**Interviewer:** Thank you for taking time out to join us in this interview. We start the interview now, after you have given me the consent to record.

There are 6 sections in this interview. We start with section one- Demographic information. Can you share your age, gender and country of origin?

**Participant 7:** Okay[uh] I am 51 years old and I'm a female and I'm from Nigeria.

**Interviewer**: Thank you. What is your highest level of education and what country did you obtain your degrees from.

**Participant 7:** Okay. I have a PhD. So, I well, my degrees some were obtained from Nigeria and some in America. I had my 1st degree and my master's in Nigeria and then I came here. I got my PhD at a university in America and I got my master’s; my MBA, Master's in business administration. So, it's like 2 /2.

I got 2 degrees from Nigeria, and 2 from US.

**Interviewer**: Thank you. If I got that right that’s one bachelor's degree from Nigeria and a master's degree from Nigeria.

**Participant 7:** Yes.

**Interviewer**: Then in the US here one Master's Degree and a PhD.

**Participant 7:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Thank you for sharing that. I'll go to the next question. How long have you lived in the US, Maryland Specifically?

**Participant 7:** [ um] Well, I've always lived in Maryland so, I’ve been here. I've lived there for [um]like [pauses: Um] it’s going to be [uh] let's say, 15 years.

**Interviewer**: Okay. Thank you.

**Participant 7:** It’s going to 15 years.

**Interviewer:** 15 years. Thank you. Next question, what is your current profession or job title?

**Participant 7:** Well, [um] I’m an adjunct lecturer and an administrative assistant.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for sharing that. Last question on the demographic information. What was your profession in Nigeria before you migrated to the US?

**Participant 7:** A lecturer.

**Interviewer**: Okay, was that in a university or a polytechnic, or a college?

**Participant 7:** Polytechnic, a polytechnic.

Interviewer: Okay.

**Participant 7:** And I was there for 18 years.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you for sharing that. We get into that later.

**Participant 7:** Okay.

**Interviewer**: We go to section 2. Section 2 We’ll talk about the push and pull factors. In other words, factors that influence why people migrate.

Under this section, we have 4 questions. So, I'll start with the 1st one.

So, what motivated your decision to migrate to the United States? Were they[uh]What are these specific factors in Nigeria that pushed you to leave? Are they economic, social, or political challenges?

**Participant 7:** [uh] Not really. I came in then to meet my husband then, he was here as a student and so when I went to the embassy to just to apply for visiting.

And then I came here with the kids like, okay, let's just come for Christmas and we go back. So, by the time we got here and because my visa was changed at the embassy and then [um] I went then to see the director of International studies and [um] he saw me and was like “Okay, this is strange, like this type of visa they were not to be given if you don't have some documents” I am the one that was supposed to prepare your documents, I didn't prepare this and they gave you this.

So, he was like [oh] seems God wants you here and He asked if I've done, asks for my level of education. I told him I have a master's and he said, “Why don't you do your PhD? and I said “Okay”. So that was why I stayed and that was you know why I didn't go back. I went back and I came back to start my PhD.

**Interviewer**: Very interesting story.

**Participant 7:** [laughs]

**Interviewer:** Thank you. So, it's more like a social factor. Your husband was here and then you came to him. Providence said, you're staying back [laughs].

**Participant 7:** Yes.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for sharing that. What attracted you to the US, Maryland in particular? I know you mentioned your husband was, I guess he was in Maryland here?

**Participant 7:** He was yes, he was in Maryland. So, that was why we came here.

I**nterviewer**: Okay, I'll go to the last question in this section. What challenges have you encountered during the migration process?

**Participant 7:** [Erm] challenges in what way?

I**nterviewer**: [Erm] Migration challenges [um] is different for different people. [um] Some people when they come they don't[um] have like a family that already lived here, some people, when they come like that, they have problem with accommodation, some people have problem with, you know…

**Participant 7:** Okay.

**Interviewer**: …getting people to mentor them, people to guide them. Some people have problem with getting job,

**Participant 7:** Okay

**Interviewer**:

..even problem with getting, I mean, getting the right to you know, I mean getting the legal right to stay in the country, so the challenge can be; they're different.

**Participant 7:** Okay. So, the 1st one I had was you know, I started my PhD and then my kids were still small so they will go to school and then from school.

So, childcare was a big problem and I was pregnant. Childcare was a big problem even when I had my baby. I remember that I used to carry him to class until I later found you know someone willing to, you know, take care of him. Because then you know, as an international student [um] when we talk about funding, you pay your money and then so every bit counts. So, you can't afford a lot of things so that was one major problem.

Another thing which is coming up now and which I tell international students that I come across now, or people that are in school now is then, there was no really many people to guide you like now I see students doing international student doing internship doing OPT, CPT you know, using that as an entrance into the real job market, using that as a leverage, there are so many opportunities. But then there wasn't much opportunity and then there were not too many people, because most of the people then that you come across were like “Okay, you come here, you start doing CNA, GNA and everything. When I came I knew people that were telling me [Oh]this is you can start your GNA, CNA, you can do this you can do that, and I look at them like I don't know[Laughs] me you know ,I don't have interest in this area do you understand? So, because the focus was on, this is the easiest way to make money.

They were not looking at, you know like the [uh] how do I put it? The focus for them was, okay, you are in America; we are here to make money, and you know, just do whatever you want to do, and that's the easiest way to.

So that was another issue I had. There was nobody to, you know, point me in the right direction that[oh] you can do this, this is going to help you. So that was another problem and I think that was a major problem.

Then the funding you know, as an international student, you are not eligible for FAFSA.

**Interviewer**: Yes.

**Participant 7:** So, that was another thing, and in some school, in schools where they don't have a funding for PhD , I know a lot of people were asking me then that [oh] “you are paying how can you be paying as a PhD” that most schools they have funding for PhD.

But the school I went to they didn't have funding. So, that was also a big problem [erm] so my salary: I told you I was lecturing so and then by the time I went back I applied for [uh] study leave so I came here and so by the time I came back I was still collecting something in Nigeria. So, I will collect that money and I use it to pay for my, you know,

**Interviewer**: For your tuition?

**Participant 7:** for my tuition yes, although along the line I think in my second, because my PhD was long that was another story, along the line I think my 3rd or 4th year I found a scholarship by myself. The 1st year I applied I didn't get in, I didn't have all the things they need, so I was looking at it till the deadline but the second year I applied I got a scholarship and that was $20,000.

So that went a long, you understand a long way. So, and later I got like a GA

**Interviewer**: A GA? You mean graduate assistant?

**Participant 7:**  Yes, graduate assistant and then that so by the time I got the graduate assistant I had already finished you know, the part where I paid.

It was just the dissertation, and that was just, you know they're just like a few hundreds every semester. So, but when I was paying huge money I didn't get anything.

**Interviewer**: whoa

**Participant 7:** So, those are the issues like not having a support you know, I think if had the support of people that you know, have lived here, you know, if you are coming from[um] somewhere new and you get here and you have that support structure already established it goes a long way in helping you to settle. I didn't have that…

**Interviewer**: That support system

**Participant 7:**  that support system wasn't there, so I had to start from scratch. I had to, you know, like it's like navigating by yourself.

**Interviewer:** And can be quite challenging. Thank you for that extensive [erm] explanation. We go to Section 3-Professional Experiences.

[Erm]I know you said you were a lecturer in a polytechnic in Nigeria for 18 years. So [erm] you can share a little more about that.

So 1st question here is: Please tell us about your career trajectory in Nigeria before relocating to the United States?

**Participant 7**: Okay, after you know in Nigeria after the 1st degree, there's something we call the service year

So, I served in the North, the northern part of the country; I served in a radio station. So, after my service I came back home. I was offered a job, but I didn't want to stay because [Laughs] of the you know the way the northern part is, the weather it was quite challenging. so, I came back and then I was looking for a job. So, I got a job in a state school, a state high school like we call it secondary school.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant 7:** So, I started and[erm] after 2 weeks I got another job at a polytechnic so I didn't stay long teaching in the high school, so I moved to the Polytechnic, and I was there till I retired in 2018.

So, I was there, I started lecturing, and I was in the we call it the General Studies. I was teaching English, you know general courses English language and literature. And then when I moved to America [uh] you know, I started my PhD and then I was home doing [um] … then one day someone just asked me and said, “Oh! are you still looking for a job? And I said yes.

She said, “Oh this professor is looking for a writing fellow and the funny thing was a, I think, about a week earlier I went to a friend of mine, She works at the school so I was like, “Okay, you've been here for long, Can you help me to do my resume? So, she put me through. We did it, and you know, so it's just like preparation. So, when that person asked me, I said, “Oh! are you still looking for a job, this person is looking for a writing fellow.

I said yes and the person gave me the email, I just sent in my resume and everything. So, I went there and the woman now responded and said I should come and meet her so that we can chat. So, I went there, I think 2 days after and we met.

So, when I got there she started interviewing me.

**Interviewer:** Sorry. Sorry I didn't mean to interrupt you. I just wanted to reconfirm that this part of the experience you're sharing applying for a writing fellow job is here in the US?

**Participant 7:**  Yes.

**Interviewer:** Okay? So, you have actually moved to question 2 because questions 2 say is - Describe your current trajectory in the United States.

So you can go on with the story but you already answered ….

**Participant 7**: Okay.

**Interviewer**: Question, 2.

**Participant 7**: Okay.

**Participant 7**: So then, I mean she interviewed me and then she said, immediately she said oh! I'm going to, you know like employ you. And so she told me “Okay, we are going to do this.

And then she emailed me and said, they said, because then the department was under the English department, that they said you have to see the chairperson, I can't employ you. Apparently, the chairperson said [oh] because English is not our 1st language….

**Interviewer:** Alright!

**Participant 7:**….he cannot employ me for a writing fellow. I got to hear about that later. So, but what they told me was that [oh] you have to meet with a chairperson. So, they set up the interview and I went. Unfortunately, my immediate boss then came late, the three of us were supposed to be there. So, when we waited and we didn't see her, the chairperson was like “Okay, come in.”and we started talking.

So, he started asking questions about my experience in Nigeria you know, how I taught and everything and then at the end he was like, “Oh you know this person is going to be your immediate boss and I’m like “okay”.

So that was our he also, you understand, he also like “okay” he agreed. So, by the time my director came, the director of the program came, we had already finished, and he just told her “oh, yeah, she's good”, then we're going to employ her.

And that was how I started and you know the funny thing? I got to know about the story later that he didn't want me, I mean he was against them giving me the job because he felt English wasn't my 1st language and he became my you know, like most, my biggest supporter when I was there. So that was how I got there in 2014 and I was there along the line till I graduated and I was still there.

And then one day and then I was called like “Okay, there's a class in English Department; I went there and I applied for like an adjunct and then I got it and I started lecturing too.

So, I was teaching in English department and along the line going to 3 years now, I was in my office when someone came and said, “oh, there's this Vice president and he need a Grant writer and your name came to my….

Interviewer: oh okay grant?

**Participant 7: ….** yes, Grant writer and your name came to my mind. And I said, Okay. So, we went and I spoke you know we discussed. We sat down with the man and he said, “Okay, we can do this” so I said, Okay.

He wanted to apply for something, and he said, “oh, you can help me to do this” and so I helped him but while he went to, how do I put it? like we had agreed, you know we already had the job description, everything and then, boom! They told him that if he's going to employ me, he would have to advertise and so; that the only way he can bring me in without that is if he says he needs an administrative assistant and then after getting it, we can change.

**Interviewer:** Okay

**Participant 7:** So, he came to me and he said, “Oh, this is what they said. I said, okay, and so that was how I came in as an administrative ….

**Interviewer**: Assistant okay.

**Participant 7:** …... assistant and then I continued, so I had to put, what do you call it? to stop the other job as a writing fellow I was, because then, you know, the hours were about to clash but because I was dealing, I only work with graduate students, maybe people writing their thesis and dissertation so sometimes I work with them on Saturdays or in the evening or sometimes Sundays, but then I had to, like, you know, put it aside, and then and focus on the 2.

And then a year ago or 2 years, It’s going to 2 years now I got another email from a school, and the email was like” oh, are you interested in teaching for us? They have this prison program where they teach. And I said, yes.

So, we had the interview and I got that too you know as part- time. I started teaching. So, later on I think my first day; my first 2 weeks because, I told them it's in the prison so I told the executive director that they have to be there I mean ,for me to get used to it; the director.

So, the executive director now came, and we were all working and she said “Oh, how did you get to hear about the program? So, I'm like, I'm not even sure but the director now said “oh through me” that she asked the administrative assistance to reach out to different schools, scout around for good English lecturers and they came back with different, you know and so she started reaching out so that was how I got that job and I did it till I got sick then I had to stop.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant 7:** So that has been my [pause]. And I also did care job too, you know, when you need money you do so many things.

During Covid, we were home and we were doing online, remote so most times, you know after you finished work, we're not allowed to… Someone just said “oh, auntie, why don't you apply for this? and you know so that was how I applied for that and I did that for quite a while.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant 7:** I did that for quite a while. So that has been my, you know, career trajectory in America.

**Interviewer:** And that's quite a lot since you got to the US. So, you've been a

Writing fellow, you've been an administrative assistant, you've been an adjunct professor.

**Participant 7:** Yes

**Interviewer**: And you've taught in the prisons reform system and you also said, you've done care job.

**Participant 7:** Uhm Uhm

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for sharing that before I move to the next question, are you still with the university?

**Participant 7:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Okay, in what capacity at the moment?

**Participant 7:** As an adjunct and as an administrative assistant.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you. I will go to the next question. How well, how well do you feel your skills and qualifications are being fully utilized in your current role?

**Participant 7:** Not really. [Laughs]

My current role is like a sub-part to my degree but you know you have to do, you know, do….

**Interviewer:** To do what you have to do. [Laughs]

**Participant 7: …**what do you have to do That's it! You have to do what you have to do. I mean, that's what is [ah] bringing in money now.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant 7:** Yeah.

**Interviewer**: Okay, thank you for sharing that. [uh] yeah, I wanted to be sure [erm]we didn't miss that question because that that's very central to this research.

[Erm] Question 4: - What barriers have you faced in the professional landscape, such as licensing requirements, recognition of foreign qualifications or work, workplace, discrimination and what strategies have you used to overcome these challenges?

**Participant 7:** Okay[um] licensing I’ve not, like working in the university [uh]I've not heard that you know, you don't need any licensing to teach in my area and also because my background is related ;my 1st degree was in the area, in the field you know where I am teaching so that was how you know, working at the writing center the only thing you know you need; you don't need any licensing.

**Interviewer:** Okay

**Participant 7:** And then, when it comes to you know; So, my qualification was enough to work there and also where I am working now, you don't need any licensing. My qualification is like I said, it’s even more than you know, in a situation where you need a like [uh], the qualification needed for the job is a high school and you are now coming in with PhD [**interviewer:** wow]so you know that's far, [laughs] far higher than ...

**Interviewer**: what is required

**Participant 7: …...** that. Yeah. And then, when it comes to discrimination [um] I don't know if I’ve ever, in any capacity. [uh] One thing I've learned is well, I would say what I have seen like, working at the writing center there were times some people will come and you know, at the beginning[um]looking at this black person with an accent coming from Nigeria and trying to teach…

**Interviewer:** And teaching English…[laughs heartily]

**Participant 7:** Yes, I you know. That’s but then, when, whenever I started working with them, or after working with them. I could remember an incident where this Caucasian lady came, you could see this like one off she was so, you know, from her countenance and demeanor you could see that she wasn't really like oh, at the back of my, of her mind is like – “what does she know?

**Interviewer:** Hmm

**Participant 7...** you know and then we started, and we worked. At the end of the session, she stood up and she asked if she could hug me. I said yes.

she said “I'm sorry to say, when I came in here I was thinking like, I have this feeling like “what does she know? I should, you understand? Like she won't be able to help me and then when we started and you know, by the time we finished, she was like, “Oh! this person is very good”, and she started[um] coming to, you know, to meet with me every week.

So those are some of the things and even from African Americans coming to, you know, like, “what does she know? And then, my 1st semester, I got an award.

**Interviewer**: Wow!

**Participant 7:** From…I was at the writing center, I wasn't even teaching them. I got an award from the English department like, oh, they saw changes in their students, and then the same semester, I got another award from the like [uh] the residential life that one of and I'd started teaching them. One of my students recommended me. They will not tell you so, I got that award twice.

**Interviewer:** Hmm, wow.

**Participant 7:** You know, when I started teaching, so I’ve gotten three awards, relating to my teaching. So sometimes I look at it, and I always tell, because I tell students, when I get to class, I have accent and I'm still teaching.

About 2 weeks ago one of my students told me. I say this is the only class where the professor breaks things done for me that you make it easy for me to understand.

So, I won’t really say, you know, when we talk about discrimination, they are subtle one you know, that you will know that this is discrimination and sometimes but it's not overt. But in my line, I can't really say I've seen discrimination.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you. Thank you for sharing that very impressive work recognition there. Thank you. Yeah, we can go to Section 4-Cultural Assimilation and Social Integration.

Oh, How would you describe your experience of cultural assimilation in Maryland? Have you experienced any cultural or social challenges since migrating?

**Participant 7:** [ Uh] well... yes, you know, coming from Nigeria, a place where I would say Nigeria is like it's a familiar country.

**Interviewer**: Yes

**Participant 7:** Like you have families, you have the support structure, then you have friends, you have outsiders, you know. In Nigeria, it's not just your family you have people that live beside you, you know, and then, coming to America, where you are alone. Let me put that in quote. “Even your neighbors” you don't relate with them; scarcely, you know.

So, that was like[uh] how do I put it when I came? That was a challenge like I could remember where we were living I will be with the kids once I'm back before I even started school. They will go to school, and I'll be alone in the house doing nothing. As an international student you don’t, you can't work outside the school. You can only work inside the school.

**Interviewer**: Within the school system.

**Participant 7:** Within the school system. So, if you don't have any job, if there in the school, if you don't get anything in the school then that means you can't work and me that you know I've been working for years now, coming in here, staying indoor day in and out, that was a big challenge and at the end, I had to go; I didn't even say that I had to work in an African store. I did that, too.

I had to work in, and that was where I started from in an African store. So, I you know that was…….

Then the culture of, you know the dressing. It took a while before I could, you know. Like, when you look at the weather here, you have to, during winter, you, you know, and then you have to[laughs]

**Interviewer**: You have to dress warmly.

**Participant 7:** and then you know that you have to let me say Kit up.

**Interviewer: [**laughs] Yes, that's the word

**Participant 7:** Yeah, that's word you have to. And then, coming from a place where there's nothing like that, you know, you just wear anything, anytime; for us throughout the year. The only time is, maybe during Christmas time, during rainy season, and we you only use sweater and then you come here.So that was navigating, that. You know when it snows, you have to go out.

And another thing is taking bus. The bus system where I was living then

going to school, my house wasn't far from the school. It's about 20 min if I drive.

but if I'm going with the bus I have to take 3 buses.

**Interviewer**: Hmm 3 buses?

**Participant 7:**  Yeah, So, imagine yeah, 3 buses to get to school and imagine during winter taking buses. And you know, you stand at the bus station and here there's nothing like, you know somebody, you know, even in Nigeria, as big as Nigeria is, if you are living within a particular like, this is Baltimore, you will know a lot of people.

**Interviewer**: Right.

**Participant 7:** So, while you are still at the bus stop, or something, you see people going and saying “Oh, this is so, so, so, let me give you a ride”. There's nothing like that here even if your neighbor is going and you know, you are living in the same apartment complex or the same area and they know you, there’s nothing like, “okay, are you going out? Or let me offer you a ride? There's nothing like that. [laughs]

**Interviewer**: [laughs] Everybody's independent.

**Participant 7:** Yeah, everybody is independent. So, you know, there's nothing like that. So, it's like you have to; So, all those are, you know, the interaction, the way you interact with people, those are like things that were a bit difficult for me, like, Okay, I’m here you don't have any relative around here, you know, if you have a relative, it would have been okay.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, okay.

**Participant 7:** But you don't have any relatives

**Interviewer**: it would have been more Interesting

**Participant 7**: You don't know how to do anything and nobody to guide you. And then I could remember there was a day I saw

one of my friends. She's my very good friend now. I went to an African store, and I saw this lady, and I was looking at her. She was, I said I mentioned my high school, and she said, Yes, and you know we got to know that we finished from the same high school and that was a turning point. She became like, you know, a family. She, you know she will come, she even when it was difficult, when things were difficult she will come to me. She will tell me things, she will say this. I remembered when I started working at the African store, she is a nurse, she works nights, she will go to work. She'll be coming. She will call me to get ready. She will come and pick me so that she will drop me because I wasn't driving.

**Interviewer:** So that you don't have to worry about transportation.

**Participant 7:** So that I don't have to worry about transportation. And then I was taking my son with me to work and then she will call me sometimes and say “Oh, I have cooked” because she leaves the house in the , going to work in the afternoon, so she would tell me “ Oh, I have cooked when you are going back home, so you can go to the house, and you know I would go to the to her house and the husband, too. They're so, you know, like very nice. The husband will say, ‘oh, yes, she cooked this.” I will take a bowl pack, maybe soup food for 2 days and I will take it to my house.

**Interviewer:** That was really helpful

**Participant 7:** Yes, very helpful, and what I was working, but it wasn't much, and then she will you know, she will go to the store; I remember during when,

Christmas is coming, because she had a good job, she would tell me, “oh, Christmas is coming! She will start buying the Christmas dress for the kids; not only her kids. She will start buying it so that you know, she'll say, so that It doesn't get to a stage where you know, everything would be overcome, overwhelming Let me use that word.

**Interviewer**: Yeah.

**Participant 7:** She had 3 kids , and with my 3 she will buy their Christmas dresses.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant 7:** She will do everything. So, you know that was the only person the only person I saw. So those were the challenges. But you know that's part of the way I navigated you know, when I saw her, she was the one that helped me to get the job at the African store like “okay, you can't be sitting down like this but if you don't mind,” I said, I don't mind because this is America. You do whatever you have to do to bring in money.

**Interviewer**: Yes, you do whatever you have to do. That’s the word.

**Participant 7:** So that was how I was able to navigate all that.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Thank you for sharing that. [Um] you already, yeah, I think you kind of answered question 3 and 4 is about- How do you navigate cultural differences in your personal and professional life?

You've answered all these questions. Then the other question I wanted to ask is-

Are there specific community networks or organizations that have supported your integration?

You mentioned a friend….

Participant 7: Uhm Uhm

Now, I think that's a very good support system but some other people have mentioned professional bodies, Churches.

**Participant 7:** Uhm Uhm

Do you have anything to add to that? Apart from yes, family of friends. Okay, sure.

**Participant 7:** Yes my church too. And then I told you, I got a scholarship that really went a long way. Do I? can I mention? don’t let me mention the organization.

So I saw this……

**Interviewer:** Um] No, I think if, it's an organization that gave you scholarship,

I think it's okay. Because, yeah since as long as it’s an…

**Participant 7:** Okay.

I**nterviewer**: Organization.

**Participant 7:** So, the American Association of University women. And I saw this scholarship and I told you the 1st time I applied, in fact, I was looking at the computer till the time passed. Even when you know you are, you have this, you are helpless and you always like, oh, this chance is going. I could still remember vividly. I could still remember that day. So, the next year I applied and then I found out that I had to; It was a funny, funny incidents; A day before the deadline, I realized that I had to send in my transcripts. The hard copy of my transcript, not email.

**Interviewer:** Not soft copy. Okay, not email.

**Participant 7:** and not email. There was nothing like, you know. We don't use that word soft copy, you know, you upload or something. it was in Iowa, so there was no way to do it. I went to this post office downtown. Then they used to run 24 hours, and they said, Oh, yeah but it's going to cost 2,000 something.

I was looking at the 2,000 for something I didn't know I would win.?

**Interviewer:** Hmm

**Participant 7:** Oh, I called someone I knew in Chicago. I Googled. I knew that Chicago is not far from there. So, I called this person and said, this is what is happening and he said, “[uh] Okay, let's do it this way” email, scan it and send it to me.

I called another 2 people. So, the 1st person went to the post office to mail it, because I was looking at the time difference that if they do same day, you understand, it will get there. So, my husband then called him and said,” Oh, I've got another one, so he went back.

At the end the other person said he was about to go. I looked at the time, so he said “Let's pray”. we prayed and sent it.

The 2 of them sent it, and later I got a notification that “Oh, we're sorry you did not win the Scholarship and everything.” I said, okay. And then about, I think a week or 2 later, I just got an email. I was checking my email where I was working and then I was like,” Okay more funding came in.’ and then.

**Interviewer**: Then they gave you.

**Participant 7:** You know, and I was looking at it like, Okay. Is this real?

**Interviewer:** Unbelievable!

**Participant 7:** You know, when you...unbelievable! And that was how you know the total amount was $20,000 and then and it's like for you to support women. So, where I'm going was when I got the money I couldn't believe it. Like okay childcare, everything you want to use it for.

So, I said, Okay, and then these people now said later they asked me. They said, Okay, they want me to okay, let me put it this way.

So, we got the award and everything. Then AAUW I've been there several times. In fact, there was a time they asked me to, they had a board meeting, the board of trustees, or something from different parts of the country. They asked me to come and speak with them. I went, and there was a conference they had, and so where I am going to is, when you talk about the support I got to know that the people that gave me the money, they are women, they’re not… It wasn't as if this money came from another, you know it's an organization, but some women will gather themselves together, do bake sales, different things, and now send this money to AAUW

**Interviewer:** Raise money.

**Participant 7:** Yes, they raise money because they want to support other women.

**Interviewer:** that’s interesting

**Participant 7:** So, I got to know. Yes, I won the award I think rock film something because later along the line, they sent an email to me, they're like, “Oh, they want me to come and meet with them and speak and you know the joy.

They sent a car to me. I got there. I was overwhelmed because I saw all these women.

They are… They cooked, you know. Their husbands were there….

**Interviewer:** To support them.

**Participant 7…** to support them, and you know, because they wanted to meet with me and we started talking and everything. So, by the time I finished they were asking questions and everything they were like, okay, they wanted to know if their money was, you know, like they raised money, they put it down if their money was in good use.

**Interviewer:** [ Laughs]

**Participant 7:** Let me put it that way and you know, like they were so happy at the end that yes, they put their money into a good cause, and you know that spoke a lot. And that's a changed my perspective in different ways.

**Interviewer:** Uhm

**Participant 7:** I started like supporting other women doing whatever I can do, because I sat down and felt like if people that they don't know me.

**Interviewer:** They didn't know you.

**Participant 7:** They don't know anything about me can come together and raise money

**Interviewer:** To help you

**Participant 7:** just because they wanted to help a woman. They believe that, okay, when [um]you have women going to school most of the time, you have issues, you know, money for childcare. You need to buy some things you need to, you know, and …

**Interviewer:** Yes

**Participant 7:** that was where they, you know, they came in like, okay, you can use this money for so many, even if you have a scholarship this money will be useful to you in different areas. I mean, let me just put it that way that they were just trying to make life easy for you as a woman going to school, and I sat down and felt for them to do this ,it made it created a big impression in me, and so I told them that. Well, you have passed the baton to me and so anywhere. I’ve mentored a lot of women I would just tell them, “Don’t worry. I'm there for you”.

Whatever you want me to do, because some people did it for me; they helped me. They held my hand. Let me put it that way, and so.

**Interviewer:** Right.

**Participant 7:** The only way to repay that kindness is to do the same.

**Interviewer:** To participate. Thank you so much for sharing that very, very inspiring story.

We'll quickly move to section 5. Section 5, will focus on dual cultural and economic challenges. There are just 3 questions.

**Participant 7:**  Okay

**Interviewer:** The first one. Do you feel torn between the cultural expectations of Nigeria and the United States?

**Participant 7:** Do I do what?

**Interviewer**: Do you feel torn between the cultural expectations of Nigeria and United States. How do you navigate this?

What I mean is do you feel like at times you have to live and behave like a Nigerian or in Nigeria, or do you feel like, “oh, do I apply the norms and values of US in this situation I think there are conflicting instances like that.” (Long pause)

**Interviewer:** Hello

**Participant 7:** Hello sir.

**Interviewer:** Okay oh, I thought, do you want me to repeat the question, or did you get it?

**Participant 7:** No can you repeat it? The air pod…can you repeat it?

**Interviewer:** Okay let me repeat it. The question says that do you sometimes feel torn between the cultural expectations of Nigeria and the United States. How do you navigate this?

**Participant 7:** Well, yes, because we came from a country where I can say we have so erm, we are engrossed [uh] in culture, we have so much culture. We are culturally oriented in diverse ways, everything about us when it comes to our way of living,

our eating you know, dressing in different ways, So, that was a big deal.

And then you come to a place where some of the things that we look at it in the face of culture that we see it as most times, this is a big deal for us from our culture and then you see that here they don't look at it.

I could remember when I started my PhD, I would go to class and then, you know, in class some of the students, you know, while you're in class. Oh, they would be calling their professors the way they relate with their professors. That was, you know, like strange to me, the way like for us, our professors are like; the relationship is like lord and master.

Interviewer: [Laughs] Yes.

**Participant 7:** Yes, we see our professors as up as high up there and us down here and then you come to an environment where you can discuss with your professors, you can ask questions, you can relate with them and you're not scared.

**Interviewer:** Yeah

**Participant 7:** So that was, you know, like, okay, yes. And then another thing is [uh] like I said before this, especially among African Americans, this idea that

they don't [uh], when you need something they don’t answer. I could remember in class then, you know, coming from Nigerian, you, and your friends are in class. You ask questions, you read together, you do.

Interviewer: Yes,

**Participant 7:** But here I will ask questions. Have you done this assignment? You know someone just coming from my background and so it was my 1st semester like, oh, I'll ask questions, and some of them say, oh, no! And you know they were not forthcoming and then I started reading, I'll go to the library. I will stay overnight in the library, I will read and read and when I get to class most of the lecturers, maybe they graded our papers, and they're talking, you know some of them, they will tell you the grade, they'll ask questions and then it became like, Oh, the professors will ask me. They will commend, you know, my work and I started seeing them call me to ask me,

“How did you do this? Can we do this assignment together? And I'm like, okay, well, I needed your help you guys were not, you know, answering me.

**Interviewer:**  Forth coming.

**Participant 7:** You were not forth coming and now but I got to realize that is how, you know they are. So, that was, you know, one of the…, okay and then, another issue is erm..

And then another issue is, can you repeat the question again?

**Interviewer**: So, I just wanted to know if you feel torn between the cultural expectations of Nigeria and the United States?

**Participant 7:** Yes, okay. So, my, you know, like my expectation, then, and then I found out that here if you read, you get your grades but then people expect some things from you like, okay, maybe when I was doing my PhD, I didn't have time for party or anything, and some people ; they will be like, okay, you know, in our culture, when someone is doing something, they expect you to be there.

**Interviewer:** Right.

**Participant 7:** And if you give excuses. I've seen people that say, Oh, is she the only one going to school and you know.

And then cooking, like it took a while before I could. You know, when you get here, you eat whatever when you don't know like you said when you don't know anybody here, I didn't know there was an African store or anything. So, it was like you were eating what they were eating and most of this thing. I didn't love it like I was just eating until I was able to, you know, get Africa and African store. And I started buying our own food. So, it was like a conflict.

And then you have kids now that started school and they, you know, they feed them American foods in school and then they come back home

and you cook and I realized that okay “how do we navigate this? Sometimes when you give them food, they will tell you. They don't want it.

**Interviewer:** [Laughs]Yeah.

**Participant 7: [**ah] because

**Interviewer**: I experienced that too, that’s quite interesting.

**Participant 7:** You know, because they you know you see that.

And then, when yeah, they speak you understand, like you find that if you are not entrenching our culture in them, you see that they will change.

So, imagine in your kids waking up in the morning and say “oh hi or something”,

I had to force them like, Okay, you don't greet me like that. You say good morning and you kneel down, I had to enforce that.

**Interviewer:** Hmm.

**Participant 7:** In my home you know, those are the things like, okay.

And then another thing is, you know, like American culture and navigating, especially with the kids, for our culture children are seen and not heard, but in America they talk, they encourage them. So sometimes, you know, it took a while before, when they ask questions like, “you don't ask me such or you don't.’

You know you shout them down but I had to, you know, like, understand like, okay, this is not how it is done here. You have to listen to them.

Some of these things, like even here in the at the office. When they say Go, they mean go.

For us in Nigeria maybe you go to an office and you need something, and like Oh, we don't have time now, or we can't do it here, or anything, or you come back, you can beg them and say, please! but here in America. If you start begging, that's a problem.

**Interviewer**: Yes.

**Participant 7:** Yeah, so just you know, it took a while but I was able to navigate the conflict was there. There's no way it's not going to be there because we have. It's like a opposite end.

We are so embedded in culture, and here they have their own culture, but their culture is free that we from our side, we see it as if there is no culture.

Interviewer: That's true. Thank you. Thank you for sharing that, too.

One more question under this section 5 –

Have you encountered economic challenges related to remittances or supporting family members in Nigeria.?

What strategies do you use to balance these responsibilities?

**Participant 7:** [Uh] not really. [laughs] I always tell people that, that's 1 thing I've enjoyed like I come from a family where you know everybody's always supportive, and there's nothing like, if you don't send money, there's going to, you know, like you have to like it's a must.

I have my mom. I send money to her, and you know my sister, but most of the time, I will even take from them.

Like I have my siblings here I have my, so sometimes I even I mean, I could remember last year, when I was sick, my elder sister sent money from Nigeria you understand. So, it's not that kind of like where you are you are forced to, you must, if you don't. You know I've never been in such a situation.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you for sharing that. Yeah, we're coming to the end of the interview. In the last section, or this section is focused on recommendations. I'll quickly walk through the questions. There are a few questions, too.

What changes or support system will you suggest in helping highly educated Nigerian immigrants succeed in their career in the US?

**Participant 7:** Okay, one is[um] networking, networking, networking. That is very, very important. I told you that when I came I didn't have that opportunity, I didn't have that chance because then there were not many people and you know, the people I was exposed to were like, oka…doing all this nursing, GNA, CNA, so mine my focus was to just go to school. So, I was just going to school and coming back home. Then working, you know, I told you when I was when I needed a job working at the African store but then I realized that the people that, when you 1st come to America the people you are exposed to determines how and what you will do. Let me put it there because that determines a lot.

The people you are exposed to will be able to guide you on the right path

if they, if you have someone that you know is in the Academia field or someone that is exposed the person will be able to tell you that. Okay, these are the things you can do.

Now, I'm in a position, I always tell international students when they come now, when I meet with them like “Okay, these are the things you can do, you can do internship” that’s going ... You know a lot of the time when you have experience here even if it's a just a little experience, it goes a long way.

**Interviewer**: Yes, it does.

**Participant 7**: It goes a long way. But if you don't have that experience, and how do you get the experience like by the time I finished my PhD.

They don't expect with a PhD to start at a lower level.

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Participant 7:** Do you understand? And I didn't have any experience here. So, that was like one of the factors, you know, inhibiting me from getting the right job.

**Interviewer:** As in maximizing your skills and experience.

**Participant 7:** And the experiences.

**Interviewer:** Despite the fact that you already had 18 years of…

**Participant 7**: Of experience in Nigeria.

**Interviewer**: …experience back in Nigeria.

**Participant 7**: Yeah. So, what I tell them now is, please, and please internship, do CPT, OPT and you find out that now then, especially, there was nothing like there was Internet then.

But the Internet will help you search for things

like online, we send email, only Google. But now things have changed

the way, you know, like there are all these social media, all the way you send things, the way you navigate. It's really helping them. So, I always tell people when you come now. please, and please, and then What do you have in mind?

Is it because you just want to make money, because a lot of the time when people come here, and you know, like I said, I'm still going to piggy back on the kind of people you meet. Some people are here, not because they have anything in mind. They're just here because they want to come to America and just make money.

But I've learned that making money is[uh] it's how do I put it? Making money is relative to you know who you are and what you are. What I mean is who you are is it depends on your area, your field.

Are you ambitious? Or you just want to, you know be in one place, and then what you are where are you? What is your drive? Where do you want to be?

If I tell you that I've met international students.; there was a guy that came, in fact, within a semester, my kids they always make fun of me when I'm talking to new students now, and they say, Oh, she's going to mention this person because what he achieved within a year, you understand, I that have been here for years I didn't achieve it.

And what? Where they've penetrated like these people will be talking. They'll be doing internship. He has done with Google, Apple, you know, different.

I had a boy that came, and I was telling him the same thing, said, Okay, when you have to navigate, he works with Goldman Sachs now he's still an International you know.

**Interviewer**: As international students.

**Participant 7:** So, network where you can, you know and ask questions. I always tell people that there are opportunities here. Well, it depends on you know where you are that will determine the opportunity you'll be exposed to.

**Interviewer:** Okay, thank you for sharing that Insightful, very insightful factor there. The next question I want to ask is-

At times people talk about the structure in the country or in the States.

Some people feel like, oh, if this structure is not like this, this would have moved better for me as a professional. Personally, do you think there are programs, all policies that that can help people do well, or that can also do you also think there are also policies and programs that hinder people from doing well in this state, in the country, as immigrants, especially African immigrants.?

**Participant 7:** Well, I would say yes and no.

Yes, in the fact that well, when you're talking about as African immigrants, if you are talking about elderly people, people coming here like as adult because of our background. We are not exposed to so many things. It's like you are starting, you know, you start from where you can start from.

**Interviewer**: Okay

**Participant 7:** Do you understand? And some of them will not go to like, okay? Like, I told you a lot of like, okay, go and do GNA and CNA. The focus was, Oh, nursing, nursing.

But for immigrant like for our children, they were born here they have that level playing field because you see them going to school from, some from elementary middle or high school, and you know they are exposed to so many opportunities, and then you see that they would have imbibe the culture a lot of the time. Some of the things that affect us is one from our culture we don't talk, we are also raised to like not going out there, and, you know, like reaching out for whatever we want.

**Interviewer:** Reaching out for help.

**Participant 7**: Yes, sometimes, because we keep quiet because we are shy. I don't think I can do this, or I don't think I can ask then we don't get the opportunity that we need to get. We don't get that guidance even at work sometimes if we don't ask questions. But if you ask questions, sometimes you get to some offices you see, like this person. How did this person get to this level? He’s not even qualified, you know I have more qualification than this person, but because one, they were brought up here, they are go-getters, some of the things they are not even qualified for you see them aspiring for it.

My kids, when they talk now, you know, they talk with authority. They talk with that understanding that they can reach for things, you understand. They don't talk as if they are something that can hinder them. But we have this for African immigrants coming in here is like we create this invisible entrance for ourselves.

Sometimes you have that, but most of the time we create it for ourselves. We see it there. We perceive it that it's there, and sometimes it's not there I've seen like in my journey made me to understand a lot. There are so many times, I tell myself. There are some things I would have done better.

There are some things I would have, you understand. I didn't know that you can ask questions. I didn't know that you can reach out and say, Okay, this, this I didn't know anything about networking.

I've attended so many conferences, I’ve attended. I've traveled to different places, and you know people will give me their business cards and everything, and I will get back and keep it like, oh, reach out to me! I like your field. I didn't know that you were you understand, that you were supposed to reach out. Those are the people that can even recommend you. Those are the people that can say “Oh, I got this opportunity. Are you interested?”

So, most times I look at it like well, there are some structures, but these are structures that we can dismantle,

**Interviewer:** Okay

**Participant 7:** Dismantle, through our having maybe advanced degree or through certifications, you understand or through and then, by changing our focus. You mentioned something the other time about, you know sending money home. Yes, that is a part of the issue. We have because of this black tax that you have to send money home a lot of the time many people will not be able to, you know, like achieve their aim, or, you know, aspire because if they want to do it, it will affect their [uh] income and you know, so they will not want anything that will affect their income at that time, and said, okay, since I'm making money, let me continue like this, but I always tell them aspire better.

Look at where you want to be. If you have to stop sending money home for the time being, do it. Don't just focus, and you know most of the time some of us like, “Oh, I will do double.” I'll do this just because you want to make money; make money, live in a big house building but we are not looking at the big picture. The big picture of getting in there, of, you know, moving up to become to a position of authority, a position of…

**Interviewer**: and influence, a position of influence.

**Participant 7:** Yes, of influence.We're not looking up at that. We are looking at making money[uh], getting a big house, we are riding big cars..

**Interviewer:** Hmm

**Participant 7:** and just living but we are not looking at me, getting up there to influence policies, to shape things that can benefit us.

**Interviewer:** [ Hmm] thank you so much. [um]yeah. So, erm 2 more questions now.

The next one, I think you've touched on it a little. And I just want to ask again, in case you have anything to add to what you already said.

Are there any policies or programs that you think should be implemented to address the barriers faced by Nigerian and African immigrants in this country, especially in this state?

**Participant 7**: As in Policies by the Government?

**Interviewer:** It could be a policy by government. It could be policy programs by government. It could also be things that a group of immigrants can do for themselves too.

**Participant 7:** Okay. I mean, because when we talk about policies by government, I think they did what they can do, although now, when you talk about DEI, that really helped you lots ,the diversity equity. And it's really helped a lot, because there were some places I could still remember when I was doing my MBA, we went to New York to a company and when you talk about the world of finance in America is predominantly whites.

**Interviewer:** Hmm.

**Participant 7**: So, when we talk about, we went, and they were like, “Don't we have anyone interested in this? Tell your people you could see that when the Diversity[erm], when we had DEI a lot of opportunities opened up. You understand? A lot of opportunities because, you know, like the level you have to have a level playing ground. It’s a matter of if you are qualified no matter who you are, you will get there.

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Participant 7**: That really helped, it helped. I knew so many Nigerians that you know. Well, you know Nigerians are, if we are, I mean if we, when we talk about Nigerians everywhere we are, forget it, we always make waves, in academics you see them at the top, always doing well. We are high achievers.That's what kind of. So, you find that that really helped us a lot.

But for other policies. So, I don't know, I don't think as I mean, in America as a government they can, you know[uh] set up a policy for African immigrants, or Nigeria or Nigerian immigrant. But for us as immigrants, we can come together to help, we can come together to guide, and then we need re-orientation.

When I say re-orientation in the fact that one our focus should not be just on making money alone.

**Interviewer:** Hmm

**Participant 7:** Our focus should be on making impact, on getting to the level of influence, on getting to the top. I always tell people if you want to do nursing yeah, that’s not… there's I mean nothing bad in that, my daughter is doing nursing

nothing bad in that but you have to get to the highest level.

You don't tell me you're going to like CNA, GNA and you've been on it for 20 years and you are now doing double.

I tell people, if you are a nurse practitioner and you are collecting $50 an hour, let's just say $50 an hour, the hours you are going to do will be reduced, but collecting CNA, GNA?

You can start from somewhere, fine but don't stay there.

**Interviewer:** Okay

**Participant 7:** So, we need to have that understanding. We need to have, like a support structure that can guide our people, that yes, you can from somewhere but you don't need to stay there. I can, and then you can also.

But also, when you start from somewhere and you start and you start working,

It is not just because everybody is doing this that you have to do it. What do you want to do?

**Interviewer**: Right

**Participant 7**: And then we should also be helping each other, have that supports like I told you, some set of people came together, you know, to raise funds doing a yard sale, bake sales to raise $20,000. What are we doing….

**Interviewer:** Hmm.

**Participant 7: …**To help each other? What are we doing? And is it not just okay, we go, I mean I know we relax, we have parties but that's not the end of it.

what are we doing? How do we help ourselves and our kids? Opportunities

like, you see some other countries, If you look at 7/11 you know, you see the kind of the demographic of the people running it. If you look at Chinese people.

**Interviewer**: Right!

**Participant 7:** There are some countries, you know, there's some set of businesses that when you get there you know the kind of people you meet there, and they bring their own people and they help their own people. They bring them, they help them even within the academics.

You see some set of people that are from a particular country. They bring their own people, and you know they get scholarships for them.

Interviewer: Hmm!

**Participant 7:** Because they know that paying is a problem for them, you know, tuition and everything. But they get scholarships and then you see them at the top and if you look at, when you talk about the tech field ,now you look at that the demographic there ,you see Indians.

**Interviewer:** That's true.

**Participant 7:** They didn't get there in just a day, is because they have that structure that helps.

My son took part in a program at one university, a coding program or something and you see, we take them very early in the morning. Then I learned that that program, you have so many people, different people. There was another one, you have many Indians and they come from different parts you know, just because of that program.

So those are the things like guiding, we need guidance. So, we need learning, unlearning and relearning.

**Interviewer**: Hmm.

**Participant 7:** We need to unlearn some things and re-learn that okay, we shouldn't be this way. Our focus should not just be on money, our focus should be on…

And I always tell people that okay yes, I want to make money, but I want to make it at the top. I want to make money like, where they are having money and influence, not just having money.

So, I think if we can have that support structure among ourselves.

**Interviewer**: Okay.

**Participant 7**: When people come in, you guide them, and then you support. Okay, what about your papers? And then also that people should speak out.

**Interviewer**:[muffled sounds]

**Participant 7:** Yes, the tendency is we tend to like, I told you we tend to keep a lot of things in like, oh, I don't want to talk about my life. I don't want people to, you know, to know that this is what is happening. I don't want my story to be out there, which is true.

That's one thing we have to learn, too, that okay, your story is not going to; we don't tell we don't talk about people when they tell you something and then you go out and you start, not because you want to help ‘A’ or but it's just because you want to gist, you want to discuss ‘A’, it shouldn't be.

So, we should make that environment like, okay, if you need help, you can come to us. These are the help in different areas we can get.

I know of a university where when you look at this, we have so many Nigerians at the top so many in positions of authority and they are helping others too.

**Interviewer:** That’s, that’s good to know. So, that's the kind of thing we need to encourage to put in place.

**Participant 7:** Yes.

I**nterviewer**: Thank you so much for your time. It has been a long day.

[uh.] it's been a long day. Thank you so much. I think you said [uh]you said it all. [Laughs]

The last question is: Do you have any additional comment or insight you would like to share.? [Both Laughs] You can still go at it if there's any other thing, maybe something just, [Laughs].

**Participant 7:** [laughs]I think we've said it all like, you know just to encourage our people.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Participant 7:** Let them know that I mean, you can achieve ..there’re opportunities, and then you can achieve whatever you want to achieve and you know but you have to work at it.

I**nterviewer**: Yes

**Participant 7:** And then that we should help each other. If you have opportunities, tell other people, you know like if I know this is….and the funny thing is, sometimes when people see opportunities because it's not for them

but because they cannot benefit from it, they don't tell others.

Maybe there's an opportunity in a particular field, and I'm not there. That's not my field and you know, instead of calling someone.

**Interviewer**: Who is in that field

**Participant 7:** Who is in that field, they will say, Oh, you know the person will become? No

If I am in a position of authority and you're in a position of authority, we are going to be able to influence and make things better for others.

**Interviewer**: It's good for all of us.

**Participant 7**: Yes.

**Interviewer:** Okay, okay, thank you so much.[um] I just want to thank you specially for your time and the valuable input shared during this interview.

So, if you would like me to share a summary of these study findings once the research is completed.

**Participant 7: Yes**

**Interviewer**: Please let me know. I will provide a copy via email.

**Participant 7**: Okay, yes, sir. I would love it.

**Interviewer:** Thank you. I will stop the recording now.

**Participant 7:** Okay.