

KALABARI FOUNDATION

# 1500 KALABARI MENTORS AND ROLE MODELS INITIATIVE



Kengema Kalabari foundation (KKf)

A concept Document

# 1500 Kalabari Mentors And Role Models Initiative™ – 2012 Edition

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## Introduction

The Kalabari Nation is one of the foremost nations in the Niger Delta Region and in Nigeria. Documented evidence reveals that the Kalabari nation existed before city state such as Sokoto, Kano, Ogbomosho, Lagos, and many other nation states <sup>[1]</sup>. It has played, and is still a forerunner in politics, trade, culture. Early interaction with British explorers, slave merchants, oil palm merchants and colonialists positioned the kingdom and its people as role models to other nations – the Engenis, the Abuas, the Oduals and others. Other nations look up to the Kalabari people as the white men of Rivers State. Kalabari people were sought after by their neighbours to show them the white man’s way of life. For example, Kalabari men were paid to teach others how to ride a bicycle; how to light a kerosene gas lamp; how to dress properly; and how to interact with the whites <sup>[1]</sup>.

Kalabari names, especially those of prominent and successful people, were adopted by people of other nationalities. Neighbours frequent Kalabari city centres – Buguma, Abonnema, and Degema –primarily for trading purposes but also to behold their scenic views and interact with the Kalabaris.

[1] [http://www.worldstatesmen.org/Nigeria\\_native.html](http://www.worldstatesmen.org/Nigeria_native.html). Retrieved on 29th of March 2012

[2] Oral session with the Paramount ruler of Ogboloma town in the Abua/Odual L.G.A, Rivers State, during the sensitisation communities on the objectives of RSSDA, held on the 7<sup>th</sup> of January 2009, at Ogboloma Town

The scholarly, economic and political prowess the Kalabari people are well known. The kingdom has produced notable people in business, government, academia and philanthropic sectors in Nigeria. In recent times, the contributions of persons like *Prof. Tamunoemi David-West; Alabo Tonye Graham Douglas; late Senator Martins Ibiapuye Yellow; High Chief O. B. Lulu Briggs; Late Chief G. K. J. Amachree; Chief R. R. Briggs; Late Justice Elizabeth Membere; Chief Omubo Clinton Odibo Harry; Late Chief Tienabeso Wenike Egedeye-obu*; and many others, to the development of the Niger Delta and Nigeria are well documented. There are still more sons and daughters of the kingdom that are successes in their areas of endeavours.

The recent oil and gas economy, reinforced with the loss of values and ethics, has rapidly resulted in the decline of the tradition and grandeur of the Kalabari Kingdom. Hard work, moral uprightness, dedication and other virtues have been displaced by a **“get-rich-quick-by-any-means-necessary”** syndrome. Youths no longer place value on education and training. Fishing, trading and other economic activities have been looked down on. They now depend on hand-outs from multi-national companies, governments and other highly placed individuals, or on income generated from illicit sources.

Militancy and crisis in the Niger Delta have also contributed to the disorientation of our youths. Warlords and Gang leaders, who hitherto became rich from the privileges they enjoy, have suddenly become heroes and role models. Youths now believe that, except they are violent or show loyalty and affiliation to one of these “leaders”, they cannot not become successful. They hold the opinion that there is no dignity in labour, hence they look for the short-cut to success and riches.

This initiative targets to achieve a reorientation of our youths by exposing them to hard working and successful role models and mentors of Kalabari extraction. It intend to collate and publish a dossier of these models, to encourage youths to look up to them as mentors.

### Objectives of the initiative:

1. Expose our youths to positive role models and mentors
2. To expose to youths the value of education and skills training
3. To encourage hard work, enterprise and productivity among youths
4. Reorient our youths and make them understand that there is dignity in labour
5. To produce a dossier of successful Kalabari people in various fields of endeavours
6. To recognise the success and contribution of Kalabari sons and daughters in

### Selection of role models:

Criteria for nomination will be developed and distributed to the public especially, real and virtual (e-) forums Kalabari people for consensus and finalisation. These criteria shall include:

- excellence in academic/ skills,
- contribution to the Kalabari society,
- contribution to the national development,
- adherence to moral and ethical, and
- excellence in profession or trade, etc.

These forums include facebook groups, yahoo – Gboru Kalabari group, Kengema foundation page, twitters pages, etc. After this, there will be a public call for nomination of deserving individuals into various categories. The categories include:

1. *Politics*
2. *Culture*
3. *Leadership*
4. *Industry/ Entrepreneurship*
5. *Education/ Training*
6. *Theology/ Religion*
7. *Sports*

A committee shall look into the nominations in a thorough and fair manner and select the final list of mentors and role models. The nominees will then be contacted to forward their bio-data, work history, pictures and other relevant details. The profile of nominees shall form the content of the 1500 KALABARI MENTORS AND ROLE MODELS dossier.

### **Expected outcome**

It is expected that more than fifteen thousand (15,000) youths of Kalabari extraction will be mentored and coached by the one thousand, five hundred (1,500) Mentors and Role Models.

Kengema Kalabari Foundation shall monitor the interactions, activities and programmes of the Mentors and their “pupils”.

The overall expected impact of the initiative is the reorienting and redirecting the capacities of our youths into productive ventures. Thus, making them have values and qualities needed to position the Kalabari kingdom in a comparative advantage with other nations of the Nigerian state.

### **Presentation and launching of the first edition**

The first edition of the dossier will be launched in a semi formal setting that will provide an opportunity for a broad spectrum of the youth to interact with the mentors. A selected few of the Models will be given opportunity to inspire participants and youth in very brief presentations.

### **Once every 2-Years**

The Kalabari mentors and role models initiative – including the publishing of the dossier – is intended to be a biennial event. It will, therefore, encourage both recipients and non recipients to be more productive and also contribute to the development of the Kingdom.