



**GENDERHOPES**  
WORKING TO END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

**Interview of the Month  
Tola Onigbanjo  
Founder, Women4Africa  
August 2015**

- 1. GenderHopes: You co-founded the Women4Africa Awards in 2011. Can you tell us more about this award ceremony and its objectives?**

Tola Onigbanjo: Women4Africa's objective is focusing on and awarding 'the ordinary African woman who is doing extraordinary things'. Women4Africa elevates and celebrates these precious women who may not be recognised because they are not in the limelight or famous. These precious women are doing incredible things in their community, homes, places of work, business etc... It is also a way to empower the younger generation as they are able to see and are encouraged by these women who are making a difference in their own unique way.

- 2. The Women4Africa Awards are divided into several categories. Why did you choose these categories and how are the nominees and winners selected?**

The categories are selected every year by a group of us. Each year some of the categories are changed but the majority of them remain the same. Nominees are selected and submitted by the public. Women4Africa have made it clear from the onset that we will not nominate and we will not select the finalists or the winners. Individuals can nominate themselves if they wish to. Once nominations close, we have a selection panel who then decides the final nominees. Once the finalists have been selected, they are asked to submit a more robust profile with evidence of their works and then this is sent to the final judges who range from various professional backgrounds. Our judges are revealed on the night of the awards and one of the judges gives a short speech as to how they made their selection. Winners are announced at the awards night.

- 3. Women4Africa has prioritized two causes: sexual exploitation of girls and the end of girl-child labour. From your experience what initiatives have been successful in helping to end those practices?**

We tend to identify and work with charitable organisations in Africa that already exist to combine these initiatives, as resourcing existing good practice

till meets our objectives. The Mantle of Mordecai foundation, AFRUCA, Amref (Stand up for mothers campaign) are a few we have worked with.

**4. You are a businesswoman, a mother and an author. What advice would you give to young African women today to realise their career objectives?**

The advice that I would give is the same one I say all the time: 'If you believe it, you can achieve it'. I would say that the most important person who needs to believe in what you want to do is YOU. With that said, your passion will drive you at a force that will enable you to achieve your dreams without giving up at the hurdles or obstacles that may present themselves along the way. Believe in you, believe in your dreams and go for it!!!

**5. Can you tell us what plans there are for Women4Africa and for yourself in the near future?**

For now, our plans are to grow Women4Africa as the most prestigious women's award worldwide. We will continue to work towards that as we continue to elevate the ordinary woman. As for myself, I have a number of books I am working on releasing so the journey towards that has begun ☺

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*Tola Onigbanjo also known as 'WiseTola' is the founder along with her husband of Women4Africa. She is also the author of "Steps" a book on step parenting, media personality and a speaker. Her three main passions are Women, Parenting and Youth. A qualified Project manager, Tola is a firm leader in small organisational and event structures.*