

University of Nottingham graduate, Tosin Akinsete, is a passionate entrepreneur with ambitions as bold and beautiful as the fabrics she uses in her contemporary designs. Boosting sales and improving online presence are just two ways that support from The Big House has helped take TDARE Fashion to the next level.



Tosin Akinsete, Founder of TDARE Fashion

"Working with The Big House has provided the leap I needed as an emerging entrepreneur."

Tosin Akinsete started her journey in the clothing business as an apprentice during holidays whilst in secondary school. This interest in fashion persisted throughout her undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

With a background that had a creative and vibrant fashion culture, it was a tour of a UK clothing warehouse that realised her passion for clothing and aspiration for a business that was dedicated to the mass production of African print fabric.

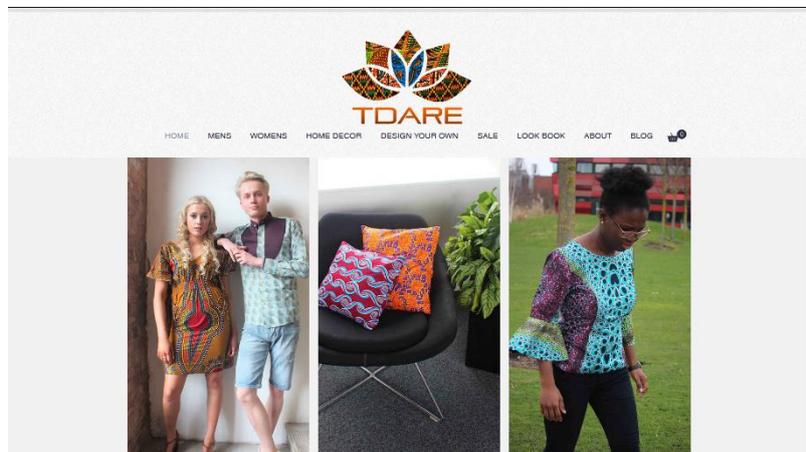
On completion of a postgraduate degree from the University of Nottingham, Tosin enrolled as a Graduate Entrepreneur with the Ingenuity Lab and TDARE Fashion was born.

**TDARE Fashion** is an online clothing store that aspires to be a contender in the UK fashion space and establish African print as a mainstream fashion item. Its motivation lies in promoting African print designs in the UK to a mass market. Bridging the gap between currently available fashion and African clothing, TDARE Fashion transforms beautiful African fabric into the latest fashion styles. The business involves making contemporary clothing styles - casual and formal - with traditional African print fabrics in exotic colours and beautiful patterns, sourced from Nigeria.

Tosin took time out from fashion to talk about the support she has received to give her business a boost.

### **What kind of support have you received from The Big House?**

As an experienced organisation in the creative and digital business sector, The Big House, through key workshops, has provided a platform for understanding the vital factors that contribute to successful entrepreneurship. In particular, the free session on Website Optimization gave me a better understanding of search engine optimisation (SEO) and some tips for website upgrades which I've used to improve my SEO ranking on a Google® search for African print fashion in the UK.



### **How has the free business support helped your business?**

Having improved the SEO for TDARE Fashion through the support of The Big House, the business has become more visible online and has generated more sales.

Attending the extensive *Prepare for Pop-Up* series of workshops provided an unbiased approach to managing the logistics of taking part in a physical market place. In addition, I benefited hugely from the workshop series which covered how to prepare for a Pop-Up in budgeting, pricing of products, and getting ideas for how to display merchandise. My active participation in a Pop-Up market at ThinkinNG at the end of the course helped me implement what I had been learning and improved my confidence in business management.

I also gained vital experience in public relations (PR) and content marketing through my participation at the workshop on creating PR content, which I can use to promote my business even further.

### **How has the free business support helped you as an individual?**

One of the most exciting aspects of the business support platform is the networking opportunity. It was pleasing to meet fellow entrepreneurs and professionals, learn from experience and be able to contact them when beyond the walls of the event hall.



The interactiveness of the workshops gave me the opportunity to get the opinion of other participants on my work. Interestingly, I found the contributions innovative and encouraging.

**Would you recommend The Big House to others looking to start or grow a creative or digital business?**

Yes! The support The Big House offered is very applicable to business and is free. This includes free workshops, business support, networking and much more. Working with the Ingenuity Lab and The Big House has provided the leap I needed as an emerging entrepreneur.

**What advice would you give to people thinking of starting a business?**

Firstly, understand your business sector. Invest time in research and feasibility studies and the legal responsibilities of running your own business. Utilise business support networks to expand your markets. Business support helps you to develop the right business management skills, including financial management, to ensure business growth and profitability.

**What are the future aspirations for your business?**

With the support received from The Big house partners, TDARE Fashion hopes to increase its reach to more parts of the UK and start supplying to retailers.

**Support Outcomes**

- Better online presence and increased sales thanks to newly acquired SEO knowledge
- Improved website design, based on feedback received at digital workshops
- Understanding and confidence gained in preparing for Pop-Up series
- Gained business advice on appropriate pricing
- Developed a supportive network of fellow entrepreneurs who remain in

The Big House provides business support, events, grants and professional advice for creative and digital businesses in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

For more information about The Big House: <https://bighouse.org.uk/>

TDARE was supported by:

The Creative Quarter: <https://bighouse.org.uk/partners/the-creative-quarter>

Nottingham Trent University: <https://bighouse.org.uk/partners/nottingham-trent-university>

This project is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020 in England.