THE VALUE OF FOOD: HOW FOOD CAN RESTORE OUR AILING ECONOMY.

Food is one commodity that sets a nation upon a high enviable pedestal among the comity of nations and also boosts the value of her currency. In one word, food can make $1USD to be N1NGN. We will explain that in a simple manner.

1. Food develops the intelligent quotient of humans and makes them use their brains. From the History of academics, Philosophy is the mother of all disciplines which explains why, at the zenith of one's academic career, one bags a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). How then did Philosophy start? It was gathered that when men have eaten, they sat down to think about the origin of things like where did man come from etc. Can one be hungry and be thinking of where God is or where man came from? The survival instinct will be activated and triggered to find food. It was this process of thinking, which basically is what Philosophy entails, that gave rise to other disciplines: medicine, law etc. These courses studied in the university today were fashioned by people who started thinking. Without food, it becomes difficult to think. This is because “a hungry man is an angry man, an angry man is an unreasonable man and an unreasonable man is a violent man.” Violence is one deplorable thing seen in many African countries, Africans carrying guns and killing fellow Africans: Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Nigeria etc. If they had fed well and their minds were set to think, they would look at where the developed countries are and make a comparison for themselves.

2. Food increases the GDP of any nation. To measure statistically the GDP of any nation, what the average citizen eats or survives on is the yard stick. We must have heard stuffs like this, “the average Nigerian lives below $1 a day.” They are simply talking about food. When every Nigerian feeds properly, our GDP will grow exponentially; but definitely not for a nation like ours that imports almost everything she needs even food. To achieve food sufficiency, we need to grow more food. We need an avalanche and a plethora of farmers to whom the government will avail lands and funds to grow food. But unfortunately, farmers have complained of the menace caused by open grazing and a sitting president is mute. Well, he la.cks the requisite knowledge on how to grow GDP. I’m not surprised.

3. Food controls inflation even artificial inflation of festive periods. Every Nigerian cannot claim oblivious of the hike in prizes of items in the market. We are almost getting used to it every December. When we have enough food in such a way that the supply exceeds demand, prizes of food items will be very cheap because if sellers don't sell, the food will perish. And so when we have enough food, salaries and minimum wages will make sense because #5000 will be able to feed a family of 5 for good 3 weeks even one month. If we have more food, teachers and lecturers and doctors will be paid less than what they receive and consequently hospital bills and school fees will be drastically reduced. The reason doctors and teachers clamour for an increase in salary even going on strike is because what they are paid at that moment can no longer provide for them and their families. Boarding Schools that buy food will spend less on food when there is more food to buy at cheaper prizes and as such, the tuition becomes less. So, it is a chain, the doctor complaining of low salary is doing so because he can no longer pay the fees of his child in a school where the teacher is increasing the fees because the hospital bills are much and prizes of food items in the market are costly for her and her family without her knowing that the traders are hiking prizes so as to pay school fees and hospital bills hiked by same teachers and doctors and so the chain continues. Food binds us in ways we don’t even imagine. It controls us.

4. Food lessens importation and so increases the value of our currency. When people produce their food, they become self-sufficient to a large extent because they are not begging for food. And so they can think. And in thinking, they begin to build their nation by discovering how to solve their problems without going to borrow incessantly. And when they do this, they depend less and less on importation. And so for the foreign body to partner with them, she has to do so at the terms placed by the food sufficient country. This is because the food sufficient country is now growing industries and looking out for other ways to solve her problems. Let’s imagine we have food in Nigeria, and more money is pumped into Aba market where shoes and clothes are made as those of Italy and Spain, such that we have more clothes and shoes in the market which exceeds demand(thus low prizes), is there any other thing keeping us from being the real giant of the world such that expatriates will want to come to work and enjoy our country? (We know what to do to have constant power supply which will cheapen the production of clothes and shoes and other items but we don’t want to do it) . A nation that has the three basic needs of man (food, clothing and shelter) in abundance is already on top. As for housing, the ancient African men were not homeless, they made houses with mud and thatch to cover their heads from rain and sunshine. We have limestone in abundance in Nigeria, what would make cement costly? We have steel industry, what should make cement and rod costly in Nigeria? We have excess unexplored lands, what stops building?

5. Food reduces crime rate. Switzerland, Iceland and Japan have lowest crime rates. Apart from being civilised, food is a major factor. Iceland has more food than her citizens. The citizens cannot finish the food because the population is relatively small. If every man or woman in Nigeria can eat three times a day with N100, do you know what that means? Who would be interested in carrying arms? There is this place I used to eat at N500 and was complaining of the high prize, I came back after three months and the same food was N800, a wrap of semo and egusi. I was dumbfounded. Another place it was N1500. Sometimes I compare it by saying, can I finish $1000 in three square meal a day? But here I am devouring N1000 in just one meal that will not even satisfy me. Another day, I was haggling prize seriously with a bike man, till he said something that shut me up and I just boarded the bike. He told me, “Oga abeg, a plate of food at ‘MAMA PUT’ is no more N300 but N500.” With that, I consolidated this my theory on food. Food controls the economy. If I refuse to pay and every other person refuses, he might abandon his bike business one day, for some crime to make money and eat.

6. Lastly, in my economics class, I learnt that when the demand curve is more than the supply curve, prizes are high because sellers will want to make profit. The goods are small in quantity and so people are struggling to have it, thus scarcity increases prize. We know some Nigerians create artificial scarcity so as to maximize profit. Too bad. Also when the supply curve is more than the demand curve, prizes are less because the goods are in abundance and buyers are even less interested. Sellers have to reduce prize so as to sell off and have money at hand and even make turnover.

Do we need to belabour the obvious? FOOD IS ESSENTIAL TO NATION BUILDING. BE A FARMER.

RECREATING\_VALUES PLATFORM HAS PRODUCTION OF MORE FOOD AS TOP PRIORITY BECAUSE WHAT COMES WITH IT CANNOT BE EXHAUSTED.

Valentine Obiagwu (philosopher cum Value creator)

#recreating\_values

When we talk of value creation, it entails looking around to see what the community needs and at the same time, solving the problem. People often think it's not their duty to solve the problem but the government. Little did they know that, in solving that problem, they create wealth. Government has become one imaginary being that people blame for their woes. But before the government system as it is today came into Africa, she has been thriving and solving her problems.

One simple example: in Onitsha, many drainages are blocked and water which should run in them now run on the roads, weakening the asphalt and creating potholes. Many of these drainages run infront of a church, company or school yet they are unattended to. For them, it is the work of the government. Who is government..? Any Establishment should always give back to the society. They should prioritise human dignity because they are patronised by these humans which remains the sole reason of that establishment to still be in existence.

'Agbero' or thugs who harass people everyday in Onitsha are becoming a serious menace. What do we do to them? Getting the military to chase them away doesn't solve the problem. We should look deeper. What was their level of education? What is the financial strength of their families? Many do not feed twice daily and so they have to look for food. Are they gainfully employed? Are there jobs for them? Many of them no longer want to work, they want quick money. Where did this idea come from? Are they being influenced by the squandering of money in the society by the government officials or the rich or the cyber thieves 'yahoo boys' which is taking their minds away from hard work?

Now these are issues that demand national concern, very serious conversations in various quarters. We are not exonerating the government from her responsibilities but when we become preoccupied with these thoughts and set out for solutions, we force the government to join the struggle. Those in government can be illiterates who know nothing about value creation and nation building. Are we to keep complaining of their incompetence?

We are waiting for no body, not even the government? Recreating\_values is out to initiate these conversations and elicit positive responses from citizens in tackling problems in their environments and not to wait for any government. We should be value creators.

#recreating\_values

Our polos of sensitization cost just #3500 but the exercise books are free especially for school children and undergraduates, so that we catch them young.

A POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO THE MENACE OF METHAMPHETAMINE OR CRYSTAL META (MKPỤRỤ MMIRI)

Methamphetamine or Crystal Meta is a potent central nervous system stimulant. It is a powerful and highly addictive chemical substance. Used as illegally as a stimulant, it directly affects the body's central nervous system and causes an immediate euphoric reaction.

"According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, methamphetamine was developed in the early 20th century and originally used as a nasal decongestant and bronchial inhaler. Its stimulative properties resulted in increased activity, decreased appetite, and a general sense of pleasure. However its potency caused it to have a longer-lasting and more harmful effects on the central nervous system than expected." (culled from WebMD). According to American Addiction Centers, methamphetamine use can lead to side effects including:

Paranoia

Irritability

Confusion

Rotting teeth

Intense scratching

Thinning body

Acne or sores

Convulsions

Liver damage

Stroke

Lowered immunity

Increased libido

Death

In fact, the toll of methamphetamine on the body has made it one of the most dangerous drugs on the American market. The National Institute on Drug Abuse reported that 1.6 million Americans had used methamphetamine in 2017." (WebMD)

As bad as it is, this illegal drug has found its way into Africa, Nigeria and then into Igbo land where it is now nicknamed "mkpụrụ mmiri" because it looks like ice. I don't intend to take you on a merry-go-round of the medical implications but to assess our solution to this menace. Many Igbo communities have discovered the abuse of this drug in their locale and so they established a solution to be: flogging the addict. Some give 100 lashes of the cane, some 300, 400 and 500. As crude as our methods have always been, do we think we can cure addiction by flogging? Same way, some pastors even parents think that one can cast out some evil spirits by flogging the possessed. (Piapụ ya mmụọ ọjọọ n'ahụ)

Some would say, 'place a ban on it or prosecute any dealer found' but here's what I think. What are the values the 'crème de la crème' of that community is offering as part of giving back to their community? Some community primary and secondary schools are simply nothing to write home about whereas as Grace would have it, some persons who passed through such schools have laboured and have become people of worth in that community. Some others who probably schooled in the city but are from the community do not think of instituting a value system for these young people in the village. It is good to organise football competitions etc in December periods but there is more to creating a value system that will inspire young people.

These men and women of substantial repute from a particular community need not wait for the government to come and renovate these primary and secondary schools in their communities. They should also institute cash prizes in various fields to make these young people aspire to some ideals because if they do not aspire for some lofty ideals, they will, out of depression, go into the intake of methamphetamine or some dangerous acts like vandalism. The Igwe, men and women of repute should create a value system that will award best plumbers, electricians, brick layers, masons etc. because not everyone will go to the university. Some intelligent young minds can also be sponsored to go to the university for professional courses but definitely not all will go. Rewarding these seeming menial jobs will do a lot to inspire these young people. Those who have the wherewithal in that community should try and patronise their own youths for their electrical or plumbing works etc.

If not for the wonders the churches are now doing to our schools here in Anambra since their handover to the church by former governor, Peter Obi, many of our schools would have been nothing to write home about. Many community schools were not handed over to the church. Men and women of great repute in that community should take up education in their communities because education is the key to human development. Flogging a man above 25 years who couldn't be educated properly is a waste of time.

Another solution: We should resort to the ụmụnna (kindred) system to tackle the menace of mkpụrụ mmiri. Ụmụnna is a group of men who can trace their lineage to a great great great great great grand father which explains why the constituent families of a particular ụmụnna cannot intermarry. Every male child should be registered at birth in the ụmụnna and should be expected to start attending meetings of the ụmụnna from the age of 18. Even if they reside out of town and cannot attend, they should be called on phone to know what they are doing wherever they are. Even the ụmụnna can summon a child of their own to come back home and explain what he is doing, if they could not understand him. The young men at home who would attend will be called out to say what they do so that any member of the ụmụnna can patronise them. Any who does not have anything doing will be given some amount of money to start up something. He will be monitored closely. The ụmụnna was once a strong voice in Igbo land and is still so today despite the current modernization. It is not old fashioned. Let us resurrect the power and voice of the ụmụnna in Igboland. Valentine Ozigbo had it as one of his manifestos to revive the ụmụnna system again in solving problems at grassroot level.

With these two steps, I think the consumption of methamphetamine or mkpụrụ mmiri will decline to an infinitesimal level.

#recreating\_values

I know a lady who studied nursing in school and upon graduation refused to practise. She delved into make-up artistry and event decorations, reason being that there is money in it more than nursing. One might say she just went through nursing school for the certificate or just to become a graduate but the real question is, “What was going on in her mind all the while she was studying nursing?” She never thought of the VALUES she would add to the nursing profession, the abnormalities and dereliction to duty she would try to correct. No, all the while, she was thinking of money. This is why we are not good in anything. A lawyer is the minister of power, a doctor is working in a bank. Why not use the money, resources and time spent and go into that profession and study everything about it so as to come out and make a tremendous change in that department?

Where is this craze of having excess riches coming from? We were known to engage in a particular line of work, to help and make things better for one another despite the income. The doctor needs the nurse for his work, the nurse needs the banker for her money, the banker needs the engineer for his computer and counter machines, the engineer needs the teacher to learn how to produce, the teacher needs the book publishers, the publishers need the trader to sell their works and so on and so forth. We are working for the good of one another. That is why we are called a community. We should not be interested in our pockets rather we should be interested in making the human race work through the creation of VALUES.

I do wonder, “Since when did having more money become the definition of success?” Who brainwashed us? What about making a name, creating an inestimable avalanche of values and legacies that the world will stand to remember? We, Africans, have been deceived into avoiding DUE PROCESS of doing things. We want everything so fast which explains why we cannot sit down and build our countries. We jump into public offices to loot and runaway, while brandishing all sorts of lies. We can do better. Some white men have perished in a bid to invent new products which ended up causing explosion during their research but it never stopped there. Others continued and today we enjoy some gadgets and devices without knowing the pain behind the production.

Valentine Obiagwu (philosopher cum value creator)

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RECREATING VALUES: THE MAN FABIAN OBI (FR.)

Values are treasures which are dear or precious to a particular set of people. Values can be subjective or objective. A person can set up principles of values for oneself while a community of persons can have a set of values, operative and instrumental in their space to which every member of that community is expected to adhere to. Coming from that backdrop, we take a look at the current situation of Nigeria. It is obvious that we have lost a whole lot of values. Our value system as a nation has been drowned in the ocean of relativism and self-aggrandizement. Most people are more interested in what pertains to them. In so far as something is not detrimental to them, they act unconcerned. With this attitude, our nation is heavily plummeting into the abyss of an irredeemable quagmire.

The front of our school gate for quite some time has been a hell hole for pedestrians as cars splash stagnant waters on their well cleaned clothes even on a sunny day, making them rain curses on the drivers. A clear look at the situation shows that the drainages are blocked and so the water that should run in them now run on the roads, creating an ugly sight and at the same time, weakening the asphalted roads. Fabian Obi (Fr.) paid the caterpillars and trucks and bought bags of cement to repair the road. Fabian Obi deserves an award for outstanding performance in community development. Recreating\_values platform is happy with Fabian Obi (Fr.) and has awarded him verbally, an award in community development.

Recreating Values is an activity of great minds that is channeled towards the transformation of Africa from a third world continent to a first world continent through the recreation of lost societal values which are fundamental to the cause of any nation building. Values are treasures that a people hold dear and by recreating these values, we hope to refresh and enliven them again in the African space so as to evoke a renewed interest and vigor in observing and practicing them.