

BIG IDEAS PLATFORM 2024 REPORT

BIG IDEAS

PLATFORM



SCHOOL OF POLITICS,
POLICY & GOVERNANCE

MacArthur
Foundation

Luminate



BIG IDEAS PLATFORM 2024 REPORT

BIG IDEAS

PLATFORM

#FIXPOLITICS



**SCHOOL OF POLITICS,
POLICY & GOVERNANCE**

MacArthur
Foundation

Luminate



CEO'S REMARKS

Alero Ayida-Otobo - CEO, School of Politics Policy and Governance (SPPG)

Mrs. Alero Ayida-Otobo opened the welcome remarks by welcoming the partners, speakers and all the attendees to the second edition of the Big Ideas Platform where ideas are birthed, shared and scaled. She introduced the four incredibly diverse ideas rooted at the intersection of technology and behavioural changes;

1. The blockchain technology which was discussed at the 1st edition of the BIP 2023 and in 2024, its implementation at the unconventional School of Politics, Policy and Governance.
2. Virtual Reality
3. Artificial Intelligence
4. Environmental Awareness

Alero also commended the expansion of the school. SPPG pioneered in Nigeria in 2021, and in Senegal and Kenya by 2023. Zimbabwe and Ghana are ready to kick-start the processes for their schools.

PARTNERS' REMARKS

Toyin Akinniyi - Director for Africa, Luminate

Mrs. Toyin Akinniyi appreciated the School of Politics, Policy and Governance for conveying a conversation on technology at its second edition of the Big Ideas Platform. She shared that development is of great importance hence the proud support from Luminate. She highlighted the need to have an all-round conversation around the general use of technology, rights, safety and ethics as well as the inclusion of Africa in global AI conversations as we explore a narrative change. She hoped that we use the Big Idea Platform to co-create solutions and move from the realm of debates and discussions to action and sustainable development for Africa.

PARTNER REMARKS

Mr. Amara Nwakpa – Director, Shehu Musa Yar'adua Foundation

Mr. Amara Nwakpa welcomed all attendees to the Yar'adua Centre and shared that he was delighted to be part of the second Edition of the Big Ideas Platform. He went on to share that the continent stands at the forefront of new possibilities, offering a unique opportunity to shape its own future. However, amidst these prospects lie significant challenges, including issues of limited accountability and democratic deficits, making it imperative to proceed with caution and vigilance.

Nwakpa stated that within these challenges lies the potential to harness the transformative power of visionary concepts driving globalization. It is crucial to leverage on creativity, innovation, and dedication while ensuring that our endeavours prioritize sustainable development and equitable progress. He concluded by asking that there is a clear narrative to contribute to a more just and prosperous global society through the discussions.

BIP SPEAKERS 2024 THE BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY



By Oluseun Badejo – Project Implementation Specialist

Oluseun Badejo spoke on the implementation of the SPPG Blockchain Certificate Verification System by a team comprising of seven students and the alumni of the 2023 cohorts at the School of Politics, Policy and Governance. Initiated during the EGP 301 class under the guidance of Dr. Andrew Nevin, the project aimed to address the global issue of certificate fraud by leveraging blockchain technology. Sterling Bank provided funding while DX Technologies offered technical expertise for the project realization.

Blockchain technology, recognized for its tamper-resistant distributed ledger system, is projected to contribute significantly to the global GDP by 2030. The adoption of blockchain holds particular relevance for the African Renaissance, aligning with the imperative of technological advancement for societal progress.

The certificate verification system developed by the team targets the pervasive issue of credential authentication, prevalent not only in obscure institutions but also in esteemed ones worldwide. Instances of certificate forgery have been reported in various African countries, underscoring the urgency of a robust verification mechanism.

The SPPG's proactive approach in implementing blockchain solutions demonstrates its commitment to innovation and pragmatic problem-solving. Nigeria has taken strides in formulating a National Blockchain Policy; however, effective implementation remains a challenge in ensuring widespread adoption and sustainability. Overcoming regulatory barriers and promoting awareness about the benefits of blockchain adoption are crucial for scaling the system beyond the SPPG.

The implemented system facilitates the digital issuance of certificates by the SPPG, enabling secure sharing and verification through QR codes. This initiative not only enhances trust among stakeholders but also sets a precedent for widespread adoption across educational institutions and beyond. The SPPG Blockchain Certificate Verification System exemplifies the school's ethos of proactive problem-solving and innovation. By leveraging blockchain technology, the system offers a reliable and transparent solution to the pervasive issue of certificate fraud, laying the groundwork for enhanced trust and accountability in credential verification processes.

BIP SPEAKERS 2024
WASTE MANAGEMENT**By Sian Cuffy-Young –
Founder, Siel Environment**

Sian Cuffy-Young, a waste management advocate from Trinidad and Tobago, addressed pressing environmental concerns, noting them as often overlooked in public discourse. Her journey into waste management began at the age of 11 when a diaper washed ashore and struck her face while swimming with her father. This impactful experience sparked a deep reflection on the disregard for cleanliness in public spaces, prompting her commitment to instigate change. In 2015, she established SIEL Environmental with the vision that transformative waste education begins with individual actions, emphasizing personal responsibility over reliance on governmental or municipal interventions.

She emphasized the global implications of escalating waste generation, citing projections by the United Nations Environment Program that forecast eight countries, including Nigeria, to bear significant responsibility for waste production by 2050. Despite this challenge, Cuffy-Young highlighted Nigerian entrepreneurs like Bilikiss Adebisi and Olufunto Boroffice, who are pioneering innovative solutions to address waste management issues, underscoring the importance of supporting such initiatives.

Exploring the concept of transformative waste education, Cuffy-Young outlined a holistic approach that delves into behavioural change at a fundamental level. This approach involves identifying and addressing barriers to sustainable practices, fostering an understanding of the global impact of individual actions, and adopting an iterative process of testing and refinement. She emphasized the role of culture in shaping attitudes towards waste management, advocating for campaigns that promote responsible consumption and disposal practices.

In concluding her presentation, Cuffy-Young urged the audience to embrace the three Ps: Preparation, Prioritization of methods over content, and Pushing beyond conventional norms. By engaging all stakeholders and fostering a culture of continuous improvement, she emphasized the collective responsibility needed to enact meaningful change towards sustainability.

BIP SPEAKERS 2024

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



By Toyosi Akerele – Founder, Rise Networks.

Toyosi Akerele started out by mentioning that the Vice President of Luminate referenced Artificial Intelligence (AI) ten times in her presentation and this signified the realization of her endeavours in Nigeria and Africa. The extensive efforts she had dedicated to social conditioning among children and young individuals over several years had permeated into the realm of policymaking.

While Akerele acknowledged the plethora of information available on AI initiatives through various online platforms, she found it imperative to underscore the profound impact of envisioning Africa's independent AI infrastructure. Reflecting on the iconic film "The Matrix," she was enthusiastic about engaging secondary school students, recognizing them as the cornerstone of Nigeria and Africa's future. It was not individuals like herself or those departing Nigeria's shores who would shape this future but rather the emerging generation.

The transformative potential of AI on a global scale was undeniable, comparable perhaps only to the advent of electricity. Her big idea is creating platforms that will empower Africa to harness AI effectively in addressing its most pressing challenges.

She expressed gratitude to the MacArthur Foundation for their invaluable support, which had enabled Rise Networks to develop groundbreaking projects such as a career chatbot serving millions of Nigerian youth and the region's inaugural AI-driven fact-checking mobile applications. Ronam, the pioneering AI-powered chatbot in West Africa, employed sophisticated algorithms and linguistic analysis to assess the of information shared on social media platforms.

Deployed during the 2023 elections to combat misinformation, these innovations underscored the commitment to enhancing electoral integrity, a cause Akerele championed since 2010. The proliferation of falsehoods within the political sphere, often perpetuated by vested interests, necessitated robust mechanisms for truth verification. This innovation not only fostered a culture of accuracy but also empowered citizens with reliable information essential for informed decision-making.

Akerele's interaction with industry luminaries such as Elon Musk underscored the global recognition of Africa's growing AI landscape. As articulated by luminaries like Bill Gates and Sam Altman, AI's transformative potential in sectors like education and healthcare was profound. Thus, fostering STEM education among youth emerged as a strategic imperative, considering Nigeria's leading position in global ChatGPT usage.

While AI's impact on public policy and citizen engagement was increasingly evident, Akerele felt it was essential to highlight exemplary initiatives from nations like Singapore, Estonia, and Austria. These pioneering efforts, ranging from data harmonization platforms to AI-integrated judicial systems, offered invaluable insights into AI's potential to revolutionize governance and service delivery.

However, merely emulating these initiatives without contextual adaptation would have been counterproductive. Instead, she urged fostering a culture of innovation, ensuring AI solutions aligned with our unique socio-economic landscape and addressed specific challenges confronting our nation.

Looking ahead, the trajectory of AI development demanded an approach encompassing human-centric policymaking, proactive measures for emergency policy adaptation, and robust frameworks for ethical and legal oversight. Moreover, addressing the digital divide and enhancing digital literacy among educators and policymakers was paramount to harnessing AI's transformative potential fully.

As Rise Networks prepare to debut Africa's first AI-themed film, slated for release in August and subsequent distribution on Netflix, Akerele remains optimistic about the role of storytelling in catalysing societal change. Leveraging influential figures like RMD to champion AI awareness among youth underscored the power of media in shaping perceptions and driving behavioural change.

Ultimately, bridging the gap between AI rhetoric and practical implementation had necessitated concerted efforts to equip the next generation with the requisite skills and resources. By empowering youth with the tools of innovation, Africa can be positioned at the forefront of the global AI revolution, driving sustainable development and prosperity for generations to come.

BIP SPEAKERS 2024

VIRTUAL REALITY



**By Ahmed Salkida –
CEO, HumAngle
Presented by Sabiqah Bello**

Sabiqah Bello represented HumAngle Media and CEO, Ahmed Salkida, at the Big Ideas Platform 2024. Bello explained that HumAngle Media is a niche media organisation that focuses on reporting Africa's conflict, humanitarian and development issues. Their focus lies in the art of storytelling, where they challenge themselves to deliver human-centered and impactful narratives through innovative media. This has encompassed a wide spectrum of mediums, ranging from text-based reporting to multimedia content, geographic information systems, open-source intelligence, virtual reality, and animations. Their overarching vision is Pan-African in nature.

Over the years, they have diligently worked towards expanding their scope, delving beyond the confines of the Lake Chad region to cover issues affecting Africa as a whole. Their approach has been characterized by innovation and immersion. HumAngle intervened and engaged with the women, listened to their stories, and comprehended their grievances and obstacles and subsequently embarking on reporting and advocating for their cause. Within a year, tangible outcomes began to materialize, with hundreds of detained men being released. Presently, over 1,200 individuals have been reunited with their families.

Their overarching goal is to foster empathy through immersive storytelling experiences, with virtual reality serving as a pivotal tool in this endeavour. HumAngle's driving force is the desire to evoke emotions and prompt action through narratives that resonate deeply with individuals. This pursuit has led to the discovery of various storytelling formats, continually expanding the engagement with virtual reality.

In a world inundated with distractions, virtual reality technology offers a unique opportunity to captivate audiences and immerse them in experiences that demand undivided attention. By leveraging this technology, we can transcend physical limitations and transport individuals to remote locales such as IDP camps in Maiduguri, thereby facilitating a deeper understanding of complex issues.

The virtual reality experiences not only raise awareness but also humanize statistics and data surrounding conflicts and violence, fostering empathy and driving positive social impact.

Moreover, it is utilized for mental health management, creating serene and meditative environments to alleviate conditions such as fear and anxiety.

At HumAngle, we prioritize mental health through initiatives like the HumAngle Sanctuary, offering mental health support and therapy to journalists and individuals across diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Through immersive virtual reality experiences, we strive to enhance the quality of life by promoting mental well-being. Support for our work is pivotal as we continue to push the boundaries of immersive storytelling. Whether through technical assistance, financial backing, or project collaborations, your contributions enable us to advance our mission of informing, engaging, and inspiring change through innovative technology.

This is our approach to storytelling. This is how we cultivate empathy. We firmly believe that virtual reality heralds the next frontier in storytelling, and we are committed to being at the forefront of this revolution.

BIG IDEAS 2024 VILLAGE SQUARE CONVERSATION

All participants were once again welcomed to the all-important forum - 2024 Big Ideas Platform, which was held on Africa Day 25th May, 2024 with the Village Square Conversation aired live by Arise News. Four incredibly impactful storytellers spoke about their work and vision. The Big Ideas Platform is a marketplace of ideas, where people come to pitch their ideas, and policy makers listen and are inspired, and citizens also listen and ask questions of themselves and of their duty-bearers. This also allows the private sector players to think on how they can be investors or mentors. The Village Square conversation asked questions around:

- What individual's thoughts were in terms of the big ideas presented.
- Suggestions on how things can be done better.
- What can be done differently.

The Village Square was represented by:

- Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyer - Mayor of Freetown
- Dayo Oyewale - Senior Special Assistant to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on International Cooperation.
- Professor A.S. Imam.
- Uche Andrews - Team lead of the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities.
- Aisha Bello Oreoluwa - Government Girl Secondary School, Dutse.

Representatives from the diaspora/Online;

- Adewola Hamzat – Journalist at African Editor Centre for Collaborative Investigative Journalism (CCIJ).
- Adama Gaye - Co-convener for Senegal #FixPolitics
- Professor Chris Mayaki - Acting executive secretary, National Universities Commission

Village Square Council

- Professor Remi Sonaiya – Co-chair WSG 3, #FixPolitics
- Abiodun Essiet - Senior Special Assistant to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on Community Engagement.
- Professor Bako Suleiman, the DG of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies represented by Dr. Adewale Aderemi.
- Chidera Ejike - Anglican Girls Grammar School.
- Abdulqoyyum Suleiman - Daru Naeem Wasa'adat Model School.
- Jide Akintunde - Director of Nigeria Development and Finance Forum and CEO of Financial Nigeria.
- Frank Nweke II - Co-chair WSG 3, #FixPolitics

Abiodun Essiet, Senior Special Assistant to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on Community Engagement.

Abiodun Essiet shared her thoughts on the prevailing attitudes of individuals towards the environment, which she deemed as unsatisfactory and unfortunately common in Nigeria. She highlighted her own experience while collaborating with the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), where her waste management project, Basa, received recognition in South Korea for its innovative approach. The project not only addressed waste management issues but also empowered informal sector workers to convert waste into wealth.

During the discussion, Essiet raised a question of certification of content in artificial intelligence (AI), particularly concerning personal biases. She emphasized the importance of distinguishing personal biases in AI-generated content and its potential impact on shaping narratives about people's behaviours. Given that individuals input such information, there exists a risk of biases influencing the portrayal of governmental operations and processes. She further questioned how content certification could ensure the accuracy and fairness of portrayals, particularly concerning African perspectives. She noted that many individuals controlling the narrative may not be of African descent, potentially leading to misrepresentations or stereotypes about the continent and its people. In light of this, she advocated for efforts to alter these narratives and promote a more accurate depiction of Africa.

Ajibola Hamzat, African Editor Centre for Collaborative Investigative Journalism (CCIJ).

Ajibola Hamzat announced that the CCIJ is currently engaged in a project concerning the 2023 Nigeria election. The essence of the project lies in the recognition that while technology can be a valuable tool, it also harbors the potential to become a weapon if wielded with ill intent. Therefore, CCIJ has undertaken an investigation into the technological aspects and incidents surrounding the election.

Contrary to the official government statement, indications of various vulnerabilities in the electoral process have surfaced, prompting this investigative initiative. The overarching goal is to safeguard future elections from technological compromise. To achieve this, CCIJ is exploring cloud technology for result collection and dissemination during voting, thereby supporting transparency and integrity.

The findings of this investigation will be disseminated through a comprehensive four-part publication scheduled between June 12th and October 1st. Subsequently, efforts will be directed towards the development of technology aimed at enhancing electoral security. Collaboration with an American organization specializing in cloud technology is underway, with the anticipation of garnering additional support from other entities to fortify the integrity of future elections in Nigeria, ensuring they do not succumb to the vulnerabilities witnessed in 2023.

Dapo Oyewale - Senior Special Assistant to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on International Cooperation

Dapo Oyewale emphasized on the importance of purpose, highlighting Africa's abundant opportunities and potentials, especially with its young population and democratized access to information via technology. However, certain factors impede our progress. Presently, Africa finds itself in a position of unprecedented opportunity. With a growing young population, heightened exposure to global opportunities and possibilities facilitated by social media is evident. Additionally, there has been a democratization of information. Gone are the days when control over TV or radio stations equated to control over information dissemination; now, information is readily accessible to anyone with a smartphone.

Previously, discussions on international relations and global affairs took place behind closed doors, masked in secrecy however; this paradigm has shifted. Platforms such as Twitter now serve as arenas for the dissemination of foreign policy statements, reflecting the changing landscape shaped by advancements like artificial intelligence (AI).

While AI holds immense potential in augmenting human capacities for information sharing and analysis, it is imperative to acknowledge and mitigate associated risks. Historically, Africa has demonstrated a tendency to hastily embrace new technologies without fully considering potential drawbacks. While Oyewale did not discredit the value of AI, likening it to transitioning from driving a Volkswagen Beetle (commonly known as an IJAPA) to a Maserati illustrates the necessity for training, capacity building, and risk awareness.

While advocating for harnessing the benefits of AI, caution must be exercised. Oyewale noted that as he embarks on this technological journey, his focus lies not on personal gain but on contributing to the technological advancement of the government he represents firmly believing that the current administration exhibits a level of tech-friendliness unparalleled in our history.

Jide Akintunde - Nigeria Development and Finance Forum

Jide Akintunde underscored the pivotal role of technology in mitigating societal challenges, emphasizing that without technological advancements, our society would have confronted even graver circumstances. However, he cautioned against contentment predicated on the notion that the current situation is preferable to potential alternatives.

It is imperative, he stated, that we transition from merely averting crises to actively fostering improvement. This necessitates a concerted effort to not only support innovative ideas but also advocate for and implement policies that facilitate tangible advancements rather than merely addressing immediate crises.

Contemplating the trajectory of progress, Akintunde expressed concern regarding the prevailing disinterest and the apparent apathy of negative forces. Despite ongoing efforts, perceivable progress remains intangible. He emphasized the imperative of inspiring societal advancement, acknowledging that no single individual possesses all the answers. It is incumbent upon us, he urged, to collectively inspire and propel society towards tangible progress, avoiding complacency in favour of proactive measures aimed at effecting substantive change.

Uche Andrews - Team lead: Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities

Uche Andrews expressed her gratitude for the opportunity provided by the SPPG's Big Idea platform to contribute to inclusivity, emphasizing the importance of equality and equity in program participation. She further advocated for genuine inclusion, emphasizing the need for societal shifts in attitudes and behaviours towards disability. Highlighting the significance of language in shaping perceptions, she promoted the use of respectful terminology. Additionally, she spoke on the potential of blockchain technology in improving access to educational resources. Overall, she encouraged collaborative efforts to promote social inclusion and propel Africa towards greater competitiveness and prosperity. In conclusion, she shared that she was encouraged by the innovative ideas presented, which underscore the pivotal role of technology in bridging gaps and promoting social inclusion. Through collaborative efforts and forward-thinking policies, we can propel Africa towards greater competitiveness and prosperity in the global arena.

Aisha Bello – GSS Dutse

Aisha Bello was captivated by the presentation by HumAngle on the use of virtual reality to develop empathy in Nigeria's large number of IDPs. However, it raised a question on how accessible and effective the technology will be and what does HumAngle hope to achieve by 2030? In response, Sabiqah Bello stated that HumAngle have started the work with virtual reality and storytelling, and only hopes to expand by going into conflict areas and hard to access places and getting stories to the right audience. They also hope to get stories to policy makers and advocates to ensure that they are able to create positive social impact. With a long-term goal of revolutionize storytelling and journalism and not make it only profitable, but also life-changing.

Chidera Ejike - Anglican Girls Grammar School

Chidera Ejike was excited to gain more insights on the blockchain technology especially as it was mentioned that the blockchain technology would increase Nigerians' GDP to 29 million by 2030.

Professor Chris Maiyaki - Acting Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission

Chris Maiyaki shared that the National Universities Commission affirms its readiness to engage in collaborative efforts with all stakeholders, including development partners and public-spirited individuals, towards the digitization of administrative, academic, and teaching delivery systems. This initiative aims to enhance the efficiency of universities, particularly addressing prolonged processes, such as access to results and transcripts in public universities, which can be advanced through technology adoption. It is evident that technology offers multifaceted solutions capable of transforming the higher education sector in Nigeria, while fostering revenue generation. There is clear acknowledgment of the efficiency of technology and its potential to incorporate evolving best practices, thereby transforming the landscape of higher education in the country.

Professor Remi Sonaiya – Co-Chair WSG 3 #FixPolitics

Remi Sonaiya shared her thoughts on the enthusiasm evoked by the advancements witnessed in the technology sector. She described that it is imperative to acknowledge that technology serves as a double-edged sword, capable of both positive and negative impacts. Henceforth, a logical approach is necessary, wherein we remain discerning and resolute regarding the utilization of these technological advancements. Primarily, the ethical dimension emerges as a pivotal concern, alongside considerations of character and capacity. However, it is encouraging to observe strides being made towards addressing these facets, particularly within the realm of political stability.

Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyer – Mayor of Freetown

Yvonne Aki-Sawyer highlighted the two paramount issues confronting our continent presently as the climate crisis and the pervasive youth unemployment, which persists at significant levels across Africa. She agreed that the discussions led by the four speakers, have touched upon areas with potential for substantial impact in addressing these challenges.

Aki-Sawyer went ahead to share that the management of waste emerges as a critical aspect requiring attention, not only for fostering health outcomes but also for creating employment opportunities. Consequently, emphasis on waste education is deemed crucial, alongside a

focus on civic responsibility. While individuals play a pivotal role in addressing these challenges, it is imperative to recognize that overcoming barriers necessitates policy interventions and interactions.

Regarding blockchain technology, the theme of integrity resurfaces, underscoring the importance of civil responsibility. While blockchain offers solutions, there exists a deeper societal self-examination concerning moral education and ethical behaviours. This self-examination extends into the realm of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

To advance as a continent, it is imperative to bridge the gap between theoretical discussions and their tangible impact on everyday lives, particularly in the context of virtual reality. Initiatives such as HumAngle, aimed at fostering empathy, are essential in this endeavour. As a continent, we possess the inherent potential to rise to these challenges and harness the opportunities presented by emerging technologies.

Otive Ibuzo

Otive Ibuzo shared that he found all the presented ideas profoundly inspiring, instilling in us a sense of hope for the possibilities within our generation. It is imperative that we, as leaders, furnish the requisite guidance and strategic direction to actualize these ideas into tangible actions. This collective effort offers a beacon of hope for the African continent, signifying the potential for transformative change.

Frank Nweke Jr. - Co-Chair WSG 3 #FixPolitics

As a member of both the Fix Politics and SPPG families, Frank Nweke expressed that he was deeply immersed in the discourse. He highlighted that the session was particularly revitalizing, as he witnessed the exchange of profound thoughts and insights from various advocates promoting significant ideas. However, he diverted everyone's attention to an aspect often overlooked—the role of government in addressing critical issues.

Consider, for instance, the alarming statistics indicating that nine out of ten children in Africa between the ages of zero to ten lack basic literacy and numeracy skills, as revealed by research conducted by Human Capital Africa. Moreover, during a recent visit to the United States, He attended a national conference on AI convened by Eric Schmidt, the founder of Google, with a focus on national competitiveness. Schmidt's transition from the private to the public sector underscores a crucial realization—that despite advancements in research and technology, the pace of societal progress often lags behind.

It is imperative to acknowledge that Africa is obviously absent from global discussions on artificial intelligence and technological advancement. He further stated that Dr. Obiageli

Ezekwesili who was present at the said conference reminded the audience of Africa's demographic significance, boasting the most youthful population globally. By 2030 or 2050, Africa is poised to become one of the most populous regions worldwide, while other continents witness demographic decline. This demographic trend underscores the imperative for Africa to feature prominently on the global agenda, as the world's needs continue to evolve.

Toyosi Akinrele – Rise Networks

Toyosi Akinrele was pleased to hear several remarks concerning artificial intelligence during the discussion. She addressed the concerns regarding job displacement due to Artificial Intelligence, in addition to the risks associated with misinformation and disinformation. She shared that it is essential to recognize that it is not Artificial Intelligence itself that displaces jobs, but rather individuals equipped with the knowledge and skills in AI who may potentially replace traditional roles.

To mitigate these risks, it is imperative to cultivate a new generation of individuals capable of competing on a global scale. She commended the National Universities Commission (NUC) for addressing the issue of disabilities, and she was particularly intrigued by the suggestion to leverage AI in developing an audio-to-text project. This initiative would facilitate access to information for individuals with disabilities, exemplifying a proactive approach to inclusivity.

However, it is crucial to acknowledge the inherent risks associated with AI adoption. Focus should be on empowering the populace with the necessary skills and competencies to harness AI effectively. This approach ensures that the data generated and utilized, including contributions to platforms such as ChatGPT, are primarily sourced from and managed by our own citizens, rather than.

THE REVEAL: 2025 Big Ideas Platform.

For 2025 BIP, it is anticipated that there will be an enlightening session featuring speakers who will address various aspects of mental health, including brain health. Notably, Chine and Chuba Ezekwesili who are slated to participate in this panel.

Big Ideas 2025 Preview:

Chine Ezekwesili shared that the forthcoming discussion promises to delve into the profound topic of liberating minds. As Africans, our progress is hindered by mental constraints that have been imposed upon us. However, we possess the inherent capacity to overcome these barriers. He stated he eagerly anticipate engaging in dialogue on strategies to unlock our potential and ensure that, alongside the advancement of artificial intelligence, our innate intelligence flourishes to its fullest extent.

Mr. Anthony Ubani - Executive Director #FixPolitics

Mr. Anthony Ubani described the happenings at the 2024 big ideas platform as “very compelling and exciting,” noting that they offer hope for the possibilities, opportunities and potentials of information technology to advance progress in Africa. He went on to welcome the founder of the #FixPolitics initiative, the visionary founder and chairperson of the groundbreaking School of Politics, Policy, and Governance, Dr. Obiageli Ezekwesili. He stated that it was with great privilege and honour to extend an invitation to her as she has emerged as one of the most influential leaders of this century from Africa. He described her as a distinguished public policy expert, an ardent advocate for democracy and good governance, and an indefatigable reformist with a wealth of innovative ideas.

Dr. Obiageli Ezekwesili – Founder #FixPolitics

Dr. Obiageli Ezekwesili extended her sincere gratitude to all attendees for gracing the Big Ideas Platform 2024 with their presence. She was particularly excited about the attendance especially as it coincided with the 2024 Africa Day celebration. She shared that there is a tendency for ideas to start, and then for ideas to die and it is the rate of death of ideas that distinguishes one country from the other and one continent from the other. Ezekwesili went further to state that it is not for the death of ideas that we are stuck in being laggards in development but the fact that we are not consistent in nurturing ideas to completion. It is paramount to recognize that women, young people, and technology serve as the catalysts for change on our continent. Hence, our focus this year on technology and behavioural change is of utmost significance.

While calling for collaboration to ensure that the big ideas platform indeed becomes so transformational in the African continent, she also noted in her address, that there is an agenda - Africa 2063 that will not amount to anything if we do not generate big ideas.

Dr Ezekwesili stated “One thing we know of Technology is its incredible exponential capacity to transform and change things. The dynamism of the efficiency that technology unlocks for societies is only possible for a people who are ready to behaviourally change and this is the greatest difficulty that we have. The failure of governance on our continent is the death knell of ideas. We are not a continent destined for failure. The failure of governance is actually in the realm of behavioural change. It is the adaptive challenges that we fail to tackle that have kept us stuck in a low equilibrium performance, whereas other continents understand how to quickly use knowledge and ideas to advance their progress. We stay stuck in low intensity realm of what is possible.”

She hoped that participants were inspired through the focus on virtual reality, Artificial Intelligence (AI), blockchain technology and environmental awareness. She expressed confidence in the younger generation, hoping that the African continent 'makes it because of

them.' She also advised against the 'e no concern me attitude' put up by some persons when it comes to issues of development.

She crowned her speech by promising to return with the proof of the implementation of ideas shared in 2024 because “we are not a forum for talk; we are a forum for talk and do.”

ADMISSIONS

Dr. Abiola Akiyode Afolabi – DEAN School of Politics Policy and Governance

Dr. Abiola shared that for an extensive duration, there was a search for an alternative, and the School of Politics, Policy, and Governance (SPPG) represents precisely that alternative. She went on to say that her recent involvement with the SPPG over the past few months has been a transformative experience, one that she believes is indispensable for Nigeria. SPPG's approach is markedly unconventional because we defy conventional norms and refuse to remain passive observers in the face of adversity.

The SPPG produces a generation of leaders who are resolute in their commitment to effecting change in the country—leaders who are visionary, determined, and prepared. Consequently, we are unapologetic in our advocacy for the widespread adoption of this institution.

Temilola Achakobe

Ms. Temilola Achakobe stated that remarkable ideas had been shared throughout the BIP event. Bold and transformative ideas that have their origins in joining the School of Politics, Policy, and Governance. SPPG classrooms are not lacking in depth; they are packed with richness, rich in ideas, personalities, and information. She gladly announced that applications were open for the 2025 session while urging interested candidates to register and join the School of Politics, Policy, and Governance.

BIG IDEAS

PLATFORM