



TEMPLARS

NIGERIA | GHANA

Creating Sustainable Impact

RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS REPORT 2023

A blurred background image of a modern office interior. In the foreground, a wooden sculpture of a person's head and shoulders is visible, made of dark wood with a textured surface. The background shows a bright, out-of-focus office space with glass partitions and a potted plant on the right.

Engaging and Supporting Communities around Us

We seek to bring our unique, solutions-oriented advice to the communities where we operate

Contents



4 Introduction



7 Our Strategy



13 Enterprise NGR Dinner



14 Experience TEMPLARS



16 Sickle Cell Walk



17 Adopt-a-Prisoner



18 Healthy Heart Foundation



19 WARIF March



20 Fair Justice Initiative



22 2024 & Beyond

Introduction

At TEMPLARS, our commitment to delivering **value to all stakeholders** within our ecosystem is fundamental to our operations. As a firm, we firmly believe that our most significant contribution to society lies in **harnessing our knowledge** and expertise to make a meaningful impact in the communities we serve by **bridging the gap in access** to legal services.

Oghogho Akpata
Managing Partner



At TEMPLARS, we have redefined our legal approach to provide clear, concise and insightful answers to complex questions.

We have offices in key commercial centres in Nigeria and Ghana: Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt and Accra. As such, the firm is strategically placed to offer quality legal services to clients in Africa.

The Firm, which was founded to fill a gap in the market for high-quality legal advice with a commercial imperative, has proven experience in legal advisory and strategic consultancy in a wide range of areas within the major economic sectors across Africa.

We assist our clients to analyse the risks involved in their transactions; and we mitigate and hedge against those risks by deploying or devising appropriate risk management tools.

Consistent with our commercial approach in the service of our clients, we constantly employ cost-effective procedures in the pursuit of each mandate.

“One of Nigeria's best law practices with top-notch lawyers who are very knowledgeable, and client driven.”

- CHAMBERS GLOBAL

PRACTICE AREAS

Corporate & Commercial 	Dispute Resolution 	Energy and Natural Resources 	Finance 	Media, Entertainment, Technology, Intellectual Property and Sports 	Tax 	Investigations, White Collar and Compliance 
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Tier 1 Firm	2 Countries	4 Cities	7 Practice Groups	22 Partners	27+ Years of experience	150+ Lawyers



At TEMPLARS, our Responsible Business Initiative is dedicated to making a real impact in the communities where we operate, showcasing our commitment to driving positive change. Our approach to corporate social responsibility (CSR) adheres to global standards and embodies the principles of corporate social impact aimed at contributing to philanthropic, activist, or charitable societal goals.

Our initiative aligns with global efforts and standards such as the United Nations Global Compact and responsible investment principles. We understand that as a company, we have a responsibility beyond just making profits and are committed to addressing crucial challenges such as the lack of access to legal aid, quality education, healthcare, environmental degradation, and youth underdevelopment.

This commitment is evident in our engagement in professional service volunteering through pro bono programs, community development, administering grants to non-profit organizations, and conducting ethically oriented business and investment practices.

At TEMPLARS, sustainability is at the core of our business practices. We have enriched our workplace policy to include regular mental and physical health awareness practices. Our inclusive initiatives support prisoners, we run regular programs to educate the next generation of lawyers, and we undertake projects aimed at fostering a sustainable environment for our local communities.



Our For our people and communities ***Strategy***

At TEMPLARS, our fundamental principle is to operate as a responsible and sustainable business. We recognize the value of long-term impact and are dedicated to creating positive change that will benefit future generations.

Our mission is to not only help our clients navigate future challenges but also to ensure the well-being of our planet, our people, and our communities. We are unwavering in our commitment to driving sustainable change across all aspects of our operations, working hand in hand with our clients and broader network to achieve positive environmental, social, and governance outcomes.

We firmly believe that genuine sustainability demands a forward-looking approach, responsible actions, and a dedication to nurturing the development and well-being of our people. We are continuously striving to exceed expectations and integrate sustainability into every aspect of our work, with a specific focus on People, Planet, and Governance.

PEOPLE

At the heart of our organisation are the people we value the most - our employees. We prioritise their health and well-being, fostering an inclusive and supportive workplace that encourages growth, collaboration, and innovation. Beyond our walls, we embrace our responsibility to the wider community, actively seeking opportunities to create a positive impact through our philanthropic initiatives and volunteer efforts.

PLANET

In the environmental sphere, we are committed to minimising our footprint and promoting sustainable practices throughout our supply chain. We have set ambitious targets to reduce our carbon emissions, water usage, and waste generation, and are continually exploring new ways to reduce our impact on the planet.

GOVERNANCE

Finally, we recognise the importance of strong governance as a foundation for sustainable business practices. We are committed to upholding the highest ethical standards in all of our operations and have implemented robust systems and processes to ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with all relevant regulations and standards.

By taking a comprehensive approach to ESG, we are confident that we can create long-term value for all of our stakeholders while contributing to a more sustainable future for all.



Our corporate social responsibility (CSR) approach is based on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles.

- a. **Focused contribution:** a. Our main goal is to make a targeted impact in areas with significant need and potential for high influence, such as health and wellness, education, youth development, justice delivery, and advocacy. To achieve this, we offer established initiatives and non-profit organizations the necessary knowledge, support, and philanthropy to drive sustainable solutions.
- b. **Strategic partnerships:** We believe that strategic partnerships are crucial to achieving our ESG goals, and we collaborate with established experts to support admirable initiatives that align with our values. Through our extensive network of partners, we work towards shared objectives in philanthropy, sustainability, and advocacy.
- c. **Advocacy:** a. As advocates for positive change, we leverage the expertise of our talented professionals to champion key developments and provide guidance to stakeholders on holistic and solution-driven approaches to ESG challenges.
- d. **Sustainability:** a. We understand the importance of sustainability and have implemented internal practices that align with global best practices. These include rethinking the design of our work environment to improve our environmental vision and meet ESG standards. We also make cultural changes that sustain design thinking around sustainability within the legal services industry.
- e. **Excellence:** Excellence is a core principle of our CSR approach, and we remain accountable for all our projects and commitments. We strive to deliver excellent solutions to ESG challenges and make a positive impact on society. By staying true to our principles, we aim to foster long-term value creation and drive sustainable growth.





At TEMPLARS, we embody the belief that **profit** should always serve a greater **purpose**. We don't just pay lip service to corporate social responsibility; we actively engage in it. Our dedication to to sustainability, environmental efficiency, and advancing human rights and justice is **on par with any other business endeavour**, be it a merger and acquisition deal or any other strategic initiative.

Femi Asante

Partner, Pro Bono and CSR





Reflecting on the year gone by, we stand proud of the strides made in our unwavering commitment to **environmental stewardship, justice** and **human rights**. The success of our programmes and partnerships underscores our dedication to social responsibility. In 2023, the team's efforts were evident through our pro-bono work, contributing over **1,000 hours** valued at **\$350,000**.

Here's to a more inclusive and responsible future and more profound connections to the communities we serve.

Debisi Omole
Chief Operating Officer



2023 *Highlights*



EnterpriseNGR Quarterly Members' *Dinner*

TEMPLARS hosted the EnterpriseNGR 2023 Quarterly Members Night in Lagos. During the event, Aigboje Aig-Imoukhuede, Chairman of EnterpriseNGR, reiterated the vision for cross-border collaborations and partnerships to drive cooperation and economic development in Africa.

Chike Obianwu, Deputy Managing Partner of TEMPLARS and a founding member of EnterpriseNGR, also spoke at the event. He highlighted TEMPLARS' dedication to the collective objective of influencing policy and advancing the private sector, achieved by continuing to share expertise in major transactions, promoting sustainable growth and remaining resilient in Nigeria's financial landscape.

EnterpriseNGR aims to position Lagos as Africa's financial epicentre. To achieve this goal, the importance of establishing a designated financial hub, drawing inspiration from global models like TheCityUK, Dubai International Financial Centre, and Singapore, was emphasized. Collaboration with the Lagos State government was also highlighted, as Lagos is a major entry point for investments in Nigeria.



Experience TEMPLARS 2.0

It was exciting for us at TEMPLARS to host the second edition of Experience TEMPLARS. Following the positive feedback we received from previous attendees, it was a no-brainer that we would be having an even better outing this year. In the maiden edition which held last year, we had over 100 applicants and eventually accommodated 20 students, however this year, we had over 400 applicants across the country with an even more diverse pool of applicants which led us to increase the number a selected student from 20 in 2022 to 35 students in 2023.

TEMPLARS Senior Associate, Orji Uka addressing the young lawyers

The aim of the annual Experience TEMPLARS is to provide insight into the legal profession, offer guidance to aspiring legal professionals, and foster engagement with the legal community. Members of our firm shared their experiences, highlighting the diverse career paths within the legal profession and the essential skills and attributes required for success.

The highlight of the day was the debate presentation by the top 6 applicants who competed for grand prizes including; internship opportunities, scholarships to attend the Nigerian Law School, and the ultimate prize of a contract of employment awarded to the best debater. This practical exercise allowed aspiring lawyers to apply theoretical knowledge in addressing topical issues in our society i.e discussions around sustainability and the role of Law firms and lawyers in promoting climate change. Throughout the day, our firm's commitment to corporate social responsibility (CSR) was evident.

We facilitated networking opportunities, allowing aspiring lawyers to connect with our legal professionals and gain insights into the day-to-day operations of a commercial law firm. Additionally, we provided resources and information on legal education, internships, and career development, aligning with our dedication to supporting the growth and development of future legal professionals.

The success of the Open Day is reflected in the positive feedback received from participants, who expressed appreciation for the valuable insights gained and the opportunity to interact with established legal professionals.

Experience TEMPLARS stands as a testament to TEMPLARS' commitment to nurturing talent, promoting legal education, and contributing to the broader legal community. This event not only showcased our firm's expertise but also reinforced our dedication to social responsibility and the cultivation of the next generation of legal practitioners.

We look forward to building on the success of this event in future engagements.



Experience TEMPLARS 2.0 Beneficiaries Flanked by TEMPLARS Partners Zelda Akindede and Chike Obianwu and COO Debisi Omole.

The Sickle Cell *Walk*



TEMPLARS partnered with the Sickle Cell Foundation Nigeria (SCFN) to drive sickle cell awareness in Lagos, Nigeria.

The partnership involved a blood walk and sickle cell awareness walk in Lagos state. The aim of the Sickle Cell Awareness Walk was to displace existing public misconceptions about sickle cell. The Sickle Cell Awareness Walk helped provide compatible blood type to people living with sickle cell and sensitised the public to better understand that sickle cell is not a death sentence. It was also aimed at educating people with sickle cell on how to survive the stigma, as well as manage the medical condition.

The Blood Walk garnered support and encouragement for people living with sickle cell and involved blood donations to persons with sickle cell by persons willing to donate.

Adopt-a-Prisoner *Project*

In furtherance of its belief that everyone is deserving of excellent legal services, especially indigent individuals, the Firm established the Templars' Adopt a Prisoner Project. The project has the sole goal to provide pro-bono legal services (to the extent practicable) to inmates of selected correctional facilities in Lagos state, with the pioneer beneficiaries being the inmates of the Female Correctional Center, Apapa, Lagos State. Selected inmates will receive legal services at no cost till their cases are effectively wrapped up.

While providing legal assistance is at the core of the initiative, the project also involves the provision of welfare items to the inmates in order to cushion the notoriously terrible living conditions they are subjected to in the prison. To this end, and in preparation of the launch of this project, the Firm started a monthly welfare drive to gather welfare items for the benefit of the inmates.

The welfare drive was an overwhelming success as the Firm generated over N4,000,000 (Four Million Naira) internally to purchase items for the inmates. Additionally, the Firm received donations of clothing items, sanitary pads, toiletries, baby clothes, food items etc., from generous members of staff.

On Saturday, 18 November 2023, the Firm carried out its first welfare visit to the Female Correctional Center, Apapa, Lagos State. The event saw a massive turnout of TEMPLARS' members of staff led by Partner Zelda Akindele and Chief Operating Officer Debisi Omole.

The Templars delegation was warmly received by the prisons' officials and the inmates who could scarcely hide their joy when informed of the largesse provided by Templars.

The Templars delegation intimated the inmates of the Adopt a Prisoner Project, answered questions regarding the project and what to expect from Templars going forward and equally provided responses to various other queries the inmates had. It was a deeply emotive experience for all delegates and exhibited Templars' commitment to ensuring that we live in a world that is fairer for all persons, even those who may currently live behind bars.



TEMPLARS CSR Team at the Female Correctional Center in Lagos, Nigeria

Healthy Heart *Foundation*

TEMPLARS formed a partnership with the Healthy Heart Foundation to enhance its efforts in reducing preventable deaths emanating from cardiovascular diseases and providing top-notch cardiovascular care in Nigeria. This collaboration was aimed at making cardiovascular interventions more affordable and accessible to Nigerians by supporting the foundation's research center, learning center, and surgical operations.

To date, with TEMPLARS' assistance, the Foundation has conducted 110 consultations, 20 heart repair surgeries, and 15 replacement surgeries. This partnership underscores TEMPLARS' commitment to improving healthcare access and outcomes in Nigeria, aligning with the Foundation's mission to address the growing burden of cardiovascular diseases in the country.

Women At Risk International Foundation (WARIF)

No Tolerance March

WARIF is a non-profit organisation established to raise awareness and address the high incidence of sexual assault, rape, and human trafficking occurring amongst young girls and women in our society.

Last year, our TEMPLARS family joined over 1,000 men, women and children who participated in the “NO TOLERANCE” March to speak up and take a stand against rape, sexual violence, child abuse, trafficking and other harmful practices in our communities.

Templars continues to contribute financially and by providing legal support services towards this cause.



TEMPLARS representatives with WARIF convener, Dr. Kemi DaSilva-Ibru and TEMPLARS Deputy Managing Partner, Chike Obianwu at the No Tolerance March



Participants at the No Tolerance March along the route through the Lekki-Ikoyi toll bridge



The Fair Justice Initiative

The Fair Justice Initiative (FJI) remains dedicated to improving the lives of prison inmates in Ghana, focusing on combating discrimination and fostering rehabilitation.

KEY INITIATIVES

Education & Skills Training: Prioritizing rehabilitative education and skills training for inmates to aid their societal reintegration.

Painting Project: A collaboration with the Judith Ellen Foundation and Fidelity Bank Ghana volunteers, enabling female inmates at Nsawam Female Medium Security Prison to express themselves through art, promoting personal growth and community.

Farm Project: In partnership with Holland Greentech, we've established a vegetable farm at Nsawam Female Medium Security Prison to combat malnutrition and provide educational opportunities. The project also generates funds to sustain itself through the sale of 60% of the produce.

Justice Stakeholder Workshop: Hosted with Justice Defenders and chaired by Chief Justice Kwasi Anin-Yeboah, the workshop discussed introducing in-prison paralegalism to enhance justice access and support inmate rehabilitation.

MEDICAL SUPPORT

Provided essential medication to inmates at Nsawam Prisons and covered medical costs for specific cases, including surgery for an elderly inmate and support for a pregnant inmate.

MOVING FORWARD

FJI continues to champion fair justice and support for inmates through practical initiatives and partnerships, focusing on education, health, and rehabilitation.



FJI Justice Stakeholder Workshop



FJI Painting Project



FJI Skills Training



FJI Farm Project



An FJI Beneficiary and Current Inmate, Discussing with TEMPLARS Partner and Founder of FJI, Femi Asante



FJI Medical Support Visit at the Nsawam Prisons, Ghana.



2024 &
Beyond

Looking ahead to 2024, we are initiating significant collaborations and projects to enhance our impact.



Partnership with Cuppy Foundation and the University of Oxford



TEMPLARS Through the Line – our Responsible Business Podcast



The Fair Justice Initiative, Ghana



Partnership with Women at Risk International Foundation Initiative (WARIF)



Partnership with Marcel Ruth Cancer Centre



The Sickle Cell Foundation Nigeria (SCFN) blood donations and sickle cell awareness drive



Adopt a Prisoner – providing support to male prisoners in Lagos



UNIBEN Students Law School Sponsorships



TEMPLARS Pages of Possibilities – A book drive in Juvenile Homes



TEMPLARS Startup Incubator



TEMPLARS Green Initiative



Experience TEMPLARS 3.0

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