

# YVONNE AYEGBENI

## THE FASHION REVOLUTIONARY

Yvonne Ayegbeni is the wife of former Nigerian international footballer, Yakubu Ayegbeni. She is also the daughter of Kadiri Ikhana who once played for the Nigerian national team. She is a fashion visionary with a unique approach to her craft and she is gradually becoming a force to be reckoned with in the UK.

### Can we meet you?

I'm Yvonne Ayegbeni, from Edo State, married to Yakubu Ayegbeni and we both have three amazing children (two girls and one boy). I am the creative designer of the label called Perfecto By Yvonne, so yes you could say I'm a fashion designer! I moved to the UK a few years ago!

### How was growing up like for you?

Growing up with parents such as mine, Dad - Kadiri Ikhana (a football coach) and mum - Philomina Ikhana (a teacher), would only make me an informed, well mannered, tutored and well groomed girl. It wasn't so easy growing up, as I had to experience life itself, but I'm happy to say I am privileged to have them as my parents. They taught me all I know today and I'm grateful.

### What has given you an edge as a fashion entrepreneur in the UK?

Perfecto is a brand which caters for mostly women of colour who find themselves in between sizes. Perfecto takes care of those parts of a woman's body which causes her to worry, like the tummy, bust parts and then thighs. And I realised that a huge number of women (especially the women of colour) do complain about these parts of their bodies. So yes I can say this is my WHY we have an edge, and it's a good one!

### How are successful African Women in the UK

### perceived?

In all honesty, successful African women in the UK are very inspirational, they lift you up at all times. Although we have seen a lot happened over the years to women of colour, but I'll maintain that they are perceived as very inspirational.

### Has fashion always been an inborn passion or something that grew over time?

Fashion was never inborn. It's a passion that grew over time, knowing that I can express myself without being perceived as someone else makes me feel good about fashion. I have a passion for this now because in the world of fashion, anything works. The freedom to be who you want to be makes me feel super good about the profession.

### How has it been, breaking into the fashion industry in a foreign city?

It hasn't been easy! It's an endless work as this is not that type which has only Africans in view, you definitely have to plan for all races. Nevertheless, I must say that I love the challenges in the field. Also, knowing that it gives me an avenue to learn more about the business is an added advantage to me.

### How and where did the inspiration to start a fashion brand originate?

I started thinking about starting a fashion brand in 2008, but I knew it

wasn't something I could rush into. I needed to ask lots of questions and most importantly, learn about the field. It's still a process, I must say!

### In what ways would you say your husband's influence and popularity has affected your fashion label?

You know most people don't actually know he's my husband?

### Do you have any plans of bringing Yperfecto to the Nigerian fashion market?

The slogan for Y-Perfecto is "Perfecto to the world". So yes, I have plans of bringing Y-Perfecto to Nigeria. Charity begins at home, remember? We have to go shake Nigeria some day.

### Whilst running a fashion brand, what can you say have been your greatest challenges?

My production! I produce all garments in Africa and Asia. Monitoring the business from here is a big challenge, but we break boundaries, don't we?

### What should every woman try at least once in her life?

I will say every woman should try to embrace life's blows when they come. In essence, the fear of "what would happen if..." shouldn't be a factor to consider when it's time to face the rough parts of life!

### What advice you have for the young and developing ladies?

FOCUS on your goals - No distractions!





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