



A Report of

A Town hall meeting on the State-Level Education Manifesto for Elected officials in Adamawa State



Organized by

The Education Champions Network (ECN) of Nigeria with support from the Malala Fund

Held at

Golden Alpine Hotel, Yola

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1.0 Preamble

A town hall meeting on the state-level education manifesto for elected officials in Adamawa State was organized by the Education Champions Network (ECN) Nigeria under the Joint Action Grant on Election Advocacy for Education supported by the Malala Fund. The project is focused on engaging candidates aspiring for positions in the state to prioritize education in their manifesto and engaging the critical stakeholders in the state and the public to encourage politicians vying for various positions to prioritize education.

The town hall meeting held at Golden Alpine Hotels Yola was attended by 77 (52 males and 24 females) and a facilitator. The participants were drawn from the public sector, the state house of assembly, civil society organizations and school children drawn from selected schools in Adamawa state, teachers, and some members of the press.

The overarching goal of the project is to improve access and quality of basic education through increased financing of the education sector.

The specific objective of the project includes:

- To engage political parties' candidates in Adamawa State to mainstream education issues in their manifestos and political parties' manifestos in the 2023 election.
- To empower stakeholders in Adamawa state to engage political candidates on education issues and present the Malala funds advocacy asks for elections.
- To extract commitment from the political stakeholders in Adamawa State to adopt and include the Malala funds advocacy asks for elections in their manifestos.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased discourse on improving the education system in Adamawa state by political candidates and citizens during the 2023 election.
- Solutions for the challenges facing the basic education system are reflected on the political aspirants' manifesto.
- Increased awareness amongst the political parties and candidates on the challenges facing the basic education system in Nigeria.
- Improved capacity of citizens to hold political office holders to account on their campaign promises and manifestos.
- Improved access and quality of education in Adamawa State.

The following were the various sessions/activities at the workshop:

2.1 Opening Session



Pic 1: Derefaka Derefaka, program manager, SCAAD Initiative and Bridget Andrew of TIP at the opening session

2.2 Welcome Address by the Executive Director of SCAAD Initiative



Pic 2: Dr. Agbaji Orinya welcoming participants to the meeting

The Executive Director of SCAAD Initiative and education champion, Mrs. Frances Okeke who was represented by Dr. Agbaji Orinya appreciated participants for honoring the invitation to the town hall meeting. He acknowledged dignitaries present, especially the speaker of the Adamawa State House of Assembly who was represented by Hon. Kate Mamuno and all the Honorable members of the Adamawa State house of assembly present, Local government Chairmen represented, members of the education board, students, and members of the press. He started his welcome address by acknowledging the commitment of the members of the State House of Assembly who not only attended in person but also arrived at the venue of the event early enough and waited patiently for the event to commence. Dr. Agbaji on behalf of the Education Champions Network (ECN) in Nigeria, welcomed all participants to the town hall meeting on the Adamawa Civil Society Education Manifesto for elected candidates. According to him, the Education Champions Network (ECN) is a global network

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of Champions advocating for girl child education. ECN Nigeria envisions a Nigeria where all women and girls, particularly the most vulnerable, have access to 12 years of free, safe, and quality education. Agbaji said the Education manifesto was developed by Civil society organizations in Adamawa State under the Election Education Advocacy project being implemented by ACE Charity, Center LSD, The Inclusion Project, SCAAD Initiative, and LEDAP to ensure political candidates prioritize education in their manifestos and even after being elected to offices. The project also empowered the traditional and religious leaders, media, schoolgirls, and the public to hold the leaders accountable and ensure that political candidates include specific education asks in their agenda during electioneering campaigns and implement the same when elected.

Dr. Agbaji, on behalf of SCAAD Initiative, congratulated the newly elected officials at various levels. He maintained that “this is a call to action by the people you represent to prioritize the issues that will empower them”. For returning elected officials, he noted that they must have represented their people well to be re-elected. He implored them to leave a legacy that will stand the test of time like ensuring that more girls within their constituency/community have access to free, safe, and quality education. This can occur through increasing the budgetary allocation for education, providing quality education, and making schools safe. Interestingly, providing free, safe, and quality education for up to 12 years will reduce early marriage, and social injustice, leading to a healthier, wealthier, and happier population.

It is for this reason that the ECN draws the attention of stakeholders in Nigeria and Adamawa state to take up the challenge of championing the cause of basic education for all children of school-going age particularly the girl child in the state. The current administration in Adamawa state has done its best by providing free education at the basic education levels, but more needs to be done concerning girl child education in the state.

He noted that it is time for elected officials to maximize the power of their office or portfolio, reflect on the education crisis in Nigeria and Adamawa state, and take a stand for education. Elected officials must devise an effective mechanism for holding themselves accountable to deliver on campaign promises now that they have been elected to office. He concluded his address by saying, that, as a coalition, we remain catalytic in our approach to the campaign for better education in Nigeria. We must work together with all the relevant stakeholders in education to advocate leadership at all levels to prioritize education at the basic level and beyond particularly for girls. It is time to empower young women and girls with education so that their future can be better to be able to contribute to societal development. Adamawa state government must not fail to offer a truly free, high-quality basic education to school-age children, especially in Adamawa State. The Nigerian child has the right to free basic education regardless of their circumstances and the Nigerian government must be seen to promote this right by investing the needed resources towards achieving education for all.

2.3 Objectives of the Meeting

Etim Mfom-Blessed, the ECN Champion from the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development (Center LSD) presented the objectives of the town hall meeting. According to her, the meeting objectives include:

- To engage political parties' candidates in Adamawa State to mainstream education issues in their manifestos and political parties' manifestos in the 2023 election.
- To empower stakeholders in Adamawa state to engage political candidates on education issues and present the Malala funds advocacy asks for elections.

- To extract commitment from the political stakeholders in Adamawa State to adopt and include the ECN advocacy asks for elections in their manifestos.



Pic 3: Etim Mfom Blessed presenting the objectives of the meeting.

According to Mfom, this townhall meeting therefore; is to bring together elected officials in Adamawa State to set an Agenda for Education in the state, and introduce and get commitment from elected officials yet to adopt the CSO manifesto on Education developed for the state. She said the meeting will also serve as a reminder to elected officials who have adopted the manifesto to implement the commitments they signed.

2.6 Technical Sessions

The following were the presentations the participants were taken through during the town hall meeting:

2.4.1 The State of Education in Adamawa State

The first technical presentation at the workshop was on The State of Education in Adamawa State. The presenter, Dr. Agbaji Orinya, who is the facilitator, gave the objectives of the presentation as below:

- To outline the state of education in Nigeria and in Adamawa State
- To increase awareness amongst the elected candidates on the challenges facing the basic education system in Adamawa State
- To outline how a collective action can lead to Improved access and quality of education in Adamawa State
- To indicate the role of the ECN in the implementation of the manifesto



Pic 4: Dr. Agbaji Orinya facilitating the first technical session on the state of education in Adamawa State

During the presentation, Dr. Agbaji Orinya pointed out that education is essential for the growth and development of any nation, and Nigeria is no exception. However, the state of education in Nigeria has been a major concern for decades. Despite being the most populous country in Africa and having the largest economy, Nigeria has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world, with only 59% of the adult population able to read and write. He noted that Nigeria reportedly has the largest number of children not enrolled in school in the world, with girls comprising the larger proportion by far (UNESCO, 2012). Analysis of school enrolments across Nigeria shows considerable variation with northern states showing significantly higher proportions of children not in school compared to those in the south (NPC and RTI International, 2011). Within the north, the Northeast Zone, including Adamawa State, has the lowest enrolment – with over 50% of girls not in school (Akyeampong et al., 2009).

Adamawa is officially categorized as an educationally disadvantaged state (EDS), a category to which all the states within the northern part of the country and some in the South-South Zone belong. These states are characterized by low participation in education at all levels. He said, this snapshot of data alone points to the significant challenges for Nigeria, and for Adamawa State in particular, in achieving the SDG goals.

Like many states in Nigeria, Adamawa State faced challenges related to access to education, particularly in rural areas. Some children, especially in remote communities, had limited access to schools. Poverty is a major determinant of whether children can attend school, and whether they manage to stay in school and/or have access to education of adequate quality. Although primary schooling is theoretically free for all, numerous studies have documented that many schools demand registration and/or examination fees and/or PTA levies. In addition, there are various recurrent direct costs, such as uniforms, textbooks, and stationery, and indirect or opportunity costs incurred through loss of child labor either in paid employment or engaged in domestic tasks such as looking after siblings. Household inability to pay school fees or levies or to provide writing materials can result in children being denied admission to school or being beaten by teachers, which can cause absenteeism

and dropout. According to the facilitator, what goes on in school is equally important in terms of getting children into school and keeping them there. One of Nigeria's major problems is a shortage of qualified teachers although qualifications in themselves are no guarantee of possessing the requisite skills or knowledge to teach effectively, as initial teacher education suffers from outdated curriculum content and teaching methodology and overcrowded classrooms. In addition, unqualified teachers are sometimes appointed in preference to qualified teachers because they are cheaper or have better political connections. Also, a shortage of female teachers in rural areas has also been highlighted as hindering the participation of girls in school.

Teacher absenteeism, which has been described as "endemic" in some public primary schools, especially in rural areas, is another major issue affecting access and educational quality. It is symptomatic of low teacher morale due to low salaries, irregular payments, and poor working conditions.

He noted that Infrastructure in schools, including classrooms, libraries, and laboratories, varied across the state. In some areas, schools lacked basic facilities. National survey results show that 96% of parents view school buildings as an important quality of a good school. School proximity was cited by 53% of parents nationally as a key consideration in school selection and by 43% of parents in the North-East and distance to school was one of the main reasons for non-enrolment (NPC and RTI International, 2011). Additionally, children who live far away from school are more likely to enroll late, and overage children are also more likely to drop out (Hunt, 2008).

An average of 57% of schools were without a water source across the state. In four out of the six case studies the situation was worse, with a particular LGEA registering nearly 80% of schools with no water source. The general lack of toilet facilities for girls in Nigeria, and elsewhere, has been cited as a significant barrier to their sustained access to school and explained in terms of the need for greater privacy for girls when relieving themselves publicly, and during the onset of menstruation.

In one school, for example, Primary 1 pupils were under shade. Primary 2 classes were held in a dark earth-floor room with termite mounds, filthy walls, piles of rubble and metal sheeting in the corner, as well as a collapsing roof, and an illegible board. Some pupils were seated on planks; others sat on the bare floor. The quality of education in Adamawa State was a concern. Insufficiently trained teachers and a lack of teaching materials impacted the overall quality of education in some schools.

Security challenges, including the presence of insurgent groups like Boko Haram, had a significant impact on education in some parts of Adamawa State. Attacks on schools and teachers disrupted the education system in affected areas. Gender disparities in access to education persist, with girls facing challenges in some areas due to cultural norms and economic factors. The digital divide was a concern, especially in rural areas of Adamawa State, where access to technology and the internet was limited.

The facilitator recommended the following as critical steps elected officials and other stakeholders can take to address these challenges outlined above.

1. Increased Government Funding: One of the most significant opportunities for improvement in the Nigerian education system is increased government funding. The government must fulfill its promise

of allocating 26% of its budget to education and ensure that the funds are used effectively and efficiently.

2. Embracing Technology: Nigeria has a high level of mobile phone penetration, with over 140 million active mobile phone lines (NCC, 2021). This presents an opportunity to leverage technology to improve education delivery, especially in areas where there is a shortage of teachers. Technology can be used to deliver e-learning platforms, distance learning, and online courses to students, improving access to education.

3. Quality Teacher Training: To address the low quality of teachers in Nigeria, there is a need for a significant investment in teacher training and development. This will ensure that teachers have the necessary qualifications and training to deliver quality education to students.

4. Curriculum Reform: The Nigerian government needs to review and update the education curriculum to ensure that it is relevant to the needs of the country and the job market. This will ensure that Nigerian graduates acquire the skills and knowledge required to compete in the job market and contribute to the country's economic development.



2.4.2 Speech/ Poem Recitation by schoolgirls on Girl education

This session had a group of selected schoolgirls from different schools across the state who presented a speech/poem on the plight of the girl child education in Adamawa state. While the other schoolgirls had placards displayed with different information and behavior change and communication messages, one of the girls, Victoria Simon recited/presented the speech as captured below:



THE PLIGHT OF GIRL CHILD EDUCATION IN ADAMAWA STATE

(I)

There is a saying that,
 "Education is a means to achieving greater success in life."
 I am sure you agree.
 Imagine you are to embark on a long journey,
 Say from Yola all the way to Abuja,
 For a crucial meeting with the president.
 If you are to go on this journey on foot,
 Will you be able to reach Abuja that day?
 No. I do not think so.
 But with a better means of transportation,
 Such as a car or an airplane,
 You can achieve much more in less time.
 You can meet up with the meeting and even return back to Yola the same day!

In the same way,
 education helps a child achieve much more in life,
 To go far and reach his or her full potential.
 Education enables a person to contribute better to the upliftment of his or her family,
 And to the development of the society at large.

....

(II)

It is also said that "In life,
 If you want to go fast, go alone.
 But if you want to go far, go together."
 Please, let us take this moment to ask ourselves this question.
 "Are we going together?"
 "Are we carrying everyone along?"
 Presently, our society is not making much progress in terms of development.
 This is because a significant part of the population is being left behind.
 Yes! The girl child has been neglected over the years.

Can a bird fly properly with only one wing?
No! I do not think so.
We need to give proper training and education to both the boy child and the girl child.
We need to carry everyone along.
As a girl child, I too have great potentials.
I have a lot to contribute for the progress of our society.

...

(III)

There is another saying that "it is only the wearer that knows where the shoe pinches".
This is true. Very true. But I can give you a clue.
As a girl child myself, I will tell you some of the challenges affecting girl child education here in Adamawa state.

The girl child long to go to school,
But many parents ignorantly choose to send only their male children to school over the female ones.
Some say that the girl child is meant to do only house chores and thus do not need education.
Oh! How wrong they are!
Also, some parents have a false fear that their daughters may get pregnant in school.
Consequently, many female children are denied from getting formal education.
This is very unfortunate!

The girl child desire to be in school during school hours,
But unfortunately, many of them miss significant amount of school time during their monthly periods.
They stay at home because they cannot afford to buy menstrual pads.
And their schools do not have adequate WASH facilities,
Such as water and toilet facilities
With which they can wash themselves.
Consequently, the academic progress of the girl child is affected negatively.
This is very regrettable!

The girl child yearns to complete her school education,
But because of poverty,
Some religious or cultural beliefs,
Many of them are married off at a young age by their parents.
Consequently, many female children end up as school dropouts.
This is very sad!

...

(IV)

My good Sir's and Ma's,
And you all, this wonderful audience here present,
I speak to you these words from the heart,
With the hope and a passionate appeal
That you do something about these challenges in order to make the girl child education in this state better.
What should we do?
What can you do?

We can join hands, as individuals and as government officials,

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to seek solutions to these challenges.

You can help by using your different offices and capacities to promote proper education and orientation of parents and the public about the importance of educating the girl child.

Also WASH facilities should be provided in all schools.

The safety and security of children in school should be adequate and guaranteed.

So as to give parents the confidence to send their children to school.

No child should be left behind.

Especially the girl child.

We have a lot to offer.

There is a saying that,

“If you educate a girl child, you educate a nation.”

We are partners in progress,

Working together for a better society.

Thank you all for listening.

2.4.3 Showcase of documentary on Free, Safe and Quality Education for All

This session was facilitated by Choice, an ECN Champion form ACE Charity. The documentary highlighted the plight of young girls and the urgent need for intervention and support to ensure that they have access to quality education and the opportunity to fulfill their potential.

It described the heartbreaking stories of young girls facing insurmountable barriers to education. Two of these girls were forced to drop out of school because their parents could not afford the school fees. As a result, they are denied the chance to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for a brighter future. It is disheartening to see their dreams of education shattered due to financial constraints.

Additionally, one of the young girls found herself in a difficult situation when she became pregnant out of wedlock. This situation can be directly linked to her parents' inability to send her to school, leaving her vulnerable and without the necessary knowledge and resources to make informed decisions about her life.

According to the facilitator, these stories are not isolated incidents but represent a larger problem affecting many young girls in Adamawa State. The lack of access to education and the resulting consequences such as early pregnancies and dropouts perpetuate a cycle of poverty and limit their opportunities for personal and professional growth.

She concluded by saying “Together, we can create a brighter future for the young girls in our communities, ensuring that they have the opportunity to pursue their dreams, complete their education, and make positive contributions to society”.



2.4.4 Presentation of State-level Education Manifesto

The presentation was facilitated by Moshood Rahinat, Education champion from Legal Defence and Assistance Project (LEDAP). She reflected on the impact of quality education and the need to make it available to all. Having determined that education is a powerful tool that can solve a lot of problems such as:

Poverty Reduction: Education can help to break the cycle of poverty and can have an intergenerational impact by lifting children from low-income families out of poverty.

Economic Growth: A result of an educated and skilled citizenry is an increase in productivity and overall economic activity.



Pic 5: Moshood Rahinat facilitating the session on the State-Level Education Manifesto

Peace and Security: Education can break cycles of conflicts and violence through empowering students with skills for peaceful resolution of conflicts and by increasing civil engagements in communities.

Improved Health: Education improves health literacy and encourages the adoption of positive lifestyle changes for better health outcomes.

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Child Marriage: Education empowers children and provides economic opportunities that reduce the dependence on marriage as a source of economic survival.

Child Labor: The number of child laborers reduces significantly with increased school enrolment. In Adamawa State 49.1% of children between ages 5 – 17 are involved in child labor with 33.4% working under unsafe conditions.

The following issues were identified as the problems with education in Adamawa state.

1. Financing: characterized by, Widespread poverty, hidden Fees, Insufficient Finance to Implement Free Education policy, Non-Gender Responsive Education budgets etc.
2. Poor Quality Education: Public primary schools in Adamawa have a qualified Teacher to pupil ratio (QTPR) of 1:45. higher than the recommended ratio, Inadequate training of teachers, poor teacher welfare, Inadequate integration of I.T infrastructure and computer education in schools, and lack of technical and vocational training.
3. Safety and Security in Schools: Insecurity resulting from banditry kidnapping and other forms of crime, Failure to implement the 2019 Safe Schools declaration to protect students and schools in conflict areas, poor access to functional and gender-segregated Water, Sanitation, and hygiene facilities, leading to illnesses, low school enrolment, poor menstrual management and sexually related violence and climate change resulting in floods and internal displacement and destruction of education facilities.

A manifesto was developed, titled RE-IMAGINING EDUCATION with the proposal to get the government of the day to commit to the following:

1. Fund More, Fund better:
 - i. Increase state-level financing for education by spending at least 22.5% of the state budget in line with the commitment made by the federal government.
 - ii. Provide counterpart funding to access UBE funds to allow for increased financing of the education sector.
 - iii. Strengthen the education monitoring and evaluation systems by implementing the UNESCO National Education Account to guide proper budget preparation and implementation and make budgets gender-responsive, transparent, and utilized in education.
 - iv. Ensure schools are truly free for 12 years by eliminating hidden fees such as education levies, PTA fees, and exam fees in all schools.
2. Provide quality education for all:
 - i. Ensure all schools meet standards that ensure Quality learning for all children - proper school infrastructure, availability of learning and instructional materials, adequate number of teachers for all core subjects, and recreational facilities.
 - ii. Ensure improved welfare and capacity building for all teachers to provide quality learning through the implementation of professional development programs, teacher promotion, new minimum wage, and proper accommodation when necessary.

- iii. Provide the educational resources teacher training and ICT infrastructure needed to implement STEAM education and vocational skills training in all secondary schools.
3. Make Schools Safe:
 - i. Effectively and immediately roll out the implementation of the Safe Schools Plan of Action and the national policy on safety security and violence-free schools.
 - ii. Provide functional, safe, inclusive, and gender-responsive water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities in schools to keep girls in school during their periods protect students from the risks of open defecation and prevent them from contacting WASH-related infections due to lack of water and hand washing facilities in schools.
 - iii. Ensure that students deprived of access to Quality education because of conflict violence or crises are promptly given access to Quality alternative education in a safe environment in line with the national Guidelines for Accelerated Basic Education.

2.4.5 Commitment by Key Stakeholders

Commitment forms were distributed to all stakeholders/Gatekeepers present at the event. The commitment forms were endorsed by all stakeholders. However, the opportunity was presented to participants who made pledges to reinforce the commitment they already signed.

Below are the statements made by the stakeholders.

1. Hon Kate Mamuno, Majority Leader and Representative of the Speaker Adamawa State House of Assembly



Thanked God for the meeting recalling her privileged meeting with Malala in Abuja where she committed to initiate a girl education project in her community as her pet project, having been a victim of patriarchy from conception and recalling the story told to her by her mother where her father warned the mother not to return home if she gave birth to a girl child when the mother was pregnant with her. Patriarchy has bedeviled our society for a long time but the government of Ahmadu Umaru Finitiri, the executive governor of Adamawa State is changing the narrative,

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especially for the girl child. Having passed the Child Rights Act into law, she believes this administration will initiate policies for the betterment of the girl child. She asked the organizers to engage the members and help them with inputs so they can better advance policies and strategies for supporting the education of the girl child. She committed to upholding the education of the girl child.

Hon Pwamakeino Mackondo, Former deputy speaker and member representing Numan constituency.



A lot of challenges have been highlighted and there is need for help, the documentary shown was from his own backyard his home, and he thanked the organizers again for helping him highlight the plight of his community to the nation and the world at large.

He committed to using the opportunity to coordinate with the executive to get the budgetary allocation to education, increased to between 22 – 25 5%, working to ensure the elimination of hidden and indirect fees, advocating for scholarship schemes and opportunities, and partnering with Malala Fund and other partners to achieve the objective of the meeting.

Hon Adum John Alaba, Hon Member Uba-Gaya Constituency and Chairman House Committee on Education Adamawa State House of Assembly

Spoke on how far they have gone in his constituency, where the enrollment of girls is higher than that of boys because of the program he organized. A product of girl child education himself, being that his education was sponsored by his elder sister. He identified awareness of the importance of girl child education as one of the major challenges to enrolling girls in school and the government of the day has done much to address it, another problem he identified is the issue of out-of-school children, which he also said has been adequately addressed by the current administration. The most important factor in education, he said, is determination.



Haj Rukkayya from FOMWAN Numan representing religious bodies.



She appreciated the presence of the member representing Numan constituency, who has been a pillar of support in their engagements in education. Especially in his commitment to giving support to the only girl school in Numan. Mothers are happy when girls are educated, Hon Kate Mamuno is a typical example.

They commit to follow up with all who made commitments to ensure they implement their commitments.

Eucharia Solomon Kpayekai Bachama Kingdom



She described this meeting as an opportunity to help the state, she thanked the Hon member representing Numan for his active participation. On behalf of traditional rulers, commit to embarking on sensitization on the importance of girl child education. They will engage with representatives of the people at all levels to fulfill their commitments.

She personally committed to looking for girls who have dropped out of school or never even been enrolled and ensuring they are back to school.

Hon Suleiman Ibrahim Sule representing Hon Suleiman Alkali, minority leader Adamawa State House of Assembly



Expressed gratitude to the organizers and suggested consistent monitoring and continuous engagement to ensure lasting solutions. He said Hon Alkali who he represents already has a blueprint for education in his constituency which is in line with the objectives of this meeting. In his project he intends to enroll and sponsor 100 indigent children in school in the 10 wards of his constituency from the 23rd of September 2023, he sought a partnership with the organizers to provide technical assistance to him.

He committed to partnering with the Malala Foundation

3.1 Open Discussions and Questions

The facilitator provided an opportunity for all participants to add their voices to all the issues raised during the technical sessions and make their own commitments, ask relevant questions, and have a robust interactive session. The microphone was passed from one participant to another.

Mr. David: School teacher.



Commended the presence of honorable members and commended the Hon member Numan constituency and will continue to remind him of his commitment today. He emphasized prioritizing the welfare of teachers, if we do so, every sector will be upheld because the teacher will instill discipline which will translate to every sector.

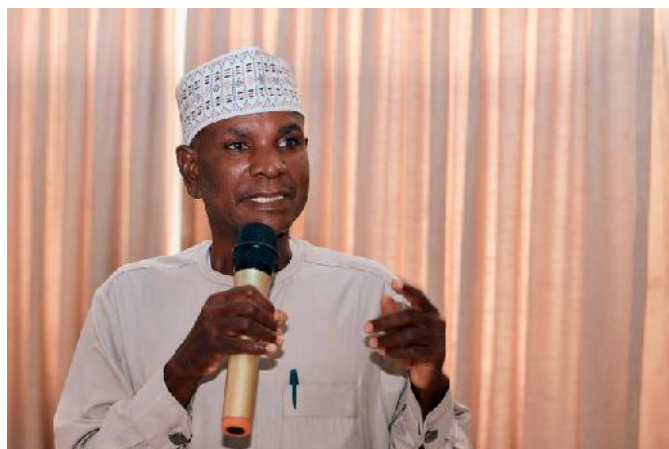
Mr Hayati: Lecturer



According to him, while watching the documentary he expressed surprise that none of the girls wanted to become a teacher. One of the problems of education in Nigeria is the scrapping of teachers' colleges, and unless we restore teachers' colleges, we will continue to churn out unqualified and under

qualified teachers. Education of the girl child is very important, employment should be based on merit and not political patronage, also the theory of free education should be evaluated to ensure it is free.

Musa Isa



Spoke about sustainability and the need for sponsors of such meetings to ensure adequate follow-up to ensure they produce lasting results.

Rakiya Garba

We should help the girl child by mentoring and getting involved with them.

Mr. Jude Fidelis



The commitment displayed by our elected representatives is good but to get them to fulfill their commitment, we must consistently follow them up.

3.2 Reading of the draft communique, Closing Remarks, and Prayer

The event Rapporteur, Maddeino Mbidoti read out the draft communique that was adopted by all participants and approved by the ECN team. Dr. Orinya Agbaji in his closing remarks, thanked all participants for taking the time to be part of the town hall meeting and urged all to sustain the momentum in the fight for quality and free education in the State.

The closing prayer was said by a Christian volunteer and the meeting ended by 2:50 pm.

News

Attack on Kamanton community stands condemned, says Katung

By Abubakar Labaran Kafanchan

The Senator representing Southern Kaduna senatorial zone, Honourable Sunday Marshall Katung, has said that the attack on Kamanton community stands condemned.

The Senator stated this Sunday in a press statement made available to newsmen.

He said, "My attention was drawn to an attack in Fadan Kamanton, a community in Zangon Kataf local government area of Kaduna state. Information suggests that the attack was carried out by a terrorist group Thursday evening. They invaded the residence of the Catholic Priest, Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Okolo, set the entire Rectory ablaze, burning to death a Seminarian, Na'aman Ngofe Danladi, who is completing his training into the Catholic Priesthood."

He expressed sadness by the news which he described as evil.

"I unequivocally condemn this horrific terrorist attack that claimed the life of our young Seminarian."

The Senator added that terrorism and violence against innocent citizens should never be justified nor be a part of our daily happenings, noting that such a cowardly and callous attack on our communities must not be allowed to continue.

He said his thoughts are with the victims' families, friends, and the entire catholic community in Kaduna South Senatorial District and the entire state.

Suicide: Stop stigmatising your neighbours, Rotary Club urges Nigerians

By Tope Sunday Abuja

The Rotary Club of Abuja Maitama, Saturday, staged a rally in Abuja to create awareness on the prevention of suicide among Nigerians.

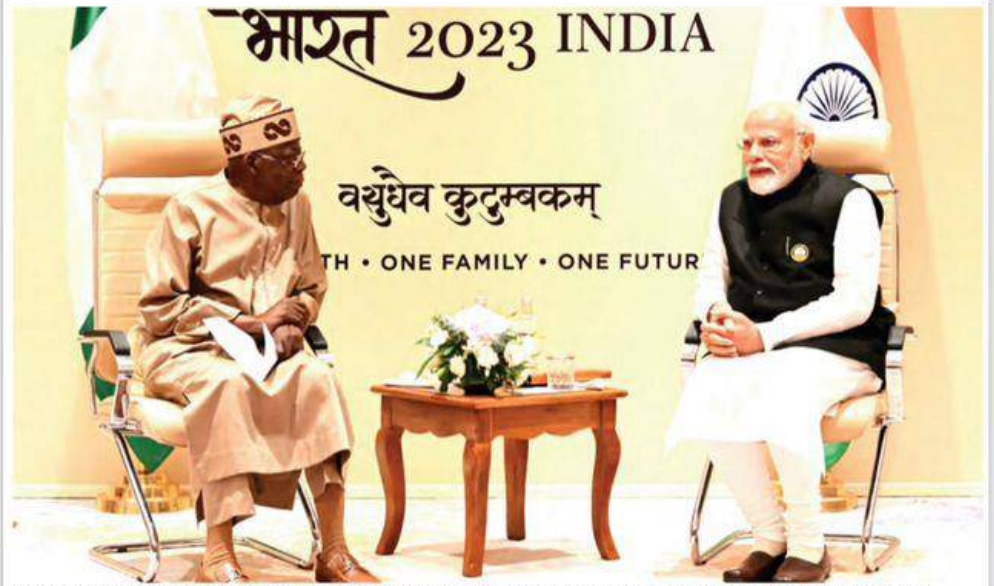
The awareness rally was staged at the Jabi Lake Park, Abuja, to commemorate the World Suicide Prevention Day Awareness Campaign.

Led by their president, Rotn. Agwu Ijeoma Joyce, members of the club displayed various placards to caution Nigerians against suicide.

Some of the placards read: "Suicide is not an option: Think of your love ones, don't do it; There is always light at end of tunnels; and 'Speak up! Don't bottle it up,' among other inscriptions.

Speaking, Joyce appealed to Nigerians to stop stigmatising and judging their neighbours, and called on the government at all levels to create more jobs and a better work environment to curb the spate of suicides claiming the lives of promising Nigerians.

She said: "Suicide is increasing by the day, and we are bringing this awareness because we need to inform people that people sit back and they are going through a lot, but for the fact that they are not able to speak out, it gets worse. And that is why we are embarking on this awareness."



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (left) and Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi, during a bilateral meeting at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, India Sunday

Photo: State House

Fuel subsidy removal: Distribution of palliatives'll continue until we address hardship – Malagi

By Benjamin Samson Abuja

Minister of Information and National Orientation, Alhaji Mohammed Idris Malagi, Sunday said the ongoing disbursement of palliatives across the states will be a continuous exercise until the hardship being experienced by citizens as a result of fuel subsidy removal is addressed.

He said the federal government is conscious of the people's needs, and that the 8-point agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu was designed to address leading socio-economic challenges and create jobs for the youth.

A statement by deputy director, press of the ministry, Suleiman Haruna noted that the minister stated this at a grand reception organized by the Niger state Government to honour political appointees from the state.

Malagi said the current administration would continue to develop policies that promote national values and orientation among the citizens.

He urged state governments to support the federal government in the project of reorienting Nigerians, without which, he said, there cannot be meaningful development.

In his remarks, the governor of

Niger state, Mohammed Umar Bago, congratulated those who secured political positions at both the federal and state levels and urged them to be good ambassadors of the state.

He lauded the federal government's plans to ameliorate the suffering of the citizens, promising that the state governors would play their part in ensuring that the palliatives reach those for whom they were intended.

He noted that Niger state provides opportunities for agriculture with its mass arable land, saying "it can play a huge role in the federal government's desire for more prosperity for Nigerians."

The statement said the minister paid courtesy visits to two former heads of state, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, and General Abdulsalami Abubakar.

Adamawa: Your free education policy defective, CSOs tell Fintiri

By Musau Abari Yola

A coalition of Civil Society Organisations under the auspices of Education Champions Network which includes Ace Charity, Center LSD, SCAAD Initiative and LEDAP, funded by Malala fund, has called for the prioritisation of girl-child

education in Adamawa state.

The organization and picked holes in the free education policy of Fintiri's administration and described it as defective.

They made their observations known Sunday at a town hall meeting of stakeholders in Yola. The meeting attracted lawmakers, policy makers, parents, teachers

and other stakeholders where they presented the result of their research findings on the state of education in Adamawa with a call government and elected representatives at all levels to prioritise girl child education in their agenda.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Orinya Agbaji of the SCAAD Initiative, expressed serious concern over the sorry state of education in Adamawa state as revealed by their findings and called on the state government to eliminate all forms of hidden fees in schools across the state and other unwholesome practices going on in public schools which make mockery of the free education policy of the present administration.

He said apart from all manners of extortions in the name of different fees and levies being imposed on students by their schools, most schools in the rural areas were abandoned to their fate with decayed infrastructure, absence of facilities, unqualified and inadequate teachers, absenteeism among many others.

He said there is the need for government at all levels, especially Adamawa state government, to give special attention to the education sector.

Dep gov seeks Algerian scholarship for Bauchi female students

By Mohammed Lawal Bauchi

The Bauchi state deputy governor, Mohammed Auwal Jatau, Sunday sought for additional scholarship opportunities for indigenes of the state, particularly the female medical students from the Algerian government, for enhanced healthcare delivery.

Jatau who made the request at the 295th Anniversary and 8th Annual National Maulud of Sheikh Ahmad Tijjani (RTA) held at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Stadium, Bauchi, said training of female medical students will go a long way towards addressing shortage of human resources in the state's health sector.

The deputy governor, who spoke on behalf of his principal, Governor Bala Mohammed, appreciated the Algerian government for providing scholarship opportunities to indigenes of the state in critical areas of human development.

He assured that the administration of Governor Bala will continue to partner with the Algerian government and other global organisations to seek for educational opportunities to youth and women in the state in order to enable them contribute positively to national development.

The deputy governor in particular acknowledged the tireless efforts of Algerian government in partnership with Sheikh Dahiru Usman Bauchi Foundation for impacting Islamic

knowledge to Muslim Ummah, not only in Bauchi, but in Nigeria and other countries in the world.

"I am here with a high powered delegation to represent my boss, His Excellency, Senator Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed, CON, (Kauran Bauchi), the executive governor of Bauchi state at this very important occasion. He has asked me to tender his apologies for his inability to attend the event due to other commitments outside the state.

"The governor has also asked me to thank our Islamic scholars who came to attend this annual Maulud from Algeria and Senegal for their contributions towards the promotion of Islam and prayers being offered to leaders for Allah's guidance."

A Report

NEWS

Ag News Editor, Tobias Lengnam

CSO wants FG to revive Abuja Carnival

The Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) has called on the Federal Government to revive the annual Abuja Carnival which has not been held for some years now.

Executive Director, Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) Ms Faith Nwadike, made the call in Abuja on Saturday during the schools' cultural competition, season two, on the original inhabitants of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the competition was organised

by CTA for schools in the FCT and featured poetry and arts categories.

Nwadike was represented by CTA's Programmes and Communication Manager, Mr MacDonald Ekemezie.

She said the first school cultural competition was held in the six Area Councils of the FCT on Dec. 14, 2022.

"This event aligns perfectly with our organisational mission of 'Catch them young'.

While urging the Federal Government to fund and encourage such projects in schools, Nwadike said the Abuja Carnival should be revived to reawaken the cultural creativity of states.

"I pray the new administration, that they should revive the carnival. They should inculcate, as a matter of right and privileges, in the young persons of the original inhabitants and other ethnic groups to showcase

their culture."

She further said that the objective of the school competition was to recognise and preserve the cultural heritage of the indigenes of the FCT.

"In the process of urbanisation and development, historical, cultural, and artistic treasures were lost. But CTA through this project, has continued to amplify the voices of the original inhabitants and

their culture.

"This may have been tagged a competition, but truly, it is just a discussion and conversation conveyed through the beautiful lenses of young people – talents and spoken words on canvas.

"These brave young ones are the tomorrow we see today."

David Jiraji of Mercy Model School Kuje, who emerged winner in the Arts Category, expressed appreciation to CTA. (NAN)

ECN admonishes Adamawa govt on more funding to education sector

From Umar Dankano, Yola

A network of five Non Governmental Organizations, NGOs, under the auspices 'Education Champions Network (ECN) Nigeria has charged the Adamawa state government to provide more funding for educational sector especially girl child education in the rural areas.

The network gave the charge in Yola Thursday at a town hall meeting organised for state legislators, school principals, school pupils and government officials with the sole aim of championing the cause of basic education for all children of school going age particularly the girl child in the state.

In her welcome address, the Executive Director of Sustainable Collective Advocacy For Africa Development Initiative (SCAAD Initiative), Mrs Frances Okeke said the Education Champions Network (ECN) Nigeria is a global network of champions advocating for girl child education.

Represented by Dr. Orinya Agbaji, Mrs Okeke stated that ECN Nigeria envisions a country where all women and girls, particularly the most vulnerable, have access to 12 years of free, safe, and quality education.

"We call on the Adamawa state government to reimagine education in the state and find better ways to provide 12 years of safe, free, quality education for all".



R-L: Executive Secretary of Nigeria Christian Pilgrims Commission (NCPC), Rev. Yakubu Pam, chatting with National Security Adviser, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu during his visit to the Office of NSA to Brief the office on preparations for Christian Pilgrimage to Israel and a 'Peace Walk' being planned by Several Christian Groups. Photo: Mahmud Isa

Group faults sponsored campaign against Kyari, others

From: Femi Oyelola, Kaduna

The Arewa Youth Consultative Forum (AYCF) has challenged what it called a "dubious" protest staged by "fictitious" groups calling for the sack and a probe of the Group Chief Executive Officer of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Limited (NNPCL), Mele Kyari.

The groups, Northern Youth Advocacy for Good Governance Initiative and Arewa Youth Forum had also called on the Federal Government to suspend the Executive Vice President (Upstream), Adokye Tombomiyeye, Managing Director, Nigerian Petroleum Development Company (NPDC) Ali Muhammed Zahra, and Managing Director,

National Petroleum Investment Management Services and Bala Wunti.

AYCF in a statement signed by its President Shettima Yerima yesterday the Forum

alleged that sponsored individuals are behind the incessant campaign for the removal of Mele Kyari as Group Chief Executive Officer of NNPCL.

We are pleased that most Nigerians who possess discernment and indeed the Federal Government have dismissed this protest as it was orchestrated by selfish individuals seeking their interests rather than those which benefit Nigerians collectively.

"It should be common knowledge now that under Mele

Kyari's leadership, NNPCL has recorded tremendous accomplishments in Nigeria's oil sector. These endeavours have been advantageous to Nigerians and propelled Nigeria's economy forward. One major achievement is an environmental pollution reduction; strategic measures put in place by NNPCL ensure the safeguarding and preservation of our environment resulting in significant reduction levels of pollution making it safer for citizens.

"Another milestone recorded by NNPCL is Port Harcourt's absence of black soot lately due to commitment towards environmental safety, which has resulted in cleaner air quality for its inhabitants. Foreign ships' presence illegally stealing crude

oil from Nigeria waters drastically reduced following stringent measures put in place under Mele Kyari's watch at NNPCL; this led to a considerable decline in illegal crude sales thereby increasing revenue generated by Nigeria's government.

Furthermore, during his tenure leading NNPCL production output increased tremendously seeing Nigeria regain Africa's top crude oil producer position ahead of Angola while boosting foreign reserves, helping attract more investments into our oil industry resulting in renewed investment activities within this sector and generating jobs opportunities through Tanfita subsidiary reducing attacks on pipelines thus improving security installations across Nigeria."