

# AFRICA'S SONS & DAUGHTERS

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## THE AFRICAN HOMECOMING REVOLUTION BELIEVES AFRICA DESERVES TO GET ITS SKILLS BACK AND IS CALLING AFRICANS HOME FROM THE DIASPORA TO BECOME PART OF THE DAWNING OF THE CONTINENT

In May 2000 *The Economist* published a report titled *Hopeless Africa*, in which Sierra Leone was the main focus. At the time, the country was in the grip of a frightening civil war that had lasted for years and, as *The Economist* put it: "The United Nations' peacekeeping mission has degenerated into a shambles, calling into question the outside world's readiness to help end the fighting not just in Sierra Leone, but in any of Africa's dreadful wars. Indeed... since Sierra Leone seems to epitomise so much of the rest of Africa, it begins to look as though the world might just give up on the entire continent."

Perhaps this was the call Africa needed to solve its own problems. One organisation to respond to it has been the Homecoming Revolution, started by Angel Jones in 2003. It's a one-stop platform that concentrates on skills repatriation to sub-Saharan Africa, thereby also bringing

together people who are eager to add economic and societal prosperity to the continent by showcasing and highlighting corporate and entrepreneurial opportunities.

The concept of the homecoming revolution first came to Jones in 1999 when she heard former President Nelson Mandela speak at Trafalgar Square in London, where she'd been living since completing her post-graduate studies in SA. After seven years abroad, she finally returned home to open her own advertising business, where the thought of the initiative slowly reignited.

The idea of persuading South Africans living abroad to come back took hold and Angel launched a website

showcasing stories of people who'd returned. It generated such lively debate and interaction that she sought funding as an NGO in order to employ staff who could handle the workload. Paul Harris, founder of FirstRand Bank and committed social activist, backed the idea and FNB became the founding sponsor of what is today a commercial venture trading as the African Homecoming Revolution.

In February 2013, Jones sold her shares in her advertising agency Morris Jones to 76 MotherRussia to work full-time as CEO of the venture. From its initial focus on expatriating South Africans, it's now also targeting Nigerians, Ghanaians, Kenyans and Ugandans to return to their respective areas of the continent. It has a strong presence in New York and London (where many

Left: Angel Jones.



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