



Topic:

Can We Build Communities That Feed Themselves? Rethinking Housing, Farming and Land Use in Nigeria

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Can We Build Communities That Feed Themselves? Rethinking Housing, Farming and Land Use in Nigeria

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EPISODE SUMMARY:

The discussion examined whether Nigerian communities can be designed to feed themselves. It explained that housing, agriculture and land use are treated as separate conversations in Nigeria when in practice they function as one interconnected system. The conversation moved across sustainable community design, permaculture principles, farm banking, cooperative ownership models and land access. It stressed that food security is less about turning every home into a farm and more about intentional planning, shared responsibility and collaboration between professions that currently work in silos. It also explored the economics of building food-producing communities, including how cooperative and share-based models can make agricultural investment accessible beyond wealthy households. It closed with a look at where public and private sector partnerships can strengthen land access, value addition and logistics.

[Dr Oluwanbepelumi Olanubi]

Hello, everyone. Welcome to another episode of Kingsgate Brief, the podcast series of Kingsgate Advisors Institute. It's good to be back again today, and of course, as you know, we are returning with fresh conversations, a deeper perspective, and the same commitment to making important development, economic, and policy issues easier to understand and more useful for everyday decision-making. At Kingsgate Advisors Institute, one of the things we care about is taking ideas that often remain in the boardroom, research papers, policy rooms, investment meetings, development conferences, and bringing them into conversations that people can actually connect with. Kingsgate Brief is one of those ways we do that. We invite participants, practitioners, thinkers, and leaders to help us unpack issues shaping Nigeria, Africa and the global economy at large in a way that is practical, thoughtful and accessible.

My name is Dr Oluwanbepelumi Olanubi. I'm the executive director of the Institute, and today I'm hosting this conversation. But before we go deeper into what we have for you today, I would like to encourage you to connect with us on all our social media platforms. Like our posts, engage with them, comment and let us know what your thoughts are, particularly on LinkedIn and on Instagram. Also, on our YouTube channel, I encourage you to subscribe and turn on the notification bell. It's important that you are one of the few people who know exactly when we post our podcast series or any other important updates. I also encourage you to visit our website, explore our pages, and I'm sure you'd be able to pick a thing or two that will help your informed decision on a daily basis.

The conversation of today is one that shapes how we live, where we live, and even the land used generally in Nigeria. The question we need to start asking ourselves is, can we actually build communities that feed themselves with housing, farming, and land use in Nigeria? In Nigeria, we tend to discuss housing as one separate issue, agriculture as another separate issue, and land use or land planning as an entirely different conversation. Conversations on housing often focus on affordability, accessibility, housing deficit, and others. When it comes to conversations on agriculture, we talk about farmland, food prices, and rural livelihood. And when we talk about urban planning, we focus on roads, drainage systems, escape infrastructure, just to mention a few. But in practice, what actually happens is that these systems work together, and they are connected. When you really think about it, these are not separate issues.

A community is not only a collection of buildings, but it is also a place where people need food, water, work, movement, safety, market access, and a healthy environment. How we design our communities affects whether the land is productive or wasted. It affects whether food travels a long way before it reaches its household or users. It affects whether flooding becomes worse or people find local livelihoods attractive to live in. Hence, when we ask whether communities can build themselves, we are not suggesting that every neighbourhood must produce rice, maize, fish, potatoes, or grains for its residents to consume. The real question and a more practical one is whether Nigerian communities can become more productive, more resilient, and more intentional about food, land, water, and livelihood.

This matters more right now in this context because food prices have remained under pressure, and most households are finding it difficult to actually survive, given the high cost of food. Cities are expanding very quickly, and farmlands are being converted to estates and commercial spaces. Climate pressure is also affecting livelihood, water supply, soil production and food production in general. So, the question is: can we build more houses? It's more like how we build communities that actually work. To help us think through this properly, I am delighted to welcome a notable guest this evening, Architect Folasiji Bomi-Daniels.

Architect Folasiji Bomi-Daniels is a Chartered Architect, Construction Management professional, Certified Permaculture Designer, and strategic investment executive with over a decade of experience spanning architecture, project management, regenerative agriculture, finance, and sustainable community development. Popularly known as "The ArchiFarmer," he is pioneering innovative models that integrate Architecture, Agriculture, Finance, and Technology to create sustainable farming communities that generate long-term economic, environmental, and social value. He serves as the Chief Investment Officer (CIO) of the Kabzeel Group, an ecosystem of companies, cooperatives, and communities committed to building sustainable wealth through real estate, agriculture, finance, and enterprise development. In this role, he leads strategic investments, financial planning, innovation, and business development initiatives that advance the Group's mission of creating resilient and regenerative communities.

Folasiji is also the President of Kabzeel Cooperative Multipurpose Society, where he oversees the management and development of over 400 acres of agricultural assets and community investment projects. Through the cooperative, he champions inclusive wealth creation by enabling individuals and communities to participate in sustainable agricultural and real estate investments. As the Program Director of Ikara Farm City, he leads the planning and implementation of a 2000-acre regenerative development project spread across 2 Nigerian States that integrates architecture, agriculture, ecology, tourism, enterprise, and community development into a thriving, future-ready settlement. The projects serve as a practical model for regenerative development, environmental stewardship, food security, and community prosperity. Folasiji is the creator of the Farmbanking concept, an innovative investment model that combines land ownership with productive agriculture to deliver both environmental impact and long-term financial returns.

Through his work as The ArchiFarmer, he continues to advocate for regenerative development and sustainable farming communities that restore ecosystems while creating wealth and improving livelihoods. He is a graduate of the Joseph Business School. Folasiji is also the visionary behind the OUTBOX Programme, an initiative dedicated to equipping young people with digital, entrepreneurial, innovation, and leadership skills for the future economy. He is an author, an accomplished speaker, strategist, and thought leader. Folasiji contributes to conversations on regenerative development, community wealth creation, food sustainability, cooperative economics, and innovation-driven enterprise across Africa.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me to welcome our notable guest, Architect Folasiji Bomi-Daniels. Good evening, and thank you for joining us.

[Architect Folasiji Bomi-Daniels]

Good evening, Doctor, and thank you for having me. It's a privilege to be here.

[Dr Oluwanbepelumi Olanubi]

I have actually been looking forward to this conversation, and at the end of today's conversation, I hope that our viewers will go with five major things. First, a thorough understanding of why housing, agriculture, food security and land use must be discussed together. And to also have a simple, practical explanation of permaculture and why it matters in the Nigerian context. We expect you to have an insight into how homes, estates, and communities can be designed to support food production without turning every place into a farm. We also expect that at the end of this conversation, our viewers will have a realistic sense of whether these ideas can be affordable, commercially viable, and even inclusive. We will hand over to you practical steps that households, developers, communities, and governments can begin to take to use land more productively. And if you ask me, I would say, let's jump right into it.

I would want to start with this, Architect, when you hear the word, or when you hear the phrase, a community that keeps itself. What comes to mind? How would we explain that in practical terms in the Nigerian context today?

[Architect Folasiji Bomi-Daniels]

All right, thank you very much. Brilliant question. What comes to mind is the future that I'm currently creating and the future that I want to see everywhere. A sustainable community is a community that integrates several aspects of its needs into things that it can produce. Not necessarily that it can produce everything it needs, but that the bulk of basic things are produced by themselves, including energy, including food, including managing health resources, and then ensuring that they work with the earth to improve the earth with their agricultural practices. So they produce the bulk of their food, manage their water resources, maximise the sunlight or produce energy from whatever means that they have, and they design intelligent climate-smart buildings.

[Dr Oluwanbepelumi Olanubi]

Interesting. Over the course of this conversation, I'm sure we'll dive a bit into what you've just laid out, especially for someone without a background in agriculture or even architecture. I want to start at the foundation: how do we usually plan, keeping the Nigerian context in mind? How do we plan housing, farming, markets, water, and land as separate issues, without bearing in mind that each is part of a bigger community, or how a community functions as a whole? Why do we usually do that, and what impact does that have on the environment in general?

[Architect Folasiji Bomi-Daniels]

Thank you very much, Doctor. Brilliant question again. I'd like to share a bit of my own story. Professionally, I'm a trained architect, and throughout my journey, I found that there's very little mention of how to take care of the earth for other users, transport users, and farmers. My mother, of blessed memory, was into agriculture, and that fueled my own passion for it. I began to realise that much of what we consider important as architects, the earth, climate change, regenerative design, and passive design, is the same thing that agriculture specialists talk about. They say we must protect the earth, work against climate change, use passive design, and so on.

But in the permaculture association I'm privileged to lead, I see that agriculturalists are trained to focus only on agriculture, and architects only on architecture, separately, when both of us are really dealing with the same earth. We work in isolation when we should be collaborating. Our curriculum is designed to make us masters of one profession instead of teaching us to work with other professions collaboratively. That's one of the core challenges.

[Dr Oluwanbepelumi Olanubi]

True, I agree with you, because we can see that these professional segments work in silos, and it isn't helping the community. So, let me ask you, as an experienced architect: how can architects or developers design homes or communities that support food production without turning residential homes into farmland? What concept brings that to life, and practically, where has it been adopted? I'm not talking about having a garden in your house, I mean, how can we build an entire community with that kind of ecosystem?

[Architect Folasiji Bomi-Daniels]

I love where this conversation is heading. For those of us in the built environment profession, architects, engineers, mechanical engineers, structural engineers, service engineers, and urban designers, we need to recognise that we're all concerned about the earth and should pay particular attention to it. This is a design thinking system that works, and it's already working in similar contexts across the world.

One approach is this: our homes don't need to become full farms, and our farms shouldn't need to become full-blown residential areas either. The real challenge is that urban areas are gradually swallowing up peri-urban areas, the zones just outside city limits, before you reach truly rural land. As cities grow through urbanisation, people push into and encroach on those areas without careful planning for food systems. Land that was originally meant for farming gets bought up by developers, often for what's called land banking, where people buy peri-urban or rural farmland purely for speculative reasons, because it's close to the city.

As both an architect and a farmer, one of the things we've developed is a farm banking concept, an upgrade to land banking. Many developers buy land, fence it, and let it sit idle for years, so

productive land stays hidden and unused. Our approach is: if you're going to buy that land anyway, why not farm it while you wait for its residential value to grow? You can produce goods that support the food economy in the meantime.

There are also what are called eco-villages: purpose-designed communities that combine residential and agricultural areas. I also promote a concept I call "foodscapes," which works even in urban areas. Everyone's familiar with landscaping, but I'm saying we should integrate food into that. Landscaping often serves a purpose like shade, and a fruit tree can provide that same shade while also giving you food. It provides a double benefit.

A good example is Village Homes in Davis, California. It celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2025, purpose-built for both farming and residential living, about seventy acres, with people living there alongside working gardens. It was very intentional. Interestingly, real estate developers who hoped to profit from that project ran into a problem: their business model depends on buying and flipping, buying, selling, buying, selling. But people who lived in that community loved it so much, with food and schools close by, and a community producing its own food, that nobody wanted to sell. So the developers actually went to the government and asked that this kind of development not be allowed to happen again, because while it worked beautifully as a community, it didn't generate the profit real estate developers were used to. Still, it shows that this kind of system can absolutely work at scale.

[Dr Oluwanbepelumi Olanubi]

Very interesting. What practical opportunities exist in Nigeria, then, when it comes to homes and estates, where we could start leveraging underused land to take advantage of this kind of approach? In terms of location and policy, how could this work in Nigeria? Because when we learn from practical, hands-on examples elsewhere, we can also benefit from the results. How do we implement that here?

[Architect Folasiji Bomi-Daniels]

Beautiful question. At the risk of sounding like I'm promoting our own work, these things exist, and they do work. One practical approach involves the land surrounding cities experiencing urban sprawl and slums: areas close to cities that aren't yet fully developed, where land isn't being put to productive use even though it's near urban centres with clear demand. That land needs to be made available for the collective good.

To build a sustainable community, everyone needs to play a part. You don't have to grow all your own food, but you should be willing to support someone who is growing food. . An urban area can't become a full-blown farm, and not everyone can become a full-time farmer, but everyone can plant something. When people are intentional about planting, even something small, they become part of a community that shares seeds and seedlings and grows resources together. That was the

essence of traditional village life, something industrialisation stripped away. What we need to recover is that sense of communal well-being and shared responsibility for food.

One benefit of this is that it helps address cycles of food inflation. Food prices rise for various reasons, such as logistics and other disruptions, but as more people get involved in farming, or simply become part of farming communities, even without farming themselves, that connection matters. As farmers say, farming isn't really a business until you sell what you've grown. If you're already part of a community that needs that food, you have buyers regardless of when you produce. Being part of a cooperative system like that is really the solution we're advocating for.

[Dr Oluwanbepelumi Olanubi]

I like that you don't have to be a farmer, but make sure you're part of a farming community, whether through your money, your location, or your involvement. I agree it's time for us to return to that. I won't get into the science or quality of food in this conversation, but more than anything, it's time we recognised something we also see in economic cycles: seasonal food inflation is often driven by poor planning, not necessarily a lack of farms. Communal farming and systems like this can help solve that.

I want to take this further and talk about permaculture. It's not as familiar a concept as agriculture or architecture, so can you explain it simply, without getting too technical, and how it differs from conventional farming?

[Architect Folasiji Bomi-Daniels]

Permaculture simply comes from "permanent culture" or "permanent agriculture." It's a design thinking system, building a sustainable food system based on intentional, well-thought-out design that works with the earth, works for people, and produces a surplus. Permaculture combines design, an architectural element, with agriculture, so you're essentially designing ecosystems.

Conventional agriculture tends to produce monocultures, a single crop. A farmer might say, "I grow maize," and another, "I grow soybeans," so each can benefit from comparative advantage and economies of scale. That's fine, but the problem is that if a disease outbreak affects one crop, say maize, every maize farmer is suddenly at risk of going broke.

What permaculture teaches instead is polyculture. With monoculture, the common practice today, you plant, maintain, and harvest, then repeat the entire cycle each season. Permaculture instead designs the system once: you plant once, maintain it, and continually harvest, so your harvest cycle never really stops. Each year, your yield can improve without additional work. You end up with gardens, timber trees, orchard crops, things that produce for a lifetime, and you leave the earth better than you found it. Permaculture works with the earth, works for people, and produces a surplus.

[Dr Oluwanbepelumi Olanubi]

I like the sound of that, it's climate-friendly, and we all know climate change is a major concern today. Any practice that supports climate-smart agriculture is welcome. You mentioned there are different concepts within permaculture. Which principle, or principles, are most relevant to Nigeria's current challenges, things like flooding, water scarcity, soil degradation, waste management, and rising food prices? Environmental problems, food shortages, and economic problems are all interconnected, so how do we tackle this, as we'd technically call it, a wicked problem?

[Architect Folasiji Bomi-Daniels]

We need a rigid, tenacious approach to solving wicked problems, and the resilience to keep at it. That's at the heart of permaculture. There are three main approaches permaculture uses, and one is to work with the earth, not just on it. One key principle is regenerative design.

We often talk about sustainability, sustainable communities, and sustainability as a whole, but permaculture pushes for something more: regeneration. Sustainability maintains a system at its current level, but if that system is already flawed, you're simply maintaining a flawed system. Regenerative principles ask instead: how can we improve this system?

That's why permaculture pushes back against continuous use of pesticides and chemicals, since they've repeatedly been shown to degrade soil. For example, if you plant corn and spray a pre-emergence or selective herbicide, that herbicide is designed so that corn survives while everything else it touches dies. So while you protect your primary product, corn, you're killing everything else around it, and the soil itself is a living thing, full of microbes, that gets damaged gradually. Over time, farmers using this method need to apply more and more chemicals.

Permaculture instead teaches you to understand your soil's makeup first: do you even need fertiliser in year one? It also encourages planting different crops together. A pest targeting corn, in a field of only corn, will simply keep eating corn every day. But in a field with ten different crops, that pest encounters other things along the way that repel it, a concept sometimes called a guild. To give a concrete example: ginger repels certain pests, beans add nitrogen to the soil like natural manure, corn grows upright, and something like pumpkin, ugu, can climb and spread around it. Planting different things together in the same space, in a way that they support each other, gives you a variety of products year-round and a continuous food supply. That's what permaculture teaches.

[Dr Oluwanbepelumi Olanubi]

Thank you. You've zoomed in on one principle, regenerative agriculture, which is a strong one, and I think it's something we need to start actually implementing, not just teaching in classrooms. I want to shift briefly to the policy environment around adopting these permaculture principles in the Nigerian context. How fair, or how hostile, is that policy environment? Are there incentives for practising this, or sanctions for not? Sustainability has become something of a buzzword across

the board, including permaculture, climate change, and the future economy. So, given Nigeria's policy environment, how well are these principles being adopted and appreciated? Are there incentives for those who practice it, and what do farmers need to have that right to follow through?

[Architect Folasiji Bomi-Daniels]

I'll leave deep policy analysis to professors and politicians, but from a practitioner's perspective, while we appreciate the provisions already written into law, what we really need is stronger enforcement. We need to see that what we say we want to protect is actually being protected, the land, the earth itself, and honestly, we're not doing enough on that front.

There's also a lot of back-and-forth: one government bans a particular product, then two or three months later, encourages farmers to produce more of it, and when that product becomes scarce, they lift the ban. We need to protect the interests of both farmers and end consumers, because it's not just about food availability, it's about the quality of food available, too.

One way the government could help through policy is by creating a genuinely enabling environment, addressing things like price transparency and logistics. Nigeria's problem isn't purely a production problem; over half of what we produce is lost along the way due to logistical failures. If we can get produce from farm to market, or to the end consumer, faster, that alone would make a real difference.

What exists today isn't enough to meet Nigeria's needs, though there are some encouraging signs. For example, there's the National Livestock Transformation Plan under the current government, a bold, ambitious initiative. But I haven't seen it move off paper and come to life yet. The plan exists, I've read the document, and there's a genuine desire to implement it, and we're asking how we can participate. But for now, it's still just sitting there. Bringing it to life is a different matter entirely.

[Dr Oluwanbepelumi Olanubi]

Rightly said, interesting. Let's hope we get friendlier, more economically sound policies that align with the Nigerian agricultural landscape. Now, let's talk about the economics of these investments and affordability. The first question is: can a food-producing community be commercially viable, and how long does it take to get there? How does it become self-sufficient enough that it doesn't depend on grants, aid, or a handful of wealthy members? How does a community become self-sufficient in a way that's actually profitable?

[Architect Folasiji Bomi-Daniels]

Without naming what we do specifically, I'll describe it. And yes, the answer to all your questions is yes.

[Dr Oluwanbepelumi Olanubi]

Feel free to mention the organisation. It's part of raising awareness. Some people don't even know opportunities like this exist, so please, go ahead.

[Architect Folasiji Bomi-Daniels]

Part of what we do at Capzil is that we've organised ourselves into a cooperative, a collective where everyone is part of something greater than the sum of its individual members. We currently manage 400 acres, and we're building a sustainable community. Everyone still runs their own thing, but we're building something bigger together, using what I'd call a shopping mall model.

If you visit a shopping mall, you'll notice anchor stores, the big names like Shoprite or the cinema, usually positioned at the far end. Those are what draw people in, and people often refer to the mall by its anchor stores' names: "I'm going to Shoprite," "I'm going to the cinema." But before you reach those anchor stores, you pass many smaller shops along the way.

Our version of that is anchor crops, crops we're confident will produce a commercially viable product. Oil palm is one, cocoa is another. There's a three-to-five-year wait before they start producing, but once they do, you can expect returns for the next thirty years. For our 400-acre project, oil palm is our anchor crop. We've established about 200 acres so far, and we expect to start earning from that within the next one to three years. But people need to eat in the meantime, you can't just make money and not eat, so alongside the oil palm, we're planting yams and maize.

We've designed what we call a food sustainability program, essentially a "grow your own food" project where members prepay. I mentioned earlier that farming's biggest challenge is that you're not really in business until you make a sale. Right now, our members use a subscription model to guarantee they're supplied with food: eggs, chicken, rice, whatever we can grow. They pay ahead of time and receive their supply like clockwork. Members are assured of healthy food, and farmers have a guaranteed market.

Members are also owners in the cooperative, so as it earns money from what they've invested, they get a return too. Take oil palm alone: one acre can generate at least a million naira. With 200 acres, you can do the math. It's very possible. The real challenge is that you need capital upfront, starting with the land itself. Right now, we're trying to get government land on lease, and it's taken over a year just to get initial approval. If land access were easier, it would cut our costs by more than half.

That's why people coming together in cooperatives can accomplish more, including helping small-holder, subsistence farmers by guaranteeing that if they produce, we'll buy, because we need what they grow. We then train them in regenerative principles: don't just dump chemicals or antibiotics onto crops, chickens, or meat. Make sure it's genuinely healthy food. It works. It's viable. It takes time and a lot of effort, but it works.

[Dr Oluwanbepelumi Olanubi]

I like that. Let me ask this: how can developers, I'll use developers as an example, adopt something like this in their own context? How do you balance this when not every community member can afford to buy ten or twenty acres of land? What kind of system makes this accessible, not just to well-off households, so that even a student, for instance, could take part? What would support that, and how can we see more of it across the country?

[Architect Folasiji Bomi-Daniels]

Since you're using me as a case study, I'll continue with myself as the example. For the oil palm projects I mentioned, Presco recently made news for coming to Ogun State. They're one of the major players in our industry, and they're bringing in a hundred million US dollars. Honestly, my first reaction was that the figure alone is enough to discourage the average farmer.

What we do differently is rely on the power of numbers. Our own project, at our scale, still runs into a few hundred million naira, so we break it down into shares. Take a project we're actually launching today, as we're recording this: we call it Project 10K Trees. We're establishing ten thousand trees, and each tree costs ten thousand naira. A student who can afford ten thousand naira can invest in that project, keep contributing over three, five, or even twenty years, and by the time it matures, they've earned many times their investment.

For our oil palm cooperative, we've similarly broken ownership into shares, currently twenty thousand naira each. Once a thousand people come together, contributing twenty thousand naira apiece, that becomes a significant sum, and people can even buy in monthly instalments, which helps them plan. That's the value of being part of an investment club, a community, or a cooperative: you don't have to start at the big end. By the time we make a purchase, we're buying at scale, but only because we've pooled together many small contributions from our members.

[Dr Oluwanbepelumi Olanubi]

That's good to know. Breaking it down like that really opens up access. It's not just about a hundred-million-dollar barrier to entry; when you're part of a community, that scale of opportunity becomes possible. You also mentioned practical implementation earlier, land ownership and planning approval, and how tedious it was just to get the government to lease land for farming. So I want to ask: what legal, regulatory, or even cultural barriers exist right now that make it difficult to build something like farm banking or permaculture at scale? What are the bottlenecks? These things can sound straightforward on paper, but what roadblocks have you actually run into?

[Architect Folasiji Bomi-Daniels]

Thank you. I'm smiling because I'm remembering several stories and trying to decide which to share. I'll pick one or two.

In one case, a government was making land available, but there was an existing community on that land, so they wanted us to engage with them properly. The World Bank has a framework for this called FRILA, the Framework for Responsible Land Access for Large-scale Investment, and it requires engaging community members directly. We had that conversation, and among the community's requests were that we put some of their chiefs on a monthly salary, renovate their traditional ruler's palace, and participate and contribute whenever they held a communal day. Those were, let's say, very interesting negotiations.

Another example involves a mentor of mine working in oil palm. He secured government-acquired land and leased it properly, but when he got boots on the ground, traditional land claimants, sometimes called "Omo Onile," still showed up. So, he ended up paying twice: lease fees to the government, and then a separate payment to the local community. There's a lot of real, on-the-ground drama that happens in Nigeria. You'll come across farms where people mark territory with sticks and red cloth as a form of traditional claim, all sorts of things.

None of that changes the fact that you need resilience and awareness that these situations happen. There are customary claims rooted in long-standing presence, "my father has farmed here for years," even without any legal documentation. On one of our recent projects, the land had been vacant since 1988. We purchased it properly from the rightful family, but people who had been farming there informally for years still claimed a stake, even without legal standing. At one point, we had to involve the police to resolve it. Land access is genuinely one of the biggest challenges in farming, because you can't farm in the sky. Even with aeroponics, you still need land to anchor it to.

[Dr Oluwanbepelumi Olanubi]

Nigeria's story is genuinely fascinating. As we come to the end of our conversation, I have just a few more questions. What role can public-private partnerships play here? I don't just mean landmark projects, but other platforms where government and the private sector, communities like yours, can collaborate. What opportunities exist for that kind of partnership to advance sustainable housing and agriculture, permaculture, while still being mindful that we're not turning every piece of land into farmland? Beyond leasing land and broadening policy, how else can the government get involved? Ultimately, the goal is sustainability, greater food supply, less waste, and optimal use of farmland. Where do you see the public and private sectors meeting on this?

[Architect Folasiji Bomi-Daniels]

Beautiful question. Beyond creating an enabling environment for business, I believe the government has a unique role to play as an arbiter between communities and investors. Government can act almost like a middleman, saying, for example, "Lagos State is open for business," inviting investors to meet with farmers, organising town hall meetings, and moderating those conversations. That kind of engagement raises awareness. Private sector players often have funds available to invest, but they need certain guarantees, especially when dealing with traditional or rural land systems, and that's exactly where government can step in as an arbiter.

Another area is price board systems. As more farmers move into different forms of agriculture, the government could help establish guaranteed pricing, so producers know that if they grow something, it will be bought at a set price, and buyers know exactly what they're taking on. We also need to focus far more on value addition, because one of the biggest contributors to poverty is that we mostly export raw produce. Turning tomatoes into tomato paste, or cassava into high-quality flour, extends shelf life and captures more value. Globally, only around 3% of the retail price of cocoa actually reaches the farmer. We need to do better.

Not everyone has to become a farmer, as I've said before. You could build a cold chain business, work in warehousing during harvest season, or participate in other parts of the value chain. But the government needs to level the playing field, starting with insecurity, which cripples agriculture repeatedly. If a farmer can't safely access their farm, and a truck can't reach it either, you simply can't guarantee supply to markets like Mile 2. It's currently easier to ship a container from China to Lagos than to move that same container from Lagos to Kano, and that's a serious problem. We need railways built for us, by us, connecting farms in the north to markets in the south. There was a government initiative under the Buhari administration that moved cattle from the north to the south for around three thousand naira per cow, a brilliant idea, though I'm not sure why it was discontinued. We need systems like that, where today's harvest can reach tomorrow's market.

We also have a lot of imported goods arriving by DHL cargo planes that then fly back empty. Why not connect those same planes to our markets, so they carry our produce back out? We need real commitment behind ideas like that. Those are the kinds of roles government, alongside private agencies, can play.

[Dr Oluwanbepelumi Olanubi]

Beautifully and brilliantly said, I agree with everything you've shared. It's not just about releasing land or drafting abstract policies that never get implemented. It has to involve the whole ecosystem. This will be my final question: for a community, and I mean anyone thinking about this, whether individuals, developers, or government agencies, what would you say are the first three to five practical steps toward building a community that produces more of what it needs?

[Architect Folasiji Bomi-Daniels]

Beautiful question. For our own food sustainability program, the first thing we did was ask our people what they actually consume. We ran a small research effort, questionnaires asking what people consume monthly, and how we could help meet that need. We needed data to bridge the gap between what a community needs and what we supply, because while oil palm is our anchor crop, it isn't the whole of anyone's diet. So the first step is understanding what your community actually needs: are you trying to produce your own food, build wealth through agriculture, or both?

Once you have that, the next steps are land access, capital, and technical know-how. Technical

know-how is the easiest part. You simply connect with local farmers who already have it. And finally, give yourself time. I always recommend a three-to-five-year horizon for agriculture. It's not a short-term venture or a get-rich-quick scheme. It's something you build over time, with grit and resilience. Stay in the game, and it pays off. Thank you.

[Dr Oluwanbepelumi Olanubi]

This has been a genuinely rich and practical conversation. We've learned that producing food within a community isn't just about a few backyard gardens or scattered crops. It's about building an intentional system that actually sustains growth. As we discussed, there's real common ground between developers, architects, and farmers. It's one ecosystem, and it shouldn't be treated in silos or isolation.

Thank you for this rich and enlightening conversation. And to our viewers who took the time to join us today, thank you for spending your time listening to this podcast this week. I encourage you to follow us on LinkedIn and Instagram, subscribe, visit our website, and get better acquainted with what we do. I'm sure you'll take something valuable from it.

That's it for today. We'll see you again next time. Until then, stay informed, ask the right questions, dig deeper into issues, and make the best decisions for yourselves with the right information and perspective. We'll see you again next time. Take care. Bye.

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