



# Project Report

Babcock University's Participation in  
the AFEL Economic Impact Challenge

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research paper is to identify the economic problems or policies affecting the growth and expansion of the business, “Joseph Joyce”, showcase how the AfCFTA agreement can create a conducive environment for the growth and prosperity of the business, and discuss how it can improve the processes and earnings of the of the business, while promoting gender equality, empowering women, and providing opportunities for youth entrepreneurs. We aim to create awareness about the importance of the AfCFTA agreement in promoting the growth and prosperity of Small and Medium sized enterprises (SMEs), and how this agreement also contributes to the empowerment of women and youth in the society.

The AfCFTA agreement aims to promote economic development in Africa through empowerment and indigenization strategies. Its goal is to ensure that businesses, especially SMEs, are given an equal opportunity to grow and prosper in the current economic environment. It also aims to provide opportunities for women and youth in Africa to participate in the economy and contribute to the economic evolution in Africa. The AfCFTA recognizes the challenges faced by SMEs, women and youth in their attempt to participate in the economy and aims to create an avenue that minimizes, and eventually eliminates such challenges.

One of the most important goals of any economy is to grow and develop. The AfCFTA agreement acknowledges that one of the best ways for any country’s economy to grow is to leverage the talents and skills of its people and the natural resources it has been endowed with. This further emphasizes the need for this study as a means of awareness to educate people about the benefits of this agreement in empowering business, as well as women and youth.

In line with the purpose of this research, we have chosen the small business of one of the students in the Economics department at Babcock University to be the focus of this study. **“Joseph Joyce” is a tie and dye clothing brand owned by Folaranmi Joyce, a 300-level student at Babcock University.** Our interview with her revealed that her idea to begin this business began from her days in secondary school. Her drive to run this business and push past the challenges stems not only from her passion for fashion and art, but also from her great appreciation of the African culture. Tie and dye, being predominantly a technique used in Western Africa, has been used to create beautiful and vivid garments for clothing and decor over the centuries. In the south western part of Nigeria specifically, these African techniques have inspired the production of *Adire*, a fabric mainly worn by the *Yoruba’s*, using a variety of resist-dyeing techniques.

Joseph Joyce is an inspiration for many other small businesses, and our major reason for choosing it as the focus of our research lies in its core foundation and mission to use African designs and African minds to create and tell the African story one amazing design at a time. This paper proceeds as follows: in section 2 we discuss the main objectives of the AfCFTA

agreement. In section 3, we analyze the economic policies facing the AfCFTA and how the objectives of the agreement can be applied to promote the growth and prosperity of Joseph Joyce. In section 4, we outline the methods and resources we employed to conduct this research as well as give a brief overview of other businesses we researched on, and how this agreement can be beneficial for all parties. Finally, in section 5, we conclude our analysis.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE AfCFTA AGREEMENT

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a free trade area encompassing most of Africa. It was established in 2018 by the African Continental Free Trade Agreement and has 43 parties and 11 signatories, making it the largest free-trade area by number of member states, after the World Trade Organization, and the largest in population and geographic size, consisting of

1.3 billion people across Africa. The agreement was brokered by the African Union (AU) and signed by 44 of its 55 member states in Kigali, Rwanda on 21 March 2018. The proposal was set to come into force 30 days after ratification by 22 of the signatory states. On 29 April 2019, the Saharawi Republic made the 22nd deposit of instruments of ratification, bringing the agreement into force on May 30; it entered its operational phase following a summit on 7 July 2019, and officially commenced 1 January 2021. Nigeria, the largest economy in Africa, signed the AfCFTA on July 7, 2019. Proponents of the FTA expect the AfCFTA to reduce poverty, increase firm competitiveness, and boost intra-African trade and investment. With regards to this research, the major objectives of the AfCFTA we have focused on are:

create a single market for goods and services, facilitated by movement of persons to deepen the economic integration of the African continent and in accordance with the Pan African Vision of “An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa” enshrined in Agenda 2063.

promote and attain sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development, gender equality and structural transformation of the State Parties.

promote industrial development through diversification and regional value chain development, agricultural development, and food security.

The AfCFTA agreement aims to achieve these objectives with the main goal of promoting economic growth and development in Africa.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Our interview with **Folaranmi Joyce**, the owner of “**Joseph Joyce**”, gave us an insight into the economic challenges she faces as a small business owner. It also helped us understand how the AfCFTA can be beneficial to the growth and prosperity of her business.

Lack of access to capital is a major factor hindering growth of Joseph Joyce. She revealed to us that her main source of capital was from contributions made by her parents. She emphasized that she is eternally grateful to them for their support of the business. However, in order for this business to transform from a small business to a medium one and

subsequently, a large business, it would require access to a larger amount of capital. She believes that she can have access to such capital if she is exposed to a larger market.

The AfCFTA agreement has one of its objectives as creating a single market for goods and services, facilitated by movement of persons to deepen the economic integration of the African continent and in accordance with the Pan African Vision of “An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa” enshrined in Agenda 2063. A major challenge that Joseph Joyce faces is its inability to expand its reach. The owner expressed her need for access to a much bigger market that could give her access to financing opportunities and economies of scale. This will greatly impact her business revenue and overall profitability of the businesses. The brand owner expressed that one of her fears is her business failing to grow outside of the Babcock community in the medium to long term. We believe that the AfCFTA agreement can be highly beneficial in this aspect through its work to create a single market for goods and services and deepen economic integration in Africa. The agreement will reduce tariffs among member countries and cover policy areas such as trade facilitation and services, as well as regulatory measures such as sanitary standards and technical barriers to trade (The World Bank, 2020). As the name implies, the AfCFTA will give small and medium sized businesses like Joseph Joyce the opportunity to expand to other countries in Africa and the world at large, thereby empowering these businesses.

Empowerment is a term that can apply to many groups and institutions. It is the process or giving authority or power to someone to do something. The AfCFTA is all about empowerment of the African people, focusing on women empowerment, gender equality and socio-economic development. One of the purposes of this research is to showcase how the AfCFTA agreement promotes this. By promoting free trade and helping **Joseph Joyce** to expand its reach beyond the university, a young woman has been empowered. The importance of this particular objective of the AfCFTA cannot be over emphasized. The young business owner, Folaranmi Joyce, expressed to us that a major motivation for her is how empowered she feels knowing she has her own business and can make an honest living for herself, no matter how small. Despite the move for gender equality in the Western world in the past decades, majority of African countries are just now embracing the fact that a woman is no less adequate than a man, particularly in business and economic activities. Also, young people are richer now than they have ever been before. Across the world, the youth are working as hard as they can to succeed, from designing clothing, to starting fintech companies and solutions, with the digital age and technology, the possibilities are endless. Here in Nigeria, it is particularly important to us to ensure that we have access to such possibilities, this agreement has already begun the process. The AfCFTA plays a major role in ensuring that this continues in Africa, by constantly ensuring that equal opportunities are provided and available for women and youth in the continent. “The confidence and joy I experience as a young, female business owner is invaluable, it keeps me going every day. I hope every woman out there gets the opportunity to experience this.” – Folaranmi Joyce, CEO, Joseph Joyce.

In order for Joseph Joyce to produce the beautiful tie and dye designs that it does, a whole chain of production is involved. Joseph Joyce works with external producers and wholesalers as well as other retailers before the final product reaches the consumer. The owner expressed to us some of the challenges she has encountered in production.

High costs which translate into high prices is a major issue the business faces. From the start of this business, Joseph Joyce has sourced its T-shirts for tie and dye from wholesalers in the country who import them from other countries such as China and the United States. The exchange rate depreciation has had adverse effects on both the overall cost and profitability of the business. Other materials sourced from wholesalers who import their products from outside Africa tend to have the same effect on cost and profitability of Joseph Joyce. The AfCFTA aims to promote industrial development through diversification and regional value chain development, agricultural development, and food security. During the interview, we were able to convince the CEO of Joseph Joyce to take an alternative approach by purchasing raw materials that are locally sourced and made. Nigeria is immensely blessed with numerous raw materials, one of which is cotton, which is used to make these T-shirts that Joseph Joyce requires to do business. We are glad that the business has decided to source for local producers in Nigeria for its raw materials in order to reduce costs and improve its profitability.

The AfCFTA has a lot more to offer than can be discussed in this paper. Its promotion of free trade, women and youth empowerment, industrialization, and economic growth and development over emphasizes its important. Our research shows that the AfCFTA agreement is one which stands for values and has objectives and aims that are germane to the growth and development of businesses and organizations.

## METHOD

**Participants:** To gather information for this research and select the SME that would best fulfil the objectives of this research, we conducted a total of 3 interviews with student and non-student entrepreneurs within the Babcock University community. The first interviewee/participant in this research was **Mr. Tijani**, owner of **TJ Shoe Clinic**, a shoe making and repair business in Babcock University, which has been providing these services for over 20 years. The second interviewee/participant was 300-level Economics student of Babcock University, **Miss Nwankwo Ebube**, owner of **Cynthia's loveforkroche**, a business that deals in making and selling beautiful clothing items made from various fabrics using crocheting techniques. Our last interviewee/participant, whose business is the focus of this research project, is **Miss Jesuferanmi Folaranmi Joyce**. She is the owner of **Joseph Joyce**, the tie and dye clothing brand this research paper aims to discuss, the economic problems affecting the business as well as how the AfCFTA agreement can contribute to and promote the growth and development of this business.

**Materials:** No specific research instrument was used in conducting this research. All interviews were conducted face-to-face and recorded using a phone microphone and a phone camera. We communicated the purpose of this research to the participants through word of

mouth before the interviews were conducted. We also educated them on what the AfCFTA agreement entails, and how its objectives align with the goals of their businesses.

**Design and Procedure:** The research design of this paper was descriptive, correlational and explanatory. It described some of the economic challenges faced by Joseph Joyce and some of the major objectives of the AfCFTA agreement. It established the relationship between the objectives of the AfCFTA and the goals of the business. It also explained how this relationship could be beneficial for growth of Joseph Joyce, and empowerment of women and youths.

## CONCLUSION

The AfCFTA agreement is one which is beneficial and necessary for all small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in Africa. This research has shown how the objectives of the agreement can promote the growth and profitability of the business, Joseph Joyce. These benefits can also be experienced and utilized by the other businesses we researched on and every SME in Africa. We have been able to identify the major economic challenges faced by Joseph Joyce as a business and how the objectives of the AfCFTA agreement will help the business to increase its revenue, profitability, and expand its reach. Through this, the AfCFTA agreement also achieves one of its major aims which is to promote gender equality, empower women and provide opportunities for youth entrepreneurs. It is our goal to continue to spread awareness about the AfCFTA and enlighten business owners about the benefits of this agreement and its industrialization, free trade and socio-economic development strategies. We hope to continue being a part of an evolution that promotes the creativity, innovation and stories of the African people.

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## THE TEAM'S AfCFTA ADVOCACY PLAN

### DESCRIPTION

<b>ISSUE</b>	Promotion of economic growth and development in Africa through free trade.
<b>ISSUE DESCRIPTION</b>	This issue focuses on the elimination of trade barriers in order to promote free trade among African nations. It also involves the promotion of sustainable growth and development in Africa through encouragement of use of African/locally made products to grow the African economy. Its aim is to reduce poverty, increase socioeconomic development and make Africa a more competitive continent in the global market.
<b>VALUE DEVELOPMENT</b>	Youth Empowerment, Entrepreneurship, Industrialization, Human Rights, Equity, Transparency, Honesty, Diligence, Innovation, and Accountability of Action and support are key pillars of this advocacy.
<b>WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating awareness about the AfCFTA, what it stands for and what it aims to achieve.</li> <li>• Advocating for more comprehensive information to be readily available about the AfCFTA.</li> <li>• From the nation at large, through newspapers and electronic media, to the students in primary schools across Nigeria, AfCFTA awareness/education should be embedded in every aspect.</li> <li>• Actual implementation of the strategies discussed to bring the objectives and goals of the AfCFTA to life.</li> </ul>
<b>TARGETS OF CHANGE</b>	The students of Babcock University are the main focus of this advocacy plan. We believe that by empowering and informing the youth of this nation from right here within the campus of Babcock University, we would be able to spread that empowerment to our immediate community, Ilishan Remo, then to the state and nation at large. The youth have the power to change the course of history and

	make a very big difference in the society. They are the targets of change.
<b>AGENTS OF CHANGE</b>	The Babcock University AFEL team, as well as its Economics Students are very dedicated to using these strategies to make a difference in our community and hopefully make an impact on a bigger scale. We also believe in Babcock University's vision to build servant leaders for a better world, the institution has been an agent of great change and we know that they will continue to support the aims and objectives of the AFCFTA.

### ADVOCACY PLAN

S/N	OBJECTIVE/GOAL	TACTICS/STRATEGIES	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES	BUDGET & TIME FRAME
1.	Promotion of Locally Made Footwear in Babcock University and our local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducting surveys and collecting data from the student to ensure we tailor supply to their needs.</li> <li>Establishing partnerships with the local cobblers through the Babcock University Student Association (BUSA) to supply sandals, slippers and shoes to the students. This may include sourcing agreements, quality control measures and ethical production practices to ensure the footwear meet the desired standards.</li> <li>For effective marketing and distribution, we will explore retail spaces on campus, organize</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Babcock University AFEL Team</li> <li>Babcock University Students' Association (BUSA)</li> <li>Babcock University Economics Students' Association (ESA).</li> </ul>	This project should take up to 2- 3 weeks, and a budget estimate of #15,000



		<p>footwear exhibitions and leverage e-commerce platforms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To address challenges such as competition from established brands, we will develop strategies for product differentiation, price competitiveness and efficient supply management.</li> <li>We will prioritize awareness and the showcase of the unique quality of African made footwear.</li> </ul>		
2.	<p>Promotion of Locally Grown Food in the Cafeteria, Sustainable Agriculture on Babcock Farms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sourcing fresh and locally grown foods will not only contribute to growth of local agriculture, but also to a healthier and more culturally enriched dining experience for the students.</li> <li>Babcock Investment Group (BIG) is already in line with this objective of the AfCFTA by owning farms and encouraging the growth of local agriculture. Our aim is to double down on this ongoing process and make it more sustainable by advocating for organic farming.</li> <li>This will also engage the students, particularly those in the Agricultural and Nutrition Sciences departments to give us more insight about how to have cleaner</li> </ul>	<p>Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Babcock University AFEL</li> <li>Agriculture Department, Nutrition and Dietetics Department</li> <li>Babcock Investment Group (BIG)</li> </ul>	<p>This project should take up to 2 weeks, and a budget estimate of #15,000</p>

		<p>agricultural process, as well as how to plan these meals for optimum health benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will work with these other students to develop better and cleaner ways to grow our food, this just strengthens the already clean diet plan that Babcock University has always implemented and advocated for.</li> <li>• For marketing, we will launch educational initiatives such as workshops, seminars and interactive sessions designed to raise awareness among students about the benefits of consuming locally grown food and making sustainable food choices.</li> </ul>		
3.	<p>Promoting Locally Made Bread, Pastries and Snacks in Babcock University</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To celebrate African culinary traditions and support local bakers and snack producers, we propose the promotion of African-made bread, snacks and pastries at Babcock University.</li> <li>• Babcock University is already involved in bread, pastries and snacks production which are known for their quality and freshness. We plan to expand this by ensuring that these Babcock products are made available for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Babcock University AFEL Team</li> <li>- Babcock University Economics Students' Association (ESA)</li> <li>- Babcock Investment Group:</li> </ul>	<p>This project should take up to 3- 4 weeks, and a budget estimate of #20,000</p>

		<p>sale in as many retail outlets as possible in our immediate community, Ilishan Remo.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subsequently, we plan to expand this supply to other cities such as Lagos and Ibadan. This expansion will lead to higher production and thereby more employment opportunities for many people.</li> <li>• We will also utilize e-commerce tools the best we can to spread awareness about the availability of Babcock bread, snacks and pastries in these cities.</li> </ul>	Babcock Bread	
4.	Promotion of Babcock Water Production and Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Babcock University is also actively involved in selling water both in sachets and bottles.</li> <li>• This initiative is a clear show of self-sufficiency and responsible entrepreneurship by Babcock University.</li> <li>• We aim to expand this water production to other cities just like our plan above.</li> <li>• We also plan to help with marketing and advertising by creating awareness at the grassroots levels and using e-commerce.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Babcock University AFEL Team</li> <li>- Babcock University Economics Students' Association (ESA)</li> <li>- Babcock Investment Group (BIG)</li> </ul>	This project should take up to 2- 4 weeks, and a budget estimate of #20,000

5.	Promoting the Sale of Handicrafts and Artwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizing on-campus art exhibitions showcasing an array of African handicrafts and artwork made by the students and members of the community.</li> <li>This will allow the students to make some money and grow their crafts businesses while encouraging appreciations of local arts and culture.</li> <li>Hosting artisan markets and craft fairs on campus could become a regular occurrence. These events would not only provide artisans with a dedicated space for sales but also offer students and the local community a unique shopping experience.</li> <li>These works could include sculptures, jewelry, paintings, textile, pottery and other unique items.</li> </ul>	<p>Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Babcock University AFEL</li> <li>Babcock University Students' Association (BUSA)</li> <li>Babcock University Economics Students' Association (ESA)</li> <li>Babcock University</li> </ul>	This project should take up to a week, and a budget estimate of #10,000
6.	Educational campaigns about the AfCFTA both within and without Babcock University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will host seminars and workshops in the university, inviting people well aligned with the AfCFTA and its objectives to come and talk with the students about the aims and objectives of the AfCFTA and how they can contribute to the overall economic</li> </ul>	<p>Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Babcock University AFEL</li> <li>Babcock University Students'</li> </ul>	This project should take up to 4 – 6 weeks, and a budget estimate of #35,000

		<p>development of Africa in their own little ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will also go to primary and secondary schools in our immediate environment with products made by the students and local artisans. This will be funded by donations/contributions from the AFEL Team and Economics Students' Association (ESA).</li> <li>• We will give these locally made products to the students so they can see for themselves how unique and special our products are. Then we will go ahead to educate them about the AfCFTA and how they can contribute to the main objective of the economic growth and development of Africa.</li> <li>• We plan to make trips like this consistently and hopefully get this topic embedded in the curricula of these schools to keep the children aware so that the change is implemented as they grow.</li> </ul>	<p>Association (BUSUA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Babcock University Economics Students' Association (ESA)</li> <li>• Babcock University</li> </ul>	
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## CONCLUSION

Our journey to promote African-made products at Babcock University is not just about supporting local artisans; it is a celebration of African culture and tradition. This advocacy plan, matched with AfCFTA principles, enriches our campus with diversity.

As we conclude our exploration of promoting African-made products at Babcock University, let us remember that our contributions are at the grassroots level. Just as tiny drops make an ocean, our collective efforts have the power to create lasting change. This initiative represents a step towards embracing the principles of AfCFTA and fostering a culturally enriched and economically empowered environment on our campus.

This advocacy plan is our commitment to AfCFTA principles and represents an opportunity for Babcock University to lead by example in promoting African culture and entrepreneurship

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