

Enugwu-Agidi Progressive Union, USA presents

# The EPU-USA

## Quarterly Newsletter

March, 2022

Issue# 001

# EPU REUNION

# 2022

WASHINGTON DC

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**BOSAH OKOYE**

Who are we? What makes a community unique? How does a community character emerge? What are the necessary ingredients that foster, as well as nurture community beliefs, norms and character?

As we try to work through these questions the article will undoubtedly raise some more issues. It is with utmost humility that one is declaring outright that this writer does not claim to have all the answers that can cover all the reader’s definitions or superior views on the subject matter/s. The ultimate purpose of this topic is to open a vista for the reader to embark on a journey of reflection, redefinition and eventually a re-engineering of the community character in a time of monumental societal changes.

Our communities like the rest of the world are going through uncontrollable changes. The changes are coming at our people in rapid succession and from every direction – Mental, Spiritual, Physical, Environmental, Social and Technological. The more developed countries are also being disrupted by these changes, which they seemingly are better equipped to handle. Our communities do not have the luxury of choosing to accept these changes or not. Change is the only constant in life. We therefore must embrace the changes from the prism of who we are and in our uniqueness.

Who we are as a people derives mostly from the things that has worked for our community – Dignity of the human person and hard work, Sanctity of life, a shared value of communal upliftment and ingrained belief system that encourages communal help and service for the betterment of the generality of the populace. That in a nutshell is the world our forebears wished they left for us and hoped we foster.

Who we are, therefore, are a peaceful people, living in harmony with our neighbors and amongst ourselves in mutual trust and respect. Post independent Nigeria was awash with Community Intentions anchored on the above values but largely cemented on trust with its inherent communal guarantees. Individual character, personal integrity and community standing were a vouchsafe to priceless opportunities. Individual wealth and community growth followed with communities deliberately focusing in and dominating selective trades and businesses. Community intention was at work and flourished to the betterment of communities.

The participants did not view each other as competition, to the amazement of outsiders who do not comprehend the dynamics of shared intention. Communities started being referenced and defined by what they are best at and what they do predominantly. It is important to emphasize that these intentions are never borne out some grand design by a community but do evolve organically through the desire by an individual to share his success and network without fear of losing his position among members of his

community. The snowball effect is what leads to this community practice and norm.

During the second quarter of the 20th century, Sir Ojukwu’s transport and logistics business became one of the leaders of that sector, attracting and encouraging more Nnewi people to join the industry. The real democratization happened as the community correctly veered into auto parts retail and distribution throughout the country. Community intention solidified their hold on the transport and auto parts sectors of the economy. The town had a consistent and stable leadership through this period. A stable and respected traditional stool and a town union leadership that experienced minimal rancor, helped matters the more. The traditional institution symbolized stability and served as arbiter on personal and business conflicts involving members of the community. It did help that the town did not suffer the devastation that some communities did as a result of the civil war.

In contrast, our community focused on the lumber/timber sector and quickly made it our town dominant sector, through mass participation. This trend was taking hold nationwide and some diversification into other building materials subsectors started to take root before the civil war. As soon as hostilities ended the trend continued with the consequent rise in living standards. The instability following the transition of the traditional leader, derailed the community’s march to further innovation and diversification. The guard rails came off. Most fixes since then have been mostly cosmetic rather than organic. The return of a semblance of stability in the last few years have been greeted with unprecedented and quantum changes in society. Our town went through a near fifty-year period of rudder lessness and lack of collective intention. How we recover, recalibrate and continue our march as a people is up to us.

The political environment in the country as unpredictable as it is, requiring that we muster all the qualities and values that define who we are and apply them to our current challenges, with an eye at winning the future. Our circumstances cannot be controlled or changed, if we fail to engage. We must work on some confidence building and selfless projects to galvanize our people again into expanding the frontiers of our community trade specialty or competence. We can expand our footprint in the sector by organized and intentional diversification into treatments and prefabrications. The ingredients are readily available to us and require mass involvement elements like youth training and empowerment.

This article solicits input from readers that wish to do so. The conversation has just started.

**Mr. Bosah Okoye is writing from Washington, D.C. branch of EPU-USA.**



The Washington, D.C. branch of EPU-USA (Enugwu-Agidi Progressive Union, USA) has presented several conceptual Hospital Building plans. This project will be launched during our 2022 Convention at Greenbelt, Maryland.

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## INNO OBIORA

Anambra State was first formed in 1976 and later divided into two in 1991 by the creation of Enugu State. The people of Anambra are diverse in their local dialects, but they have the same customs and cultures. They are known for their entrepreneurship and apprenticeship. Something ugly is happening to this small state despite their economic powers, many towns are not been carried along in the administration of this beautiful State.

Enugu Agidi is one of the four towns that make up of the great NRI kingdom, which the history tells us is the first Igbo people. Nri kingdom comprises Nawfia, Enugwu Agidi, Enugwu Ukwu and Agu Ukwu. These four towns are believed to be the conner stone of Igbo ancestry.

Today, as a member of Enugu Agidi progressive union, we want to send a strong message to the newly elected Governor of Anambra State, Governor, Charles Chukwuma Soludo that we can no longer keep quiet and allow any government of Anambra State to take us for granted. We should and must be part of the decision making in our dear State.

Enugu Agidi is a vibrant town with all talents in different endeavors, and to silent us and tell us as if we are not relevant in Igbo land is under statement. We all know the challenges facing all states in Nigeria particularly our dear state, Anambra State.

Lack of infrastructures, no security, no roads, no light, no public water works, no empowering businesses that pay real wages and drugs and alcohol abuses. Inter town disagreements within clans, land disputes, and family's disunity are all prevailing problems facing many towns

All these problems are enormous and challenging but selection of few from towns which have had their indigens served out in the previous governments, will not anchor well with us who have never seen our town in any good positions in the old or new Anambra State.

What does this show to our collective consciousness as the people from the great State of Anambra State? We all know that Anambra has more than 160 towns and the no resources to accommodate everyone in the state as commissioners or other vital posts, but non-Enugu Agidi indigenes were contacted or screened for any position in your government.

This system of we are together during elections and campaigns, and we are who we are after election will not continue. Enugu Agidi was busy during elections with loudspeakers blasting day and night. But now the bell and the dusts of the election are over, the people we help to win will not select us as part of their team, this practice must stop.

Enugu Agidi has never had a commissioner of our State during the civilian regime of East Central State under Mr. Ukpabi Asika in 1970, till today be it military or civilian government. Not even a deputy governor or state house of Assembly in our state and people would like us to keep quiet and just follow the trends in our state as zombies.

This will not continue to happen. Enugu Agidi indigenes are great and blessed people. They have been contributing to the advancement of Igbo people in Nigeria in all fields of endeavors. Professor Fabian Anene Ositadimma Udekwa, was Enugu Agidi indigene, who was a distinguished professor of Surgery at the University of Nigeria Nsukka. He was one of the first pioneer of open-heart surgery in Africa. He was a proud son of Enugu Agidi who had ten children who are all medical doctors. Probably, no one can beat this record in the world.

Enugu Agidi also produced professor Ofiaeli of the Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital, Awka, Prof. Dr. Nnamdi Nwankwo, Prof. Dr. Emeka Nwankwo, Professor, Anozie Nebolisa and Attorney, Emeka Okeke who is working at world Bank in Washington, D.C. USA. Other eminent people from Enugu Agidi are John Okoye, Chinedu Ikeanyi, Kachi Nwosu and Chief Okekeuche. In business, we have Umeano and sons, one of the first Nigerians to export palm produce through UAC to overseas. We have my great Uncle, Prince Okoli, who built houses for Njikoka local government and created two secondary schools with the help of other indigenous people from Enugu Agidi.

What is it that every government that comes around treat us as if we do not count? It is time that we stand tall and be counted. There is a lot to do in Anambra State and everyone citizen or non-citizen of Anambra state should be involved to build a new state where Igbos and Nigeria will be proud again. It is equally sad that the people of Anambra State have not been developing their own State, but they are the pioneers in development other parts of the Country. When our elders say *Aku luo uno*, which translates when the wealth gets to your homeland, does not mean anything to Anambra people. It is a new day for every Igbo, to start building Igbo land. In doing so, all towns should have a representative in our state as a non-government official but as a citizen of Anambra state to discuss for a better way forward.

As Igbos are upset of the Federal Government of non-inclusive in the running of the country, we people of Anambra State will not imitate the ugliness of a sectional Anambra State where some people are not being carried along in running affairs of our dear Godly blessed State. In all 36 States of the Federation and the Federal Capital Abuja, Anambra people have invested more than any other people after the indigenes of that State. My advice to Anambra people is to add value and help the indigenous people of each State you reside, especially the youths and the elderly. Do not discriminate against any tribe. In Anambra State, we the people of Enugu Agidi will not allow any government to discriminate against us either. Anyi Pulu ka mee as Oliver De Coque, the great Anambra musician sang in one of his songs. This means, Enugwu Agidi is equal to any task and willing to do more for the good of Anambra State and Nigeria at large.

**Mr. Inno Obiora is writing from New Jersey, branch of EPU-USA.**  
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This first edition of EPU-USA Quarterly Newsletter is brought to you courtesy of The EPU-USA Internet & Information Committee and RitBridge Info Tech.

