

BIG IDEAS

PLATFORM

BIG IDEAS PLATFORM 2025

**BRAIN HEALTH AND
MENTAL WELL-BEING**



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MENTAL WELL-BEING**

#FIXPOLITICS



**SCHOOL OF POLITICS,
POLICY & GOVERNANCE**

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OPENING

Platform (BIP) 2025 kicked off with the singing of the National Anthem by all. A video providing a brief recap of the BIP 2024 followed.

Big Ideas Platform 2024 Video Highlight

The 2024 edition highlighted four big ideas:

1. Transformative waste management as the duty of all.
2. Leveraging blockchain technology as a digital ledger for storing tamper-proof certificates.
3. Leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) to create platforms for tackling Africa's challenges.
4. Using virtual reality experiences to address policy-making and challenges.

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



The CEO welcomed all to the BIP 2025 edition. She reiterated what the acronym BIP stands for:

B for Bold
I for Innovative
P for Pioneering

She reminded guests of Toyosi Akerele-Ogunsiji's big 2024 idea, which was to leverage AI to create the future of Africa. She then noted that, 12 months later, on April 18 2025, the first African AI picture film was born. The movie, which was ideated and announced at the BIP 2024, is a landmark, disruptive, and foundational future-shifting movie and was made to show the world that 'people who make it in life do not have two heads.'

The CEO stated that the BIP 2025 would focus on brain health and mental well-being, which have been gaining global attention. The mental well-being of individuals, communities, and future generations is becoming more evident. Neglecting one's mental well-being has a significant effect on the productivity of the family and the nation at large. Alero explained that the BIP 2025 would examine how brain health affects mental well-being, decision-making in policy spheres, and personal interactions and choices. Brain health shapes the ability to

Opening Remarks

respond to trauma, either breaking the cycle or perpetuating it. Data from the WHO shows that 1 in 3 people develop a neurological disorder at some point in their lives. Anyone can suffer from these disorders if their mental well-being is not protected to avoid burnout. The WHO Data also shows that low and middle-income countries account for 70% of brain diseases and disorders globally.

This year's BIP aimed to open our minds to what needs to be done to contain this global pandemic. Its importance is seen in the consequences of poor brain health, which extend beyond an individual to national economies and human capital. More data from the WHO shows that 43% of children in low and middle-income countries fail to reach their full cognitive development potential due to extreme poverty. Alero suggested that the reason some students underperform in exams like the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) may be because they already suffer from reduced cognitive ability. The seed from their first 5 to 10 years is what manifests when they become teenagers. They do not perform well in exams that determine their future, because they do not understand the questions, nor have the capacity to answer them.

Alero described the BIP 2025 as an avenue to decide on support for children and young adults experiencing delayed brain development due to socioeconomic challenges. She addressed the growing prevalence of stress-related disorders in adults, and cognitive decline and dementia in the elderly. The contributions from the BIP 2025 speakers provided space for innovators in mental well-being to present transformative ideas, highlight their remarkable work and its impact, and engage with policymakers. She hoped that through the event, decision makers would be challenged to take action, innovators would be encouraged to collaborate, and citizens would be inspired to launch initiatives that create ripple effects across Africa.

Alero introduced the keynote speaker, Dr Emma Sky, from the Yale International Leadership Centre (Yale ILC), whose speech would focus on emotional intelligence in governance and policy making. Alero thanked the thought leadership directorate of the unconventional SPPG for the hard work in organising this event. She also appreciated Dr Amina Salihu, and her assistant, Hauwa Mohammed, for leading the team.

In closing, the SPPG CEO defined the SPPG as a laboratory where the programmes designed would announce the next community of political leaders who possess the 3Cs: Character, Competence, and Capacity. SPPG trains and supports entry into politics and public service, raising a new generation of political and public leaders. She highlighted the launch of the SPPG Network of Public Leaders, which took place a day before. The Network comprises graduates who have completed the rigorous 10-month programme designed to empower every political leader to step into position and address the challenges facing Africa. The SPPG, which started in Nigeria, saw its first Senegal graduates in April 2025 and has launched in Kenya and Ghana. The school is raising individuals who will challenge bad governance in the political ecosystem, listen to the citizens, and deliver effective governance to help Africa rise and take its rightful position in the global arena. She finally encouraged everyone present to ensure that their mindset towards mental health and well-being was transformed, disrupted, and revolutionised to approach things in a new and different way.



REMARKS BY PARTNER: YAR'ADUA FOUNDATION

Mr Amara Nwankpa, representing the Yar'Adua Foundation, opened the session with powerful insights into the evolving global landscape, particularly the intersection of technology, innovation, and human development. He emphasised how rapidly the tech space is transforming lives across sectors, from governance to education to health, and how innovation, when guided by empathy and a sense of community, can have far-reaching impacts.

One of the most striking parts of his remarks centred around mental health, a subject often neglected in mainstream conversations, particularly in the African context. Nwankpa made a passionate case for placing mental health at the centre of public discourse and policy. In a powerful statement, he declared, 'Care is not weakness. Weakness is not retreat.' These words underscored his belief that caring for others, especially those dealing with mental health issues, is a form of strength and social responsibility.

Nwankpa urged the participants, policymakers, innovators, students, and leaders, to take an active role in creating awareness, building support systems, and challenging the stigma that surrounds mental health challenges in our communities. He noted that mental health has become one of the greatest challenges of our time, and that addressing it requires collective will, immediate action, and sustained commitment.

In welcoming participants to the BIP 2025, he reaffirmed the Yar'Adua Foundation's commitment to championing mental health advocacy in Nigeria and beyond. Through partnerships, public dialogue, and resource support, the Foundation continues to stand with individuals and families facing mental health struggles, providing not just awareness but tangible interventions to foster healing and hope.



KEYNOTE
ADDRESS
BY DR EMMA
SKY,
FOUNDING
DIRECTOR,
YALE ILC

Dr Sky began by thanking all in attendance for the BIP 2025, which marked Africa Day, a day dedicated to celebrating Africa's freedom and future. The well-being of an individual is deeply connected to the context they live in and the opportunities to develop to their full potential, lead productive lives, and contribute to society, Sky said. The well-being of an individual is therefore related to the well-being of the community, country, and continent. She argued that living and working in conflict-inflicted societies and those with gross inequality brings the recognition of trauma on people's psyches, the humiliation of living under corrupt and incompetent leaders, frustration about injustice, and lack of opportunities. The woes inflicting Africa and the amplifying and reinforcing of the perception of a better life elsewhere by social media cause anxiety and mental health problems.

This year, SPPG students, when asked about the policy issue of focus, chose food and security. A large number of the students did not have access to stable electricity and the internet. A life worth living and worthy of humanity cannot be talked about if people cannot meet their basic needs.

Sky's Big Idea was *a positive vision for Africa's future and a horizon of hope*. She projected that by 2050, a quarter of the world's population, 2.5 billion people, will be African. If Sub-Saharan Africa can raise its productivity growth from 1% per year to about 4% (close to India's), by 2050, Africa's share of output will be 10%, accounting for a fifth of global growth. She noted that, amongst other factors, if Africa makes a quicker democratic transition, expand and improve education, increase infrastructure investment and boost agricultural and manufacturing productivity, it would achieve greater bargaining power globally. Sky proposed the pathway to realising this horizon of hope as human capital and talent in Africa.

Sky credited African innovators and investors like Tarek Mouganie (Ghana), Tokunboh Ishmael (Nigeria), and Abdouramane Diallo (Cote d'Ivoire). She hailed climate change champions like James

Muwonge, Soraya Hosni, and Hyppolite Ntigurirwa, while applauding the work of storytellers Stephanie Busari, and soul musician Asa. All the individuals mentioned are Yale Fellows, role models, and people through whom Africa's future can be re-imagined.

These new generations of leaders are being cultivated at the SPPG and supported by the ILC Yale. The workshop of the SPPG graduates held the previous day. At the event, the emerging leaders spent time imagining an optimistic future for Nigeria and how to get there. The participants displayed commitment and character in their quest to build a better Nigeria. These emerging leaders are leaders of a stable society. Mindful of the quote by Socrates, 'the unexamined life is not worth living,' three pertinent questions were asked:

1. You've got one life. How are you going to live it?
2. How are you going to use your leadership position for the benefit of the less fortunate?
3. What are you going to do to make your time on earth meaningful?

Africa has got the hustle to harness and a youthful population that can be the force for change. The pathway to possible requires a new generation of ambitious leaders who can inspire populations with the vision for better public goods, a crackdown on corruption, and making governance effective. This will harness the hustle, attract investments, create larger and more dynamic private sectors, and make more productive large firms that bring talent and tech together efficiently. It will lead to productivity gains and economic transformation.

The mental health crisis, seen as a leadership crisis, is not unique to Africa. More severe in Africa is the lack of leaders who understand the dangers of neglect and are committed to enabling citizens develop to their full potential so they can lead productive lives. This will make a tremendous contribution to addressing the brain health and mental well-being of Africans. Dr Sky closed with the powerful statement: the well-being of everyone in the world will depend on the next generation of African leaders and the flourishing future of Africa.



SPEAKERS

DR
ANDREW
NEVIN,
DIRECTOR
OF
BRAINNOMICS
VENTURE

Dr Andrew Nevin's presentation focused on the concept of brain health and cognitive performance, a topic often overlooked in discussions about personal and national development. His Big Idea at the BIP 2025 was rooted in a simple but powerful truth: The brain is the most important and modifiable part of the human body.

Dr Nevin, Director of Brainnomics Venture, began his session by reflecting on a transformative meeting with Dr Obiageli Ezekwesili in Berlin, where Dr. Ezekwesili introduced him to the mission of the School of Politics, Policy, and Governance (SPPG). Inspired by the institution's vision and impact, he expressed deep admiration for the strides SPPG has made and the potential it holds for Africa's future.

He emphasised that just like our muscles can grow stronger with exercise, our brains can be shaped and enhanced through intentional practices. He explained that neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to change and adapt, means that how we use our brains daily has a profound impact on our emotional and cognitive well-being.

Dr Nevin cited scientific research showing how the brain can recover and even thrive after injury or disease. Yet even in the absence of illness, everyday habits can either build up or wear down our brain's capabilities. He noted that every action from the moment we wake up to when we go to sleep affects the brain in some way. While positive activities like exercise, mindfulness, and quality sleep can enhance brain function, he cautioned against modern stressors such as chronic stress, sleep deprivation, constant multitasking, and digital overload, all of which can impair brain health over time.

Dr Nevin made a particularly strong point about multitasking, describing it as one of the most damaging yet normalised behaviours, especially within Nigerian society. He explained that trying to do too many things at once leads to cognitive fragmentation, where none of the tasks receive full attention and the brain becomes overstimulated and fatigued. 'Multitasking damages the

brain every single time you do it,' he warned. 'You are the architect of your own brain,' Dr. Nevin noted on the need for people to become more intentional about how they use their mental resources. According to him, brain health is more than just being smart or productive. It encompasses cognitive sharpness, emotional stability, social connectedness, and a sense of personal purpose.

To drive his message home, Dr Nevin introduced a short brain performance quiz to help participants reflect on their daily habits:

Brain Health Self-Assessment Quiz

The quiz: (all on a scale from 0 = all the time to 4 = never)

1. How often are you on your phone as soon as you open your eyes in the morning and until you close them at night?
2. How often are you engaging in multiple tasks or conversations simultaneously?
3. How often are you in back-to-back meetings or tasks without taking breaks in between?
4. How often are you cruising on autopilot?
5. How often are you sitting at your desk for hours on end?
6. How often do you tackle your to-do list in whatever order it appears?
7. How often do you reach the end of your workday and have no energy left for your personal life?

Score Guide:

- 0-7: Running on empty
- 8-15: Low power mode
- 16-23: Good Power
- 24-32: Fully charged

Dr Nevin concluded with a reminder that everyone is essentially their own neuro-engineer. 'You are the CEO of your own brain,' he said. 'And how you manage it will shape not just your health, but your happiness, your relationships, and your legacy.'



ANIKEADE
FUNKE-TREASURE
AKINTOYE,
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR,
ILLUMINATE
NIGERIA
DEVELOPMENT
AND NETWORK
CONVENER,
SANITARY PAD
MEDIA CAMPAIGN

As a compère of the BIP 2023 and a speaker for the BIP 2025, Anikeade Funke-Treasure Akintoye came with 28 years of experience working in the media and 6 years of experience as a campaigner, community organiser, and scholar in menstrual health. Her Big Idea, “Destigmatising Menstruation Through Open Dialogue in the Media,” cited the influence the media can wield in changing the narratives about menstrual health.

Akintoye argued that ‘blood is life and menstruation plays a crucial role in perpetuating the human population and is the site for a lot of things for women.’ She defined mental health as a person’s condition with regard to their psychological and emotional well-being. It is the foundation for emotions, thinking, communication, learning, resilience, self-esteem, and hope. It stems from a complex interplay of biological, psychological, and environmental factors.

The podcast ‘My Period Stories’ was created to show the impact of menstruation on the mental health in menstruators, deal with the silence around periods, and spotlight the issues around dysmenorrhea. It tries to normalise period conversations and use storytelling to amplify the narratives and challenges of people from low-income communities, those with disabilities, and other menstruators who face disorders like fibroid complications and endometriosis. The podcast also highlights the pre-colonial celebratory narrative of menstruation. This calls for reframing menstrual health from being seen as a curse, burden, or source of shame to prioritising menstrual dignity.

Akintoye’s speech focused on the intersection of menstrual health and mental health and advised policymakers to consider ‘introducing a mental health unit either as a standalone or merged with the guidance/counselling unit in schools.’ She called on innovators to include the African narrative celebrating menstruation in all they do. The public should empathise with menstruators, especially those with complications.

An important bill to be passed by the Bauchi state government was spotlighted. The bill, if passed, will see pad banks available in schools and prisons.

In closing, Akintoye called on Nigerian policymakers to consider introducing menstrual leave in the labour laws as Zambia has done, to enable women be more productive. Menstruation matters, and so do the ways we talk about it, write, and illustrate it.



CHUBA AND CHINEMELUM EZEKWESILI

Chuba and Chinemelum, creative storytellers and mental health advocates, took the stage to present their nature-based approach to emotional intelligence and mental well-being. They began by highlighting the growing mental health crisis in Nigeria, noting the deep-seated stigma and lack of emotional literacy that keep people suffering in silence.

Their Big Idea for the BIP 2025 was a unique, nature-inspired, science-backed framework called 'The Framework of Intention.' This framework was developed during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, a time of global uncertainty and personal introspection. They shared a moving story of how they coped during that period by gardening daily and converting the concrete walkway of their studio into a vibrant botanical garden. What began as a coping mechanism evolved into a powerful metaphor for growth, patience, and intentionality.

Their framework is grounded in three core principles:

1. **Slow Down:** In a world of speed and distraction, slowing down is a revolutionary act. They explained that slowing down gives the mind space to reflect, recharge, and reset. It allows individuals to become more aware of their thoughts and emotions, enabling clearer decision-making and deeper connections.
2. **Be Grateful:** They emphasised the role of gratitude in rewiring the brain for positivity. Gratitude helps to reframe challenges as opportunities and builds emotional resilience. 'When we focus on gratitude, we cultivate a mindset that attracts hope and abundance,' they said.
3. **Take Responsibility:** The final step in the framework encourages individuals to take ownership of their emotions, reactions, and choices. By doing so, people gain the power to shape their lives instead of being driven by external forces. Responsibility, they explained, is not

about blame but empowerment.

They also shared how this framework can be applied to real-life emotional challenges, like anger.

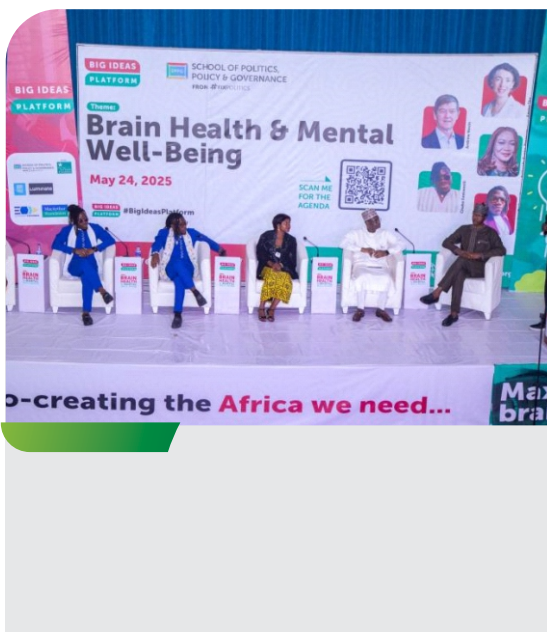
Chuba and Chinemelum closed their presentation by encouraging participants to reconnect with nature, with self, and with purpose. Their message was one of healing, mindfulness, and reclaiming personal agency through intentional living.

SPOKEN WORD



Poet Esinet Kolade gave a powerful recital, 'The Clarion Call,' themed around the nurturing of the mind and Africa's challenges. The performance called for the youth and people of Nigeria and Africa to rise.

VILLAGE SQUARE CONVERSATIONS



The conversation, designed to generate new ideas, was moderated by Rex Rim-Rukeh, Co-creator, #FixPolitics Africa. Panelists included Dr Muhammad Raji Mahmud, Mr Kamry Apollo, Ms Priscilla Usiobaifo, Chuba and Chinemelum Ezekwesili, and Anikeade Funke-Treasure Akintoye.

QUESTION 1: What does the problem of mental health look like for Nigerian citizens and the government?

Dr Muhammad Raji Mahmud: There is a lack of adequate data on the enormous mental health challenges in the country, as the cases seen in the

hospitals are few. The importance of mental health is not recognised by society, and the stigma associated with mental health challenges leads to silence. Mental health stress triggers can be seen in different demographics in society, for example, access to quality education, transportation challenges for students in public schools, and bureaucratic processes in the workplace.

QUESTION 2: What do you think about feeding data to government institutions? What does the data look like?

Priscilla Usiobaifo: An argument for SGBV cases cannot be made to policymakers without evidence from data. The national GBV dashboard set up post-COVID and the BraveHeart Initiative (BHI) SGBV dashboard show and analyse cases of SGBV, which can be tracked by the government and be used as justification for response.

QUESTION 3: What can be done by society and policymakers for the young generation and girls undergoing menstruation who are facing poverty and a lack of proper nutrition needed for brain health development?

Anikeade Funke-Treasure Akintoye: The present Nigerian government needs to be more committed to the school feeding programme, especially in the rural areas, to prevent absenteeism. The overall well-being of the children should be considered, and we need to prioritise the local government level to deal with nutrition and menstruation.

QUESTION 4: What do mental health issues look like in Nigeria? What is overlooked as normal but is a sign of a mental health issue? How do we sell the idea of the impact and consequences of mental health to the government?

Anikeade Funke-Treasure Akintoye: Both the young and old are affected. The erroneous belief is that mental health has to do with adults alone, but children and teenagers experience it as well. The living conditions in Nigeria are a stress factor that affects teenagers, leading to anxiety and fear. A lot of young menstruators are affected by the lack of access to pads, which leads to vulnerability and them being preyed on by the wrong individuals.

Chuba and Chinemelum Ezekwesili: The challenging environmental conditions in Nigeria affect the mental health and economic productivity of individuals and the country.

Priscilla Usiobaifo: Poverty breeds violence. There is a strong link between hungry children and sexual violence. The economic crisis facing the country has led to more people being poor, which translates to children not having enough nutrition to sustain them in school, and ultimately leads to exploitation and affects their mental health. These children grow up to become dysfunctional adults who may continue the cycle of violence and exploitation.

Dr Muhammad Raji Mahmud: Targeted response using data. It is important to look at mental health holistically from the angle of biology and genetics, where some disease traits can be transferred from one generation to the other, individual characteristics and lifestyle, environmental factors like war torn regions in Nigeria, socioeconomic challenges, and government policies which do not prioritise mental health issues. There needs to be intentional efforts to get country-wide data from the field to be able to make informed policies that target individuals, socioeconomic factors, and access to health care.

Kamry Apollo: Role of the media. There is stigma associated with the word mental health. Education is needed to create awareness around the meaning and types of mental health challenges. Most people are undereducated about the critical things of importance. The situation of North-East Nigeria, where individuals grow up in a violence-filled environment, affects the mental state of these individuals as well as the future of the region. To ensure that children are given proper nutrition for brain health development, the media needs to insist on the proper execution of the school feeding programme.

QUESTION 5: How do we evaluate the mental health of our leaders to ensure that decision makers are in the right frame of mind? How do individuals reorient themselves after going through mental health challenges? How do government officials and decision makers reorient themselves to ensure better decision-making with a sound mind?

Chuba and Chinemelum Ezekwesili: Transformation of mindset and mental health can come from citizens practising 'The Framework.' Government officials need to enrol in the SPPG to get the right knowledge to back up good intentions. Structures should be created to ensure that people elected to lead should undergo periodic mental evaluation.

QUESTION 6: What should the government do for itself to ensure that decisions are made from a place of a sound mind?

Kamry Apollo: Communities should be treated on a need basis by the government by finding out and solving the unique challenges of each community.

Dr Muhammad Raji Mahmud: All individuals, both citizens and government, need to look inwards and find how best to carry oneself and impact others. The government needs to focus on and nurture a healthy younger generation. Rough statistics show that 80-90 per cent of Nigerians have gone through mental health issues at a point in their lives, 2 out of 10 Nigerians have either depression or anxiety, with 80 per cent not having access to any health care. These issues need to be addressed.

Priscilla Usiobaifo: There is a need for the government to subsidise mental health services. Organisations need to take responsibility for their staff's mental health. BHI has integrated the seven approaches to mental well-being, and other organisations should do so as well. The approaches can be found on the BHI website and include:

1. All work should be fulfilment and purpose-driven
2. Prioritise self-care and sleep
3. Nutrition and exercise
4. Positive outlook on life
5. Stress management and identifying stressors
6. Normalise conversations around mental wellness
7. Medical care

Chuba and Chinemelum Ezekwesili: The government should bring more spaces of nature into the environment as a form of free therapy for mental wellness.

Anikeade Funke-Treasure Akintoye: The use of social media platforms for spreading toxicity should be curtailed for the sake of mental wellness.

QUESTIONS AND FEEDBACK FROM THE AUDIENCE

Daniel Uche: What is the role of parenting, the education system, and religious organisations on brain health and mental well-being in Nigeria?

Priscilla Usiobaifo: Religious leaders are a big challenge for those working in the mental health space. They fuel the narrative that there is no need to seek professional medical help for mental health issues, and spiritualise mental health challenges. Parents contribute to mental stress for young persons by putting pressure on the unmarried to get into toxic unions, which has led to an increase in cases of femicide. Young men are pressured to make money at all costs, leading to an increase in abuse of drugs, cyber fraud, and embezzlement by politicians.

Iweze Rose from Environmental Management and Occupational Health: There exists a department of mental health in the Federal Ministry of Health, and a mental health policy which is not being implemented. Mental health can be linked with climate change, insecurity, and the environment. How can we advocate for the implementation of the existing mental health policy?

Zeenat Yusuf from Ansaru Deen International School: How can we alleviate the mental state of depression that results from menstruation or the lack of it?

Anikeade Funke-Treasure Akintoye: Speak up and share concerns with a parent, guardian, or teacher so that medical help can be sought for.

Linking climate change with mental health as it relates to menstruators, a major challenge is the disposal of pads and menstrual waste. Advocacy is going on for moving from disposables to the climate-friendly reusables, such as the menstrual cups and the washable pads.

SPPG ADMISSION ANNOUNCEMENT: PRESENTED BY TEMILOLA ACHAKUBE, HEAD OF ADMISSIONS

The highlight of this session was the official announcement of the opening of applications for the SPPG Class of 2026. To mark the moment, a short but powerful video was shown, summarising the state of our nation, a country in crisis due to poor leadership, weak institutions, corruption, and a glaring disconnect between the government and its citizens.

The video served as a stark reminder of how we arrived at the point we are. We are governed not by the best of us, but by a compromised ruling class that has failed to prioritise the needs of the people. The video stressed that the School of Politics, Policy, and Governance (SPPG) was established to change that narrative by preparing a new generation of leaders who are ethical, competent, and driven by values. ‘This is why we are calling on you, the educated, value-driven elite,’ the video stated. ‘If not the best of us, then who should lead?’ It issued a bold call to action directed at technocrats, professionals, innovators, and disruptors, urging them to step forward and replace the dysfunctional political class. While acknowledging that politics in Nigeria can be daunting and full of barriers, the Head of Admission asserted that the SPPG Advantage, an unconventional and highly practical curriculum, exists to bridge that gap.

The SPPG offers access to seasoned policy experts, governance specialists, and political strategists who understand the nuances of Nigeria’s political terrain. It also provides a strong, supportive network that equips its students to lead and transform systems from within.

The video concluded with ‘SPPG equips you with practical tools to succeed in governance, the time to act is now. Nigeria is waiting for you. Because if the best of us do not lead, the worst of us will.’

SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS

This year’s school segment was particularly impactful. Schools were tasked with answering the question: ‘How can technology be used to influence positive change in your school and community?’, covering key thematic categories such as Environmental Sustainability, Health and Well-being, Education, and Agriculture.

NICOWA Schools: NICOWA students began their presentation with a heartfelt appreciation to the organisers of the ‘You’ve Got Ideas’ initiative under the Big Ideas Platform. Their innovation-centred project explored how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming education. They showcased AI-powered tools that help students study more effectively, read ahead, and improve retention.

They took this a step further by demonstrating how they used AI to design architectural plans for a 3-bedroom apartment, complete with rooms, kitchens, and water closets, all from the comfort of their homes.

Another striking component of their presentation was the introduction of a cost-free and simple mental health support tool called FPTT – Foot and Palm Tapping Therapy, a form of self-applied stimulation that reduces stress and anxiety, improves sleep, and strengthens the mind-body connection without any side effects. Using just the point end of a pen, this therapy can be practised while seated or lying down and holds tremendous potential for students coping with academic and social stress.

Government Girls Secondary School, Dutse: This school took inspiration from the BIP 2024 and returned this year with a significantly enhanced democratic governance model within their school. Their Big Idea was *the standardisation of GGSS Dutse's Democratic System of Government*.

Their presentation was both powerful and innovative. One of the students, who now serves as the first Senate President of the school government, shared how they initially used plain white papers as ballots. However, this year, they are moving towards producing official ballot papers and acquiring 20 ballot boxes, one for each class, which now serve as polling units.

Their new system includes an independent electoral commission, a written constitution, and a school federation divided into four states, with both majority and minority rights fully integrated. Through this project, the school aims to model a transparent, inclusive, and participatory democracy, encouraging civic responsibility and political literacy.

They expressed a need for financial support to fund their 2025 election, which will cost N524,000, and invited potential partners to support this exemplary civic education project.

Ansaru Deen Secondary School: Ansaru Deen's presentation focused on the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in enhancing learning outcomes. The school has adopted modern digital learning tools that are improving student proficiency, engagement, and knowledge retention.

They described their use of the David-Bello SMCR Model, which represents:

- Source (Teacher)
- Message (Knowledge or Skills)
- Channel (Technology)
- Receiver (Students)

The school also boasts a large CBT (Computer-Based Testing) centre equipped with wide-range internet connectivity, ensuring access to real-time educational resources. Their system demonstrates how ICT can be used not only to bridge the learning gap but also to prepare students for a technology-driven future.

Junior Secondary School, Gosa: JSS Gosa presented their initiative titled 'Project Safe Spaces,' using

technology as a tool for education, safety, and identity-building. With the support of the MacArthur Foundation, they have been able to explore key issues such as values, identity, access to education, democracy, and digital skills.

They appealed for further support to complete their E-library project, which will enable students to access more learning materials and connect with their peers across schools and communities. Their Big Idea promotes safe internet practices, hygiene awareness, and encourages a culture of inclusion and digital literacy among junior students.

Government Secondary School, Gwagwalada: Their project focused on the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotics in health care delivery. Through a dramatic enactment, they showcased a futuristic scenario where a robot administered medical checkups, diagnosed conditions, and recommended appropriate medications to a sick patient. Their performance offered a glimpse into the future of medical technology, highlighting how automation and AI can complement human health care services, especially in rural or underserved areas.

His Excellency International School, Bwari: This school opened with a creative drama performance introducing the concept of blockchain technology. They educated the audience on the four major types of blockchain: private, public, consortium, and hybrid, and explained their application in finance (e.g., Opay and Moniepoint), e-commerce, and secure transactions.

Their project also addressed plastic waste management by promoting recycling and reusing. They demonstrated how plastic bottles could be repurposed into bags, cups, and jewellery, encouraging environmentally sustainable practices in their communities. They concluded with a powerful choral song titled 'Let's Change Our Hearts,' reinforcing their message about personal transformation and collective responsibility.

DRAMA PERFORMANCE: 'IMAGINATION' BY KININSO KONCEPTS & AROJAH ROYAL THEATRE

The event featured a compelling stage drama titled 'Imagination,' developed in partnership between Kininso Koncepts and Arojah Royal Theatre. This piece dramatised the challenges facing Nigeria today, from tribal divisions to institutional failures.

The central message was a call to every Nigerian to take action, assume responsibility, and unite to build a better nation. The play portrayed a vision of a self-sustaining Nigeria, one where citizens no longer have to travel abroad for health care or tourism, but proudly support and develop their own country's systems.



REMARKS BY
DR OBIAGELI
'OBY' EZEKWESILI,
FOUNDER SPPG,
#FixPolitics

Dr Oby began by expressing hope for the future of Nigeria because of the younger generation it possesses. The three game changers for Africa were listed as its young people, its women, and technology. The BIP has consistently seen children expressing themselves as those taking charge of the future. She reiterated the keynote speaker's words that Africa's future is bright based on the talents seen. The presentation of the school children showed that they are ready to work, and that is the hope of the older generation.

She echoed the words of Funke-Treasure Akintoye on the need to speak up in the face of new knowledge, and the importance of pad banks for girls in schools. She made a call for schools and government across the country to gain efficiency by curtailing outlandish spending and providing pad banks for girls.

Additionally, she emphasised the importance of Dr Nevine's thoughts on being the architect of your brain, the science behind multitasking, and that ageing does not lead to lesser brain function. She suggested that if given attention, these ideas would bring about a marked improvement in the productivity of our nation intergenerationally.

Dr Oby also highlighted the conversation about the design and birth of the SPPG, which was a Big Idea to create a pipeline of trained leaders that will serve with competence, character, and a strong ethical foundation.

The BIP platform, which stems from the SPPG, marks the celebration of Africa Day every year. The Africa 2063 agenda proposed by the African Union (AU) will be achieved by Africa improving on its productivity, which was echoed in BIP conversations and the 'Framework of Growth' concept. Designing policies with a duty of care and empathy stated during the conversations is an important value for governance to change the notion of those in power being entitled to a good life, while the citizens suffer, as the mental health of the citizens affects the health of the nation.

The drive of the SPPG to have a different genre and cadre of leaders who subordinate personal interest to that of the collective is possible through the focus on brain health. According to research, improving the brain health of the world can unlock 28 trillion USD to the global economy. She enjoined all to follow the 'Framework of Growth' and not abandon taking the duty of care for the family, workplace, and the nation, while restating that women are a game changer for Africa and that by unlocking all the possibilities of women, the continent will see greater economic growth.

In closing, Dr. Ezekwesili thanked the SPPG team and made a note that an idea cannot happen on the strength of an individual alone, but on collective leadership. The Big Idea for all is that no one will stay small, as small is no longer beautiful.



CHAIRPERSON REMARKS BY MR FRANK NWEKE II

Mr Nweke began by giving thanks to all present. Then, referring to the Scripture that speaks on training a child in the path for growth so that in old age they won't depart from it, he mentioned the impact the previous editions of the BIP have had on the school children.

Responding to a question posed during the village square conversation on what the government can do to ensure that decisions are made from a place of sound mind, he stated that more than palliatives, the government needs to focus on the welfare and well-being of the people, quality education, health care, environmental sustainability, infrastructure, and ensure security of lives and property. If the government can do these, it will reduce the need for palliatives such as access to mental health care. He stated that mental health issues are clear symptoms of the deeply systemic issues of misgovernance in the country Mr. Nweke called for reflection and contemplation on the points and issues discussed by the speakers as a reason for improvement on lifestyle, well-being, and productivity. Commenting on the speakers' presentations, he pointed out that they have shown that brain health and mental well-being are not side issues, but central, deeply human, and socioeconomic concerns that affect productivity, relationships, innovation, and national progress.

Honouring the human mind as a place deserving of rest, care, and protection is a way to build sustainable solutions, and this speaks to the fact that self-care is not a luxury but a necessary factor for the success of solutions and Big Ideas being advocated for. These ideas do not have to be complicated but can be simple and intentional.

Concluding, Mr. Nweke enjoined participants to take home the awareness of what needs tending in our lives and to become leaders who protect our mind spaces. Big Ideas are those that allow others to breathe.

SCHOOL PRESENTATION AWARDS

The awards were presented to the three schools with the most innovative Big Ideas by the Founder, SPPG, and the CEO, SPPG.

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3rd Place: Government Girls' Secondary School, Dutse. Their Big Idea was bringing innovation in the election system of secondary schools to model the electoral system of the country.



2nd Place: Government Secondary School, Gwagwalada. Their Big Idea was *introducing accurate AI technology into the health system to enhance health care delivery.*



1st Place: His Excellency International Schools. Their Big Idea was *to use Information Technology to enhance waste management and educational systems.*



CLOSING REMARKS

To close the day, Dr Ezekwesili, expressed gratitude to the organising team, volunteers, partners, and everyone who contributed to the success of the Big Ideas Platform 2025.

She reiterated the school's mission to reshape Nigeria's leadership landscape by equipping value-driven citizens with the knowledge, network, and courage to act. She gave an inspiring quote, 'An idea whose time has come cannot be killed.' As the curtains fell on this transformative event, participants left energised and inspired to not only dream big but also act boldly. The BIP 2025 closed out with a vote of thanks by the compère, the cutting of the BIP 2025 cake, and photos.

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