



72^e Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Panorama

NO U-TURN

A FILM BY
IKE NNAEBUE

PRODUCED BY CHRISTILLA HUIILLARD-KANN OKEY OMEIRE DON EDKINS TINY MUNGWE
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER TEBOHO EDKINS EDITING MATTHIEU AUGUSTIN DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JIDE AKINLEMINU
ORIGINAL MUSIC IKWAN ONKHA SOUND EUGENE SAFALI & ALI BAMHAOUED EDITING MANU VIDAL SOUND MIXING LAURE ARTO
COLOR GRADING THIBAUT PETILLON ASSISTANT EDITING MARK GRANDY PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT CORINNE DELPECH INGRID LE GRANGE
ASSISTANT PRODUCERS BERENICE HAHN & CLARISSE BELONDRADE DISTRIBUTION STEPS



Elda Production, Passion8 Communications & STEPS present:

NO U-TURN

Nigeria/ France/ South Africa/Germany, 2022, 94 min.

A film by Ike Nnaebue

A production of
Elda productions (France)

In co-production with
Passion8 Communications (Nigeria)
STEPS (South Africa)



PRESS NOTES

Press materials can be downloaded [here](#)



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FESTIVALS

BERLINALE : February 2022

WORLD PREMIERE
BEST DOCUMENTARY AWARD SPECIAL MENTION

TRUE FALSE : March 2022

NORTH AMERICA PREMIERE

LOGLINE

In a quest to understand how hope transcends fear, multi-award-winning Nollywood director Ike Nnaebue retakes a journey he took 26 years ago, to find out why young people in West Africa are still compelled to travel to Europe by road despite knowing the dangers ahead.

SYNOPSIS

Nollywood filmmaker Ike Nnaebue retraces a journey he made twenty-six years ago, when he left Nigeria as a young man to try and reach Europe by road. Along the way, he meets those who are taking the same trip today to search for a better life and, through conversations with them, tries to understand the aspirations of young people in West Africa.

On his own journey, Ike Nnaebue returned because of the advice a stranger gave him. Why do other young men and women continue? With images of people lured into slavery and bondage along the routes in North Africa all over social media and the internet, most young people are aware of the dangers of traveling undocumented by road. Yet more and more women are joining the ranks of those who risk this journey. Who are the people taking such a dangerous risk and what does this mean for the evolving gender roles in African society?

This journey is a reflection on Ike Nnaebue's own coming-of-age story, a road movie through the landscapes and cultures of West Africa. **No U-Turn** is Nnaebue's first documentary.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When my friends came upon the idea to go to Europe by road, I got on board as I was looking for a plan that could help to improve my economic circumstances. During my journey for No U-Turn twenty-six years later, it is very interesting to note that young people are still going on this journey today for the same reasons. The current rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria is 52.65% leaving young people with the option of getting into internet fraud, crime, political thuggery, religious extremism, and other vices. Given these options, for many young people, the idea to go to Europe is very attractive.

I was born into a polygamous Igbo family and lost my father at an early age. As a result, I took on the responsibility of looking after my family as a young man. At the end of elementary school, I found an apprenticeship with a spare parts dealer and according to our Igbo practice, I would work for him for five years and he would repay me by 'settling' me in a spare parts business of my own. When the time for his end of the deal was nearing, my master conveniently orchestrated a fall out with me, ensuring that he didn't have to settle me. I was a young man, ready to start his life, but now I was stuck without a plan.

Some friends started talking about the possibility of reaching Europe by road. There were stories about young Nigerians who had travelled to a Spanish island town called Las Palmas where there were fruit picking jobs that paid well and allowed them to send home money and cars. I had been saving up some money and scraped together anything else I could to join the boys on this great adventure. So we set off excitedly, talking loud in the buses as we went along.

On the bus between Gao and Bamako in Mali, a man approached us as he had overheard us discussing our plans in our home language Igbo. He warned us that the journey we were embarking on was full of dangers. He started recounting the story of a bus that set off through the desert and Western Sahara. The driver lost his way in the desert and kept driving around in circles until they ran out of fuel. They were stranded, ran out of provisions, and eventually died in the desert. After this revelation, I was certain that I would not be going further on this journey. I decided to turn around and go back home.

On the stop in Bamako, we were debating the next step with my friends when another Igbo-speaking Nigerian overheard us. This time it was a man we dubbed 'Messiah' who told us he worked as a sailor in Austria and was on his way to pick up his wife and kids in the Gambia. He offered to travel with us to the Gambia and help us apply to work on the ships to go to Austria with him. This to us was better than we had imagined, so we decided to go with him. On crossing the border into the Gambia, he offered to keep our cash for us in order to avoid customs tax. We agreed and let him keep it for the first few days after we arrived. Within a week, however, he disappeared with all our money and we were stranded in Banjul. We quickly found a Nigerian community and joined the church where I participated in theatre and film productions. Before long, I found my calling as a filmmaker in the Gambia, first being cast as a lead in a major local production, and eventually

learning to produce and direct. When I returned to Nigeria two years later, I had found my voice and my way in life.

Many who have attempted to travel to Europe by road have not been as lucky as me. More and more reports escalate around the direness of the situation, yet more and more young people are making the crossing. I wanted to know why.

With **No U-Turn**, I took the journey as I was planning on taking years ago. From Lagos (Nigeria) to Tangier (Morocco), via Cotonou (Benin), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), Bamako (Mali) and Casablanca (Morocco), I met all these migrants. But this time, there will be no U-Turn.

I set out to meet West African youth migrating, trying to understand their challenges and hopes as well as the choices they make. Because for most people on these roads, Europe represents a life dream. This is an existential dream. This is not really about Europe, the place. It's about opportunity and a chance to self-actualize, contributing to their society.

What are the stories of these men and women crossing the borders throughout West Africa and how is this trend of more women migrating shaping the societies they come from and the communities they land in? These women travelling through these perilous roads keep hope as their constant companion. That hope is like the moon, sometimes full in its abundance and often waning nothing. For many people the idea of returning unsuccessful is unthinkable. What can we do to ensure that people can dream in their own countries? Why is it unrealistic to dream of a comfortable life in a continent of abundant resources?

Ike Nnaebue, February 2022



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Ike Nnaebue

Born on the 19th day of June 1975 in Ojoto, Anambra State Nigeria, Ike Nnaebue is a highly celebrated Nigerian director, screenwriter and producer. He is the Founder and CEO of Love Portion Creativehubs: building a network of creative hubs across Africa and some select cities around the globe. Ike is fondly regarded as one of the champions of the emerging new African cinema.



Ike's 1st commercial film **False** continues to generate lots of buzz within the film community and among African movie fans. **False**, which Ike wrote and directed, was released in October 2013 and won a Golden Icon Academy Award (GIAMA) that same year out of the 3 nominations which the movie received. **False** went on to receive 12 nominations at Nollywood Movie Awards that same year, making it the highest nominated movie of the year.

His film **Sink or Swim** won Best Narrative Feature at the 2017 Newark International Film Festival and has received several nominations and official selections at notable international film festivals around the globe. Sink or Swim is an epic; thought provoking movie about illegal migration and human trafficking. The film has an inter-continental cast which is drawn from Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Zambia and Cote d'Ivoire.

In 2018, **Loving Daniella**, a film about love and mental illness earned three nominations at the Las Vegas Black Film Festival and claimed the Best Actress trophy. **Loving Daniella** was released in the Caribbean and Nigerian cinemas the same year.

Ike just concluded work on his first documentary **No U-Turn**: a very personal film to him in which he relives his early adulthood experience of trying to travel to Europe by road.

Ike is also the founder of Treasurewells Academy and the Host of Breaking into Nollywood with Ike Nnaebue Workshop which he has successfully hosted in Lagos, New York, Atlanta (twice) And Dallas (twice). Ike is also very passionate about sharing with young African the know-how of Smartphone Filmmaking. He is Creative Director for Passion8 Communications Ltd: a premium media content production company based in Lagos Nigeria.

Filmography Ike Nnaebue:

“False” 2013 / 2014

Fiction, 75min. // Written & Directed by Ike Nnaebue // Produced by Uche Jombo

“A Long Night” 2014

Fiction, 80min. // Written & Directed by Ike Nnaebue // Produced by Uche Jombo

“Alomo” 2014

Television commercial, 1min. // Written & Directed by Ike Nnaebue // Produced by Passion8 Communications Ltd.

“Sink or Swim” 2015.

Fiction, 80min. // Written & Directed by Ike Nnaebue // Produced by Richard Nwaobi

“Wings of My Dreams” 2016.

Fiction, 80min. // Written & Directed by Ike Nnaebue // Produced by Seun Omojola

“The Other Side” 2016.

Fiction, 75min. // Written & Directed by Ike Nnaebue // Produced by Ngozi Ibe

“The Golden Fleece” 2017

Web Series // Written & Directed by Ike Nnaebue // Produced by Oby Uzoukwu

“The Plan” 2017

Fiction, 75min. // Written, Produced & Directed by Ike Nnaebue // Commissioned project for Mnet

“DR Mekam” 2018

Fiction, 80min // Written & Directed by Ike Nnaebue // Produced by Oby Uzoukwu

“Loving Daniella” 2018

Fiction, 80min. // Written & Directed by Ike Nnaebue // Produced by Akin Kolade, Uddy Udoh

“Besieged” 2019

Fiction, 80min // Directed by Ike Nnaebue // Written & Produced by Jane Gam Dede

“No U-turn” 2022

Documentary, 94mins. // Directed and Written by Ike Nnaebue //

Produced by Christilla Huillard-kann, Okechukwu Omeire, Tiny Mungwe, Don Edkins

ABOUT THE PRODUCERS

CHRISTILLA HUILLARD-KANN

Christilla Huillard-Kann is Producer and co-founder of Elda Productions, a production company of documentaries created in 2016 and based in Paris. She produces and coproduces for the French and international market, focusing on social issues, contemporary history, and culture. The company's main partners include CNC Funds, Eurimages, FTV, ARTE, French Regional Funds, World Cinema Fund, Catapult and Procirep. She was formerly Deputy Director of New Medias, in charge of editorial at RADIO FRANCE, the major French Public Radio Station. Prior to this, she was commissioning editor at ARTE FRANCE (documentaries department), Producer and Head of documentary department at Image et Cie (LAGARDERE Group) and journalist/reporter/Editor at France Inter, the major French Public Radio channel. For a short time, she also worked as a demographer at Unesco. She is co-founder of "l'air numérique", an out-of-competition selection of digital works of the European First Film festival "Premiers Plans". She holds a M. Philo in Demographics and Econometrics at SciencesPo and a MSc in Economics at the Institute for the Study of Economic and Social Development (IEDES Paris).

OKEY OMEIRE

Okey Omeire is a prolific audiovisual content developer and content producer with valuable experience in documentary film production, music production, sound engineering, movie score composition and photography in Nigeria. In the last year, he has done pioneering directing and cinematography work in the Nigerian horror film genre. He is presently working as an executive producer on the Generation Africa project for *No U-Turn*. His work with smartphone filmmaking is pioneering and continues to pave the way for its mainstream emergence in Africa as a pop-culture mainstay in cinema, having shot and directed the sixteen-episode series *Don't Call Me Baby*, which was shot entirely on a smartphone. With a repertoire of over two hundred original film scores to his credit, he is leading the charge in the silent evolution of music and sound design in the Nigerian cine-space.

CREDITS

Directed by	Ike Nnaebue
Cinematography	Jide Akinleminu
Editing	Matthieu Augustin
Original Music	Ikwan N. Onwuka aka Ikwan Onkha
Sound Recording	Eugène Safali Ali Bamhaoued
Sound Editing	Manu Vidal
Mixing	Laure Arto
Colorimetry	Thibaut Pétilion
Produced by	Christilla Huillard-Kann (Elda Production, France) Okechukwu Omeire (Passion8 Communications, Nigeria) Don Edkins (STEPS, South Africa) Tiny Mungwe (STEPS, South Africa)
In partnership with	ARTE France
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No U-Turn is part of *Generation Africa*.

ABOUT GENERATION AFRICA

Generation Africa is a collection of 25 short, medium and feature length documentary films from 16 countries in Africa, which aim to shine a light on the future of youth in Africa through the topic of migration. Produced by STEPS in South Africa in collaboration with production companies in each country, this project aims to give voice to African storytellers in an initiative that has built a strong documentary community across Anglophone and Francophone Africa.

For the first time, filmmakers from French and English-speaking countries were able to create collaboration across the continent as well as with the North. The project centred on the professional development of filmmakers participating in the project, with support from African and international experts in story development, dramaturgy and production, as well as post-production.

Generation Africa was conceived from the beginning with a clear idea for reaching audiences, as these films will be distributed in Africa through the STEPS pan-African platform AfriDocs.net, as well as the network of broadcasters in a global broadcasting event led in partnership with Arte (France, ZDF and Strasbourg).

This ground-breaking collection introduces exciting young documentary voices to a world stage in order to shift the narrative on migration.

Films that have been released as part of the Generation Africa programme are Ousmane Samassékou's CPH:DOX winner *The Last Shelter*, *Zinder* by Aïcha Macky (Visions du Réel), *Taamaden* by Seydou Cissé (IDFA), *Fati's Choice* by Fatimah Dadzie (DOK Leipzig) and *Stay Up!* by Aïssata Ouarma (DOK Leipzig / Doc Lisboa).

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