

## ..A network for filmmakers to share ideas

By Ishaya Bako



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[Ishaya Bako - Wikipedia](#)

DOCUMENTARIES aren't popular in Nigeria. But that will change. In Africa's largest country, and the presumed giant of entertainment and culture on the continent, our films are popular and rightfully so. If our expressions and our 'never say die' attitude is exaggerated and dramatic; it is only fair our music and movies reflect that. As *Nollywood* evolves, so will the films that will be produced. One genre and artform that will also evolve is the non-fiction film, the documentary.

Documentary asks questions, it seeks truth. Documentary shines a light; it pushes its audience to act. Documentary captures our lives and plays it back to us, warts and all. The documentary is a mirror to society, a mirror to humanity.

The *iREP International Documentary Film Festival* is one of a kind and an important platform for documentary films in Nigeria. The three wise men – Jahman Anikulapo, Makin Soyinka and Femi Odugbemi have envisioned and breathed life into a festival that celebrates the documentary form, celebrates its filmmakers and showcases documentary films in the iconic Freedom Park, Lagos.

I remember watching '*Faaji Agba*' by Remi Vaughan-Richards in 2016 at the outdoor amphitheater at Freedom Park. The screening was followed by a Q&A with Remi and some of the musicians in the documentary. It was a great film, a great atmosphere and a lovely interaction with the creatives and audiences that appreciate that kind of stuff. This is what iREP represents, an avowed commitment to the documentary film in Africa and its filmmakers and showcasing documentaries from home and abroad to a growing audience.

The *iREPXCHANGE* (on whatsapp), stemming from the festival has also created a platform for filmmakers to network and share ideas and tips to make their craft better.

This is important as iREP has not only become a platform for Nigerian and African filmmakers to showcase their work, it is also an opportunity for us to watch films from across the world and also interact with the filmmakers. This is evidenced by its longstanding collaboration with *DOK.fest München* and the reputation it has built over the last 10 years for its programming,

organization and consistency. A consistency I hope and pray continues for the next 10 years and longer.

Documentaries aren't popular in Nigeria, but they don't need to be. They need to be good; they need to speak truth to power and they need to captivate an audience like nothing else has, and nothing else can. iREP embodies that and encourages films and filmmakers to do so as well. Our films will evolve, and our films will improve. I am positive in saying this because festivals like iREP exist and platforms like the *iREPXCHANGE* encourage filmmakers to know each other, know each other's work and be better at it.

This is only 10 years in, I'm excited to see what the next 10 years hold. Happy Anniversary.

- *Bako is director of **Road to Yesterday & I do Not Come to You by Chance***

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