

# Credocast

A publication of Credo Advisory

Vol. 2 Issue 4. April 2019

## Building a National Identity

Afro-Juju

Konga **Kakaki** King Sunny Ade

Abadie Koyo Agba **Jookwa**

Pete Edochie Genevieve Nnaji

**Afro-Beat**

Sunny Okosun Olu Jacobs Joke Silva Omotola Jalade Ekeinde Nnamdi Azikiwe

Sango- Festival

Umu Ada **Fuji** Juju

Boma NYSC

Oliver De Coque

Calabar Canival **Sango** Festival Galala **Ethigi** Yahooze Skelewu Shooki Sekem **Ankara** Caftan Omoge Ahmadu **Eyimba** Funmilayo Kuti Obafemi Awolowo Margaret Ekpo Herbert Macaulay Aliko Dangote **Tinapa** Yankari Udo

Agbani Darego Emeka Anyaoku Nri Kingdom **Kobo** Tuface Idibia D'banji Lagbaja Onyeka Onwenu Dora Akuyili

Olumo Rock **Zuma Rock** Taiye and Kehinde Igbankwu **Aso Rock** Oji Nzu Nwoke Sango **Ikeji Festival**

**Olojo Festival** Aure **Walima** Amala Fufu Egusi Banga Afang Akara Oha **Edikiakong** Ogbono Afang Tuwo

**Suya** Ojude Oba Festival

Gongo Aso **Calabash**

**Shaku Shaku** Ofada rice

Birnin Kudu Pepper Soup

**Yoruba** Kano Nwankwo

Maiduguri

Ore Arewa

**Wazobia**

Calabari

**Plateau**

Jookwa

Kanuri

Enugu

Iyabo

Amala

Akara

Ajebo

Gbedu

Okwo

Argungu

Kingdom

Kobo

Alaja

Naija

Chi

Eko

Oke

On

Gele

Giwa

Mina

Digwa

Joromi

Abadiye

Alewwa

**Alanta** Markurdi Konkobelow

Benin Nsukka **Jollof Rice**

Argungu Festival Badagry

Obudu Ekabo **Okirika**

Iya Iyawo Chinua Achebe

Fula Buba Jay Jay Okocha Afro Highlife Moi-Moi Olumide Phyno Wizkid Kano Fela Kuti Shade Adu

**Nollywood** Suleja **Naira** Owo Ilesha Iseyin Vom **Abuja** Eko Gele **Super Eagles** Iyoba Kanuri

Sokoto Jalingo Gusau **Agbada** Aki Paw Paw **Aso-Ebi** Mbese Wole Soyinka Calabash **Hausa**

Nwa Obirin Ibibio Warri Calabari Aburo Dinta **Owambe** Ego Chief Egun **Lolo** Igala Ijebu Isekiri

**Limpopo** Onyenkuzi Akwa Mai-Sai **Idoma** Mai-Ruwa Obi Eze Nwanyi Nwanne Jookwa Alaja

**Ibo** Bubu Iro and Buba **Ahia** Oja Aba Garki **Super Falcons** Lagosian **Tiv** Agbo Nna Nne **Iya**

Kaba Kafanchan **Sannu** Urhobo Oga Chibok **Oba Emir** Uche Bimbo **Aboki** Ekieta Usman

Chiamanda Ngozi Adichie Okonjo Iweala Ejima Taiye Kehinde Halima Nasfat PDP APC

**Pidgin** Ututu Oma **Ekabo** Barka De Safe Bawo ni **Kedu** Ogori Me Digwa

Mesiere Ado **Nagode Mavo** Abole Mallam Daura

Plateau Aba Ibadan Maiduguri Fulani **Eba**

Onitsha **Ile-Ife** Kano Uyo Fela Kuti

Arewa **Wazobia** Phyno Omugwo

Shagamu **Isi-agu** Wizkid Davido

**Kobo** Abinchi Nri Onje **Ego**

**Lasgidi**

4

Communicating 'One Nigeria'

5

Nigerian Dream - Dead or Alive?

7

Champions of National Identity

# 4

## Nigerian Dream Dead or Alive?

*Is there a Nigerian dream or an ethos that expresses love for country? If there is, how does one communicate this national identity so millennials and future generations embrace it?*

# 5

## Communicating 'One Nigeria'

*All communication channels must be utilized to comprehensively engage Nigerians to ensure inclusion.*

# 7

## Champions of National Identity

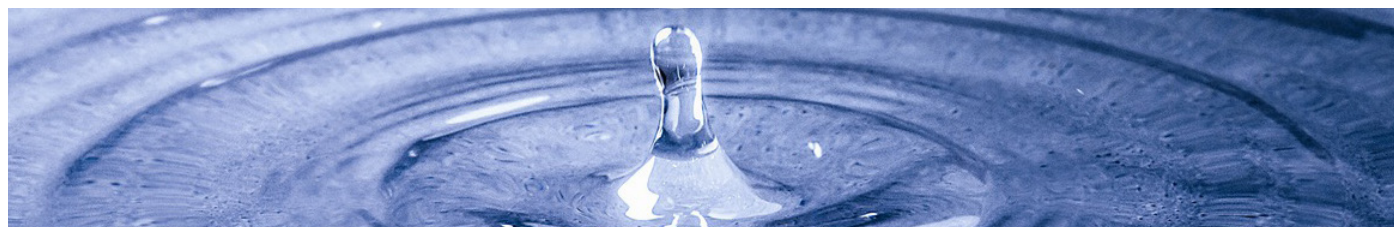
*Thought leaders and influencers have the capacity to shape a nation's perception.*

## About Credo Advisory

Credo Advisory is a strategic communications firm that specializes in designing and implementing strategic, operational and tactical communications initiatives. We provide a full suite of communications support to our clients, which include public communications and advocacy, government relations, community engagement, media relations, crisis communications, digital communications and capacity building.

Our mission is to develop bespoke communications products, activities and campaigns based on knowledge, research and industry insights. With our ability to communicate effectively with diverse audiences and stakeholder groups, Credo's mission is to provide impactful strategic communications advisory from inception to implementation. At Credo, we are committed to improving the way societies communicate.

[www.creadoadvisory.com](http://www.creadoadvisory.com)





“*Nigerians see their ethnicity as their primary means of identification before anything else.*”


# Introduction

Nigeria’s unity and national identity continues to be threatened by ethnic, social and religious conflicts fostered by Boko Haram, Indigenous People of the Biafra (IPOB), Fulani herdsmen, Niger Delta militants to mention a few. Patriotism as a national virtue continues to fade because of these growing fault lines in Nigeria’s socio-cultural fabric. Nigerians see their ethnicity as their primary means of identification before anything else. For any developing country to fast track their developmental goals, it must proactively engage as a united nation in order to collectively address and overcome its developmental challenges. This is historically evidenced in the United States, the United Kingdom, Singapore and more recently Ethiopia and post-conflict Rwanda.

Communications scholars are convinced that strategic communications can play a critical role in national reconciliation, as well as in creating and entrenching a national identity. Traditional and social media are key to implementing the development objectives of any nation due to their significant influence on popular culture. Hence, the media is largely utilized as a potent mobilization tool for nation building.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the engagement advantage social media provides, there is a growing number of Nigerians creating ethnic tension and stoking hate on social media. This is prevalent in many countries wrestling with racial, ethnic and/or religious divide. This phenomenon counters nurturing a national identity. For example, during the Nigerian 2019 elections, there was a significant increase in social media content that stoked ethnic hatred.<sup>2</sup>

← Tweet



**Araoye Oluwadamilare** ▼

@Oluwadamiilaree

Replying to @aktogbaskey @dmightyangel and @SamJosh19879836

The same Igbos will call Nigeria Zoo, Call Yoruba and Hausa Animals yet they want to be the President of Zoo republic in 2023. I can't blame them anyway. The day Ojuwku lost an election in the Southeast was the day I realised they are just advance primitive chest beaters.

8:55 · 05 Mar 19 · [Twitter for Android](#)

---

3 Retweets 11 Likes

← Tweet



**Vinci** ▼

@Elvis\_corp

Nigeria is a Farce, Nigeria should never have been put together and can never be one. Soon everyone will realise this, the last election brought me to this point. To move forward the Igbos, yorubas and the south will have to merge and separate from the north.

14:17 · 09 Mar 19 · [Twitter for Android](#)

---

5 Retweets 10 Likes

<sup>1</sup> Emmanuel Ngozi (2014) The Media and Challenges of National Identity In Nigeria. Available at: [https://www.academia.edu/4660674/media\\_and\\_national\\_identity](https://www.academia.edu/4660674/media_and_national_identity)  
<sup>2</sup> Ayomide O. Tayo (2019) Our original sin and hypocritical young Nigerians. Available at: <https://www.pulse.ng/news/local/tribalism-in-nigeria-elections-2019/qle5rjj>

How can the narrative change? How can Nigerians start thinking as Nigerians and not as Yoruba, Ijaw or Fulani? How can hate speech and ethnic vitriol be mitigated during ethnically charged events like general elections? Strategic communications (specifically public advocacy) can positively influence mindsets and behaviour over time which can help nurture a unified national identity for Nigeria. But who will lead this effort?

“It is imperative that nation states have a measure of common culture and civic ideology, a set of common understandings and aspirations, sentiments and ideas that bind the population together.”



On the how, strategic communications efforts work best when they are multi-pronged, wide spanning, inclusive, consultative and evidenced-based. Also, they use audience specific messaging and leveraging of multiple communications channels can determine what attracts your audience.<sup>3</sup>

## Nigerian Dream - Dead or Alive?

Is there a Nigerian dream or an ethos that expresses love for country? If there is, how does one communicate this national identity so millennials and future generations embrace it? If such an identity doesn't exist, can it be cultivated or must it occur organically? It is imperative that nation states have “a measure of common culture and civic ideology, a set of common understandings and aspirations, sentiments and ideas that bind the population together. The major agencies through which this socialisation is carried out are the mass education system and mass media.<sup>4</sup> Considering how much of our knowledge of the world comes from mediated communication, either through people or through mass media, this is likely to be a primary source of influence on structures of identification.<sup>5</sup>

### What is National Identity?

National identity is a person's identity or sense of belonging to a nation state. It can arise from the “common points” in people's daily lives: national symbols, language, the nation's history, national consciousness and cultural artefacts. Patriotism is the positive expression to national identity categorized by national pride.<sup>6</sup>

In Nigeria, the national football team is a shared cultural point and by extension a part of its national identity. Nigeria's love for football has been further propagated with print, digital and social media. Nigeria's thriving film industry, Nollywood, is an important element in its national identity. Nollywood is responsible for shaping public perception and influencing behaviour because it is a reflection of the Nigerian experience. As new media occupies a pivotal place in the lives of Nigerian youth,

<sup>3</sup> The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2005) Strategic Communication For Behaviour And Social Change In South Asia. Available at: [https://www.unicef.org/cbsc/files/Strategic\\_Communication\\_for\\_Behaviour\\_and\\_Social\\_Change.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/cbsc/files/Strategic_Communication_for_Behaviour_and_Social_Change.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Significance Of Media Systems In National Identity Construction Sociology Essay. (November 2018). Available at: <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/sociology/significance-of-media-systems-in-national-identity-construction-sociology-essay>

<sup>5</sup> Significance Of Media Systems In National Identity Construction Sociology Essay (November 2018).. Available at: <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/sociology/significance-of-media-systems-in-national-identity-construction-sociology-essay>

<sup>6</sup> Wikipedia. Available at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_identity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_identity)



“ Fostering national identity will require consistent sensitization to challenge the myths and misconceptions hindering a country’s common identity. ”



it becomes a potentially crucial element in the construction of Nigeria’s national identity.<sup>7</sup>

## Communicating ‘One Nigeria’

### Sensitization

Fostering national identity will require consistent sensitization to challenge the myths and misconceptions hindering a country’s common identity. The Federal Government under the Ministry of Information and Culture can implement a national campaign using radio, television, print and social media to disseminate strategic messaging on national identity.

The Ministry can sponsor indigenous programming centered around promoting Nigerian culture - music competitions, fashion shows, tourism and festivals. Such initiatives can also have transformational economic impact. The “Made in Nigeria” campaign geared at promoting local content and local manufacturing is a perfect example of promoting Nigeria’s identity with economic benefits.

### Engaging Stakeholders

All communication channels must be utilized to comprehensively engage Nigerians to ensure inclusion. The traders, commercial bus drivers, civil servants, students, diasporans, rural dwellers, etc, must be targeted via social media and mass media. The messaging and language must be crafted to be accessible for all Nigerians. Again, Nollywood is a strategic public sensitization vehicle. The National Film Corporation and other related bodies can promote national identity by sponsoring and infusing pro-Nigeria content in their films. The same can be applied to Nigeria’s thriving music industry. Both industries wield massive national and global appeal.

<sup>7</sup> Chiara Pattaro (2015) New Media & Youth Identity. Issues and Research Pathways Available at: [https://ijse.padovauniversitypress.it/system/files/papers/2015\\_1\\_12.pdf](https://ijse.padovauniversitypress.it/system/files/papers/2015_1_12.pdf)

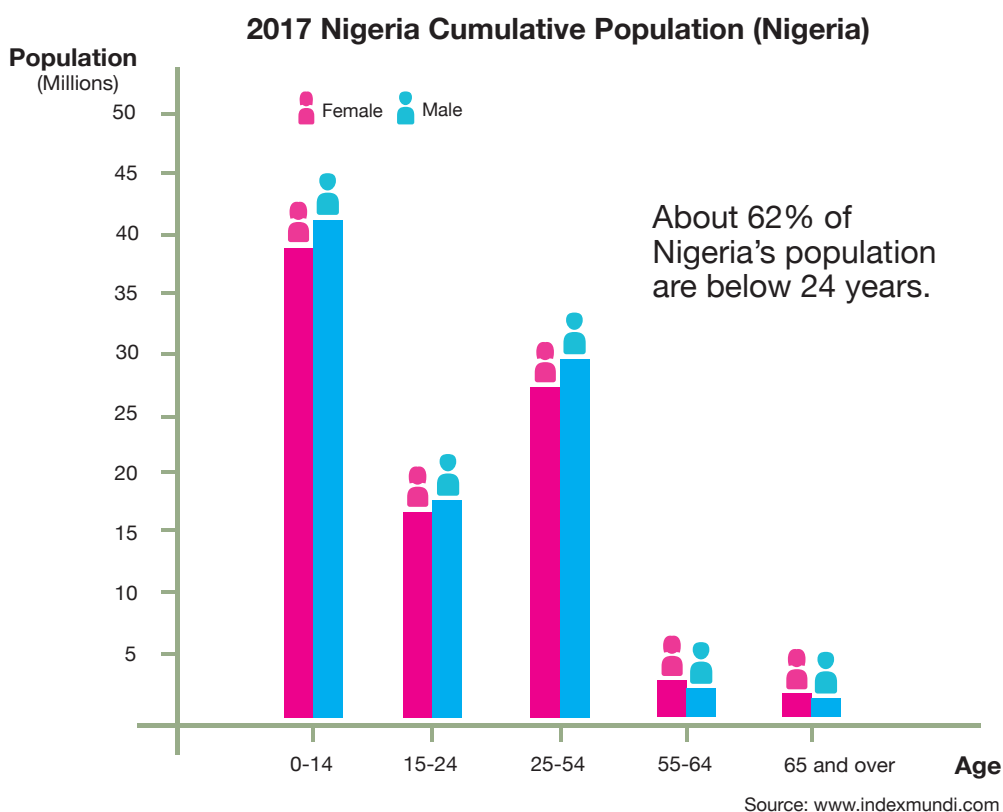
“Over 90 million Nigerians are internet users”

# Key Stakeholders

## Youth

Nigerian youth stand to be major stakeholders in this process due to their sheer numbers. More than half of Nigerians are under 30 years. The question is how to harness the current ‘youth bulge’ in building national identity.

Millennials possess different learning and engagement behaviour from the previous generation who prefer traditional media. Millennials rely on digital and social media for their news, movies, sports and music. Any mass campaign targeted at youth must use these channels to share content that will resonate with them.



## Religious Leaders

Faith communities are the largest institutions in Nigeria and their leaders are held in high regard. For a multi-religious nation like Nigeria, religious leaders must play a key role in any public advocacy campaign. These prominent figures must understand and support the objective in order to effectively communicate the messaging to their various followers. Religious leaders should also be seen as part of the solution to the national divide. Extensive stakeholder management is required to ensure inclusion and collaboration across all major religions and their bodies. This is critical as religion continues to be a fault line in Nigeria’s nationhood. Stakeholder engagements should include dialogues and forums with religious organizations where synergy on national identity efforts is attained.

## Traditional Rulers

Traditional rulers are responsible for preserving the norms and values guiding a community. They are powerful figures and determine what is culturally acceptable in rural Nigeria. Rulers like Ooni of Ife, Oba of Benin, Emir of Kano, Alafin of Oyo, Sultan of Sokoto, Asabga of Asaba and many more stand to be a pivotal channel in communicating national identity to the grassroots.

“A campaign of this scope and scale will require champions who can help drive the narrative and influence their followers.”

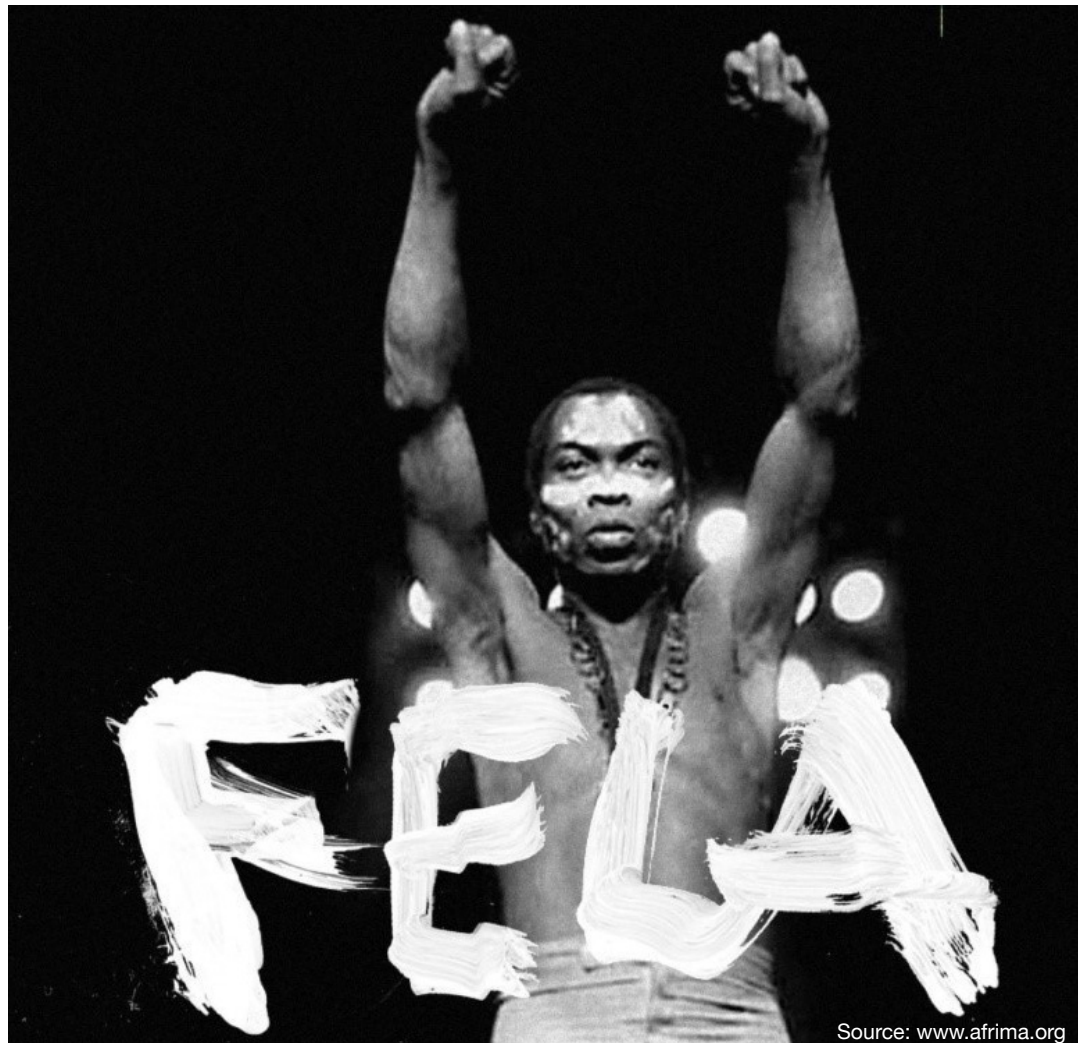
# Strategy for Identity Building

## Social Media

Over 90 million Nigerians are internet users.<sup>8</sup> This is a significant demographic that must be leveraged for any public campaign – specifically for social media. Social media has championed revolutionary movements that has impacted the world. The #MeToo, #NotTooYoungToRun, #EnoughIsEnough, #BringBackOurGirls, #ElectionNoBeWar and more movements galvanized Nigerians behind a particular cause. Similarly, leveraging hashtags like #OneNigeria, #IAmNigeria, #NigerianDream and #MyNigeria can create and promote a sense of identity for Nigerians.

## Champions of National Identity

Thought leaders and influencers have the capacity to shape a nation’s perception. A campaign of this scope and scale will require champions who can help drive the narrative and influence their followers. These champions should represent various fields of endeavour - music, movies, fashion, sports, politics, business, etc. Their synergized efforts in the campaign can have transformational impact on the minds and psyche of Nigerians.



Source: [www.afrima.org](http://www.afrima.org)

Like Fela Anikulapo Kuti, the Afrobeat music legend, these champions can use their various crafts and platforms to communicate a shared national identity. Fela single-handedly contributed to shaping Nigeria’s culture through songs that struck a chord with those who felt Nigeria wasn’t working.

<sup>8</sup> The Statistics Portal (2017) Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/183849/internet-users-nigeria/>



“Rural radio programming serves as their primary source of cultural, political, health and other educational and enlightenment information.”

Figures like Chimamanda Adichie who promotes feminism in her literary works, Folarin Falana ‘Falz’ whose music addresses the endemic issues in Nigeria or Genevieve Nnaji who uses her films to showcase Nigerian culture to the world can be effective champions in building a national identity.

### Grassroot Advocacy

The nomads and rural dwellers without internet or limited digital access require offline engagement to understand and support national identity. Majority of this stakeholder group are illiterate and will need face-to-face communication in their local dialect for successful advocacy. Despite their perceived ‘disconnection’ from mainstream Nigeria, this group are critical and wield considerable influence.

Rural radio programming serves as their primary source of cultural, political, health and other educational and enlightenment information. Therefore, it is essential to develop tactical radio content along the national identity narrative as well as leverage religious and community leaders for maximum campaign sensitization.

### Credo Experience

Credo Advisory has conducted similar exercises on the national level through grassroot advocacy to solve problems effecting change in a community. While campaigning for change, Credo designed and implemented a community engagement framework that was inclusive. Specifically, the team conducted townhall engagement exercises in 7 communities in Niger and Sokoto states which entailed working closely with community leaders, women leaders, youth leaders as well as engaging aggressively with state governments to ensure project success. Town hall engagements were also conducted to sensitize members of selected communities as well as community champions identified to continue the grassroots advocacy for sustainability.

## Conclusion

While many Nigerians view cultural, ethnic and religious diversity as a challenge rather than a strength, advocacy and communications can help counter such divisive perceptions. It is that perception that is responsible for the dwindling sense of national identity and the growing inter-tribal and inter-religious conflicts occurring in Nigeria.

Despite the cultural and social diversity, Nigerians still manage to come together at every World Cup because of their shared hopes for the Nigeria team. They also come together as fierce defenders of Nigeria’s title in the “Jollof Rice Wars” with Senegal and Ghana. Again, because of their shared sentiment, they are able to forge an identity and national pride around Nigerian cuisine. These are the sort of cultural elements that can foster a sense of Nigerian pride and unity through deliberate engagement and advocacy.