

NIGERIA

HomeNews

ITION, SEPTEMBER 1989

HOME NEWS, PILOT ISSUE, SEPTEMBER 1989

NIGERIAN WINS TOP PRIZE

A Nigerian, Miss Adeola Solanke has been voted London's top young business person in this year's Livewire competition. The London area competition run by the London Enterprise agency for Livewire was to find the best young business brains in London.

Adeola's Tama Communications emerged the overall winner of the contest because it proved to be the best organised and viable. It is a worthy product of Adeola's association with the Livewire scheme, a scheme that provides young people

(16-25 years old) with business advice.

As a client of Livewire, she was linked with an advisor who after careful assessment and evaluation of each client's business ideas, assists in the production of a business plan. According

to Adeola, "We were asked to write a business plan after registering to join the scheme."

An alumnus of Sheffield University where she read English, Adeola who grew up in London, started her business in response to a message — BE YOUR OWN BOSS — displayed at a job centre. She had gone to the job centre in search of a job that would make a full use of

her talents. It was out of a high sense of responsibility, that she had gone to the job centre to look for a professionally rewarding job, but as fate would have it, she ended up an employer.

But why Tama Communications, an outfit that renders writing, research and publicity services? She said, "I started Tama Communications because I saw a need for a professional media service sympathetic to the needs of the voluntary sector and black organisations, and able to communicate their interests either locally or nationally."

Recalling her experience, "I have worked with many such groups as an employee," she continued, "many need to improve their

image so that the valuable work they do gets proper recognition and investment. Now (that) I am self employed I can help them do that."

Tama Communications seems destined to succeed as it has, within a short period of existence, got a long list of clients. They include, The Arts Council, The Health and Education Authority, Greater London Arts, The University of London and the BBC. A reputable journalist, Adeola has worked with various papers and magazines, radio and television. She has written for the Caribbean Times, The Guardian, The Times Newspaper and of course, African Concord, where she started her career in journalism.



(Right) ADEOLA SOLANKE: A bundle of talent.

Guardian

Wednesday September 20 1989

How to succeed in business

Adeole Solanke on the exhilaration of starting your own outfit

IT WAS a prize-giving ceremony and Richard Branson unpredictably said, "Half of you will fail." He was talking earlier this summer to the 20 finalists in the national Livewire competition for young people in business. I was one of the lucky ones, the winner in the London finals. I won £2,000 and perhaps more importantly, a vote of confidence from sponsors the National Westminster Bank, Lenta, the London Enterprise Agency and Livewire regional co-ordinators.

Livewire is an annual national competition for people aged 16-25. Nationally its main sponsor is Shell UK: 4,800 people entered the competition for 1989 but only 30 per cent of these submitted an eight-page business plan and only 400 of us received cash or other kinds of assistance to help us develop our businesses.

The 20 regional winners rubbed shoulders at the finals where the overall winner, Colin Rafferty, a 22 year old furniture manufacturer from Hartlepool, won £3,000.

I started my own business, Tama Communications, a year ago this month. I had worked on magazines for four years and wanted to go freelance. I had also tried for work in TV but couldn't get what I was looking for.

Most young people who start their own businesses do so because, like me, they want to take control of their lives. Livewire produced a survey, The Young Entrepreneurs Report, based on 1,000 young people, most over 21. They found that it wasn't a lack of jobs that prompts young people to seek self-employment. Most want to stay in business and have a 10 year plan.

In my experience there is a lot more to be said about self-employment than beating the unemployment blues. It's exhilarating to reinvent yourself



Livewire London winner Ade Solanke

PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN SMITH

in the form of your own business idea and to see it taking shape, starting with the letter-headed paper. The acknowledgement of a job well done from your first customers and the calls from strangers on the recommendation of past clients are really encouraging.

Being self-employed is being your own worst exploiter. You work harder for yourself than for anyone else but being your own boss has its advantages. You get more out of yourself. I balked at anything to do with maths at school but I can now do cash flows and financial projections with confidence, and some days with aplomb.

Most of the people in the survey rated themselves as highly energetic, determined and hard working. It all helps. In my case the problem is knowing when to switch off. That's especially difficult if you work from home, as a third of those surveyed did. Livewire helps to put young hopefuls in touch with advisers, and points them in the direction of the Prince's Youth Business Trust, which can provide grants and soft loans.

Financial support, the chief bug-bear for any business, is available from various sources. Special loan funds, like the Business in Community Scheme, have been set up and

offer cheaper loans than banks. But am I part of some right-wing plot to spawn a nation of new mini-capitalists? Or am I the thin edge of a huge wedge to inculcate profit values into rebellious youth? Or am I the victim of some dastardly plot to divert disgruntled youth from revolution?

Some people now regard me with suspicion because they feel in some way I've "crossed the line." I feel I've done what many people, especially young people, women and black people, should perhaps do — operate as independently and professionally as possible.

I sometimes think of a brief conversation I had at the Livewire finals. At one of the well-stocked tables bearing refreshments for the guests, a waiter's gaze caught my attention. "I used to run my own printing company," he said wistfully, "but it went bust."

I replied that it was never too late. "Wait until you get to my age," he said, a sobering comment which I hope I'll always recall with sympathy rather than empathy.

● The 1990 Livewire competition will be launched on October 16, and the deadline for business plans is February 28, 1990. Details — Livewire UK, Project North East, 60 Grainger Street, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 5JG.

YOUNG GUARDIAN



THE TOPS: Hazel Faithfull, Ade Solanke, Bevali Read, Annabel Bottomley, Kate Easton.

PICTURE: Ken Towner

Meet the Livewire birds

WOMEN have won the first five places in the competition to find the best young business brains in London, run by the London Enterprise Agency.

Men took only three of the top 10 positions in the search for the new generation of entrepreneurs—organised as part of the 1989 Livewire contest.

And five women—all aged 24 or 25—took the top places and the fastest cheques at the awards ceremony in the City. They were selected be-

cause of the potential in their business plans, which they have already turned into profitable small businesses.

Top prize, and a £2000 cheque, went to 25-year-old Ade Solanke, who launched a writing, research and publicity service just nine months ago. It is already proving a big success.

The business launched by runner-up Bevali Read, also literally started in a skip. She retrieved three discarded hat blocks from a rubbish container and invested £30 in establishing a hat design business based in Hackney just 18 months ago.

Third place went to 24-year-old Annabel Bottomley who has set up a business producing Filofax inserts—the first covers Fulham and she has plans for similar inserts for Battersea and Clapham.

Hazel Faithfull and Kate Easton, who took fourth and fifth places and

Handing over £12,000 to the 10 winners, he said they had all displayed the determination, self motivation and resilience needed to transform good ideas into thriving businesses.

Hazel manufactures a range of high-quality ceramics and Kate makes hand-tufted rugs and silk wall hangings. Both have ambitious plans to expand.

The winners were praised by Derek Wanless of the competition's sponsor NatWest Bank.

Handing over £12,000 to the 10 winners, he said they had all displayed the determination, self motivation and resilience needed to transform good ideas into thriving businesses.

THE VOICE

Britain's Best Black Newspaper!

ADE'S A REAL LIVEWIRE

A freelance journalist who formed her own information and public relations service has won £2,000 in a competition to find the best business brains of the future.

Ade Solanke, 25, was last week named London's most promising entrepreneur as part of the 1989 Livewire Scheme which provides young people aged 16-25 with business advice.

Each Livewire client is linked with an adviser who helps to assess and evaluate ideas for self employment and also helps to produce a business plan.

London Livewire is sponsored by National Westminster Bank and co-ordinated by the London Enterprise Agency

(Lenta), together with a network of voluntary advisers, business counsellors and training organisations.

Graduate

A graduate of English Literature from Sheffield University, Ade had a varied career in journalism before setting up a Writing, Research and Publicity Service last year.

"In 1987 I was working as commercial press editor and was made redundant", she explained. "At the job centre I



THE WINNER: Ade Solanke receiving her cheque from Liz Phillip of Lenta.

saw one of those posters which said 'Be your own boss' and this idea took root."

After securing a loan to buy a fax machine and word processor, and helped by her many contacts in the media, she started trading from home. Her clients include Bloomsbury Health Authority, Alcohol Concern, Goldsmith College

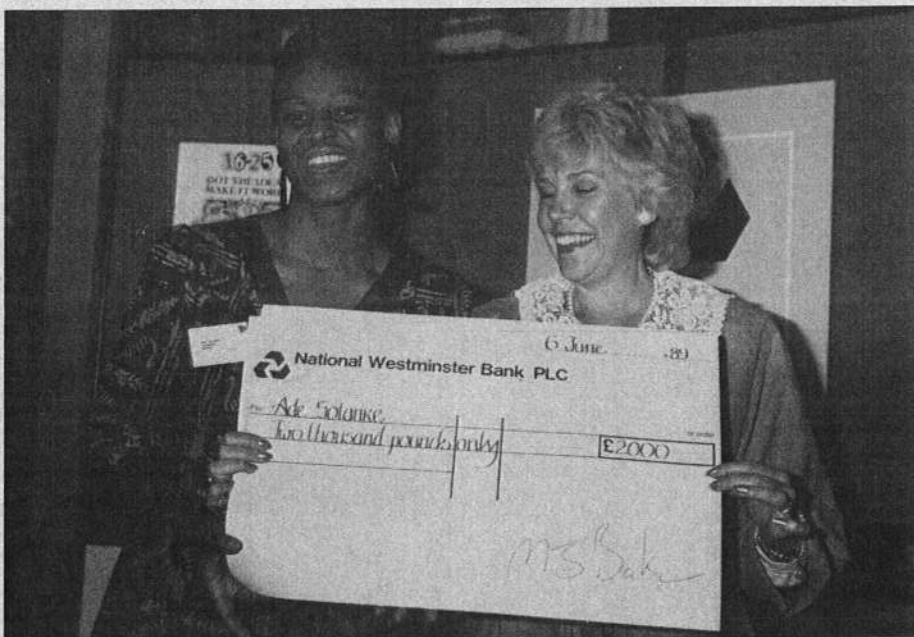
and The Arts Council.

"I was absolutely thrilled to bits to win the award," said Ade, who now goes through to the national finals on June 27 when a top prize of £3,000 is at stake.

"The money has enabled me to pay off the loan and concentrate on future plans to expand the business."

FREELANCE

NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS ■ LONDON FREELANCE BRANCH BULLETIN ■ SEPT 1989



'Thrilled' Ade being presented with her cheque after winning the London Livewire competition

Freelance scoops 1st prize

NUJ FREELANCE member Ade Solanke has won first prize of £2000 and title 'top youth business in London' in a London-wide competition.

Her year old writing, research and publicity service, Tama Communications, was judged "an outstanding enterprise" in the 1989 London Livewire competition, an annual scheme to find the best young business brains in London.

"I'm thrilled by the award," says 25 year old Ade. "It has given me heaps more confidence to pursue my ideas and prove that I can make a success of going it alone."

Livewire is a national competition, sponsored by in London by Nat West and run by the London Enterprise Agency (LEnta). It is open to young people between the ages of 16 and 25 who wish to become self-employed.

They are teamed up with advisors who help to produce a business plan on which their ideas for self-employment are judged.

Ade studied English at Sheffield University and has worked in print journalism since graduating in 1984.

Her clients so far have included the BBC, the Arts Council, the Health Education Authority, Alcohol Concern (she helped publicise their National Drinkwise day) and the University of London where she teaches a media skills course.

Freelance journalism has included work for the Guardian, the Times Literary Supplement, plus specialist black publications.

Ade is currently researching her first publication, a book on black women visual artists to be published by the Women's Press.

concord



PEOPLE



Adeola Solanke

A Lady Titan Abudding

IF the contest had been held on the basis of beauty, she would have won a double prize. For sharp eyes, thin lips, pointed nose, oblong but roundish face, sizeable ears usually adorned with large fitting rings, a mesmerising face with effectively arresting gaze all hanging on a tall slim frame. These are the main features of **Adeola Solanke**, the Nigerian girl who recently won the top prize in a competition for the Best Young Business Brains in London.

Adeola's outfit, Tama Communications, a nine-month old enterprise that renders writing, research and publicity services, was voted "one of the most promising enterprises in the UK" out of almost 100 applications. To the bargain, she collected the 2000 pounds prize money, a specially minted medal from the royal mint and also the mantle of the reigning London Livewire champion. She won the prize because her business proved the most well-put-together and viable in 1989. The competition was organised by London Enterprise Agency (LENTA), the coor-

dinator of London Livewire and sponsored by the National Westminster Bank.

Former **African Concord** staff in London, Adeola explained that her start-up experience was really exciting. "We were asked to write a business plan after registering to join the scheme. I suppose as a writer, I had a headstart there. I have years of journalistic experience and I've worked in radio and TV. The written word can really move mountains."

She started Tama Communications, she said because she saw the need for a professional media service (that would be) sympathetic to the needs of the voluntary sector and black organisations; an outfit that would be able to communicate their interests either locally or nationally.

Currently, Adeola, a graduate of English from Sheffield University is writing a book on black women visual artists in London. At 25, age is really on her side, and with the amount of energy, dedication and professionalism she puts in her business, the sky seems the limit for her.

Doyin Iyiola in London

YOUR PULL-OUT-AND-KEEP GUIDE TO SMALL BUSINESSES

SUNDAY SPECIAL

Baby stops writer drumming up work

ONE of the key people in two-year-old Tama Communications is Akimola Solanke. But he was born only on New Year's Day this year.

"I'm looking for a nanny right now," said his mother, Adeola, Zi, a freelance journalist who went solo in September, 1988. "Until I find satisfactory childcare, my capacity to generate work is restricted."

The name of her company, Tama, is a West African word meaning "talking drum". And that is how Solanke sees her role.

Experience

"I've always wanted to write, even before I went to read English at Sheffield University," she explained. "The ultimate would be to write fiction, but I'd always like to write some journalism."

So when she came back to London, where she was born, Solanke just started writing, for friends and people who wanted odd pieces done.

Then she became picture editor at Concord Weekly and went on to be editor of Black



On the write lines - Adeola Solanke

PAGE A8

SUNDAY MIRROR, October 7, 1990

GOING SOLO

sponsored by the National Westminster Bank.

The competition was to write a business plan, which was a valuable exercise in itself. But winning earned Solanke a cheque for £1,000, presented by Virgin Group tycoon Richard Branson.

Channel

"He offered me a job after that," she said. "But it would have meant relocating to Gairwick, and I didn't want to do that."

"I see myself as a channel between the media and the black community, and I think there is going to be a lot of work in that area."

Arts in London. "I had about five years' experience with different papers, writing about arts and black issues," Solanke said.

"Then I was made redundant and I thought, 'this could be a blessing in disguise'. And it just took off."

Getting started required £575 for an Amstrad personal computer and £175 for a telephone answering machine.

"I didn't know what to expect, but the work was just there. I targeted voluntary organisations and got in touch with newspapers."

She took out a bank personal loan, then last year won the London LiveWire Youth Business Competition,

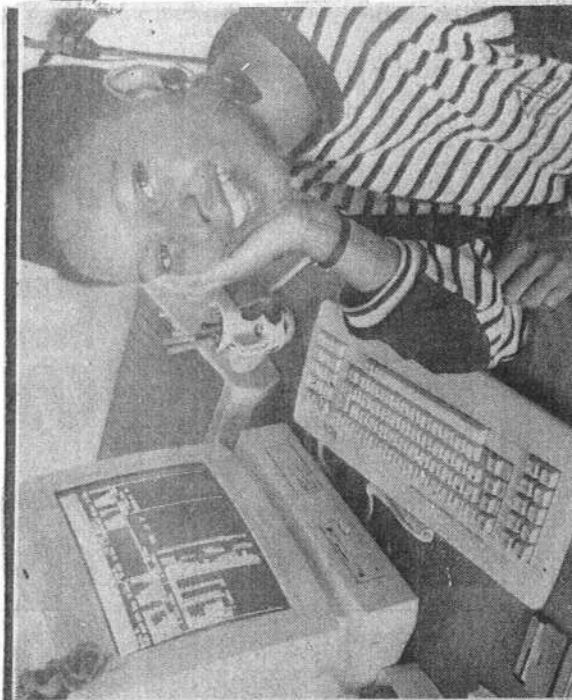
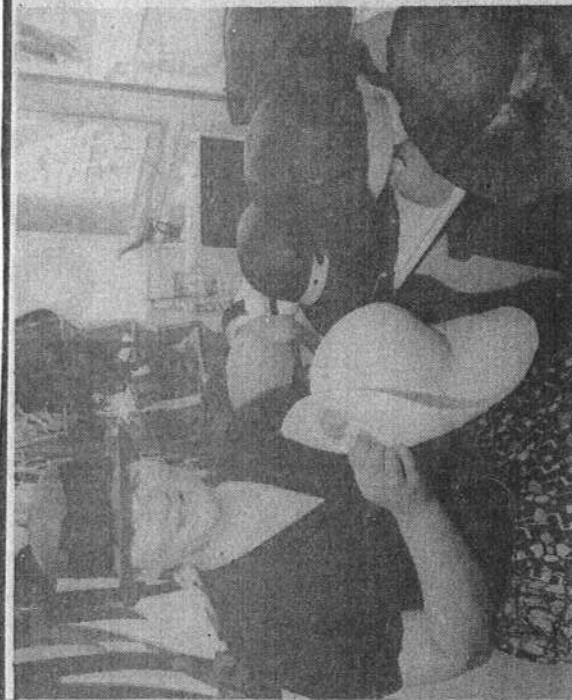
Hackney Gazette

25p

No. 16,460 FRIDAY, JUNE 16 1989

AND NORTH LONDON ADVERTISER

Established 1864



Hats off to business ideas contest winners

LOCAL brains must be brimming with sound business ideas because four people from Hackney and Tower Hamlets have won top prizes in a London wide competition.

Livewire is a scheme to encourage under 26-year-olds to work for themselves either in business, co-operative or community projects.

The London Regional prize winner is 25-year-old Ade Solanke, pictured right, from Colvestone Crescent, Dalston. She left Sheffield University with a degree in English and the idea that she wanted to write. She now numbers the Bloomsbury Health Authority, Alcohol Concern, Goldsmith's College and

the Arts Council among her clients.

Livewire's £1,750 runner-up, Bevali Read, 25, above left, works just a straw boater's throw from the Gazette offices in Kingsland Road. Bevali has been trading for 18 months after beginning a hat-making business with just £30 and three hat blocks retrieved from a skip.

Other winners included Kate Easton who designs and makes tufted rugs and wallhangings in the crypt of St John's Church, Cambridge Heath Road. Her work earned her a £1,500 prize. Designing and building a unique folding table has won Duncan Jackson, 25, from Myrtle Street, Bethnal Green, a £500 prize.

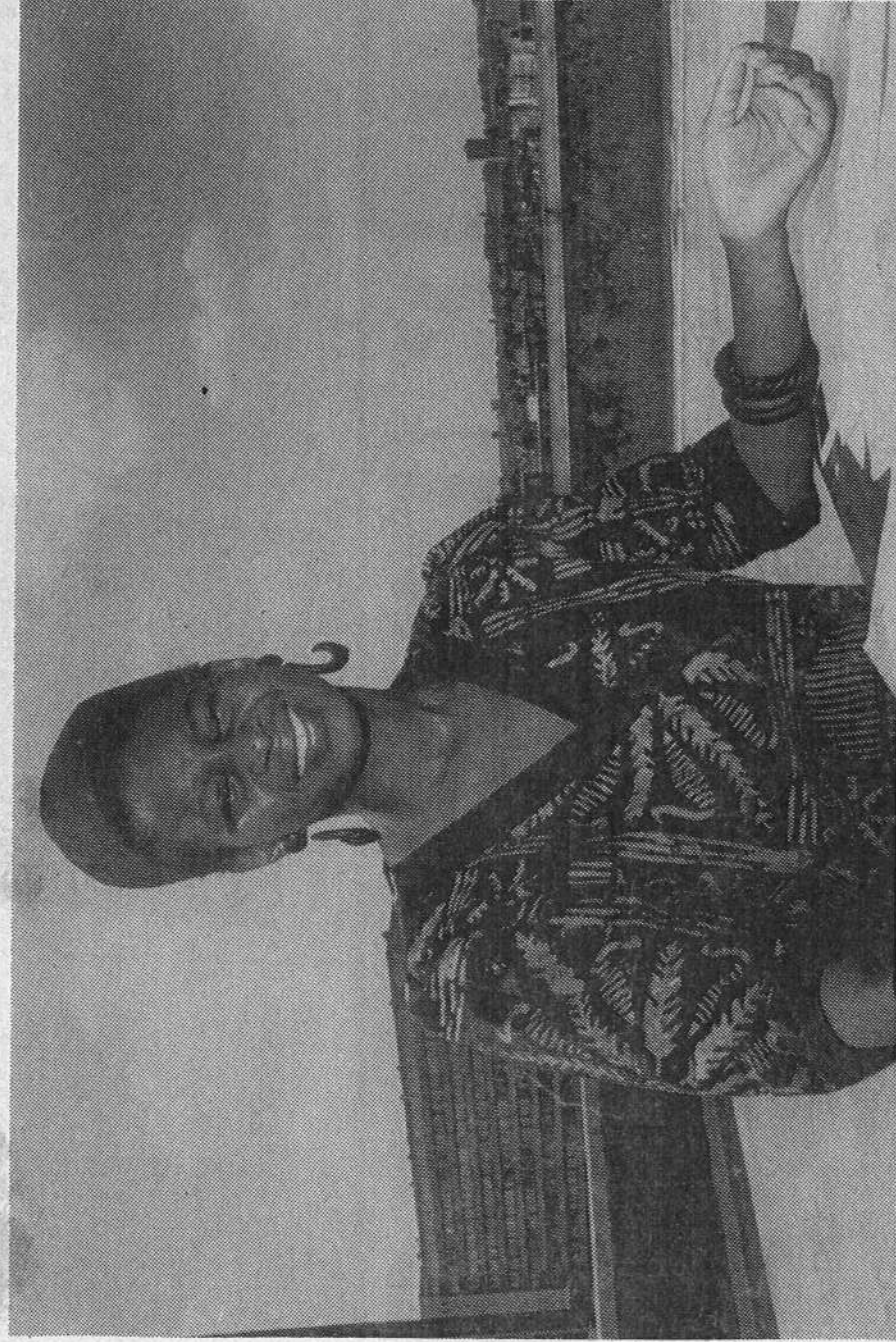
Getting on top of the business

ADE Solanke is London's top young business person! *Tama Communications*, her nine-month old enterprise, has been voted "one of the most promising enterprises in the UK," and the 25 year-old publicist has scooped £2000 prize money, a specially minted medal from the Royal Mint, and the prestigious mantle of reigning London Livewire champion for 1989.

The London Livewire competition is an annual scheme designed to assist young people between the ages of 16 and 25 interested in running their own businesses.

Enterprise

The competition is sponsored by Nat West Bank and is run by the London Enterprise Agency (LENTA). This year it attracted almost 100 applicants. LENTA teams up



Adeola Solanke: "The written word can really move mountains"

each Livewire applicant with an adviser who helps them to assess their business ideas and produce a business plan. A delighted Ade ex-

plained: "We were asked to write a business plan after registering to join the scheme. I suppose as a writer I had a head-start there. I have

years of journalistic experience and I've worked in radio and TV. The written word can really move mountains!" Solanke, a Nigerian

who grew up in London, studied English at Sheffield University before finding work in print journalism, mainly with black publications. She sees Tama as a specialist service bringing together knowledge of the media (she has written for the *Caribbean Times*, *The Guardian* and *The*

Times newspapers) with knowledge of the black community.

"I started Tama Communications because I saw a need for a professional media service sympathetic to the needs of the voluntary sector and black organisations, and able to communicate their interests either locally or nationally.

Recognition

"I've worked with many such groups as an employee," she continues enthusiastically. "Many need to improve their image so that the valuable work they do gets proper recognition and investment. Now I'm self-employed I can help them do that."

So far Tama Communications' clients have included The Arts Council, The Health Education Authority, Greater London Arts, the University of London, and the BBC.

Ade is also working on a book about black

women visual artists in Britain. With her zest and professionalism, Tama seems sure to stride from success to success!

HACKNEY



Gazette

HACKNEY GAZETTE November 22, 1991 13



Top businesswoman makes Stateside trip

AN award-winning Hackney businesswoman, Adeola Solanke, took a midnight train to Georgia and met some US folks making tracks for business success.

Ade, from Osbaldeston Road, Stoke Newington, runs her own writing, research and publicity company which was voted top young business in London in 1989 and described by Shell UK as "one of the most promising in the UK."

She joined other London business people as part of a trade delegation on a trip to Atlanta in the deep south for Minority Development Week, an annual celebration of black businesses in the US, where they met reporters on the Atlanta Daily World - one of the oldest black newspapers in the world.

Businesswoman From London At World Office



ADEOLA SOLANKE

One of London's top young business people was in Atlanta recently for MED week, as part of a trade delegation.

Adeola Solanke, of Tama Communications, provides a writing research and publicity service that won \$2,000 in a search for the "Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow" in 1989.

Tama was voted the top youth business in the Livewire Competition sponsored by National Westminster Bank and Shell United Kingdom. The judges said it was "one of the most promising enterprises in the UK."

Solanke was in town for a week with a delegation of other business representatives from London, who attended a Sept. 26 reception sponsored by the Atlanta, Business League and City Atlanta.

"I'm thrilled to have had the opportunity to see the tremendous strides and achievements black people in Atlanta are making," Solanke, said during a brief visit to the *Daily World* office.

Her business offers a writing research and publicity service to small business, government agencies and private companies.

Ms. Solanke was accompanied by businessman Lookman Dabiri, also of London, when she visited the World office.

INSIDE



Ade's Atlanta mission Page 11

Prizewinning communicator goes networking in Atlanta

A prizewinning young businesswoman of Nigerian origin rubbed shoulders with her North American peers during a recent trip to Atlanta for Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week - the annual celebration of the progress of black businesspeople in the USA.

Caribbean Times contributor Adoola Solanke met up with journalists from the *Atlanta Daily World*, one of the oldest black newspapers in the world, along with other business people, when she attended as part of a

London trade delegation. Her company, Tama Communications, voted the top young business in London in 1989 and described by Shell UK as "one of the most promising in the UK." USA, thanks to the support of Hackney Economic Development Unit.

Brian Hodges, Enterprise Team leader for the borough (who also attended the event), said "MED week is a unique marketing and educational opportunity for local businesses. They see new ways of working and a variety of new options for trading, both at home and in the US."

MED Week is a national celebration with activities across the USA. The organisers recognise the achievements of black businesses by giving awards to outstanding successes. It is supported by federal government and private and corporate donations.

Tama Communications offers a writing and publicity service to clients such as the BBC, Britain's Education Authority and the Midland Bank.

"It was fantastic to see the achievements of black-owned businesses in the USA. The way they network and support each other is a lesson for us in London," enthused the ever cheerful Solanke, aged 28.

