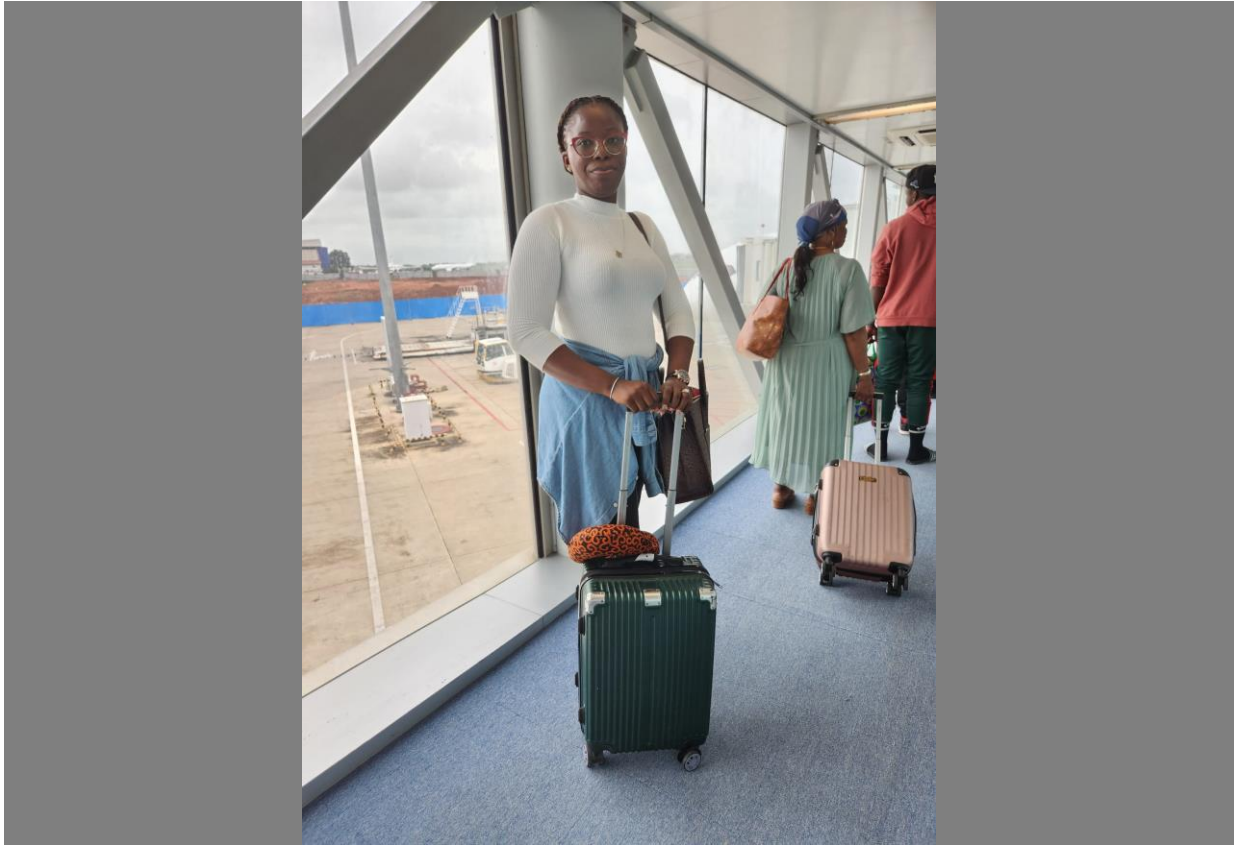




Stitching Cultures



A brave journey into the unknown

As an international student who had never left the shores of her country in all three decades of existence, coming to the United States to pursue a degree in Social Work was filled with excitement and thoughts of the unknown - which was nerve-racking.

I said my painful goodbyes to the world and culture I had ever known for a journey into the unknown.

I arrived in the US with high hopes for my new life, starting school and meeting new people. However, I was soon faced with navigating cultural transitions.



Two worlds and cultures apart

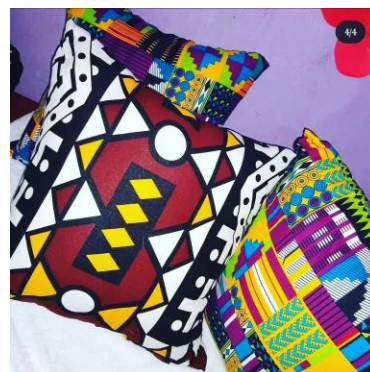
A major cultural transition I immediately experienced was the shift from the communal lifestyle of my African descent to the individualistic lifestyle of the United States.

I was alone, miles away from my loved ones, navigating the most difficult financial whirlwind caused by the foreign exchange situation in my home country, experiencing the coldest weather I had ever felt since I was born, striving to fit in, and weathering the storm of a new culture. I was shattered, alone, and depressed.

The difference was huge, but rather than seeing this as a challenge, I approached it as an opportunity to grow, learn, and adapt, embracing a new culture.

Tapping into my artistic background, I decided to stitch my old world to the newly found one I was embracing.

This change of perspective offered me the opportunity to leverage my identity as a Nigerian to navigate my new world.



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Growing up in one of the poorest countries in the world, I have lived and learned resilience, communal support, and resourcefulness.

These values have become my guiding steps and have helped me thrive. In addition, my journey into the world of social work has given me a renewed appreciation for cultural competence and respect for diverse perspectives.

When I was in Nigeria, I derived the utmost joy from curating beautiful arts and crafts that brought smiles to people's faces.

I taught these skills to over a hundred individuals as a form of expression and cultural appreciation.

Upon my arrival in the USA, I was amazed at the storytelling and inclusion power that arts and crafts provided in the community as well. This realization, coupled with my understanding of foundational values in social work, has been very empowering and soothing.

This motivated me to use my skill and passion to curate pieces using African patterns, thereby promoting my cultural heritage and expressing myself.

My journey as a Nigerian, an international student majoring in social work, and an art curator exemplifies the celebration of diversity in action.

With one stitch at a time, my identity as a Nigerian, shaped by the values of resilience, community support, and resourcefulness is continuously being woven into a story of inclusion, empowerment, and transformation as I navigate my journey as a student and social worker in the United States.



We become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dream.

Jimmy Carter

