist and global humanist. Other ideals explored in past editions, also in the context of Soyinka’s life-long pursuits have been freedom of thoughts and expressions, rights to life and choices, social justices, and human capital development.



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Features of the 2023 edition

July 13, 2023 @ Ijegba Forestage, Abeokuta, Ogun State

- (i) Students Essay Writing; & excerpts from previous Winners Essay
- (ii) Youth Creative Expression (Do Your Own Thing) & Culture House Reception

1. Student Essay Writing Session

Motif: *The Educational/Intellectual engagement of the students on the theme through Essay Writing Competitions.*

For this edition, 89 students would on Thursday, July 13, converge on the base of the project at the Ijegba Forestage Theatre to write the essay in the full glare of the public, including their parents/guardians, teachers as well as other members of the public. These students drawn from around Nigeria writing on the theme: **WOLE SOYINKA: HUMANISM, ARTISTRY & NATIONALISM**. The objective is to deepen their understanding of the dynamics of nation building, especially to think through the examples already established through Wole Soyinka's personal life and intervention in public discourses and engagements.

The number of the students-participants in the essay writing session is 89 -- to tally with the 89th birthday anniversary of the grand inspiration behind the project, Soyinka, the writer, rights activists and polemicists, in whose honour the project was birthed in 2010.



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Winners of the Essay writing competitions will be unveiled on July 13, the actual birthday of the patron saint of the project.

NB: The entries in English language will be 800 words minimum in text volume.

Culture House Reception

This is a session of free cultural expressions by participants in the project; featuring storytelling, spoken word, poetry, musical and theatrical performances, film screening, etc.

WSICE: The Project

The WSICE is organised on the platform of the *OpenDoor Series Project WS*, an international cultural exchange programme designed for the purpose of using the platforms of Arts (literary & performing) and Culture to affirm and uphold the dignity of man.

Organised and Sponsored by Zmirage Multimedia Ltd (Nigeria & UK) led by Dr. Teju Kareem, and jointly promoted with Global NewHaven led by Prof Segun Ojewuyi (Dean of College of Art & Media, Southern Illinois University, SIU, Carbondale, USA), the *OpenDoorSeries* continues to enjoy support from Ogun State Government.

Overall Project Mission, Vision & Principle

The youth are the key to bringing about change and prosperity in Nigeria and around the world. It is our duty to engage them and ensure that their thinking and goals are oriented toward progress for the motherland and humanity, stated Dr. Kareem.



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He added: The Wole Soyinka international cultural exchange mission is to reaffirm and elevate the dignity of man through the platforms of literature, arts, and culture. Project WSICE seeks to create unity among mankind regardless of nationality, culture, or religion by focusing on youth as the future of humanity.

Other core value propositions of the WSICE are: Fostering unity, bolstering integrity, and instilling qualities of leadership in the young people.

WS89: Celebrating the Icon

Wole Soyinka as a “Global Humanist”, has “exemplified and advocated for social justice, democracy and cultural preservation through his careers as a writer, rights activist, and teacher. He has been a strong advocate for free speech, fought against human rights abuses locally and globally and paid heavy personal tolls as a result. His extensive publications, lectures and creative enterprises have all addressed the fervent societal challenges of his time and for his country; a more equitable and just nationhood,” stated Dr. Kareem. To celebrate the 89th birthday anniversary (July 13) of Wole Soyinka as is WSICE tradition since inception, the focus remains the growing children and youth of Nigeria and the world. Central is the Essay writing competition where young people are given topics reflective of current national or international concern.



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