

CPA Profile – Shehu Usman Ladan

Why did you decide to start out on a career in accountancy?

Right from my student days in secondary school, I was excited by the esteem status of civil servants in our society, particularly, the treasurers and accounting staff, who were highly rated in the government of newly independent Nigeria in the 1960s and from this I developed an interest in the accounting profession. This indeed influenced my decision to enroll for a Diploma in Accountancy programme and subsequently, I graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting and I obtained a Master of Business Administration (MBA), both from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria which is the first university in Northern Nigeria. Afterwards, I was admitted into the professional membership of the Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN) which qualified me as a Certified National Accountant, CNA. I am still happy with my decision to pursue accountancy profession in my life.

Can you provide a brief history of your career?

I am currently the President of Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN), which is a recognized Professional Accountancy Organization (PAO) in Nigeria and is one of the largest in terms of its membership size in Africa. ANAN has a Mutual Recognition Agreement with CPA Ireland.

My real-life work experience began with a vacation job at Barclays Bank of Nigeria (now Union Bank of Nigeria) in 1977, where I was engaged as a bank clerk. After completing my National Diploma in 1978, I had a stint with the Nigerian Television Authority as an Accounting Assistant. I joined Usmanu Danfodio University, Sokoto (then University of Sokoto) in 1978, where over the years I rose to the position of Chief Accountant. In 1989 I was appointed as Bursar of Federal College of Education (Technical) in Gusau and in 1994 I was appointed as the Bursar of Usmanu Danfodio University where I retired in 2000. As a Bursar I was responsible for the Financial Administration of the University as well as the Chief Financial Adviser.

It is obvious that my career had been mainly in higher institutions of learning.

Indeed, my reflections on my career have been wonderful because I found myself in the initial development stages of the two educational institutions where I worked. From the beginning of my career as an Accountant, I was involved in various projects, especially capital development projects, covering planning, execution and monitoring responsibilities.

Two years after my retirement from the public service, I was appointed as Revenue Adviser to the Government of Sokoto State of Nigeria in 2002 until 2011. My contributions went beyond matters of increasing revenue generation in the state to improving the human resource management of the State Revenue Agency towards greater efficiency in service delivery.

Why did you choose to become a member of CPA?

The CPA qualification is one of the highest rated qualifications within the IFAC family, and thus I feel it is worthwhile to become one.

What have been the benefits of joining CPA Ireland through Mutual Recognition?

As a leader of ANAN, which has a Mutual Recognition Agreement with CPA Ireland, I believe becoming a member of CPA Ireland will encourage other ANAN members to take the liberty of actualizing the mutual recognition and, more so, with the additional qualification, members will be better prepared for the international accounting environment. So, combining the CNA qualification of ANAN with the CPA Ireland qualification is a plus for professional accountants.

What is your biggest career achievement?

Although it is difficult to evaluate a career path that spans more than three decades, I am happy to have been a mentor to many accounting and financial professionals, particularly my subordinates in the public service. More significantly, it is great to have worked with many people at different levels of the career ladder and leave without a blemish. That is, I was able to track my path and surmount the unquantifiable risks of the profession successfully. I always like to develop others and add value to any tasks in my kitty.



Shehu Usman Ladan,
President of ANAN, MNI,
FCNA, CPA.

How do you feel being a member of CPA Ireland will help in your career?

With dual membership of professional accountancy organizations, one will be better equipped with the knowledge and skills required for this dynamic profession based on symbiotic relationships in terms of training and retraining as well as cross fertilization of ideas and experiences.

What in your view are the most pressing issues for accountants?

Balancing professional responsibilities with challenges in the professional environment. The Accountancy profession has had a very difficult trajectory, manifested in various corporate scandals across the globe since in the 1990s. The profession is walking on a very tight rope of renaissance towards changing its battered image worldwide. We must adhere strictly to the ethics of the profession by ensuring quality assurance in our service delivery geared towards the protection of public interest, which is the hallmark of the profession. The Accountant performs an important role in decision making, from generation through to execution and evaluation of accounting information to taking final corporate decisions. Having worked in the public service in the higher education sector and considering the prevailing concern for good governance, I believe the Accountant has a greater role to play in combatting corruption, especially in areas of public financial management and performance (value for money) audit. Another dimension is that of combatting the burgeoning cyber and financial crimes. The Accountant of today is confronted with the huge challenges of technology, because Information Technology (IT) is driving the profession and so does the need for the Accountant to embrace the technology for efficiency and excellent service delivery.

Building Trust – A Look Ahead At Our Global Profession

Gail McEvoy, IFAC Board Member, Past – President, CPA Ireland.

The International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) is the global organisation for the accountancy profession dedicated to serving the public interest by strengthening the profession and contributing to the development of strong international economies. IFAC is comprised of over 175 members and associates in more than 130 countries, representing almost 3 million accountants.

CPA Ireland is a founding member of IFAC and has a long tradition of actively contributing to IFAC.

The Board of IFAC, consisting of the President and not more than 22 members, is entrusted to govern and oversee the operations of IFAC.

Having been nominated by CPA Ireland, I was appointed to the Board of IFAC in 2013 and re-appointed in 2016 for a second term of 3 years. My journey to this international role started with joining the Council of CPA Ireland and subsequently, being elected President of CPA Ireland. I always have been motivated to give something back to my profession but this is not a journey that I ever anticipated when I first qualified as a CPA.

As we all know, the accountancy profession is operating in an environment of volatility, uncertainty and change and this is an appropriate time to share some of the key challenges facing the IFAC Board.

A Strategy for the Profession

On a personal level, it is very challenging but rewarding to be involved in the development of a strategy for the global profession. The profession is built on the values of integrity, expertise and transparency. How do we articulate that expertise in an environment of artificial intelligence and machine learning? Recent crises and audit failures have damaged global trust in the profession. How do we rebuild that trust and speak out as a profession with authority and

confidence? These are just some of the strategic challenges facing IFAC and they demonstrate the imperative to be agile and this probably applies to every business and practice and the imperative to add value to what members (professional bodies like CPA Ireland) are already doing.

CPA Ireland's Role in the Global Profession

I am particularly conscious of how CPA Ireland's work, nationally and internationally, can help our peers. For example, our research on entrepreneurship and on social enterprise spark global conversations and ideas that help the profession in other countries and also help CPA Ireland to consider other perspectives. CPA Ireland's work in developing the profession is also enhancing the profile and reputation of CPA Ireland, internationally. Our most recent capacity building contract to working with the Association of National Accountants of Nigeria to advance accountancy education demonstrates how CPA Ireland's global footprint can make a difference.



Rachel Grimes, President of IFAC, An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, Gail McEvoy, Past President, CPA Ireland.

Future Challenges and Opportunities for the Profession

Technology, the war for talent, high quality international standards, regulatory fragmentation are immense challenges and also immense opportunities for the profession.

In April 2018, IFAC and Business at OECD (BIAC) launched a key piece of research: "Regulatory Divergence: Costs, Risks and Impacts" which found that fragmented financial regulation costs the global economy US \$ 780 billion per annum.

IFAC has long advocated for smart regulation and when the President of IFAC, Rachel Grimes, addressed the CPA Ireland Annual Conference 2018, it presented

the opportunity for a meeting with An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar and a discussion on the impact of fragmented regulation. This is a good example of IFAC adding value to a national accountancy body.

Operating Effectively Within an International Board

Operating within an international board is incredibly challenging, developmental and rewarding. Entertaining different perspectives and valuing diverse viewpoints challenges me to listen, watch, avoid premature judgement and appreciate the context.

Being curious helps me or one to see and understand others' frame of reference using non – critical questioning, such as "what makes this work for you?".

On an international board we focus on commonalities and never lose sight of what is shared. There are many issues that are common to all countries such as regulation, cybersecurity, the war for talent, access to finance and the impact of technology.

Creating time to meet with other board members informally is also invaluable to learn from their ideas and perspectives.

Charting a Future Built on Trust

Despite uncertainty in an increasingly fragmented world the accountancy profession, through IFAC, continues to move closer together and speak out on issues that are important for global economies and the welfare of people.

IFAC is volunteer led and is dependent on volunteers to contribute to its Board and Committees. Ours is a profession that depends on volunteers, diversity and shared perspectives for the best outcomes.

The future for the profession will be challenging but also full of opportunity. It's never too late to ensure that you are contributing to your profession. From personal experience I can assure you that what you will get out of your profession is in direct proportion to what you put in. So be a part of a bright future at national or international level.