

# LEADERS

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## Empowering Nigeria's Future

An Interview with Oyindamola Lami Adeyemi, Executive Chairperson, Still Earth Holdings

**EDITORS' NOTE** Oyindamola Lami Adeyemi is a Nigerian entrepreneur with a wealth of experience spanning the construction and engineering, energy, and finance sectors. As the Executive Chairperson of Still Earth Holdings, she is committed to creating value towards Africa's development through the group's subsidiaries. Under her leadership, Still Earth Construction has grown to become a leading construction and engineering company executing landmark developmental and infrastructure projects across Nigeria with the highest quality of service. It boasts a diverse portfolio which spans over 10 years in commercial and industrial buildings, civil works, engineering, and infrastructure such as roads, drainage systems, and bridges across the country. Adeyemi is a graduate of the Harvard Business School Owner/President Management Program and holds a BSc in political science, and an MSc in political economy and governance. She is a member of the Institute of Directors, the Young Presidents Organization, Women in Business, among other organizations.



Oyindamola Lami Adeyemi

**COMPANY BRIEF** Still Earth Holdings ([stillearthconstruction.com](http://stillearthconstruction.com)) manages an extensive portfolio of companies focused on major infrastructure development projects, oil and gas, and finance. Its companies; Still Earth Construction & Realty, Still Earth Capital & Finance, and Tirex Petroleum & Energy, collectively represent its involvement across key sectors supporting the Nigerian government's drive to address the infrastructure deficit across the Nation. From addressing power needs, to bridging the gaps in basic infrastructure, to providing resources that promote financial inclusivity, Still Earth Holdings has been instrumental in contributing to Nigeria's economy.

### Will you discuss your career journey?

I would say my career journey has been steady and progressive. I began my career in the banking sector in November 2005. While working in that sector, I nursed the dream of starting a business of my own, but the challenge then was raising the capital to proceed with it. Slowly but steadily, I was able to raise some funds to begin with. In 2011, I founded Still Earth Construction Limited which has

diverse portfolios in commercial and industrial buildings, civil works, engineering, and infrastructure. This was followed by Still Earth Capital Finance, Tirex Petroleum & Energy, and Amber Properties in that order. Following the expansion of the business, there was need to have all subsidiaries under a holding company – Still Earth Holdings. The holding company became the parent company housing other subsidiaries. Although we are still evolving and expanding on all frontiers, we are focused on becoming industry leaders in Nigeria.

### How do you define Still Earth Holdings' mission and purpose?

At Still Earth Holdings, we have a mission to deliver exceptional value across the sectors we operate in. We create impactful solutions that drive national development and economic empowerment. Our focus is to empower Nigeria's future through strategic innovation, infrastructure development, supporting production increment initiatives, operational excellence, and sustainable growth. We invest in initiatives that uplift communities and better the lives of the people. Our business units are well positioned to meet the growing demands of the industries they serve.

### Will you provide an overview of Still Earth Holdings' portfolio of companies?

Still Earth Holdings is a group of companies founded in 2011, with three subsidiaries operating in various sectors of the Nigerian economy. The subsidiaries are Tirex Petroleum & Energy, an indigenous Nigerian drilling company which operates in the upstream sector of the oil and gas industry and has its corporate office in Lagos, Nigeria; Still Earth Construction, an infrastructure development company with multiple projects in road sand building construction also headquartered in Lagos, Nigeria; and Still Earth Capital Finance, which provides capital and financial solutions for individuals and businesses in Nigeria. The fourth subsidiary is Amber Properties which operates in the real estate sector with an interest in the hospitality business.

These four subsidiaries have their uniqueness and contribute to the development of Nigeria. Over the last 21 months, Tirex Petroleum & Energy has drilled about 16 wells and spearheaded major projects for various clients, marking a substantial contribution to the nation's oil production. Still Earth Capital Finance is at the forefront of promoting sustainable growth for small- and medium- scale businesses and driving economic empowerment for individuals in the skilled, semi-skilled, and



Aerial view of the ongoing 20 unit detached duplex project at the PMB Housing Estate, Abeokuta Ogun State, Nigeria by Still Earth Construction



Oyindamola Lami Adeyemi

unskilled sector. Still Earth Construction deploys top-notch construction methods in completing complex projects while delivering world-class infrastructure projects.

**How is Still Earth Construction supporting the Nigerian government's efforts to address the infrastructure deficit across the nation?**

Still Earth Construction adheres to compliance regulations when it comes to government standards. We prioritize accelerating infrastructure delivery, focusing on road and affordable housing projects that benefit underserved communities. We have executed road and school projects in urban and rural communities in partnership with some state governments, addressing urbanization challenges. This ultimately improves the living standard of the people. We have strategically aligned our operations with the development priorities of some state governments, thereby reducing infrastructure deficits, fostering economic growth, and improving the quality of life for citizens.

**Will you discuss Still Earth Capital Finance's focus on providing resources that promote financial inclusivity?**

We provide easily accessible financial products and offer low-cost, flexible savings accounts, microloans, and tailored investment opportunities that cater to underserved populations, including low-income individuals and small-scale businesses. Our focus is on providing personalized financial solutions that are tailored to the specific needs of the people, from high-net-worth individuals to peasant traders and even to underserved individuals, driving sustainable growth. We also provide technology-driven solutions that simplify financial processes, ensuring individuals in remote or underserved regions can access our services. Our fair lending practices prioritize transparent policies that consider diverse income sources, ensuring equitable access to credit. At Still Earth Capital, we demonstrate a commitment to reducing economic disparities and fostering



Aerial view of the ongoing detached duplex project at the Ibara Housing Estate, Abeokuta Ogun State, Nigeria by Still Earth Construction

long-term financial well-being for individuals and communities.

**What do you feel are the challenges operating in three male dominated sectors in Nigeria – oil and gas, construction, and finance?**

This is an interesting question. I would say balancing strategic oversights across multiple companies. It's really a daunting challenge managing a portfolio of companies with varying industries, markets, and operational structures. It requires in-depth knowledge of each industry and the ability to prioritize effectively. The oil and gas and construction sectors in Nigeria are truly male dominated and navigating gender bias is a huge challenge. Facing stereotypes about women's leadership capabilities, especially in Nigeria where the culture is male dominated, requires determination and resilience to succeed as a woman. In the Nigerian oil and gas sector, frequent policy shifts and regulatory changes can create an unpredictable business environment. Infrastructure deficits such as limited refining capacity and poor logistics infrastructure could slow down operations. Competing against international oil companies is another huge challenge for the local players.

**Did you always know that you had an entrepreneurial spirit and desire to build your own company?**

I had always wanted to run my own business, although I had to begin my career as a banking executive. I have a personal ambition, passion, and a desire to make a meaningful impact on the lives of people – the ambition to lead and inspire others, serving as a role model for women and younger generations.

My vision is of building something enduring, creating a legacy that reflects my values and aspirations. This personal ambition turned my passions into a thriving business called Still Earth Holdings. It's a commitment to solving problems, fulfilling unmet needs, and making a difference in my community and

country. It's a desire to challenge stereotypes, break gender biases, and prove that women can excel in leadership and entrepreneurship. It's a desire to give back, create jobs, and positively influence society. I am motivated by the chance to pave the way for others, fostering inclusivity and diversity in business. My desire to build my own company is a mix of my personal ambition and the will to create something meaningful that reflects my identity, values, and dreams.

**What do you see as the keys to effective leadership and how do you approach your management style?**

I strongly believe the keys to effective leadership are having a strong vision and strategic thinking, a compelling vision that aligns with long-term goals. Confidence and self-belief are also key factors. When you believe in your capabilities and lead with conviction, you overcome self-doubt. And of course, integrity – leadership comes with having integrity and high moral standards. At Still Earth Holdings, our management policies are well defined. We take inclusivity of our staff in our decisions very seriously. We have a robust corporate governance system that ensures all cadres are well represented in management decisions. Our management system is goal oriented, and we place high standards on achieving results. Our core values are well defined such that it fosters a positive work environment.

**What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers?**

Nothing comes easily or by chance. Robert Collier once said, "Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out." Achieving great success in your career requires being smart and working hard. Resilience, consistency, doggedness, and discipline are all factors that propel success. It is important to have a clear vision and set achievable short- and long-term goals and align with them. It is also important to build a strong work ethic. This will guide you, keep you focused, and set you in the right direction. ●