



KING'S COLLEGE **OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION (KCOBA)** *Old School... New Thinking*



PRESS STATEMENT

KING'S COLLEGE: A LEGACY WE MUST MANAGE, RENEW AND GIVE BACK

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A MOMENT FOR HONESTY

There are moments when silence ceases to serve the truth, and we have arrived at one of them. I have watched, with a heavy and genuine concern, as a sincere effort to renew and strengthen our beloved King's College has been drawn into controversy — cast in some quarters as an attempt by the Old Boys to seize what does not belong to us.

Let me speak with the plainness this moment demands: **King's College is not being sold.** There is no sale. There is no transfer of ownership to KCOBA. The College remains, today and always, a public national institution. What is changing is not who owns King's College, but the framework through which it is managed, maintained, financed, modernised and developed.

We are not acquiring King's College. **KING'S COLLEGE IS NOT FOR SALE.** We are returning to serve it — to help manage, support and rebuild the institution that shaped generations of Nigerians. This is a matter of stewardship, of responsibility, of service rendered in gratitude, not a bid for possession.

WHY WE MUST ACT

King's College was founded in 1909, and in the century-and-more since, it has produced Nigerians and Africans who have served their nation and continent with distinction across nearly every field of endeavour. We hold that history close. But love for King's College must also summon the courage to confront what is happening within its walls today.

There are serious and long-standing reports of an admissions culture in which places meant for deserving children can be compromised by money and influence. There are equally troubling concerns that state-based admission quotas have, in some instances, been diverted through improper arrangements to candidates from outside the relevant states. Our discreet investigations and inquiries have established these troubling concerns, which strike at the heart of merit, federal character, inclusiveness and access for the children of modest means — the very children King's College was built to serve. There has been in the past an established admission racketeering where affluent parents have made monetary payments to secure admissions. Some of the current agitations are being sponsored by those who for years have been benefiting from this corrupt admission process. We can confirm that some of the students purportedly admitted to fill the slots reserved for some states of the Federation have been shown to be from other states but gained admission because the racketeers sold those slots. The ill-profits of that



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endeavor led to over-admissions and at a time there were over 3800 students in King's College whose carrying capacity should not be more than 1200 students. This has exerted undue pressure of the facilities and taken its toll on proper monitoring and discipline of the students.

These are not minor administrative irritations. They cut to the soul of what King's College is meant to represent. A national institution must remain a door open to every talented Nigerian child — never a gate that opens only to influence or wealth.

THE ROT WE MUST CONFRONT

The concerns extend well beyond admissions. Kingsmen have witnessed, and repeatedly raised alarm over, deteriorating infrastructure, poor maintenance, and conditions in parts of the College unworthy of the institution we remember and cherish.

Some buildings and facilities have fallen into such disrepair that their very structural integrity raises grave concern for the safety of students, teachers and staff alike. This is unacceptable, and it cannot be allowed to continue.

There have also been instances of students drawn into substance or drug abuse, some resulting in expulsion. Our answer to this must combine firm discipline with compassion — counselling, early intervention, and genuine student welfare.

Perhaps most painfully, Kingsmen have encountered students asking for money on King's College campus, reportedly because they were hungry. Whatever the particulars of any individual case, the mere possibility that a child within King's College may go hungry enough to beg should trouble the conscience of every adult who claims to love this institution.

A rescue mission begins with the courage to name the problem plainly.

THE VICTORIA ISLAND CAMPUS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Our Victoria Island campus is being operated as a commercial car park, which accommodates the cars of a multitude of people who daily visit the visa application centre and other commercial building around the Churchgate Towers rendering the premises prone to infiltration by undesirable elements and exposing the students to grave security risks. These are not mere allegations. This state of affairs is confirmed. The toll for the car parks are collected in cash and there is no transparent accounting for the proceeds. These matters deserve thorough investigation and corrective action. The agitators know that the King's College Old Boys would cut off these sources of irregular and corrupt income and are thus fighting to protect their corrupt and illegitimate means of livelihood. Every attempt to dismantle corrupt structures results in a counterattack by corrupt elements.

The PTA collects PTA levies which run into several hundred million Naira which they utilize for the purpose of procurement and contracts. This has become a huge industry and may account for the vehemence of the opposition of the King's College PTA which circulated messages threatening to shut down King's College and several other Unity Schools across Nigeria. No single stakeholder should simultaneously control the collection of substantial levies and the award of contracts financed by those same funds, absent transparent safeguards. The PTA knows that the KCOBA would not allow any opaque levies and improper contract awards to continue.



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This is not a matter of personalities. It is a matter of governance. Wherever vested interests profit from opacity, weak controls or institutional disorder, the greater interest of King's College must prevail.

THIS DID NOT BEGIN TODAY

KCOBA has not suddenly appeared with the present moment. For many years, the Old Boys have quietly intervened in the welfare and development of King's College — funding scholarships, offering financial assistance, supporting students, contributing to infrastructure and welfare initiatives, mobilising resources in seasons of urgent need, and bringing professional expertise and technology to bear upon the College's challenges.

When King's College faced an outbreak of diphtheria, it was the Old Boys who mobilised support and worked alongside stakeholders to bring the situation under control. The Ministry of Education has, on several occasions, recognised and commended this contribution. The PTA itself has repeatedly appealed to KCOBA for intervention, and we have answered that call each time, unwilling to stand by while our alma mater struggled.

Ours, then, is not a history of sudden ambition for control. It is a history of quiet, consistent service. “Service to the living, Honour to our dead” as contained in our school song.

Let me stress that as Chairman of the BOT of Ansarudeen College I presided over a similar transfer of the management of the Ansarudeen Schools in Lagos State to the Ansarudeen Educational Trust and the success story of that initiative is available for all to see. We must thank and applaud the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria His Excellency Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR who graciously approved this forward looking and development-oriented transfer of the management and operations of King's College Lagos to the King's College Education Trust. Incidentally His Excellency President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR also transferred the operation and management of the mission schools back to the Christian and Islamic missions when he was Governor of Lagos State. We know that the generations coming who would benefit from this transformative action of the President would be eternally grateful to His Excellency the President.

THE DIGITAL KING'S COLLEGE WE HAVE TRIED TO BUILD

KCOBA has also pursued a digitisation initiative, born of the conviction that a modern institution cannot continue to run on systems designed for another era entirely different. We sought to help the College move toward more efficient, connected and digitally enabled ways of working.

Regrettably, these efforts met obstacles and, in important respects, were prevented from full implementation. The lesson is an important one: goodwill and philanthropy alone are not sufficient. Good intentions require an enabling framework of management through which they may be delivered, sustained and scaled.

Those willing to bring technology, expertise and resources to King's College should be empowered to do so — not frustrated by the very governance system meant to protect and enhance the institution.



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MANAGEMENT, NOT OWNERSHIP

The purpose of the proposed management arrangement is simple: to build the capacity to restore, operate, maintain and develop King's College professionally and sustainably.

We are not coming to take King's College. We are coming to help save it.

The Old Boys lay no claim to private ownership of King's College. It is, and shall remain, a national institution, and its public character must be jealously preserved. What we seek is the responsibility to manage and operate it in a manner that restores standards, strengthens systems, protects assets, improves student welfare, supports teachers, and cultivates an environment in which excellence can once again flourish.

This is a not-for-profit mission. Its purpose is not to extract gain from King's College, but to ensure that every resource serves education and the children who pass through its gates — not personal enrichment.

A RESCUE MISSION

We choose the word *rescue* deliberately, for there is too much at stake to treat the present challenge as routine administration.

Rescue means safe buildings, clean classrooms and hostels, functioning laboratories and libraries, reliable digital systems, high academic standards, disciplined administration, genuine student welfare, and world-class sporting facilities.

It means restoring King's College to a place where a brilliant child of a modest Nigerian family may aspire to gain admission through a process that is fair and transparent — a place where poverty is never a barrier to excellence.

OUR CHILDREN MUST COME FIRST

Our children deserve modern laboratories, world-class libraries, decent hostels, access to technology, STEM and robotics education, scholarships, well-supported teachers, and safe learning environments. They deserve, too, world-class sporting facilities — for sport builds discipline, teamwork, resilience, leadership, wellbeing and character in equal measure.

Our students must never become pawns in adult disagreements. Where concerns are genuine, let them be raised openly, honestly and within the bounds of the law. Let the adults argue their case with vigour, if they must — but let the children learn undisturbed.

Unauthorised or false communications that sow confusion about school resumption, or disrupt the rhythm of learning, serve no student's interest. Whatever our disagreements as adults, the classroom must remain sacred and protected ground. A lot of the agitators against this laudable initiative have not taken time to understand plan and the concept. We have engaged with some of the parent representatives and teachers and assured them that we would prioritize teachers' welfare committing to pay much more than is being currently paid. We have embarked on a N100,000,000,000 Endowment fund raise exercise so that scholarships would be provided for indigent students and we have committed to ensure that the current spend of parents on the King's College Students enrolled in the school would not be increased.



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TEACHERS ARE PART OF THE SOLUTION

Our teachers are nation-builders, and their welfare, professional development and dignity must remain central to any programme of renewal. Teachers and non-academic staff must be treated as partners in the rescue and transformation of King's College — never as casualties of institutional disagreement.

A MANAGEMENT MODEL MUST EARN TRUST

We do not ask to be trusted simply because we are Old Boys. Trust must be earned, deliberately and continuously. We commit to transparency in procurement, accountability for every naira entrusted to the institution, openness to scrutiny, and a willingness to publish our progress for all to see.

The questions before us are simple, and we welcome them: What will we build? What will we repair? What will we digitise? How will we protect admissions? How will we improve student welfare? How will we support teachers? How will we develop sport? How will every resource be accounted for?

By these standards — and no others — should KCOBA be judged.

WE OWE KING'S COLLEGE

I am an old man now, and when I look back, I do not remember King's College merely as buildings and grounds. I remember boys, teachers, discipline, friendships, dreams — the institution that helped shape the course of my life. Every Kingsman carries within him some piece of King's College, carried quietly, for a lifetime.

We owe King's College a debt, and we intend to repay it — through service, through sacrifice, through professional management and faithful stewardship. Not through ownership. Not through profit.

THE WORK AHEAD

The work before us is considerable: buildings to make safe and to renovate, laboratories to equip, hostels to modernise, technology and digital systems to deploy, admissions to protect, student welfare to strengthen, teachers to develop, scholarships to expand, sporting facilities to transform, and standards of discipline and accountability to restore.

Every hour spent on needless confrontation is an hour stolen from this work. Let us move, together, from suspicion to fact, from rhetoric to result, and from confrontation to constructive engagement.

Permit me to remind Nigerians that King's College is much more than a unity school. It is Nigeria's premier and pre-eminent college which has produced old boys who have been of tremendous to the country including

The First Chief Medical Adviser- Dr Manuwa

First Indigenous Chief Justice of Nigeria Sir Adetokunbo Ademola

Dr Akanu Ibiam



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First Nigerian Chief Judge of the Western Region Justice Morgan

First Chief Judge of the Mid-Western Region Justice Begho

First Barrister at law of Eastern Nigeria Sir Louis Mbanefo

First Medical Director of Northern Nigeria Dr. R.B. Dikko

There were four King's College Old Boys in the Cabinet of General Yakubu Gowon viz:

- Anthony Enahoro - Minister of Labour
- Alhaji Femi Okunnu SAN - Minister of Works and Housing
- Wenike Briggs - Minister of Trade and Industry
- Dr R.B. Dikko - Minister of Mines and Power

Two Kingsmen Allison Ayida and Philip C. Asiodu also served as Permanent Secretaries in that administration.

It is to preserve this rich legacy of King's College as a fertile breeding ground for leaders and men of excellence in various endeavors of life that we have committed ourselves. We urge all stakeholders to support this objective to enhance and restore the glory of Kings College Lagos. We are open to engage with all stakeholders of the King's College Community including parents, teachers, unions and other relevant stakeholders.

Please trust the process knowing that at my age I would not commit to anything that would compromise the growth and wellbeing of a college I have benefited from immensely and have grown to love and cherish.

A FINAL WORD

King's College does not belong to any single generation of Kingsmen. It belongs to those who came before us, to the boys who fill its classrooms today, and to the Nigerian children yet unborn who will one day wear its colours with pride. Our duty is simply this: to hand it forward stronger, safer, fairer, cleaner, better managed, and more excellent than we found it.

We are not here to take. We are here to give back.

This is our alma mater. This is our debt. This is our moment to serve.

May the glory of King's College be restored and enhanced so that it may continually flourish.

FLOREAT COLLEGIUM.