

Hollywood actor John Boyega to invest in Nollywood

British-Nigerian actor John Boyega has said that he is in Nigeria to give back and nurture talent that will end up as ambassadors for the country.



Actor, John Boyega.

Speaking exclusively to *ThisDay's* sister broadcast network, Arise News Channel, Boyega said his parents always told him to go back to Nigeria when he is fully established.

While stressing that Nigerian young actors have the energy and work ethic to succeed in the movie industry globally, Boyega who appeared on the morning programme on the TV network, called on the Nigerian government to provide the platform to nurture talents, adding that he was lucky to have grown up in a country where the platform is available.

According to him, "I have been here a good couple of times; I have been coming since 2001. It's the right time, I was raised by my parents and they told me that 'when you are of age and you have established yourself enough to transfer your skills to others, you have to go back home'.

"So, I am just doing what we have been told to do. I am enjoying it, it seems like there are more people with the same mentality."

On what plans he has in the future for the local industry, he said: "This trip was for intel, to be educated about the

infrastructure here, what is in place, what is not in place and what requires to be done, what it takes for a major studio in Hollywood to come down here and collaborate with the best from Nigeria and work on stories that will be filmed here.

"This is a great opportunity because entertainment actually attracts a huge variety of jobs. A big film set needs a lawyer, sewers, and caterers. So this is a structure for the country and something that should be embraced. "Before that, is story and so myself and my producing partner are going up to the Caribbean for isolation to develop, because it can't just be one story that comes, we have to develop as many stories as we can.

"My dream is to star in it alongside a Nollywood actress known or unknown. That will be a fantastic dream."

Boyega, who starred in the blockbuster Star Wars franchises, *The Force Awakens* and *The Last Jedi*, arrived the country last week and announced that he was seeking to make a low budget Nollywood movie that would cost N9 billion.

Speaking on his talent hunt in Nigeria, he said there was the need for more training for young actors, adding that Nigerians has the energy and the work ethic to succeed.

"The fundamental thing that we have been doing is that before we do any project in Nigeria is to see what is on the ground. We should stay away from the mentality that Hollywood can teach you everything.

Storytelling

"There is the energy and the work ethic here that can still be transformed. That is where we can come in and help the process. Actors have to give more, you can't have this lack of rehearsals for project and there is a quick turnaround before we bring out a project. It affects quality, sound and the process of storytelling.

"As you know, for a global movie to have local box office and international box office, you had to have appeal to the world and I think Nigeria is ready for the world, not just for us watching ourselves or having conversations with each other, we must have stories that has a same historical value like a country like China or the United States of America.

"Why shouldn't we go for excellence? I think that with training, especially for the young actors, we can go far. There is a style for film that is not too over the top, there is a style that requires you to do the work internally.

"The camera is so intimate and it represents the audience and sees everything that goes on in your eyes. Sometimes when you are able to convey emotion accurately, the audience sees it.

"That, topped with a fantastic story based at home, shot at home, will be the ultimate dream. Training and shadowing programming for important things like cinematography, for drama, is something that we could also look at," he said.

He noted that for young Nigerians that live here, the country needs to do something for them, there needs to be a structure in place.

"Talent is God given, it grows in you and keeps you up at night, it scares you, it is an ambition. If that is nurtured and watered by the environment, they can be like me.

"My blessing comes from the fact that I have that structure. Why shouldn't we have that? If we do so, we can kill two birds with one stone because these talents will go and be Nigeria's ambassadors and attract people from all over the world to our country and see the beauty of it. Also, entertainment changes the mindset of people about a country," he added.

Speaking on his role in the recently released science fiction film *Pacific Rim Uprising* and why it was such a hit in Nigeria, he said: "I think it is amazing. When I was growing up, when we put on Hollywood films, our parents could not just follow them, they didn't understand the stories.

"I think a lot of that is because they did not have the characters that they could relate to and say, 'this could be my son or daughter.'

"I think me starring in it opened that kind of door and I'm glad. I have always wanted this kind of quality entertainment to be exposed to the masses.

"There is still lots of work to be done, but I am happy to be one of the many artists that are a part of this big jigsaw puzzle."

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