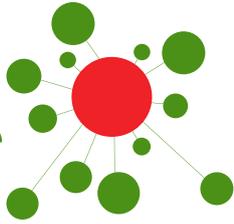


New Media,
Citizens &
Governance
Conference



#NMCG2018

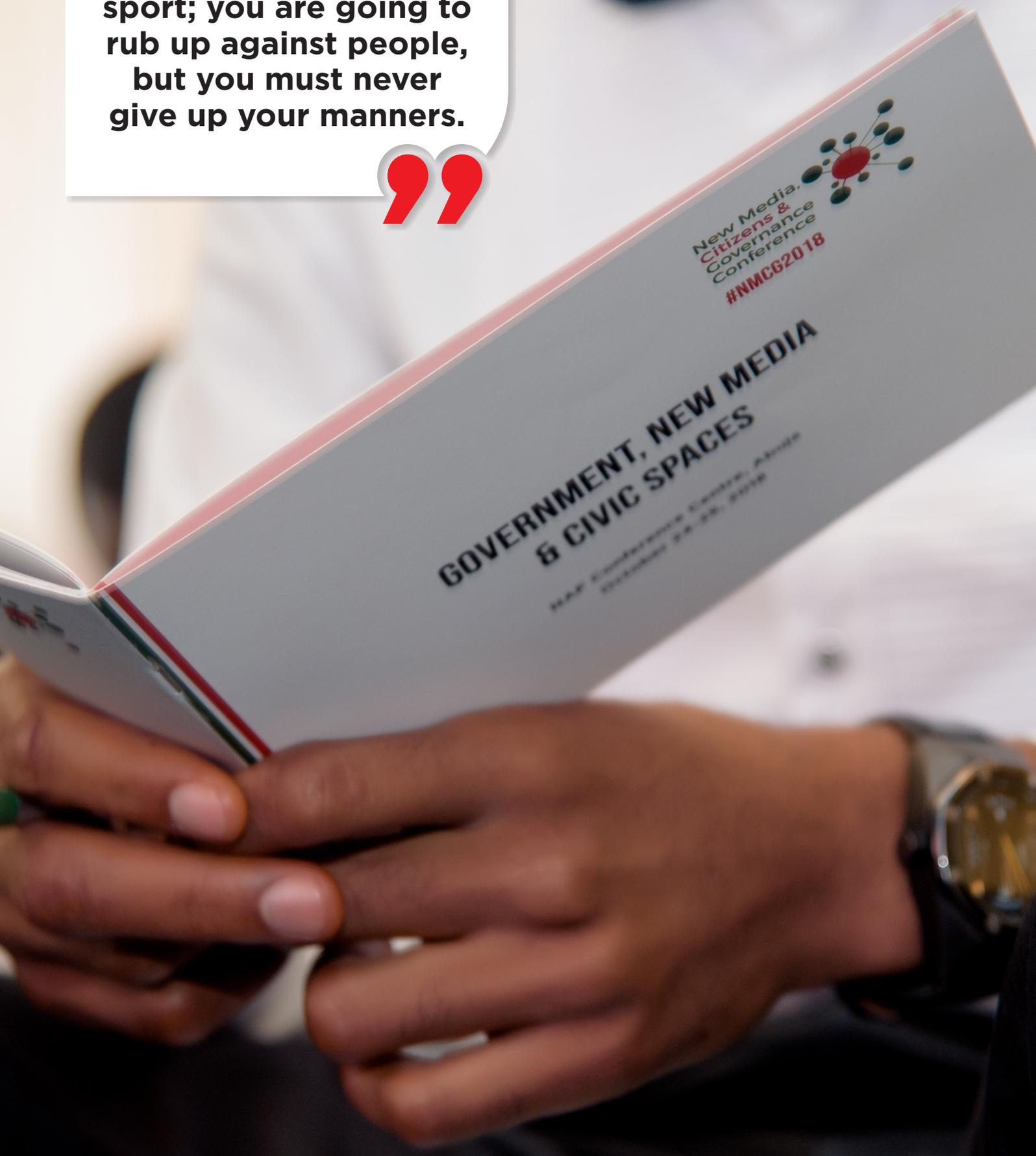
GOVERNMENT, NEW MEDIA & CIVIC SPACES

October 2018 | Abuja, Nigeria

“

Citizenship is a contact sport; you are going to rub up against people, but you must never give up your manners.

”



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INTRODUCTION

The 3rd edition of the New Media, Citizens and Governance Conference (#NMCG2018) took place in Abuja, Nigeria, and was attended by citizens, eminent professionals and experts in good governance, public affairs, electoral technology and digital security.

#NMCG2018 AT A GLANCE



7
Countries



8 Panel Sessions



46
Speakers



142
Physical Attendees



CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

The two-day, interdisciplinary and pan-African conference was aimed at demonstrating the ways in which citizens can:

- best navigate the digital space while protecting their safety and privacy;
- use new media to participate innovatively in the democratic process;
- use new media to achieve positive social ends, such as sex and voter education;
- explore sustainable ways of holding public officials accountable;
- proffer lasting solutions to electoral corruption in Nigeria; and
- explore the intersection between social media, civil society advocacy, and good governance.



DAY ONE

KEYNOTE ADDRESS:

“GOVERNMENT, NEW MEDIA & CIVIC SPACES” - Chidi Odinkalu

Civil rights campaigner and former chair of the governing council of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Chidi Odinkalu, headlined the conference. Being that the background to the conference’s discourse was the 2019 elections, Odinkalu began by remarking that the country was at the foothill of campaign season. He expressed gratitude to the conference’s organizers (Paradigm Initiative, Enough is Enough, BudgIT, media partners and MacArthur Foundation) for what he described as a necessary conversation.

On the subject of new media, Odinkalu clarified that new media has not invented new things altogether but rather invented things to a scale that we could not have imagined even 25 years ago. Seven of the 10 biggest companies in the world today were born by the revolution that occurred in the 1980s, and the first trillion-dollar capitalization has already materialized on the back of this revolution. Social media has made it possible for agglomerations that were unimagined just a quarter of a century ago to happen in all manner of sectors like capitals, initiatives, organizing, movement building, and free expression. This has created a governance crisis and placed a limit on the aspects of people’s lives the state can control.

Odinkalu expressed fear that the government could find a way to control

new media in a manner that will be detrimental to the citizenry. According to him, one of the biggest problems on social media is the evocation of influence without responsibility. Social media is not just driving up crime, fraud, and violence in general, it is driving it towards women, especially.

Odinkalu said that at the NHRC, the biggest complaints they get relates to violence against women and young persons, especially internet violence. Society tolerates and incentivizes these abusive behaviours, thereby creating the impression that they are normal. The violence of the analog age has now been driven up to scale by the digital environment.

Odinkalu warned that social media could lead to death as shown in the case of Cynthia Osokogu who was lured to her murder by men on the internet. It is the government’s responsibility to ensure the internet does not produce such consequences for everyone. In most cases, the perpetrators of internet violence are people known to the victims and who can easily be nabbed by the

“*New media has not invented new things altogether but rather invented things to a scale that we could not have imagined even 25 years ago.*”



authorities. Sadly, a society that cannot find perpetrators of violence in such easy circumstances would find it difficult to apprehend random perpetrators of violence on the streets during elections. In the age of the tyranny of 280 characters, people should not give up on expertise and mutual verifiability because it is only through this that people will be able to become authoritative and influential engagers on social media.

As the country goes into elections, the numbers are quite interesting, with 1,558 elective positions: the President, 29 Governors, 109 Senators, 360 members of the House of Representatives, 991 members of the State Houses of Assembly and 68 elective officials for the FCT Area Councils. There are 119,973 polling units, 8,809 wards and 84.2 million registered voters (up from 68.8

million in 2015 and 73.5 million in 2011.)

Despite these numbers, Odinkalu said our electoral arithmetic does not make sense when compared to demographics. The population is growing between the regions of 2.6% to 2.8% per annum while the economy in the past five years has improved only by 1%. Demand is outwitting supply. In 1983, the voting population was about 25.5 million; in 2015 we had just about 31 million voters and a growth in voter turnout of 19% between 1983 and 2015. Whereas, over this same period, Nigeria's population had grown by about 147%. Between 2011 and 2015, the nation's population grew by about 11-12% while electoral roll fell to 4%. These numbers are not adding up.

Odinkalu's conclusion was: Nigeria has never been good at numbers. Too many dead people occupy our electoral rolls and it makes no sense. This is where the difference between citizens who are in search of truth and politicians in search of power comes to play. Citizens who want truth want rational processes that make sense; politicians in search of power want processes which do not make sense but can put them in power.

Odinkalu urged the audience to, as a community of citizens, start using social media to educate others on electoral governance. As social media users, citizens need to help clamp down on electoral violence and encourage more people, especially the youth, to participate civilly in the electoral process.

Odinkalu said Nigeria is a country that is in not just one but three wars. War, in strategic studies, is defined as a *conflict where there are more than 1,000 field mortalities per annum*. Going by this definition, the North Eastern part of the country is at war. The same can be said of the North Central and North West.

“*Nigeria has never been good at numbers. Too many dead people occupy our electoral roles and it makes no sense.*”

The problem with voting in Nigeria is not *casting* the votes but *counting* them. The collation system is deliberately designed to be opaque and open to manipulation. Historically, the places that produce the most votes in the country are the places that people do not inhabit. Elections in the country have always been won in two places, the creeks of the Niger Delta and

in the “Sahelian” region of Northern Nigeria, because in these two strategic locations, it is easier to manufacture and change electoral results because of geographic factors.

Odinkalu urged citizens who care about governance to make social media safe for everyone, as when this

happens, a scale is created wherein about 1.5 million internet users can ultimately be recruited for positive ends. Election results-manufacturing, he added, can be countered by transmitting electoral results immediately from the polling units to the centre through a secure channel. This will help in eliminating opportunities for corruption.



Cross-section of participants

PANEL 1:

“ARE ELECTIONS WON ON THE TIMELINE?”

The panel featured Habiba Balogun of the KOWA Party, Sesugh Akume of the Abundant Nigeria Renewal Party (ANRP) and Demola Olarewaju of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP). It was moderated by Chioma Agwuegbo (Programme Manager of Reboot). The panel’s discussion focused on actions, lessons learnt, and suggestions for better engagement as Nigeria approaches the 2019 general elections as well as the role new media could play in the elections.

Habiba Balogun of KOWA, in her assessment of the 2015 elections, spoke of the need for people to ensure that they vote for rather than against something. She said the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is one of the most progressive organizations in the country and is always ready to work with civil society groups by employing collegial engagements as against the usual master-servant, master-slave engagements one expects with government agencies.

She said that the APC had used social media to win people over in the build-up to the 2015 elections. This made people not only realize the power of social media but also try to capture that power.

Balogun said that people need to regulate what is being disseminated on social media instead of waiting for the government to do so. Although citizens are taking up the responsibility of sifting out fake news and calling out hate speech, they are not equipped to engage in warfare with political parties regarding this. There

is a need for regulators to curtail the excesses of some of these powerful institutions.

Balogun declared that were she the INEC Chairman, she would ensure that polling unit results are tweeted immediately.

Social media is a powerful factor in the voting process because it can be used to confirm one’s choice and also influence one’s decision to vote or not for a candidate. Social media’s influence will grow significantly by the 2023 elections as more people of voting age will be present on these platforms.

On the issue of vote buying, Balogun said politicians who buy votes are the ones committing the crime, and as such, should be dealt with under the provisions of the Electoral Act. The focus, she argued, must shift from the people selling their votes as they are the victims of these corrupt politicians.

“**Social media’s influence will grow significantly by the 2023 elections as more people of voting age will be present on these platforms.**”

Sesugh Akume of ANRP said the 2015 election was not won by a particular candidate or a political party but by



Chioma Agwuegbo, Sesugh Akume, Habiba Balogun, Demola Olarewaju

the citizens because they (the people) owned the system. Most Nigerians do not belong to political parties. Driving the desired change in society rests with the people. There is a need for people to stand by the values they care about. People need to take personal responsibility seriously because everyone has a role to play in the emergence of the Nigerian state that works for all. People need to counter propaganda, fake news and bullying because a lot of individuals have different agendas aimed at preventing people from expressing themselves.

Akume pinned the emergence of Bukola Saraki as Senate President on the strength of social media, because it had happened despite the fact that PDP

senators outnumbered their APC counterparts on the floor at the time.

Speaking on what he would do if he were INEC Chairman, Akume said he would ensure the immediate transmission of election results electronically so that it goes round and everyone knows the figures.

Akume warned though that elections are not won on the timeline (social media) alone because there are a combination of factors that determine electoral victory. The fact that a candidate has locked down social media does not necessarily mean he/she will win an election. He condemned the proliferation of accounts on social media set up to create the impression that people who currently are

no longer popular are, in fact, popular.

In assessing the 2015 election, **Demola Olarewaju of PDP** said that the election is an extreme example of people power. While a lot of Nigerians have the confidence to vote out a government they don't like in the upcoming 2019 election, they are afraid that such a government will not actually leave office - examples being the recent happenings in the Osun and Ekiti elections.

On the need to counter propaganda, he agreed, albeit reluctantly, that the two major parties in the country are very



“ Politicians who buy votes are the ones committing the crime, and as such, should be dealt with under the provisions of the Electoral Act.”

guilty of it. However, he asked the KOWA party representative, Habiba Balogun, to step up her party's game online and counter the propaganda of other parties.

On what he would do if he were INEC Chairman, Olarewaju said he will ensure results in units with any form of irregularities are either not announced or cancelled altogether.

At this point, the floor was opened to the audience to state what they would do if they had the opportunity to man INEC for 48 hours.

- One participant said he would delist both the APC and PDP.
- Another said he would whittle down the number of political parties in the country which, according to him, form a “cobweb of confusion”.
- A third participant also spoke on the need to audit the account of political parties so that they do not have money to bribe voters, muscle down young political parties, etc.
- Yet another participant said he will introduce electronic voting in Nigeria.

PANEL 2: **“WHO IS AFRAID OF NEW MEDIA? FAKE NEWS AND HATE SPEECH”**

This panel was moderated by the Executive Director of Paradigm Initiative, 'Gbenga Sesan, with the participation of Armsfree Ajanaku of the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), Theophilus Abah of Daily Trust and Ronald Kakembo, an expert in digital training. The discussion here was focused on how to optimally utilize new media in the wave of fake news and hate speech.

Armsfree Ajanaku emphasized the importance of situating the conversation around fake news and hate speech properly in the character of the Nigerian state, the role of identity politics, and the ways in which new media has made it possible for all our fault lines to be highlighted. The new media space is complex and nebulous. There must be focus on how conversations in this space can be programmed towards containment.

On the need for civil society to be more proactive rather than reactive to government clampdowns, **Gbenga Sesan** said civil society needs to find a balance between challenging information people put out on social media and correcting misinformed public narratives with facts.

Ronald Kakembo, the digital training expert, reminded the audience that radio was used as a propaganda tool in Rwanda and this led to the genocide. He spoke of Twitter wars and the dilemma of freedom of expression. He made reference to former Ugandan president, Idi Amin, who said,

“*There must be focus on how conversations in this space can be programmed towards containment.*”

‘There is freedom of speech, but I cannot guarantee freedom after speech.’ He spoke of the filters put in place to develop anti-censorship tools. Examples are the filters on Facebook which control what kind of content is posted on the platform. But, Kakembo stressed, the responsibility for what goes out to the world falls on users of new media.

Increasingly, people are beginning to speak their minds. The more oppression there is going on in the community, the greater the need for people to express themselves.

Theophilus Abah of Daily Trust said that, as a journalist and news processor, he is not surprised by what is going on currently (distortions of information, beer parlour discussions, etc.) because the media have been dealing with these issues for a long time. The screening of information before it is disseminated – which used to be the hallmark of print media practice – is not available on social media. And as such, people can sit in the comfort of their bedrooms, put out their



Ronald Kakembo, 'Gbenga Sesan, Armsfree Ajanaku, Theophilus Abah

imaginations and prank others by distorting information. It is important to not only stop at making laws to counter this malady, but to educate people and monitor the happenings on social media and verify that the information being circulated therein is true, and if otherwise, amplify the truth for people to be properly informed. Government needs to empower journalists and social media activists interested in verification in order to counter untruthful information doing the rounds on social media.

Abah also spoke about his work training journalists so that they are able to

“ Civil societies need to find a balance between challenging information people put out on social media and correcting misinformed public narratives with facts.”

identify fake news and verify information being circulated therein. Speaking on the publication of incorrect stories by traditional media, Abah said once it is discovered some information is incorrect, it is taken down and the erring reporter punished. On combating fake news, he spoke of the importance of education by looking at the curriculum at secondary school level and talking to religious leaders about the need to preach against the spread of fake news.

Finally, he implored the audience to read more newspapers because they are better at verifying information.

PANEL 3:

“CHECKS AND BALANCES: HOLDING OUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES ACCOUNTABLE”

This session was moderated by the Co-founder of Follow The Money, Hamzat Lawal, with Uadamen Ilevbaoje of BudgIT, Safiyanu Lawal of Kano Budget Working Group, Oladayo Olaide of MacArthur Foundation and Isa Mustapha of Babura Patriotic Movement as the discussants. The session showcased the work of different civil society organizations involved in tracking projects and public expenditure.

Uadamen Ilevbaoje spoke about the work of BudgIT in sensitizing people towards taking ownership of government projects, so that they can ask the right questions, which will bring about better service delivery in their various communities. Presently, Ilevbaoje said, BudgIT has 24 tracking officers in 20 states that sensitize people on government projects. He spoke of the discrepancy between the implementation of the constituency projects of federal lawmakers in Nigeria and the amount released for these projects. He said that **Tracka** was able to find over **13,000** projects abandoned since 2014, and has been able to facilitate the implementation of over **5,000** of these projects.

On the effect of BudgIT’s work with regard to returning political office holders to their respective positions in the upcoming 2019 elections, Ilevbaoje said that almost all serving lawmakers in Niger State lost their tickets to return to the National Assembly due to the investigative role they (BudgIT) played in tracking appropriations and, in the long

run, exposing the incompetence of most of these lawmakers.

As part of the success of their efforts, Ilevbaoje cited the example of BudgIT’s engagement with the Kaduna State government, through their social media handle, where the state governor, Nasir El-Rufai, instructed the contractor in charge of executing a 74-million-naira 12-block classroom project to discontinue the work and start afresh because they had been using substandard materials.

Ilevbaoje said it is important that projects are not scrapped over flawed execution because the common man at the grassroots benefits from them. Instead, he said, what is needed are more campaigns on project monitoring, awareness and proper allocation to ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) with the capacity to execute them.

“It is important that projects are not scrapped over flawed execution because the common man at the grassroots benefits from them.”

Safiyanu Lawal Bichi of Kano Budget Working Group spoke about what his organization does with regard to the monitoring of the implementation of Kano State's budget. He said they have engaged the state government and federal lawmakers representing Kano State in the budgetary process.

He spoke of the Group's engagements with contractors and the alleged collection of kickbacks from them (contractors) by the Kano State governor, Abdullahi Umar Ganduje. Lawal lamented the spate of uncompleted and abandoned projects in the state. In tackling this issue, he spoke of the Working Group's engagement with

citizens through trainings and encouragement towards participating in the budget process.

Speaking on project appraisal, Lawal called out the government on a usual ploy wherein it embarks on capital projects just to gain political support and re-election.

He concluded his presentation by reiterating the importance of citizen engagement in the budgetary process.

Isa Mustapha of Babura Patriotic Movement spoke of his organization's work in monitoring capital budgets and creating a partnership with the Due



Oladayo Olaide, Hamzat Lawal, Uadamen Ilevbaoje, Safiyanu Lawal, Isa Mustapha

Process and Budget Monitoring Group. He spoke about the use of new media tools (Facebook and Whatsapp) to share information to citizens on projects, using both English and Nigerian languages.

On constituency projects, Mustapha spoke about Babura Patriotic Movement's efforts in monitoring them and ensuring they are implemented accordingly.

Oladayo Olaide of MacArthur Foundation spoke about a number of things that have inspired the Foundation's work in the area of accountability and fighting corruption. He said the Foundation is not under any illusion that corruption can be defeated within a very short period. His organization made a decision to work across the divides of supply and demand. On the supply side, Olaide spoke of their collaboration with different agencies such as the Presidential Advisory Committee against Corruption (PACAC), National Electricity Regulation Commission (NERC), and the Consumer Protection Council (CPC), which are government institutions responsible for holding service providers to account. Their work with the CPC has forced a number of multinational companies, often considered untouchable, to go on their knees and respond to previously denied services or services provided to



Nigerian customers. Their work with NERC has caused the body to move from the quiet one to one that calls out electricity distribution companies (DisCos) and demands that they provide efficient service. Ultimately, this has resulted in NERC, together with the Ministry of Power, mandating DisCos to meter every consumer.

“ Unless there is a consistent and sustained effort towards tackling corruption, it doesn't matter how much you invest in the health sector, it will leak.”

MacArthur Foundation has supported a cohort of media organizations by working to improve the capacity of civil society organizations to investigate and

expose corruption. Olaide said the country is so “busy” that no issue of public importance can remain in public discourse for more than 70 hours. Consequently, citizens are unable to follow through most issues because they are bombarded with loads of such issues on a daily basis.

To ensure these issues are not swept under the carpet, Olaide said the Foundation supports media organizations in revealing and exposing corruption on the one hand, and on the other hand, lobby the cohort of civil society organizations towards ensuring they make these issues an

““ *The country is so “busy” that no issue of public importance can remain in public discourse for more than 70 hours.*”

agenda that continues to get public attention. On plans to support more groups so that they can amplify the good work MacArthur Foundation is doing, Olaide said the Foundation’s goal is to ultimately reduce corruption in Nigeria. More organizations (media and journalism

cohort) are beginning to engage in investigative work.

About the relative success of MacArthur Foundation’s work, Olaide said they have seen an increase, through some of the interactive programs the Foundation is funding, the level of consciousness regarding the cost of corruption in people.

Olaide said that the anti-corruption push must be seen as something on which the well-being and continued existence of the country rests on. He said, *“Unless there is a consistent and sustained effort towards tackling corruption, it doesn’t matter how much you invest in the health sector, it will leak.”*

He added that fighting corruption, when it is led by a whole community, is less dangerous compared to when it is led by civil society groups. When the issue is detached from the organization or individuals it becomes less risky.

He concluded by saying that the fight against corruption should be a compulsory programme of every administration across national levels.

DAY TWO

PANEL 4

“CLOSING CIVIC SPACES AND CONSTITUTION 101”

This session analysed citizens’ constitutional rights and responsibilities and the panelists also discussed their work towards closing the knowledge gap between citizens’ awareness of their rights and demand for same. The panel was moderated by international law expert, Adeola Oyinlade and the other discussants were energy and urban governance researcher Fisayo Ajala, lawyer Olumide Babalola, and Director-General of the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Garba Abari.

Adeola Oyinlade spoke about an app, **Know Your Right Nigeria**, through which people can learn about their basic rights in English and the other major Nigerian languages. People can also report human rights violations on the app by sharing documentary and video evidence. Agencies of government saddled with the responsibility of upholding human rights can be contacted through the app. In summary, Oyinlade said, the application is useful for expanding the frontiers of human rights through social media.

Fisayo Ajala spoke about the contribution of **Spaces for Change** towards expanding the frontiers of human rights and compiling databases on different forms of infringement of fundamental human rights in Nigeria.

On the enforcement of human rights, he said **Spaces for Change** works with informal communities in Lagos which come to them with complaints of human rights violations and have these cases taken to court.

Ajala said people need to form groups on Whatsapp, Twitter, and Facebook to discuss human rights. With this, he believes, citizens will be better equipped to defend their rights against violations.

Olumide Babalola spoke about consumer rights in Nigeria and what **Spaces for Change** have achieved in the expansion of the frontiers of human rights in Nigeria. He gave an example using his organization’s work in 2014 when telecommunications companies started routing unsolicited calls to telephone users through a medium called telemarketing. This, according to him, was a prime example of

“When service providers are aware that people are going to take them up, they sit up.”



consumer rights violation. In the end, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) came up with the *Do Not Disturb Code*. They also filed an action on behalf of people living with disabilities so they could access legal provisions that make life easier for them. When service providers are aware that people are going to take them up, they sit up. He said that Nigerians' seeming unwillingness to take these providers up, make them take citizens for granted.

Babalola also cited the example of MultiChoice's increase of its subscription

fees without first alerting customers via an update of their terms and conditions. The case is currently in court.

Garba Abari, NOA DG, spoke about what NOA is doing to foster the appreciation and preservation of the natural environment we live in which is increasingly incapacitated daily. He also spoke about the poverty and lack of information about government activities present in rural communities - all of which people in the cities are removed from.

Abari spoke about the proliferation of civil society organizations that are now occupying spaces hitherto occupied by weak institutions of the state. He spoke of the values added by these organizations - especially those working in the areas of anti-corruption - and the NOA's engagements with them.

On the stigmatization of young men from Boko Haram-affected areas, Abari said these issues are attitudinal and that the NOA is trying to sensitize the people to develop the values of doing to others what one would have others do to one. Though the NOA does not have the power of enforcement and prosecution, they have control over the nation's moral switch. They have the responsibility of letting citizens be aware of the minimum acceptable level of conduct towards others.

Speaking about vote buying, Abari said

this is a big threat to Nigerian society, democracy, leadership recruitment pattern, and quality of governance. He said Nigerian politics was not like this in the First Republic when candidates used to get the vote based on the programmess of political parties. The NOA is engaging traditional institutions because of their closeness to the people and using religious leaders to send messages to citizens on the importance of performance indicators in evaluating politicians.

Finally, Abari spoke of the

instrumentality of social media in addressing these issues and confessed to being an active user himself.

To wrap up, the session, 'Yemi Adamolekun (Executive Director, EiE Nigeria) presented '**Constitution 101**' - a simplified version of the Nigerian Constitution. The document currently written in English would in the future be available in Hausa, Igbo, & Yoruba. An audio version would also be produced.



Fisayo Ajala, Olumide Babalola, Garba Abari, 'Yemi Adamolekun, Adeola Oyinlade

PANEL 5

“#METOO IN NIGERIA: USING THE MEDIA AS A SEX EDUCATION TOOL”

The session was moderated by Chris Ihidero with Stand to End Rape’s Jekein Lato-Unah, Center for Sex Education and Family Life’s Chizobam Ofoegbu, women and girls’ rights campaigners Dorothy Njemanze and Anthonia Okoli as panelists. The panel explored ways to effectively use new media as a sex education tool.

Jekein Lato-Unah of **Stand to End Rape**, a gender-based violence organization run by youths only, spoke of the organization’s work in providing legal, psychological and academic help to victims and survivors of rape. They have been doing this for the past five years.

She noted that the biggest problem we have in the society when it comes to the interpretation of sexual abuse, assaults, harassment and the like is patriarchy.

““ *People do not know their rights, even when they do, they do not have money to take people to court.*”

Lato-Unah spoke about parents’ complicity in sexual abuse. She cited a case where a parent always asked their girl child to change her clothes whenever a certain man visited their house. She invited the audience to consider that the parent’s focus solely on their fear of their daughter getting pregnant is the wrong approach. The child is supposed to be educated properly on sexuality.

On the concept of consent and consequences, she said people do not know their rights, even when they do, they do not have money to take people to court.

Chizobam Ofoegbu, founder of **The Confident Woman Network**, spoke about the centre’s involvement in sexual education. Through their community infusion programmes, they educate people in different communities in Ajegunle and Makoko about sex, gender equality, etc. They majorly provide psychological help because they discovered that whenever there is a need for sex education, a problem comes up – usually rape.

She pointed out that the average child risks being abused by someone in their own home.

Men must be engaged in the drive against rape and sexual abuse. People keep engaging in sexual activities despite being aware that it is bad because they feel the good outweighs the bad. For women, they do so because they want to be accepted and feel protected, pampered and cared for. Sex is like drug addiction, she said. It must be replaced with something that can give youth relative satisfaction or the feel-good factor. Instead, kids are being bombarded with simplistic instructions not to have sex.

Dorothy Njemanze of the **Dorothy Njemanze Foundation** discussed the work of her foundation in breaking down very important information into audio-

“ There is a strong link between sexual violation and mental health issues which are handled poorly in the country.”

v i s u a l format, so that people can clearly understand t h e provisions of our legal s y s t e m s a n d processes.

She spoke of her organization’s current projects, especially the latest one called *Akachi*, a TV series that is subtitled in sign

language to carry the disabled community along. The series focuses on sexual reproductive health, gender-based violence and comprehensive sexuality education.

Njemanze spoke about consent in sexual interactions, emphasising that children cannot consent to sexual activity. She said children need to be exposed to the fact that all humans have the same organs which are a valued part of their bodies. Children must be encouraged to speak up about anyone who comes close to them and what the person does with their bodies.

She criticized the patriarchy, stating that,



Jekein Lato-Unah, Chizobam Ofoegbu, Dorothy Njemanze, Chris Ihidero, Anthonia Okoli

it upsets the rights of women to be human. She spoke about the hypocrisy in the fight against prostitution. According to her, the focus is always on women. Women cannot prostitute themselves, she said: *“If there is no demand, supply will have a problem.”*

She spoke about her rape by four people when she was eight. She could not speak up then for fear of being further victimized. Incidents like what she went



through energized her to help other people. She stressed the importance of comprehensive sexuality education, telling people the use of their body parts and letting them know that they have complete autonomy over them.

The way to justice for the common man is through the police. However, the police are themselves products of our abusive society.

Njemanze said there is a strong link between sexual violation and mental health issues which are handled poorly in the country. She also spoke of the role of social media in breaking the silence around sexual abuse - something the traditional media could not do due to stringent regulations.

Anthonia Okoli teaches girls to defend themselves against violence. She spoke about the holistic approach to sexual education which her organization is working on, involving both sexes towards preventing sexual harassment.

She spoke of the disadvantages of social media in contributing to sexual harassment and the need to restrict social media for under-aged children. She said there should be more focus on putting positive contents on the platform.

PANEL 6: “NEW MEDIA AS AN ADVOCACY TOOL”

This session focused on the role new media plays in driving advocacy towards the actualization of a more functional society. It was moderated by Laila Johnson-Salami with the support of other panelists: co-director and co-founder of Justice & Empowerment Initiatives (JEI), Megan Chapman; Bukky Shonibare of Girl Child Africa, and ex-convener of #TrollCabal, Ose Anenih.

Laila Johnson-Salami opened the session by saying that it is extremely important to discuss new media as an advocacy tool as it is a double-edged sword.

Megan Chapman spoke about JEI’s campaign in helping the poor, especially Nigerians living in slums. She said that social media is helping them reach out and find allies in their campaign against government threats of eviction and demolition, but the major work is actually done on the ground, as most people are not connected on social media.

She further noted the importance of social media as an advocacy tool – especially during the **Otodo Gbame** issue which trended on social media – and how people from across the world responded and were able to raise two million naira for the victims within just two days. *“Yes, social media has been useful in amplifying advocacy,”* she says.

Bukky Shonibare spoke about her work in Girl Child Africa, which is geared towards ensuring that girl children go to school. Initially, her work in BBOG was to highlight the fact that some girls had been abducted from their school. She did not imagine that five years later, Nigeria would still be talking about the missing

girls. Her advocacy is not just for the Chibok girls but also for other people that have been abducted and had their lives disrupted by insurgency.

“*It is extremely important to discuss new media as an advocacy tool as it is a double-edged sword.*”

She revealed how social media helped her narrate her experience with the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) to the public. According to her, people were able to empathize with her story and it encouraged others to come forward with theirs.

Ose Anenih said social media as an advocacy tool is very powerful. Unfortunately, issues do not trend for long before other things come up and steal everyone’s attention again. To forestall this, he said, what his team does at #Trollcabal is to keep important conversations in public discourse by enabling meaningful and helpful discussions around them and asking open-ended questions that bring about better understanding of the topic in the spotlight.

PANEL 7

“NEW MEDIA AND ELECTIONS”

This session highlighted the role new media played in the elections recently conducted in other African countries and picked out lessons as Nigeria approached her general elections. This panel was moderated by election technology consultant, Fatu Ogwuche; with the panelists being writer and activist, Farida Noubremma; founding director of Girl Up Vine Club, Yasmine Bilkis; journalist Precious Gaye; journalist and CEO RED | For Africa, Adebola Williams; and Ghanaian expert on information technology and democracy, Kwami Ahiabenu.

Farida Noubremma said that the elections in Togo have been very violent in the past. She gave an instance of the election that was organized two months after Gnassingbé Eyadéma died: over one thousand Togolese died in the aftermath of that election. For a country of only 5 million people, this is a huge number.

Noubremma also spoke of the amendments to the term limit of the president, which thousands of citizens demanded. However in the new constitution submitted to parliament, there is a condition that the term limit does not affect the parents or past friends of the president. This makes election and referendum the only viable options to solving the country's ongoing political crisis.

She pointed out the importance of social/new media in mobilizing and organizing people. However, the government has also developed counter measures in the form of surveillance towards this surge in the use of new media by sending viruses to people's phones and computers, so that they can

have access to them. They create a platform called Anti-cyber Terrorism Unit, where the opposite of anything she posts is disseminated in order to turn people against her. She also noted that the internet in the country was even shut down at some point.

Noubremma urged people to take action against anything they think could prevent them from exercising their voting rights as social media cannot be blamed for preventing them from voting. She concluded that there should be a kind of system that limits the repression of voters especially by security agents who might use repressive forces against potential voters.

“*The democratization of access and connectivity to new and social media makes it a force for any human being who has a message to influence the actions of a group of people.*”

Reacting to the question on what she would do to change the trajectory of elections in Africa, she said that she will give the option of voting against candidate because high number of voter apathy is caused by the quality of candidates presented during elections. But then again, citizens should have a say in rejecting candidates if they feel their lives will be worse off with the given candidate.

Yasmine Bilkis revealed how Whatsapp played key role in voting out the incumbent president during the last presidential election in Sierra Leone. According to her, the youths have been using social media to effectively advocate for better governance. She suggested that at elections, instead of having just the two options of either voting for A or B, there should be a third option allowing the electorate to vote

against candidates. This would reduce voter apathy as people will be inclined to vote, even if it is against candidates they feel are not qualified for the position, rather than decide not to vote at all because of the quality of candidates.

On what she would do to change the voting process in Africa, Yasmine stressed the importance of civic education in primary schools. She believes this will stem vote buying syndrome and also empower people to make informed decisions in choosing candidates during elections.

Precious Gaye noted that social media was used as tool for campaigning, mobilizing and persuading people to join the cause towards the election in Liberia. She also affirmed that social media was used by the Liberian electoral authorities to reach out to the people. Text messages



Fatu Ogwuche, Farida Noubremma, Yasmine Bilkis, Precious Gaye, Kwami Ahiabenu, Adebola Williams

are also used to get in touch with people who might not be on the internet.

Kwami Ahiabenu spoke about the importance of social media in supporting the activities of the electoral management body in Ghana, as it allows them to respond to issues as they occur. He further noted that people need to agitate, mobilize, advocate and keep on pushing to ensure that their votes actually count and that accurate results come out. He confessed though that this might be difficult to achieve in a system that is designed in such a way that some of the results will not reflect the wishes of the people.

Adebola Williams noted that the democratization of access and connectivity to new media makes it a force for any human being who has a message to influence the actions of a group of people. Thus, social media is beyond elections as it plays a marketing role. Social media is a tool or a vehicle that is used to reach out to people especially the sophisticated audience on the internet.

On bridging the gap between people on new media and those not on it, Williams emphasized the importance of training the leader of the group on how to use Twitter, Whatsapp and Facebook, so that what's shared on new media can reach them and be disseminated to others. However, Williams stressed that it is still

important to reach out to the people physically as there is the need for them to feel the pulse of the politicians directly.

He further noted that citizens should see the business of nation building as dependent on their own lives and livelihoods. Business of making our nation work is why we are our own personal government, and as such, citizens should use the same spirit used in pursuing personal success towards their civic responsibilities.

“ *People need to agitate, mobilize, advocate and keep on pushing to ensure that their votes actually count and that accurate results come out.*”

Williams said that social media played a big role in the 2015 general elections in Nigeria as excited young Nigerians waited at the polling stations until the results were counted and, at the same time, tweeted results which made it difficult for officials to present doctored results. The same phenomenon was observed in Ghana.

He stressed that the people, being the owners of the commonwealth, have the ultimate power to demand accountability from political office holders, and at the same, determine who gets what during elections, when, and how, as far as public office is concerned. Thus, State Craft is only doing her job professionally in marketing her candidate the same way other brands such as Coca-Cola and Pepsi do. Then again, the citizens have the final say in accepting or rejecting what is sold to them.

PANEL 8

“DIGITAL SECURITY - IS SOCIAL MEDIA REALLY FRIENDLY?”

The session, which was aimed at raising awareness against various occurrences in the media space and the importance of digital security for social media users, was moderated by Paradigm Initiative's, Adeboye Adegoke with Peter Nkanga a journalist, Gabriel Okpo, Co-Creation Hub; Akua Gyekye, Facebook's Policy Manager, West and Central Africa; and Ronald Kakembo a digital consultant as panelists.

Adeboye Adegoke started the session by announcing that it was going to be a practical one.

- He noted that digital security is an important tool in the current age we are in.
- He said digital security is a myth to many people because it is difficult to police the internet.

He invited the audience to reflect on the questions: *“If I didn't have social media, how will I communicate? What happens to information I have – pictures, videos, texts, etc. – that I don't want any other person to have access to? How do we ensure our private information is secure?”*

He said the most important thing when talking about digital security is having your own personal protocol for securing the information you have online.

Adeboye Adegoke reiterated the importance of digital security not just to those who work as advocates but also to the layman. He moved on from there by asking **Akua Gyekye** about basic cues with which to secure our accounts from a

Facebook perspective. Gyekye said citizens can secure their accounts from hackers by updating their privacy settings. She explained this, using the following points:

- The Privacy Check on Facebook allows you to determine who you share information with and what people can see about you from what you have shared in the past. You can change these settings to meet your needs.
- The Security Check allows you check for applications that have access to your information and disable them if you wish.
- The Help Center offers information on things such as lost passwords and how to regain access to your account.
- People can report unusual or bad activity such as hate speech and fake accounts to Facebook and such posts will be reviewed and taken down, if deemed to have violated their community guidelines.

He asked Gabriel Okpo what an average person needs to know about digital security as well as the steps to be taken towards securing one's account.

Gabriel responded by making reference



Akua Gyekye, Ronald Kakembo, Gabriel Okpo, Cecilia Mandu, Peter Nkanga, Adeboye Adegoke

to the fact that most people who get hacked left themselves vulnerable as a result of the type of password (relatively easy) they used in creating their account.

He asked **Cecilia Maundu** what she thought people who work in non-governmental organizations should do to keep themselves safe from digital threats from government surveillance or people who are angry at the kind of work she does. She highlighted her advice as follows:

- One must be careful about leaving one's digital footprints by ensuring

“ Anyone can be a target for hacking, and as such, everyone should keep their safety in mind and regard digital security the same way they regard protecting their home, family and life.”

that no stone is left unturned in staying untraceable while online and, most importantly, offline.

- One must note that not being famous online does not protect one from hackers' interests.
- People need to be extremely careful of what they post on social media as this can come back to haunt them later in life.

She concluded by reminding the audience that security begins with the individual.

A member of the audience wanted to know what the difference is between *http* and *https* and which is more secure.

Adeboye directed the question to Ronald Kakembo who started by letting everyone understand that the only reason the internet was invented was to communicate. As such, security was not at the back of the minds of the brains behind the technology. As time went on however, hackers found loopholes in the internet which led to the development of some security measures aimed at securing what people send across the internet. One of these measures is the *https* which Kakembo likened to a message covered and sealed in an envelope which, according to him, has some form of protection compared to a postcard which is unsealed and whose contents are open to anyone.

Adeboye asked Peter Nkanga how he creates a sense of security among his family members; how he keeps himself secure given the nature of his work, and what he thinks people who work in a similar capacity as he should do to be safe on the internet?

Nkanga responded by asking the audience to write the words: “*threshold of acceptable risk*”. He pointed out that information (having access to sensitive materials or information some people do not want others to reveal or have access to) is the reason why there are attacks, and as such, precautions needed to be taken. One of such precautions is, surrounding oneself with people one can trust as partners. These people need to

be aware of the steps one is taking to stay safe on a daily basis. It is also necessary to have applications that will maximize the security of one’s communications.

Nkanga also spoke about the danger of granting access to applications downloaded on Play Store as some of these applications are put in place by criminals who want to commit cybercrimes and gain access to sensitive information on your device. He said that the digital world is an extension of the physical. Like in the physical world, one can be at risk here too.

Ronald Kakembo was asked to educate the audience about the key things one must know about digital security and how to secure one’s digital footprints. He responded by saying anyone can be a target for hacking, and as such, everyone should keep their safety in mind and regard digital security the same way they regard protecting their home, family and life.

Cecilia Maundu stressed that people must keep themselves updated with new ways of securing themselves from hackers.

Responding to the question of Facebook’s role in securing users’ accounts given the recent digital breaches on their platform, Akua Gyekye said that Facebook has, as is its custom, learnt from what happened, communicated openly with users and taken steps to ensure the breach does not happen again.

PANEL 9

#OfficeOfTheCitizen: HOW LONG WILL YOU RANT?

This session highlighted the use of entertainment to engage citizens on governance issues. The panel was moderated by Nelly Kalu with Oluwatoyin Bayegun (Woli Arole) and Sani Michael (MC Lively) as the panelists.

On the importance of new media in contemporary times, **Woli Arole** spoke on the fact that it has helped them (comedians and people generally in the creative sector) to convey their message especially on what is happening out there in their own way. He also said comedians have the opportunity to sense the pulse of the people because they are connected to two sides of life situations in their day-to-day engagements and bringing out material things to portray the realities of life in their own hilarious ways.

On if it has become difficult to tell jokes within the current political climate, Mc Lively said that it is always difficult to tell political jokes, speaking against the government and speaking for the people. He spoke further on the influence his legal profession as well as his background as a student union activist have on his comedy.

On the causes he is interested in; Mc Lively professed his love for his country and reiterated the importance of things needing to truly get better. Woli Arole on the other hand said he is

more interested in the country as a whole ranging from infrastructure, power, attitude of a typical Nigerian, mindset, exposure, how things can really work to build a new Nigeria. Conclusively, he said nation-building is a major cause for him.

On the contradiction between the premium placed on making profits by comedians and their passion to move Nigeria forward, Woli Arole said the mindset of a Nigerian is very powerful. He said there are *“very few intelligent people in Nigeria”* owing to the fact that the mindset of a typical Nigerian is only interested in junk and things that are not resourceful instead of them to be preoccupied with things that can ‘really’ move the country forward. He used the number of people in attendance at the on-going conference as an example compared to huge crowds that usually

grace an average musical or comedy show which is at variance with realities of the country. In a nutshell, what they produce or their craft is largely determined by what an average Nigerian wants to consume. Thus, the issue is not about what they bring out, but rather about the Nigerian mind which

is not *“intelligent, not advancing, a mind that prefers gossip to nation building, a*

“**Nigerians are very slow to change. The fact that it is difficult does not mean you can't do it.**”

mind which prefers to talk about people more than ideas". Conclusively, as a creative artist or a comedian, it will be killing to gravitate more towards the direction of what will bring about nation building but rather focus on profit because of the demands of the consumers.

Mc Lively buttressed Woli Arole's point on what inspires the content of the craft produced by comedians and entertainers, by speaking further on the need to strike a balance between profit making and at the same time working on trendy issues or flowing with the demands of the time.

On how he manages to engage his followers on different views/opinions as they come, Mc Lively said the mind of a

typical Nigerian is less receptive towards change which makes it rather difficult for them to accept people in different capacities/walks of life. The way out is to engage different people in their space on the fact that it is quite possible for entertainers to have roles outside their major line of calling.

Woli Arole believes that the personality people build overtime helps others to find it easy to accept them in different capacities and roles, because people tend to know you for what you do and as such, create a sense of acceptance.

On if he can speak openly about his political choices, owing to the fact that this might also influence the choice of his



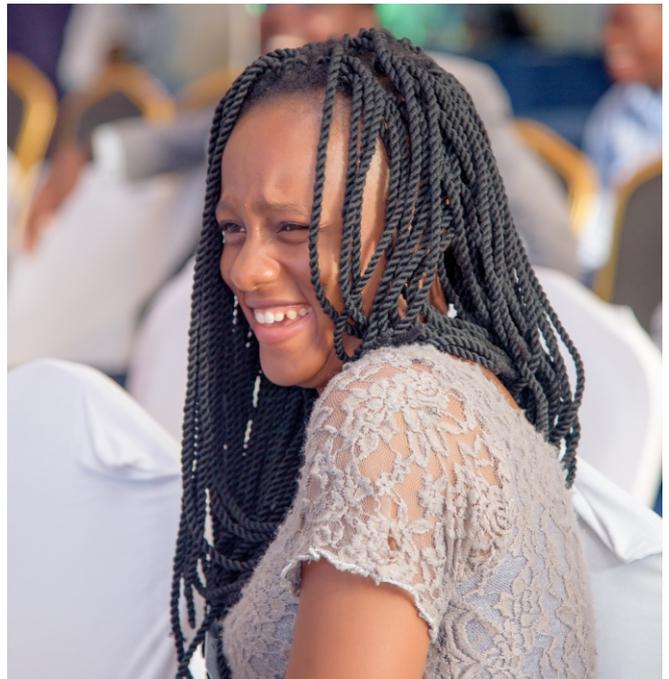
Nelly Kalu, Mc Lively (Sani Michael), Woli Arole (Oluwatoyin Bayegun)

followers, Woli Arole responded by saying every human has the ability of free will and that his responsibility as an influencer is to pitch the options of ideologies, clarify them and give people the options to chose based on what they collectively think can benefit the nation.

Regarding the ‘consent conversation’ on rape going round Twitter and if he thinks rape is something that can be joked about, Mc Lively said jokes can be cracked on rape only in ways that are not offensive especially towards the victims and also which will not bring about the spread of the vice.

On how they are able to communicate to people on what they (comedians) seriously believe in due to their free spirited nature, wildness and spontaneity, Woli Arole reiterated his earlier assertion on personality built over time as key in being able to pass across

messages in serious terms. Mc Lively on the other hand spoke on the need to be intentional about letting people know that one can be serious and that the seriousness can also be seen in the jokes.



SPEAKERS

Adeola Oyinlade is a Nigerian lawyer, and human rights and international law expert.

Adebola Williams is a Nigerian media entrepreneur, journalist, political activist and motivational speaker.

Adeboye Adegoke is the Programme Manager (Digital Rights) at Paradigm Initiative.

Akua Gyekye is Facebook's Policy Manager for West and Central Africa where she leads engagement with government, civil society, and policy influencers on issues relating to privacy, online safety and security, and freedom of expression.

Bukky Shonibare is the founder of The Light Family Empowerment Foundation which coordinates Adopt-A-Camp, Girl Child Africa, and The Skills Centre - aimed at assisting internally displaced persons and promoting girls' and women's rights.

Cecilia Maundu is a digital security trainer and broadcast journalist with the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation.

Chidi Odinkalu is a lawyer and the Senior Team Manager for the Africa Programme of the Open Society Justice Initiative.

Chioma Agwuegbo is Programme Manager at Reboot for the Africa office, leading projects that bring together media, civil society, communities, and government to advance social justice.

Chizobam Ofoegbu is the founder of The Confident Woman Network, and CEO of SheBoss TV.

Chris Ihidero is a theatre actor and director, broadcaster, newspaper columnist, and university lecturer.

Demola Olarewaju is a writer with a background in Nigeria's political history, party tendencies, and ideological activism. He is a contributor to various magazines and journals.

Dr Garba Abari is the Director-General of Nigeria's National Orientation Agency (NOA).

Farida Noubremma is a prolific social activist and writer, recently emerging as the unequivocal voice of Togo's pro-democracy movement.

Fatu Ogwuche is an election technology consultant and Mandela Washington Fellow with an expertise in designing technology for elections and situation rooms.

SPEAKERS

Fisayo Ajala is the researcher on energy, urban governance and civic space sectors at Spaces for Change (S4C).

'Gbenga Sesan is the Executive Director of Paradigm Initiative.

Hamzat Lawal is an activist who has successfully led grassroots campaigns in over 40 African countries. He has over nine years' experience in the non-profit sector and specializes in practical issues associated with climate change, open data, advocacy campaigns, and development policies as they affect rural and deprived grassroots communities.

Isa Mustapha is the State Coordinator, Project Monitoring Partnership - Babura Patriotic Movement.

Jekein Lato-Unah is a Nigerian multi-dimensional artist who describes her work as based on her interaction with her environment.

Kwami Ahiabenu is one of Ghana's foremost experts on information technology and democracy, with over a decade's experience in new media, business strategy, information, and communication technologies and development.

Laila Johnson-Salami is a TV and radio journalist, an advocate for sustainable

development and co-founder of the We Rise Initiative.

Megan Chapman is co-director/co-founder of Justice & Empowerment Initiatives (JEI) - Nigeria.

Olumide Babalola is the managing partner of Olumide Babalola LP and has extensive experience in consumer rights and human rights enforcement litigation.

Ose Anenih is a hotelier, property developer and design consultant who sometimes writes political commentary on the state of the Nigerian nation.

Praise Fowowe is the principal consultant of Praise Fowowe International and founder of Centre for Sex Education and Family Life. He is an internationally acclaimed sexuality education strategist and advisor.

Precious Gaye is a Liberian journalist and social change activist, passionate about gender equality, education and social justice.

Ronald Kakembo is a digital protection consultant with Front Line Defenders operating within sub-Saharan Africa.

Safiyanu Lawal Bichi is the coordinator of Kano Budget Working Group.

SPEAKERS

Sesugh Akume is spokesperson for Abundant Nigeria Renewal Party (ANRP) and the immediate past spokesperson for #BringBackOurGirls and head of its Strategic Communications Team.

Theophilus Abbah is the editor of Sunday Trust.

Uadamen Ilevbaoje is a Programme Manager with BudGIT Foundation, working at the grassroots and sub-national level with communities and states across Nigeria.

Yasmine Bilkis is the founding director of Girl Up Vine Sierra Leone which promotes health, safety, leadership and education of adolescent girls through community outreach and advocacy.



HOSTS

Enough is Enough Nigeria (EiE) is a non-partisan network of individuals and organizations committed to instituting a culture of good governance and public accountability in Nigeria through active citizenship. EiE launched the concept of the #OfficeOfTheCitizen as part of its 5th anniversary activities in 2015 to educate Nigerians on their rights and responsibilities. EiE's #RSVP- Register|Select|Vote|Protect is a key voter education campaign. EiE was an integral part of the #OccupyNigeria movement in 2012 and is very active in the #OpenNASS campaign.



Paradigm Initiative is a social enterprise that builds an ICT-enabled support system and advocates digital rights in order to improve livelihoods for under-served youth. Our programs include digital inclusion programs – such as the Life Skills. ICT. Financial Readiness. Entrepreneurship (LIFE) training program and Tertiary program – and the Digital Rights Program. Across our offices in Nigeria (Aba, Abuja, Ajegunle, Kano, Yaba) and beyond, we work to connect under-served youth with improved livelihoods through our digital inclusion and digital rights programs.



Founded in 2011, **BudgIT** is a civic organization that applies technology to intersect citizen engagement with institutional improvement, to facilitate societal change. A pioneer in the field of social advocacy melded with technology, BudgIT uses an array of tech tools to simplify the budget and matters of public spending for citizens, with the primary aim of raising standard of transparency and accountability in government.



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*Yemi Adamolekun



Conference participant



Chizobam Ofoegbu, Dorothy Njemanze, Chris Ihidero



Woli Arole, Tope Ogundipe, Mc Lively, *Yemi Adamolekun, Gabriel Okeowo



Cross-section of participants

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Project Showcase - ReVoDa



Nelly Kalu, Hamzat Lawal, Fortune Agula Musa



Cross-section of participants



Adebola Williams



Habiba Balogun, Demola Olarenwaju



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