

**Article from « la Croix de Marianne Meunier / pages « Rencontrer » - p.10-17 : « Ngozi OKONJO-IWEALA : TRAVAILLER AVEC L'AFRIQUE RELEVE DE LA SOLIDARITE » (Octobre 2020)**

**Résumé by Regina Ubanatu :**

On the occasion of her testimonial in this article in the La Croix newspaper of October 2020, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, born in 1954 in Nigeria in Ogwashi Uku (Delta State) and a finalist for consideration as the Director of the World Trade Organization looked back on her journey as a dogged, unrelenting and exceptional woman. Taking up one of the largest and most prestigious international organizations in the world seems obvious to her! This is another of her many challenges, which she will hopefully be able to leverage. She has got all the qualities and skills needed to attain this prestigious position: extremely qualified, with 25 years at the helm of the World Bank, a two time Minister of Finance in Nigeria and more recently named by the NGO Transparency International (2019) as one of the eight most inspiring women fighting against corruption. Nothing could resist her!

Despite Nigeria's negative international image, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala positively projects her birth country: *"I don't know of a more vibrant and more exciting country than Nigeria"*. She owes her doggedness and resilience to the encouragement of a loving and committed father: *"As long as you have a head on your shoulders, you have what you need. You will see!"*. Furthermore, from of her traumatic experience as an adolescence who witnessed the Nigerian civil war, she rose to become a powerful force: A dark and painful past about which Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala accepted, in this article, to give her frank point of view. The war in Biafra, she couldn't forget: *"What affected me the most was seeing so many children dying of kwashiorkor (a tropical disease caused by malnutrition). And, then there was fear. The bombardments were frequent and very close. My family and I were fleeing from place to place."* During these years of war, she tells us that she walked many kilometers to save her young sister: *"My little sister, who was 3 years old, came down with a serious case of malaria. My mother also took ill ..."* Not to be discouraged, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala carried his sister on her back to reach a medical center located 5 kilometers from her house! This young sister who, like herself later wished to help others, would eventually become a doctor: *"Today my sister is a Doctor, a specialist in infectious diseases. She treats patients afflicted by COVID-19"*

This allows us to a quick peep into theories of determinism! You can be born a black female in a war torn country, suffer from illness and / or physical constraints in childhood, and yet still keep your pride, your dynamism and dignity intact!

For, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, a new page in her life's story remains to be written for all our reading pleasure.