**Interviewer:** Good evening.

**Participant 22:** Good evening, Sir.

**Interviewer:** Thank you for joining me in this interview and having given me your consent to record the interview, the interview is now being recorded, so we can start.

**Participant 22:** Okay, let’s start.

**Interviewer:** So, before we start, we have six sections in this interview, I will start with section One. We have a series of questions under each section, some five questions, some four questions, some three questions but I will start with section one. Section one is about demographic information.

**Participant 22:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** So, the first question under this section is, can you tell us your age, your gender, and your country of origin?

**Participant 22:** Okay. I'm 48 years old. I'm a female, and my country of origin is Nigeria.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you for sharing that. Question two, what is your highest level of education, and what country did you obtain your degree from?

**Participant 22:** Okay, my highest level of education is… I have a master's degree in peace studies and conflict resolution and I obtained it from Nigeria.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you.

**Participant 22:** You're welcome.

**Interviewer:** How long have you lived in the US, specifically in Maryland?

**Participant 22:** Okay, 3 years in Maryland, 3 years in the US

**Interviewer:** Okay. Thank you.

**Participant 22:** You're welcome.

**Interviewer:** The next question is, what is your current profession or job title?

**Participant 22:** Currently, I work as a community coach, that is direct support personnel. I support people that live with disabilities. So that is what I do.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you for sharing that.

**Participant 22:** You’re welcome.

**Interviewer:** The last question under this section is, what was your profession in Nigeria before you migrated?

**Participant 22:** While in Nigeria, I trained as a lawyer in Nigeria. I had an LLB in Nigeria before doing my master's in peace studies and conflict resolution, because the aspect of law that I was into in Nigeria is alternative dispute resolution, and that is why I decided to take a master's in peace studies and conflict resolution. That was what I was doing in Nigeria with my other private businesses, too, that I was doing.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you for sharing that. We'll get into a little details, more details about that later in subsequent sections.

**Participant 22:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** We’ll quickly go to section two. Section two, I will ask questions about push and pull factors. Push and pull factors are factors that influence people's decision to migrate from their country of origin to other countries, or from one country to the other generally.

The first question there, what motivated your decision to migrate to the United States? Were there specific factors in Nigeria that made you leave. e.g., economic, social, or political challenges?

**Participant 22:** Well, I could say economic…all the issues you mentioned actually motivated my coming, my migrating from Nigeria. The economic issue, like topmost of it all, because we got to a point that it was becoming too difficult to live in Nigeria. We have the fees, especially the children's school fees, was increasing by the day. Earning in Naira and having children school outside Nigeria, supporting them, was becoming an issue and withdrawing them and bringing them back, I think it's going to have an effect on the children, and even on the parents, too. So that was well…topmost thing that motivated our moving, “let's move to a place that the currency is okay, we'll be able to finance the children's school.” So that is it.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you for sharing that.

**Participant 22:** You’re welcome.

**Interviewer:** The next question is I want to know the reason why you decided to move to the US, and also Maryland in particular?

**Participant 22:** Okay. For me, I moved to the US because my spouse moved to the US before me. In my own case, he got a job from Nigeria, probably because he had his PhD here in US so it was easy for him to move from Nigeria to this place, he got a job in his field. So he moved here. So with the way everything was going, I knew it was going to be better for us to join him here, more opportunities, and at least I will earn the currency that at least will be able to pay school fees easily than what I was earning in Nigeria. So when we looked at all that factors, we felt that it's better for us to move. That was why we came here to join him, myself and my children. But my husband moved, and we came after he had moved, and what motivated him to Maryland, the job he got was in Maryland, and that is why he came to Maryland.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you for sharing that.

**Participant 22:** You're welcome.

**Interviewer:** The last question under this section is about the challenges that people go through when they migrate. In your own case, too, did you encounter any challenges during the migration process?

**Participant 22:** A lot. Yeah, challenges. For me, one of the first challenge I encountered here was the culture shock. It's just different. What you're used to and what you're seeing, a different ball game. Settling in was a challenge for me because I came in, the visa I came in with is not a visa that will let me work. I had to go through the process of getting a work permit, applying for work permits, and all that, because my visa did not come with a work permit. So the challenge of waiting for over four months before I got something to do was a big challenge to me. Coming from a place that I was up and about doing everything, even in my own little way there, and all that, and coming to a place that you're just redundant for four months before getting a work permit to start something was a big one for me.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you for sharing that. We’ll go to the next section, section three. Section three, we’ll talk about professional experiences.

**Participant 22:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned that back in Nigeria, you were an attorney and you also specialized in ADR- Alternative Dispute Resolution. Can you share in a little bit more detail your career trajectory in Nigeria before coming over to the US?

**Participant 22:** Okay. Well, in Nigeria, like I said earlier, I had my LLB, I was doing alternative dispute resolution in Nigeria, practicing in Abuja. I had my own private practice. Of course, I worked in a couple of places before I decided to start up something, so I was doing my own stuff, was doing my thing, and I can say that in Nigeria it was thriving because Nigeria at a point, is beginning to move from the traditional way of settling cases, of settling issues, which is the court that we all know. And we know the challenges associated with the court, not everyone can afford that, and not everyone gets the justice that they want, and all that. So Nigeria, in a way, too, is beginning to lean towards alternative dispute resolution because they get judgment faster than the traditional way that we know, that is the court. So it was okay, I was doing well in it but like I said, there were factors that made me to move.

You know, I think that’s the little I can say about it, except you want me to expand more.

**Interviewer:** I think I just have one follow up question, and I think after that we can move to the next question and the follow up question

**Participant 22:** Okay

**Interviewer:** That I have is, you said you practiced as an attorney for some time, then you set up your own private practice and you were also involved in ADR, alternative dispute resolution. What I would just want to know is, both your time when you were working in other people's practices, and the time you had your own practice and the time you went into ADR, I just want to know the total number of years that you worked after you finished your education in Nigeria before you came over to the US.

**Participant 22:** Okay, about 15 years, thereabout, yes.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you for sharing that. You had 15 years of professional experience.

**Participant 22:** Yes

**Interviewer:** In Nigeria. Okay. The next question is, how would you describe your current career trajectory in the United States?

**Participant 22**: Hmmmm! That is a big question. Well, someone, not someone, people will say, America is a humbling ground, like you come, and you forget who you are. That is a summary of what I can say. I remember coming in here, and you know, I didn't come with the intention of doing what I'm doing now. I came with the intention that okay, at least I know I have my own experience I've been doing something. So I was going to get something related to what I know how to do. You understand what I'm saying?

**Interviewer:** Yes, I understand.

**Participant 22**: But when I got here, the first set of people I met, what they were saying was just like, in this place forget about whatever you are in Nigeria., just drop it. I heard that

and it didn't go down well with me, but I came to realize later that that is just the reality of it all. We had a senior friend, that he became our friend later, like a family friend that we were referred to. He has lived here for over 30 years, and when we went to see him like, okay, how do we go? I went to meet him for advice and all that, and he told me, “look, I know you read law, forget about the law, pocket it.”

**Interviewer:** Hmmmm!

**Participant 22:** Pocket it. It's not going to pay bills here, and it's not going to put food on your table because you can't afford to go into it here right away, so you need to do something and everything. So that is just it for me, transitioning into or what do I say, fitting into the system here, it's way, way, way, way beyond what I expected. So it wasn't an easy one, very humiliating, you know, frustrating. You understand what I mean, putting years into your career, all your efforts and everything, then you're coming here, you're struggling to even take a position with people that barely went through high school. You understand what I mean?

**Interviewer:** Hmmmm!

**Participant 22:** So it is a very frustrating and a very sad one for me.

**Interviewer:** Okay, yeah, thank you for sharing that experience. This is a very common experience among highly educated African immigrants in the US generally so, Maryland is not an exception. Your own experience is also not an exception.

**Participant 22:** Hmm.

**Interviewer:** But the next question I want to ask is but I don't want to project it, but I know that you are not currently utilizing your skills, knowledge, and experience back home well enough in your position, based on what you have described to me. But, I still want you to say it, maybe there is a another way that you want to say it. So how well do you feel your skills and qualifications are being fully utilized in your current role?

**Participant 22:** If there's anything below under-utilized, that is what it is. If there's any word to say, it's underutilized, that is how it is, it is underutilized. In fact, there is no room for that. Whatever skills I had before coming here. It's irrelevant to the role I play.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you for sharing that. Some of the reasons why immigrants face these challenges, are what we'll be talking about in the next question, what I'm going to ask you in the next question. Yeah, it's about barriers that people face when they move over to the US from Africa, if you are a highly educated professional. So the question is, what barriers have you faced in the professional landscape, such as licensing requirements, recognition of foreign qualifications, and/or workplace discrimination, and what strategies have you used to overcome these challenges?

**Participant 22:** Okay. I think I understand what you're trying to say. So I'll just try to pick as this thing. Like the barriers that I can say, coming from Nigeria, for instance, I studied law, coming from Nigeria to US, I know that it's not easy to just come and practice here.

**Interviewer:** Hmm.

Participant 22: Because they have their own laws here. Even in Nigeria, you can't have a foreign law degree and come to Nigeria and practice, it's not possible, you have to go through the legal system of every country before you can practice in any country. So for US, you have to have an LLM, that is master’s in law.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant 22:** You have an LLM, then you go through their bar exam, the American Bar Association, you go through their exam from any approved…so you need to take their bar exam before you can practice in the US

**Interviewer:** As a foreign trained lawyer?

**Participant 22:** Yes, you need to.

**Interviewer:** As a foreign, trained lawyer.

**Participant 22:** As a foreign trained lawyer, there are two ways, it is either you have an LLm, that is, master’s, then go through their bar exams of any states that you intend to practice.

For instance, if you're in Maryland, you have to go through their bar exam. Nigeria, you know it's general like, once you write a Nigerian bar exam, you can practice anywhere in Nigeria, but in US it's not the same. In US, you can't move from state to state to practice in the US. Any state you're practicing; you have to go through their bar exam of that state.

**Interviewer:** Hmmn.

**Participant 22:** That is how it is here. So it's even more complex than what we have in Nigeria. You understand what I'm saying. You could even check that out later, too, and understand what I'm trying to say. So it's quite tedious, it's not an easy one for one that just migrated, considering the financial implication. You have a lot of bills you're facing, you're coming to pay bills, and you don't even have access to loans and all that. So how do you come? And the first thing you do is to start schooling, it's not possible. So those are the difficult challenges one faces when you come here So what’s the next one again? I know it's like I over…

**Interviewer:** Yes, thank you for sharing that.

**Participant 22**: You're welcome.

**Interviewer**: You've talked about how difficult it is to transition from

**Participant 22:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Being a foreign trained lawyer, then coming over here to also start as a lawyer

**Participant 22:** Yes

**Interviewer:** You mentioned the cost of going to school, that's under licensing.

**Participant 22:** Okay. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Because you have to meet those licensing requirements before you're able to practice. And you said, it is very, very expensive, really.

**Participant 22:** We can’t afford it. It’s not what we can afford as you come into US to just start immediately. It's expensive.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you for sharing that. The other thing I wanted to know is, you also said that a foreign trained lawyer in Nigeria, too, cannot just practice in Nigeria. He needs to

**Participant 22**: go through.

**Interviewer:** He needs to go through certain trainings in Nigeria.

**Participant 22:** Yes, you need to understand the legal system of every country you need to practice. You don't, you can't come. The law is not the same everywhere. The law in Nigeria is different from the law in US. In America, the law in Maryland differs from the law in another State. So, you can’t move from Texas, for instance, you move from Houston, and you come to Maryland, and you want to practice. It doesn't work like that here; you need to understand the law of everywhere you want to practice.

**Interviewer:** Okay, I have one follow up question there, no let me say two. Based on the recognition of foreign qualifications, which one do you think is more tedious? A foreign, trained lawyer that is going to Nigeria to practice. Or a Nigerian trained lawyer that is coming over here to practice. Which of those two processes do you think is more tedious?

**Participant 22:** Hmmm! I can tell you of a truth that it might be the same thing.

**Interviewer:** Okay

**Participant 22:** In law profession, maybe other profession I can't say, but in law I think it's going to be the same thing because you're practicing in a place you need to know the laws of the place you're practicing.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Participant 22:** You're coming to Nigeria, you need to know what is Nigerian legal system, how does it work in Nigeria, you need to understand that. Coming to US, you need to understand the US legal system, the Maryland legal system, how does it work, you need to understand. So for me, I can say it's the same thing.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you for sharing that.

**Participant 22:** You're welcome.

**Interviewer:** There’s something I don't want to leave out, workplace discrimination. I know you work, you have a job now, and you go there on a daily basis.

**Participant 22:** Uhhhmmm

**Interviewer:** It's a big barrier if people experience discrimination at workplace.

**Participant 22:** Uhhhmmm

**Interviewer:** In your own case, will you say you've experienced any kind of workplace discrimination, and how do you manage it, if it has ever happened to you?

**Participant 22:** Hmm! Well, I can…on a scale of 1to 10, I could say 8 for workplace discrimination. I've had a couple of jobs, you know, maybe because of my qualification, and because of my background from Nigeria and all that, I find it difficult to last, I don't think I've had a job in US since I got here in my third year. I don't think I've worked in a place for more than 6 months.

**Interviewer:** Hmmmmm

**Participant 22:** Because I get frustrated, and I get annoyed, and I leave the place because once you are being hired, they ask for your qualifications right? We submit all that. You put all that which, of course, I know that they are not even looking at it. So they hire you, you're working and you're being treated like you don't even know anything, you understand what I mean?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Participant 22:** You don't know anything, you've got an accent, you've got this. So there is a lot of workplace discrimination, that is the truth. There is, I've experienced a lot. So when it's beginning to get to me, I just put my resignation, I leave. I just look for the next job and I start. That is how it's been for me. And I think you said, how do I handle it, I think that is how I have been handling it so I don't get depressed.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Thank you for sharing that.

**Participant 22:** You're welcome.

**Interviewer:** We go to Section four. We’ll talk about cultural assimilation and social integration. I know you must have touched on this to some extent, but let me just still say the question in case you have anything to add.

**Participant 22:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** How would you describe your experience of cultural assimilation in Maryland? Have you experienced any cultural or social challenges since you migrated? And how have you navigated cultural differences in your personal and professional life?

**Participant 22:** Okay, I will just put it together. Okay, I'm trying to think of how to differentiate between the cultural assimilation in, you said in professional, *abi* (meaning ‘or’ ) workplace and personal life, right? I'll use a very recent example, I just lost my mom.

**Interviewer:** Oh, I'm sorry

**Participant 22:** Last month.

**Interviewer:** I'm sorry to hear that, may her memory be a blessing.

**Participant 22:** No, that’s…Amen!

**Interviewer:** Also, may her soul rest in peace.

**Participant 22:** Amen. So I will talk a bit about we are coming from a place that both at work then in your private. You know, like I just shared with you now, see the way you responded, because you can relate with it, we are from the same country, and we know how it works.

**Interviewer:** Hmm.

**Participant 22:** But here I feel there is no empathy. Nobody feels your pain. They just expect you to move on.

**Interviewer:** Hmm.

**Participant 22:** So like it's a cultural difference that I find it really, really difficult to, you know, come to terms with. How do you know, someone lost their mom, someone is telling you, I will use my work as an example, I lost my mom, I can't come to work, I sent you a message, oh, I can't be at work because I don't feel too good, and you know that I lost my mom? And you’re asking me, Oh, if you don't feel too good, then you need to bring a medical report.

**Interviewer:** Hmmmmm

**Participant 22:** So I need to get a medical report that I'm not feeling well. I had to tell my manager. Yeah, I I'm not feeling well because I am sick. I'm not feeling well because I'm grieving. It's not something I will go to the hospital for, I need to heal, she’s like, okay, let's take a bereavement leave instead. You know, and she said it with without empathy.

**Interviewer:** Hmmm

**Participant 22:** You understand what I mean? Then I resumed work, you're giving me work that, you know is going to stress me. That is not what we get back home. Back home, your boss is going to tell you to stay at home. There's empathy, there is love everywhere. People come around you, they see you, but nobody even talks about it. You have like a work group, no one brings it up to say, Oh, we're sorry this our colleague lost a loved one, you know, you can reach out to the person. There's nothing of that nature. It's not what I'm used to, so it's a culture, it’s a tradition where I'm coming from, people look out for each other, and it's not the same thing here. So I think what I've said, I've said about individual and even the workplace. I don't know if it answered your question or I digressed. I don't know.

**Interviewer:** Yes, it does. I know that's a difficult thing to talk about. Sorry about your loss.

**Participant 22:** You're welcome.

**Interviewer:** I pray for strength and grace for you.

**Participant 22:** A lot happened but this is the most recent. And I feel okay, it could explain what I'm trying to say better. Thank you.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Thank you for sharing that.

**Participant 22**: You're welcome.

**Interviewer:** I have one more question under this section of cultural assimilation and social integration.

**Participant 22:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** Earlier, you talked about the challenges of continuing in your professional career path because of high cost of retraining, now let me use the word to retrain yourself.

**Participant 22:** To retrain, yes

**Interviewer:** To comply with the standard and the…

**Participant 22:** Yes, to get the necessary certification.

**Interviewer:** …certification for you to be able to continue to practice your career.

So, the last question I want to ask is, are there specific community networks or organizations that have supported your integration in that line. How well have these organizations supported your career advancement? Were there organizations you reached out to, or you could have reached out to that could have, maybe supported your career advancement in any way in particular?

Participant 22: The truth is that I don't even know of any. I doubt if there are organizations that could support, or I could reach out to for support, I doubt. I don't know of any. Both online and offline, I don't think there is any.

**Interviewer:** Okay. I’ve talked to people and people have mentioned that maybe

traditional communities from Nigeria, cultural groups from Nigeria, or maybe church, organizations.

**Participant 22:** Well, I go to a church, but I don't think my church will support you in that, I don't know. Maybe, I’ve not found out, but I don't think it's something that they will do. Then for community, I don't see the community that I belong to or that I'm supposed to belong to, I don't see them supporting me, especially financially to take the certifications I need.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you for sharing that. I’m just, I get information from different perspectives and I just want to give you an example of this, or maybe for someone, for example, for someone who is in academics, they have a lot of…they have a few, let me not say a lot. They have a few organizations that they can reach out to..

**Participant 22:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** …for some grants, some aid, some scholarships for professionals. I'm not too sure, because that's not my line. If somebody can be a voluntary member of maybe an association of attorneys in a county, if they ever exist, or in the state.

**Participant 22:** There are some…oh, sorry. I know. Okay, is that what you mean? I know I check a lot online for volunteering jobs, that is law related, and all that. I have applied to, I have reached out to so many of them without response, probably because of where I'm coming from, you understand what I mean, no, I can't say because of status because I have a legal stay here and all that, but probably because of where I am coming from, knowing I'm an immigrant and all that. So I've never gotten a response, not even a feedback from any of them.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you for sharing that. I just want to be sure that you're aware of these opportunities.

**Participant 22:** Yes, yes, I know, like you have, like county representatives, you see some what do they call it, you see some jury duties and all that, and all that. I see, all sorts like law related. I've tried to contact a couple but there's no response, there's no feedback. So it's quite discouraging.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, thank you for sharing that. We go to Section five.

**Participant 22:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** Section five, we’ll talk about dual cultural and economic challenges. I have two questions here, the first one is, do you feel torn between the cultural expectations of Nigeria and that of the United States. How do you navigate this?

**Participant 22:** Hmmmmm! Yeah, it's draining, like, cultural expectation of where we are coming from is emmm, let me use a phrase to say, “we are our brother’s keeper”, that is Nigeria. Everybody looks up to you, it’s like you are the ones they…especially you're here, everybody looks up to you, you’re earning in dollars, you meet the needs of people, you need to pay school fees, you need to do people's house rent and all that, yes. Then we are in a place where it’s all man for himself, you understand what I mean, you're working your pay is not even enough to pay your bills here. There are too many bills to pay but the balance is not easy to strike, because I feel torn. I feel in the middle because you wake up every day to messages. You wake up every day and not just message, disturbing messages. And most times I feel, oh, is it better to even go back home so we're seeing each other. So I feel torn, that is it because I really can't strike a balance between keeping tabs with the expectations back home, then balancing up with the reality on ground here.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Thank you. So you said at times you feel like is it really better for you to go back to Nigeria.

**Participant 22:** Uhhhmmm

**Interviewer:** Hmmmmm

**Participant 22:** Because the request is more, now that you are here.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So I have one more question (laughs)

**Participant 22:** (laughs)

**Interviewer:** When you said the request, I’m hoping it’s going to be relevant to my next question.

**Participant 22**: Okay.

**Interviewer:** Have you encountered economy challenges related to remittances or supporting family members back in Nigeria? How do you balance this dual responsibility?

**Participant 22:** I think I even answered the second question in the course of the question.

**Interviewer:** So that request you’re talking about is economic support for people.

**Participant 22:** Economic support, that is just it. What was…the first question is not about economic right, the expectations.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, it's part of it. It can be cultural, it can be social expectation, it can be about norms and values, it's part of it.

**Participant 22:** Oh, okay, that's fine.

**Interviewer:** Thank you for sharing that. We move to section six.

**Participant 23:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** As someone who has lived in the US and Maryland for the past 3 years and as someone who has experienced the challenges highly educated immigrants from Africa, from Nigeria face when they live here. You've talked about challenges with the culture, the integration. You talked about the challenges of licensing and high cost, of retraining. You've also talked about the challenges of not having the right information, not having the right support that can help in advancing your careers! Here I have three questions, and the question I want to ask first is, do you think there are policies or programs, or anything at all that are already in place, that kind of hinders people from advancing their career when they come? On the other side of it, do you also think there are also existing policies and programs that support people's career growth when they migrate to the US from Africa as highly educated immigrants?

**Participant 22:** Well, policies, programs. I can’t think too much on that. But I know that…for instance, you're applying for jobs, I've seen roles that I feel like, oh, I qualify for this role, but they don't get back to me because maybe where my degree is from. Because when they ask you to upload your results and all that, pull your resume, pull everything. Nobody gets back to you, or they'll tell you sorry we decided to move on with a better candidate, and all that and all that. So I feel if there are ways that they could even verify or evaluate our result, go through our resume the experience you have, because the truth is, most times the role you're being denied of because of where you're coming from, because of where your degree is from, you do better than the people they are even taking. How do you explain? You're coming here with a master's degree. You're coming here with a PhD and you're at the same level with somebody from high school just because you are coming from outside. You understand what I mean? Just because you're coming from outside. Now, you're asking, okay, if there's a role and you're saying degree - bachelor's, BSc, this, that apply, and you apply, and nobody is talking. So I just feel that the policies and at times, they spell it out and tell you your degree must be from a recognized institution in the US.

**Interviewer:** Hmm.

**Participant 22:** You understand what I mean. So for me, it's kind of discriminatory. So I feel if it's a policy, that is what I don't know, I don't know if it's like a national policy. I've not taken my time, you know, since I got here, I've not even had the thing of the law, because I'm not even looking at it in the next, let me say, in the next 5 years. I'm not even looking at it. What is priority for me now, let the children just finish school and all that before I can even think of, okay, let me advance my career and all that, for now, you know. So I don't know why that should come up. So if there's a way it could, you know, be looked at, if our results could be, our certificates, too, could be evaluated or something, and just get a job that will at least equal to what you're coming in here with. We have a lot of experience to give to, so I don't know if there are policies that they could come up with that will even favor immigrants, because the immigrants have a lot to offer, too. So most people are coming with well of experience, experience that you know that they have. But they cannot even bring all this, that they come, and they are being limited to menial jobs that you know, that does not even befit their status or their qualifications just because they came in as immigrants, so I don't know if there are policies. If there are policies is what I don't know but that’s what I see.

**Interviewer:** Okay, yes, thank you for sharing that. I wanted to know if based on your experience and observation, you've seen anything that you feel like, oh, this practice or this policy hinders people, this practice or this policy supports people to grow. But I understand your perspective. But I just want to clarify something, because I believe everybody's unique in their own situation. For someone like you, you have a degree in law back in Nigeria, you were practicing law back in Nigeria, and then you had a master's degree in peace and conflict, resolution specializing in alternative dispute resolution, ADR. And you are not licensed to practice law in the US but you have a valid work authorization and you also…so the point I'm trying to make is when you mentioned that you applied to some jobs, I want to believe these jobs you apply to are not jobs that you need to practice as an attorney.

**Participant 22:** No

**Interviewer:** I want to believe there are jobs that maybe based on your experience on the conflict side and based on your experience having a master's degree, you feel you should be able to do these jobs.

**Participant 22:** True

**Interviewer:** Am I correct on that?

**Participant 22:** Correct

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you. I just want to clarify that.

**Participant 22:** Correct

**Interviewer:** Yeah, because if you had, if you had only a law degree in Nigeria and you are not licensed to practice law, maybe that probably would have limited the opportunities.

**Participant 22:** No, no.

**Interviewer:** But having a master's degree specializing in ADR in conflict resolution, I think, should open more opportunities for you to be able to get a job. Thank you for clarifying that.

**Participant 22:** You're welcome.

**Interviewer:** Then one more question.

**Participant 22:** Go ahead!

**Interviewer:** What changes or support systems do you think if they are put in place, it's going to help highly educated Nigerian immigrants to succeed more in their careers in the US. It doesn't have to be only from the Government, or from the State or county or Federal Government, it can be from a non-government organization.

**Participant 22:** Exactly. That was what…

**Interviewer:** What kind of changes do you think if they are put in place, can help people like you more?

**Participant 22:** Okay. Oh, changes. Talking about what kind of changes…I think if one is authorized to work in the US then you should have some form of qualifications even before you got here. If there could be a way that even our qualifications as immigrants could be evaluated. Just the way you evaluate a lot of things before you give us a work authorization, give us social security and all that. If that could also be evaluated you understand, it puts us out there for even the employers to know that…if there's a form of evaluation that could give us an edge to fit into the system in areas that we are qualified. So I don't know if there are NGO’s that could advocate for the immigrants. I don't know how that works, but if they have advocacy groups among maybe how it's being formed I don't know how that will work, but I think to me it could go a long way that someday our voices will be heard toO. It might not be from us, but maybe the people behind us might benefit from it. I don't know if I'm making sense.

**Interviewer:** Yes, I understand. And I appreciate that insight. I appreciate your contribution. I just want to add that in the US, there are organizations that evaluate foreign credentials, WES

**Participant 22:** Yeah, I know of WES

**Interviewer:** Okay, maybe what you're trying to say is, let me rephrase it. I just want to be clear on that question. Or do you mean a kind of a different evaluation, that is by the direct employer, not by a third party.

**Participant 22:** Exactly by the employer.

**Interviewer:** By the employer.

**Participant 22:** I'm not talking about the WES evaluation, you understand, because nobody, because they are not even asking for that. You understand what I mean? No one is asking, because if they ask for your certificates to be evaluated, I think we'll gladly evaluate it. So we fit into where you're supposed to be not coming in with here with a PhD and you're being treated like you have just a high school, or you don't even have a high school, or don't have any form of certification. You understand what I mean. So maybe the employers, if they could come up with something that let's evaluate this and put you, and you know, start you where at least you are supposed to start with, not degrading you, humiliating you just because you're an immigrant.

**Interviewer:** Thank you for sharing your perspective today. One more question is,

I don't want to preempt your answer. Do you have any additional comment or insight you would like to share, maybe something that just came up, or something you forgot to mention earlier in the interview?

**Participant 22:** No.

**Interviewer:** Or maybe a word of advice for…

**Participant 22:** Ummmm.

**Interviewer:** Anyone. (laughs)

**Participant 22:** (laughs) Oh, no! A word of advice, I don't know. Like, I don't know how that will be related to your research but you know what I can say is that for immigrants that are planning to come, just prepare yourself. For me, if I know what I know now, I would have prepared myself better.

**Interviewer:** Hmmmm!

**Participant 22:** You understand what I mean? Maybe I would have…because from the little I've known here, I've seen that things, whatever we're coming with, you understand, it's not of value here, I'm sorry to say so. If I had known better, probably I would have prepared myself better, even if it was to take an online course from the US. If I knew I was coming I would have done something, I'm sure, if I had done all that I would have fit in proper. So like you said the word of advice, anyone that is trying to come in, whatever you do, just try and get maybe a certification from the US before you come here. So when you come you fit into it, except maybe, after your research, we are hopeful that a lot of other Nigerians, or, let me say, immigrants, will come up with researches of this nature and probably one day our voices will be heard, and you guys can push for a change that we so desire. That's it.

**Interviewer:** Yes, it's been a very interesting conversation. I want to thank you for your time and for the very insightful perspective that you shared with me during this interview. I really appreciate your time.

**Participant 22:** You're welcome, sir.

**Interviewer:** And If you want me to send you a copy of the research findings when I finish, please let me know I will, I will share a copy with you via email.

**Participant 22:** Okay, you can. You can do it if you want. So it's fine. I can go through it. But I hope I was able to at least make an input.

**Interviewer:** I appreciate your perspective. They are very, very helpful.

**Participant 22:** You're welcome, Sir, and I wish you all the best, too.

**Interviewer:** Thank you. I'm going to stop the recording now.

**Participant 22:** Okay, sir.

**Interviewer:** Thank you.

**Participant 22:** You're welcome.