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IN THIS ISSUE

TRANSFORMATION



MEET THE EXCELLENCE TEAM

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FROM THE PUBLISHER



Professor Abdullahi Yusufu Ribadu, FCVSN
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SHAPING A FUTURE-READY UNIVERSITY SYSTEM:

THE JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION

Welcome to another exciting edition of Excellence Magazine, the first for the year. This edition is anchored on the theme, Transformation, reflecting the dynamic changes shaping Nigeria's higher education landscape, particularly the Nigerian University System (NUS).

Transformation is not just a word but the reality of our universities as they redefine themselves, embracing innovation, deepening collaborations, and aligning with global best practices through the Centres of Excellence. Today, we see what was once a gradual evolution become a deliberate, system-wide shift toward relevance, resilience, and impact.

In this issue, we highlight milestones and initiatives of the Africa Centres of Excellence for Development Impact (ACE Impact), the Sustainable Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards Enhancement (SPESSE) Project and the Nigerian Research and Education Network (NgREN) that embody this transformation.

Through ACE Impact, we continue to showcase Nigeria's leadership in advancing quality postgraduate education and applied research across diverse fields, with the ACEs driving regional development and knowledge production.

SPESSE continues to document its strides in strengthening public sector performance and service delivery through targeted training and capacity development,

ensuring Nigeria's workforce is equipped for the challenges of the future.

Equally transformative is the progress of the NgREN, which is steadily weaving institutions into a shared digital ecosystem. Today, we celebrate not just the connection among Nigerian universities but also the gradual onboarding of the entire Nigerian education sector onto the Network. The NgREN continues to unlock new possibilities for collaboration, knowledge sharing, and access to cutting-edge academic resources, thereby bridging gaps and expanding horizons across the education sector.

As we begin the year, this edition reaffirms the National Universities Commission's commitment to fostering transformation in higher education through partnerships, innovation, and strategic vision. The stories within these pages transcend reports of progress to reflect a collective determination to build a university system that is globally competitive, nationally responsive, and future-ready.

We invite you to explore, reflect, and be inspired by the transformative journeys of our Centres of Excellence and their host universities. Together, we continue to build a stronger, more dynamic higher education ecosystem for Nigeria and beyond.

Professor Abdullahi Yusuf Ribadu,
FCVSN

*Executive Secretary, National Universities
Commission*

FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Transformation in Motion: Sustaining Impact, Expanding Possibilities



It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to yet another compelling edition of Excellence Magazine, themed *Transformation*. This edition captures a defining moment in Nigeria's higher education landscape, where progress is not only evident but enduring, and where the gains of strategic interventions are being sustained, scaled, and reimagined for the future.

At the heart of this transformation are initiatives such as the Africa Centres of Excellence for Development Impact (ACE Impact) Project, co-supported by the

World Bank and the Agence Française de Développement (AFD). Although the ACE Impact Project formally came to a close last year, its legacy continues to thrive through the ACE Alliance, a testament to the resilience and forward-thinking nature of our ACEs. Across the network, we see inspiring stories of sustained impact: from the commissioning of the ElectroX Laboratory by Federal University of Technology, Owerri's Centre for Future Energies and Electrochemical Systems (ACE-FUELS), to Ahmadu Bello University's Centre for Neglected Tropical

Diseases and Forensic Biotechnology's commitment to sustaining the internationalisation of education beyond project closure, and the collaborative efforts by Bayero University, Kano's Centre for Population Health and Policy (ACEPHAP) to improve the health and wellbeing of women and infants in Kano and beyond. These stories affirm that when thoughtfully nurtured, transformation extends far beyond project timelines.

Building on the successes of the ACE Project in Nigeria, discussions have commenced around the Africa Centres of Excellence for Innovation and Economic Growth (ACE Innovate) Project with the World Bank and other key stakeholders on the proposed project structure and implementation. This signals a renewed commitment to deepening impact, fostering innovation, and ensuring that Nigerian Centres of Excellence remain at the forefront of research and development across the continent.

Equally noteworthy is the progress of the SPESSE Project. With conversations on additional financing at an advanced stage, the project is poised to expand its reach and consolidate its role in strengthening public sector capacity and service delivery. This next phase represents not just continuity, but an opportunity to amplify outcomes and respond more effectively to emerging governance challenges.

Transformation is also evident in the steady evolution of the Nigerian Research and Education Network (NgREN). The recent reconstitution of its Board, alongside the establishment of a Technical Advisory

Committee, marks a significant step towards enhancing its governance and strategic direction. Of particular importance is the planned integration of NgREN with the TERAS platform, a move that will broaden its scope and reinforce its capacity to serve not only universities but the entire Nigerian education ecosystem through improved connectivity, collaboration, and access to digital resources.

In parallel, the Blueprint-ICT-Dev Project continues to lay the foundation for a more digitally enabled university system, reinforcing the critical role of technology in teaching, learning, research, and institutional management.

Together, these initiatives reflect a higher education system in transition, a system that is embracing innovation, strengthening partnerships, and positioning itself for global relevance and competitiveness.

The stories in this edition are not merely accounts of progress; they are powerful narratives of vision, collaboration, and sustained transformation.

As you turn these pages, we invite you to reflect on the strides made, the lessons learned, and the possibilities ahead. The journey of transformation continues, and its impact is only just beginning.

Warm regards,

Dr Joshua Atah
Director, Special Projects



EDITOR'S NOTE

Tracing the Path of Transformation

Dear Reader,

Every edition of Excellence Magazine tells a story, but this one tells several, all connected by a common thread: transformation that is visible, measurable, and still unfolding.

What stands out in this issue is not just what has been achieved, but how those achievements are evolving. The conclusion of the ACE Impact Project, for instance, is not presented here as an ending, but as a transition. Through

the ACE Alliance, the Centres have continued to adapt, collaborate, and extend their reach. The stories featured, from advancements in research infrastructure to growing international partnerships and community-focused interventions, offer a closer look at how impact is being sustained in practical terms.

Reading through these pages, you also feel a strong sense of anticipation. Early conversations around the Africa Centres of Excellence for Innovation and Economic Growth (ACE Innovate)

Project point to a future shaped by lessons learned and ambitions refined. Similarly, the expected additional financing for the SPESSE Project signals continuity in strengthening public sector capacity; an area whose importance becomes clearer with each passing year.

Beyond individual projects, this edition highlights an expanding ecosystem. The evolving role of the Nigerian Research and Education Network (NgREN), particularly with its planned expansion to a broader digital platform connecting the entire Nigerian education sector, reflects a shift toward interconnectedness across various levels of education. In the same vein, the Blueprint-ICT-Dev Project reinforces the quiet but critical work of building digital foundations that enable everything else to function more effectively.

Taken together, these features present a multi-dimensional story rather than a single narrative; one

where progress is not uniform, but purposeful. Some stories capture consolidation, others point to expansion, and a few offer glimpses into what comes next.

That diversity is, in itself, a marker of transformation.

As you read through this edition, you may find yourself moving between reflection and expectation, between what has been accomplished and what is still taking shape. That balance is intentional. It mirrors the current moment within the Nigerian University System (NUS): grounded in results, yet open to possibilities.

Yvonne Orekyeh

Editor, Excellence Magazine

A - ACE

S - SPESSE

N - NgREN

B - Blueprint-ICT-Dev

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Honourable Minister of Education, Dr Maruf Tunji Alausa, CON, speaking during the visit by the World Bank, NUC, AFD and AAU, to discuss the proposed ACE Innovate Project

FGN COMMITS TO PROPOSED ACE INNOVATE PROJECT, AS EDUCATION MINISTER COMMENDS WORLD BANK, AFD

The Federal Government of Nigeria has reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring the success of the proposed Africa Centres of Excellence for Innovation and Economic Growth (ACE Innovate) Project, with a promise to provide the necessary policy support, coordination, and oversight to guarantee that the objectives are not only realised but sustained in the overall interest of the country. Honourable Minister of Education, Dr Maruf Tunji Alausa, made this known when a team from the World Bank, Agence Française de Développement (AFD), Association of African Universities (AAU) and the National Universities Commission (NUC) visited his office during the just-concluded in-country consultation on the proposed ACE Innovate Project. The meeting was geared towards harvesting stakeholders' ideas on the design and implementation of the project.

The three-day consultation, which held in Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria, saw the team meet with the Honourable Minister of Education and other public and private sector stakeholders, such as the Centre Leaders of Africa Centres of Excellence (ACE) from earlier phases of the Project (ACE 1 and ACE Impact), Rectors of polytechnics and Provosts of colleges of education.

Dr Alausa described the project as a key initiative supported by the World Bank and implemented by the Federal Government of Nigeria. He explained that it builds on the ACE model to better address Africa's skills and jobs needs, expand its impact, and sustain research and innovation within Nigeria's higher education system. He appreciated the World Bank and the

AFD for their continued partnership and unwavering support toward Nigeria's development, adding that the collaboration once again demonstrates shared commitment to inclusive growth, poverty reduction, and sustainable development.

The Minister noted that a remarkable achievement of the ACE Project in Nigeria is its contribution to the internationalisation of education. The Nigerian ACEs, he noted, have attracted students and faculty from across Africa, fostering cross-border knowledge exchange and positioning Nigeria as a regional hub for excellence. This aligns with the broader agenda to integrate Nigeria into global education data systems, and ensure that its institutions are recognised and ranked among the best worldwide. "The ACE Project has positioned Nigeria not only as a consumer but also as a provider of high-quality transnational education, and through the ACE Innovate Project, our Centres can continue to forge stronger project partnerships with leading institutions worldwide, promoting joint degrees, faculty exchanges, and collaborative research that benefit students and faculty alike. To remain competitive, however, we must continue to benchmark our systems against global standards, leveraging robust data to guide policy, planning, and performance improvement", the Minister reiterated.

Describing the proposed project as a milestone in the collective efforts at repositioning the Nigerian University System (NUS) for excellence and global competitiveness, the Executive Secretary of the NUC, Professor Abdullahi Yusufu Ribadu, affirmed the Commission's



Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission, Professor Abdullahi Yusufu Ribadu (left), with the immediate past Director, University Education, Federal Ministry of Education, Mrs R. G. Ilyasu, during the ACE Innovate consultative meeting which took place at the NUC Secretariat, Abuja



World Bank Country Director for Nigeria, Mathew A. Verghis, addressing other project stakeholders during the visit to the Honourable Minister of Education, Dr Maruf Tunji Alausa, as part of the consultative meetings on ACE Innovate, which took place in Abuja and Lagos

commitment to ensuring the development of Nigerian universities' capacity to effectively respond to national development needs. According to him, the ACE Innovate Project suitably aligns with Nigeria's national development agenda and will promote academic excellence, research innovation, institutional governance, and capacity development. The Executive Secretary commended the timeliness of the Project, which, he said, was carefully designed to address critical challenges such as unemployment, poverty, food insecurity, and infrastructural deficit, among others.

Highlighting the achievements and the impact of previous phases of the ACE Project, the National Project Coordinator, Dr Joshua Atah, urged all stakeholders to ensure that project gains are sustained. He stated that the ACE Innovate Project aims to strengthen the skills of graduates to be industry-ready and/or job-creators rather than job-seekers.

World Bank Practice Manager, Education, West and Central Africa, Ms Scherezad Latif, described the consultation as a critical step in guaranteeing collective ownership and the impact of the project.

According to her, achieving the desired transformation would require adopting new and innovative approaches. She noted that ACE Innovate, which is centred around relevant skills for jobs and innovation to support priority sectors, plans to build on the strong foundation and achievements of the established ACE platform, while expanding its reach and broadening its impact. "In response to regional and national priorities, the World Bank is prioritising jobs and inclusive growth at the centre of its development agenda, and ACE Innovate is positioned to play a pivotal role at the forefront of this agenda", she said.

Ms Latif explained that the programme is designed to equip young people within the region with advanced skills, entrepreneurial competencies, and applied research capabilities that will enable graduates to thrive in an evolving labour market, placing emphasis on the "job-rich" priority sectors that can drive productivity and economic transformation. She reaffirmed the World Bank's commitment to advancing skills, innovation, and higher education for sustainable growth and job creation in Nigeria and Africa.



Country Director, Agence Française de Développement, Nigeria, Jacky Amprou, during the consultative meeting with the private sector and industry in ACE Innovate-focused priority sectors



World Bank Task Team Lead for the proposed ACE Innovate Project, Xiaonan Cao, during the engagement with critical stakeholders on the proposed ACE Innovate Project

“Through ACE Innovate, we hope to collaborate with you to further strengthen centres of excellence that shape the next generation of African leaders, innovators, and changemakers”.

The AFD Nigeria Country Director, Jacky Amprou, said the focus is not only on excellence in postgraduate education, but also on job creation, employability, and broader impact. It is to ensure that the skills developed through the ACEs match the needs of the labour market and contribute directly to economic growth. It means stronger links with industry, closer

collaboration with technical and vocational institutions, and more attention to key sectors such as energy, agribusiness, health, tourism, and value-added manufacturing.

Mr Amprou stated that both ACE 1 and ACE Impact had delivered truly remarkable results, noting that what had started as an ambitious idea has grown into a strong network of centres producing high-quality graduates, advancing research, and strengthening regional cooperation. The recent launch of the ACE Compendium of Achievements and the ACE Alliance clearly shows the impact of this journey and the commitment to its sustainability. “AFD has been proud to co-finance the ACE Impact Project alongside the World



World Bank Practice Manager, Education, West and Central Africa, Ms Scherezad Latif (right), with the World Bank Task Team Lead, ACE Impact, Namrata Tognatta, during the visit to the Minister of Education as part of engagements with key stakeholders on ACE Innovate



Programme Manager for ACE Impact with the Association of African Universities, Dr Sylvia Mkandawire, during the consultative meeting with ACE Innovate stakeholders, which took place in the NUC Secretariat in Abuja.



Ms Tognatta with Jason Weaver, a Senior Economist with the World Bank and part of the ACE Innovate team, during the visit to the Minister of Education in Abuja

Bank. We have witnessed firsthand the progress made: thousands of postgraduate students trained, stronger laboratories, deeper regional mobility, and closer links between universities and industry. These achievements would not have been possible without the leadership of the universities, the NUC, and the AAU. We sincerely commend all of you.

“What is especially encouraging is how the Centres have evolved. They are no longer just academic units; they are becoming locomotive units of innovation, entrepreneurship, partners of local industries, and actors of real development in areas such as energy, agriculture, health, and digital technologies”,

he emphasised.

Making a presentation, Dr Obasi Philip Ikechi, of the Macroeconomic Analysis

Department of the Federal Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, revealed that Nigeria’s National Development Plan 2026–2030 prioritises productivity-led growth, economic diversification, human capital development, and stronger policy coordination to unlock sustainable and inclusive growth. The ACE Innovate project, he said, fits well as a strategic enabler for this development agenda, which aims to strengthen skills, applied research, innovation, and industrial competitiveness in priority sectors. According to him, universities and research institutions are critical to delivering productivity gains, industrial transformation, quality jobs, and export diversification under the NDP 2026–2030.

The AAU, which served as the Regional Facilitation Unit (RFU) for both ACE 1 and ACE Impact was represented during the in-country consultations by Programme Manager, ACE Impact, Dr Sylvia Mkandawire, and Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, Mrs Adeline Addy.

ELECTROLAB X: WHERE AFRICA'S ENERGY FUTURE TAKES SHAPE

By Victor Aniefiok and Yvonne Orekyeh



(L-R) Vice-Chancellor, FUTO, Prof. Nnenna N. Oti; President and Chief Executive of the Dangote Group, Alhaji Aliko Dangote; GCON; Pro-Chancellor, FUTO, Senator Jack Tilley-Gyado, OFR; and some members of the University management, Governing Council and Senate during the commissioning ceremony of the ACE-FUELS ElectroLab X, marking the official launch of the facility as a fully operational, world-class research and innovation hub



ACE-FUELS research assistants conducting battery testing and performance evaluation in the ACE-FUELS ElectroLab X

A glove box for electrolyte/active material synthesis

On a bright morning at the Federal University of Technology, Owerri (FUTO), a quiet but significant shift took place; one that speaks to the enduring impact of the Africa Centres of Excellence for Development Impact (ACE Impact) Project, even after its official closure in June 2025.

At the centre of it all was the Africa Centre of Excellence in Future Energies and Electrochemical Systems (ACE-FUELS), unveiling its most ambitious facility yet: ElectroLab X, a cutting-edge laboratory designed to accelerate breakthroughs in clean energy technologies. The moment was marked by the presence of leading figures from academia, industry, and government, with the facility formally commissioned by industrialist Aliko Dangote.

But this was more than a ceremonial ribbon-cutting.

ElectroLab X represents a bold statement that Africa is not waiting on the sidelines of the global energy transition. Instead, it is building the capacity to lead. Inside the facility, researchers are already pushing the boundaries of next-generation solar technologies, developing alternatives to lithium-based batteries, and advancing materials science critical to sustainable energy systems. From perovskite solar modules to sodium-ion batteries and emerging hydrogen technologies, the work being done here is both locally relevant and globally competitive.

What makes this milestone particularly compelling is its timing. With ACE Impact concluded, centres like ACE-FUELS are demonstrating that transformation does not end with project funding. Through strategic partnerships with institutions such as Swansea University and support from



A laser bin (enclosed laser system) for separating perovskite solar cells



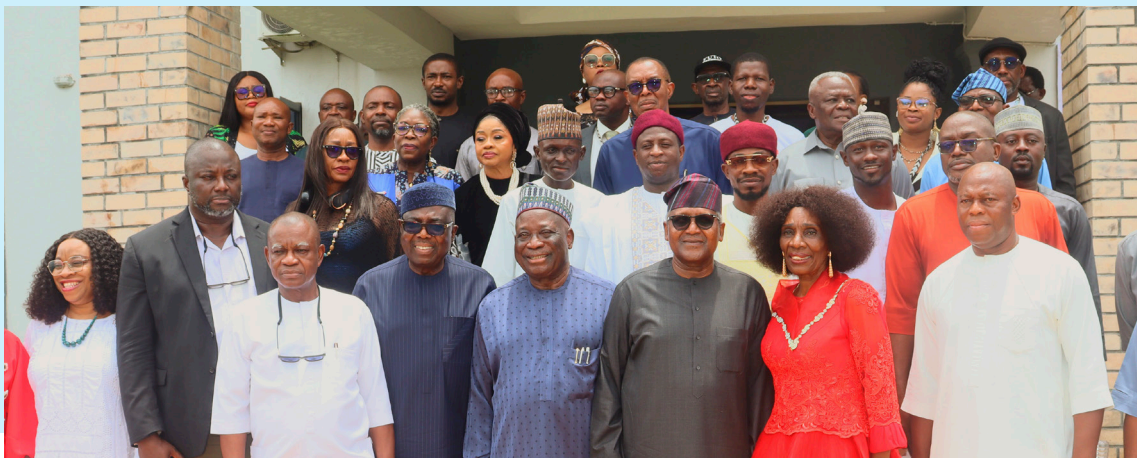
The battery testing system and aging/constant temperature chambers enabling precision testing, controlled performance evaluation, and advanced battery research at ACE-FUELS ElectroLab X

international partners including the World Bank, Agence Française de Développement (AFD), and UK research bodies, the Centre has not only sustained momentum but expanded its vision.

ElectroLab X is also designed with a clear purpose beyond research: 'to bridge the gap between innovation and industry'.

By fostering collaborations with private sector leaders and development partners, the facility is positioning itself as a launchpad for homegrown solutions, supporting local manufacturing, reducing import dependence, and nurturing a new generation of technopreneurs.

For students, researchers, and industry professionals alike, it offers something even more valuable: access. Access to world-class equipment, to cutting-edge knowledge, and to opportunities that were once out of reach.



(L-R) Centre Leader, ACE-FUELS and FUTO Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research, Development and Innovation), Prof. Emeka E. Oguzie; Vice-Chancellor Elect, Prof. Iyke Dozie; non-Executive Director, Dangote Cement, Mr Ernest Ebi; FUTO Pro-Chancellor, Senator Jack Tilley-Gyado OFR; President and Chief Executive of the Dangote Group, Alhaji Aliko Dangote, GCON; Vice-Chancellor, FUTO, Prof. Nnenna N. Oti; Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration), Prof. Clifford M. Agu; and some members of University Management, Governing Council and Senate during the commissioning ceremony of the ElectroLab X



Members of the university leadership, including the Pro-Chancellor, Senator Jack Tilley-Gyado, OFR; the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Nnenna N. Oti; with members of the university Management, Governing Council, and Senate, receiving Alhaji Aliko Dangote, GCON, for the official commissioning of the ACE-FUELS ElectroLab X



Centre Leader, ACE-FUELS, Prof. Emeka E. Oguzie, conducting guests and members of the university community on a guided tour of the ACE-FUELS facility, showcasing cutting-edge research infrastructure, innovation-driven initiatives, and the Centre's vision for sustainable energy advancement



Alhaji Aliko Dangote, GCON, officially commissioning the ACE-FUELS ElectroLab-X, marking a significant milestone in advancing research, innovation, and next-generation energy solutions

As delegates toured the facility, moving through its advanced laboratories and pilot-scale systems, it became evident that this is not just infrastructure but an ecosystem in motion. One that connects ideas to application, research to enterprise, and ambition to impact.

The significance of the moment was further underscored by the presence of key stakeholders. Among them were the Pro-Chancellor of FUTO, Senator Jack Tilley-Gyado, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Nnenna N. Oti, and Vice-Chancellor Designate, Professor Iyke Dozie, alongside other members of the University's Governing Council and

Senate. Representatives of the National Universities Commission (NUC), Southeast Development Commission (SEDC), and international partners were also in attendance, reflecting the broad coalition supporting this bold step forward.

In many ways, ElectroLab X captures the very essence of transformation that this edition of Excellence Magazine celebrates. It is a reminder that while projects may conclude, their true legacy lies in what they make possible long after.

And in FUTO, in Owerri, that future is already taking shape.

EXPORTING STANDARDS: HOW SPESSE IS TURNING NIGERIA'S PROCUREMENT REFORM INTO A GLOBAL MODEL

By Sufuyan Ojeifo



Representative of the Special Guest of Honour/Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Deputy Chief of Staff to the President, Senator Ibrahim Hassan Hadejia, delivering the Vice President's remarks during the maiden convocation ceremony for the 2,075 professionals certified by the Nigeria Procurement Certification Portal, which took place in the old Banquet Hall of the Presidential Villa

Revolutions in government rarely arrive with brass bands. They slip in without fanfare, often disguised as login credentials and course modules.

One day, a procurement officer in Kano is riffling through paper files. A few months later, she is navigating an e-procurement dashboard

with the calm assurance of someone who understands both the rules and the reasons behind them.

In Lagos, a young professional who once treated environmental safeguards as bureaucratic footnotes now debates them with conviction.

And somewhere in Pakistan, a public official signs into a

Nigerian certification portal and takes an examination designed in Abuja.

If that last image does not make you pause, it should. Because that is how you know something subtle but profound is happening.

The Sustainable Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards Enhancement



Director-General of BPP, Dr Adebowale Adedokun, with the Chief Procurement Officer of the Operations Policy and Country Services, Vice-Presidency of the World Bank Group, Hiba Tahboub, during the convocation ceremony for the first cohort of certified candidates from the Nigeria Procurement Certification Programme



World Bank Task Team Lead on the SPESSE Project, Ishtiaq Siddique, during the BPP Convocation ceremony, which took place in the Presidential Villa

(SPESSE) Project was never meant to be a slogan. It was conceived as architecture. Architecture, if properly designed, does not shout; it endures.

Late January 2026 brought policymakers, development partners, and newly certified procurement professionals together at the State House Banquet Hall. The occasion was the NPCP Convocation, marking the authentication of the first cohort of graduates from Nigeria's National Procurement Certification Programme (NPCP), launched by the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP).

Yet the real story was not the ceremony. It was what the ceremony confirmed. After years of fragmented efforts, from the Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit of 2001 to the Procurement Cadre of 2005, the Public Procurement Act of 2007, and the University of Turin collaborations of 2019 and 2020, Nigeria's procurement professionalisation agenda has finally gained both momentum and structure. While each previous attempt added something valuable, the gaps persisted: weak system performance, unharmonised capacity building, and inadequate critical skills. SPESSE was designed in 2020 to break that cycle.

A Certificate Crosses Borders

Consider the development that quietly stole the show at a recent professional procurement certification exam. A diaspora-based participant from Pakistan successfully earned a certification under Nigeria's NPCP.

It began with a cautious inquiry to the National Coordinator at the BPP, Mr Babatunde Oladele. Was the candidate eligible? What were the requirements? Could the system accommodate a remote participant? Yes!

A professional in South Asia verified eligibility, navigated the Nigerian digital platform, completed the required assessments, and demonstrated proficiency in Nigeria's procurement frameworks. No ribbon-cutting, no diplomatic communiqué. Yet the symbolism was potent. A system built to cure domestic quackery had become credible enough to attract international interest. This outcome sits squarely within the reform vision of the Director-General of BPP, Dr Adebowale Adedokun. For years, procurement in Nigeria operated with uneven standards. Training was sporadic, accountability was selective, and professionalisation was more aspiration than reality.



National Coordinator, SPESSE Project, Dr Joshua Atah, presenting an overview of the SPESSE Project in Nigeria, during the maiden convocation ceremony for the Nigeria Procurement Certification Programme, which saw the certification of 2,075 professionals in procurement management



Special guests at the BPP Convocation Ceremony, the premier Director-General of BPP, Engr Emeka Ezeh (Left), and the first World Bank Task Team Lead on the SPESSE Project, Chief Bayo Awosemusi

The wager was straightforward: build systems so credible that bypassing them becomes costly; replace discretion with structure; replace improvisation with certification; and digitise the process so that geography no longer matters. That wager is beginning to yield returns. When a Pakistani official opts to sit for a Nigerian procurement examination, he is not indulging his curiosity; he is recognising a benchmark.

Numbers with Consequence

After the NPCP online platform went live in April 2025, a total of 2,075 officers were trained and certified in the final quarter of that year alone. More than 6,500 Nigerian officers are (currently) in training, and their certification is targeted before the end of the first half of 2026.

It is tempting to treat these as just tidy statistics. That would be a misreading of what is really happening. Each certified officer returns to a ministry, department, or agency with altered instincts. Faced with a procurement file, they are no longer merely processing paperwork. They are applying

a framework that connects directly to the government’s reform priorities: the Nigeria First policy promoting local content, affirmative procurement provisions for women and youth, the debarment framework holding erring contractors accountable, and the Price Intelligence and Benchmarking System strengthening fiscal discipline. They grasp environmental and social safeguards as enforceable standards rather than ornamental clauses.

In a country where public procurement accounts for a significant share of government expenditure, this is not cosmetic reform. It is structural reinforcement.

At the convocation, Vice President Kashim Shettima, who was represented by Deputy Chief of Staff to the President, Senator Ibrahim Hassan Hadejia, captured it succinctly: “Public procurement sits at the heart of governance. It is the bridge between public policy and public impact. When procurement systems are weak, development stalls. When they are strong,



Some key stakeholders of the SPESSE Project with some of the graduates during the inaugural convocation ceremony for professionals certified under the Nigeria Procurement Certification Programme, which took place in the old Banquet Hall of the Presidential Villa

transparent, and professional, nations thrive”. That is not rhetoric. It is arithmetic.

Reform that Outlives the Applause

For the first cohort of NPCP graduates, certification is not merely a career milestone. It is a charge: to uphold professional standards, resist shortcuts, and treat procurement as a strategic instrument for delivering public value. The 2,075 certified officers are not decorative figures. They are custodians of a new culture embedded across MDAs. The 6,500 in training represent continuity rather than episodic reform. And the Pakistani certificate holder stands as evidence that standards drafted in Abuja can command attention in Islamabad. For a country long accustomed to importing templates and exporting talent, that reversal carries significance for Nigeria.

With additional financing from the World Bank, which is projected to run through June 2029, SPESSE has acquired what many reforms lack: time to consolidate and institutionalise. Nigeria is presently

reviewing its Public Procurement Act, refining thresholds and advancing sector-specific reforms. These technical adjustments will demand professionals who understand both the letter and the spirit of the law. Certification, in this context, becomes less a badge and more a necessity.

Institutional reform rarely provides cinematic moments. It looks instead like dashboards being updated, officers studying for examinations and systems quietly hardening against abuse. That is the SPESSE effect. A system sturdy enough to travel. A framework credible enough to attract. A culture disciplined enough to endure.

If someone in Pakistan sees value in logging into a Nigerian certification portal, the more urgent question may be whether we fully appreciate what is being built at home. The most consequential revolutions are often the ones that end up exporting standards rather than slogans. The absence of fanfare should not diminish what Nigeria’s SPESSE has accomplished so far.

Repositioning NgREN for a Unified Digital Future

By Yvonne Orekyeh

The newly reconstituted Board of the Nigerian Research and Education Network (NgREN) has set a decisive tone for the future of digital infrastructure within the Nigerian research and education community. Convened as an inaugural session of the new Board, the 12th meeting of the NgREN Board, which took place in the NgREN Secretariat housed within the National Universities Commission (NUC), focused on redefining the Network's institutional direction, strengthening its governance and financial structures, and charting a clear direction for 2026.

In his opening remarks, the Chairman of the Board and Chancellor, Athena Centre, Honourable Osita

Chidoka, reflected on the significant shifts that have occurred in Nigeria's digital education landscape since the Board last met in 2022. From evolving connectivity models to changing funding frameworks and institutional mandates, the environment has grown more complex and more promising. Against this backdrop, he emphasised the need for a coordinated, forward-looking strategy that ensures that the Network remains central to advancing digital learning and research across the country.

A highlight of the meeting was the Board's review of the status of the NgREN and Tertiary Education, Research, Application and Services (TERAS). While acknowledging the distinct roles of both



Chairman of the newly constituted NgREN Board and Chancellor, Athena Centre, Honourable Osita Chidoka.



Members of the 12th Board of the NgREN, during their inaugural meeting, which took place in the NgREN Secretariat, in the National Universities Commission, Abuja

platforms, the Board identified areas of overlap and duplication, including services already independently subscribed to by some universities. This prompted a strong call for a harmonisation, reengineering, and optimisation of existing digital infrastructure across both NgREN and TERAS, rather than an expansion through new investments. The overarching goal, members agreed, is to develop a single, seamless platform that delivers efficient, high-quality services to all stakeholders. In practical terms, this means mapping existing infrastructure, consolidating services, and eliminating fragmentation across systems.

In furtherance of this objective, the Board noted ongoing efforts to assess universities' readiness for connection to the NgREN. It also acknowledged the constitution of a Technical Advisory Committee on the NgREN/TERAS integration by the Honourable Minister of Education, bringing together key stakeholders from across the sector to guide the Network's development.

The Board was informed of ongoing engagements with Galaxy Backbone Ltd, a government-owned provider of ICT infrastructure with an extensive fibre

network spanning multiple states, to lease fibre capacity and explore peering opportunities, particularly in Lagos, as part of efforts to strengthen last-mile connectivity to universities.

Beyond infrastructure, the Board noted the importance of stakeholder engagement in the planned restructuring of the Network. It acknowledged the roles of ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), such as the Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy (FMCIDE), Galaxy Backbone Ltd, the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), and the Universal Service Provision Fund (USPF). These partnerships are expected to play a vital role in improving service delivery and expanding the reach of NgREN.

With clear resolutions and a renewed sense of purpose, the 12th meeting marked a pivotal step in repositioning NgREN. As the Network evolves into a more integrated and efficient platform, it stands poised to play an even greater role in powering research, innovation, and digital learning across not just Nigeria's universities but in the entire Nigerian education sector.



Vice-Chancellor, Bayero University, Kano (BUK), Professor Haruna Musa (left), and WOFAN Group Executive Board Chair, Dr Salamatu Garba, with other staff of the Centre for Dryland Agriculture and BUK and guests during the unveiling of the SIBLING initiative in Bayero University, Kano.

EXCITEMENT IN BUK AS WOMEN FARMERS PARTNER CDA ON AGRIBUSINESS, SKILLS FOR LIVELIHOOD INITIATIVE

By Nura Garba and Hamza Usman

Smiles, relief, and heartfelt prayers from beneficiaries filled the air as Women Farmers Advancement Network (WOFAN), in strategic collaboration with the Centre for Dryland Agriculture (CDA) and the Faculty of Agriculture, Bayero University, Kano (BUK), launched the Skills Improvement to Boost Livelihood and Nurture Growth (SIBLING) Initiative. This ambitious intervention aims to reposition agricultural education, strengthen livelihoods, and accelerate youth-driven agribusiness development. The initiative, which was formally unveiled

by the University's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Haruna Musa, marked a significant milestone in WOFAN's expanding footprint from rural communities into academic and research ecosystems, while reinforcing CDA's mandate of translating research into real-world impact.

Designed as a two-year pilot programme, SIBLING seeks to strengthen agribusiness training, promote climate-smart agriculture, stimulate innovative student research, and encourage specialisation across key agribusiness value chains. Central to the programme is its livelihood

component, which targets neighbouring communities and micro-agro marketers within and outside the university environment.

As a first-line intervention under the SIBLING framework, WOFAN distributed 560 bags of rice to 2,617 identified beneficiaries, mainly junior, casual, and outsourced low-ranking staff, prioritising women between the ages of 18 and 35 under its ICON2 initiative. The gesture was aimed at supporting small businesses, easing household food pressure, and reinforcing economic resilience, particularly ahead of the Ramadan season.



Dr Garba, addressing the Vice-Chancellor, BUK, and other participants during the launch of the SIBLING initiative, which took place in Kano.

Vice-Chancellor, BUK, Professor Haruna Musa (left), with the Centre Leader, CDA, Professor Sanusi Gaya (centre), and WOFAN Executive Board Chair, Dr Garba, during the launch of SIBLING

Declaring the initiative open, Professor Musa described SIBLING as a transformative programme for the university community. He said the initiative directly addresses the long-standing gap between theory and practice in agricultural education. “Today marks the beginning of a transformative journey for our students and junior staff”, the Vice-Chancellor said. “This partnership equips our graduates with hands-on skills, improves employability, and makes agribusiness more attractive as a dignified and profitable vocation”. He disclosed that facilities commissioned under the project include rice milling and processing units, briquette-making machines for converting rice husks into fuel, compost production units, and fisheries training sections. These innovations, he said, would promote value addition, youth participation, and sustainable agriculture. The Vice-Chancellor commended WOFAN for providing equipment, input, and technical expertise, describing the collaboration with CDA as a model for effective university development and organisation partnerships with measurable social impact.

In her remarks, the WOFAN Group Executive Board Chair and United Nations POLAC Peace Ambassador, Dr Salamatu Garba, said SIBLING represents a deliberate scaling of WOFAN’s ICON2 project beyond rural communities into centres of learning, innovation, and

research. According to her, the initiative is built on a dual focus: empowering students through entrepreneurship-driven agricultural training and strengthening livelihoods among vulnerable groups.

“Our students study agriculture, but many lack entrepreneurial exposure. We want to change that”, she said. “Young people between 18 and 35 are the backbone of the economy, and they must be prioritised if agriculture is to become a tool for wealth creation”.

Dr Garba explained that SIBLING would promote climate-smart agriculture, compost and biochar production, briquette making, rainwater harvesting, and circular-economy practices. The programme, she added, would also deploy climate information services, decision-support tools, and artificial intelligence applications to guide precision farming and improve soil management. “At WOFAN, we only take tested and proven innovations to farmers. The time has come to transform agriculture sustainably”, she said.

Earlier, the Chairman of the Local Organising Committee and Chairman of the Technical Board of Advisers for the WOFAN ICON2 Project, Professor Sani

Miko, described the launch as a historic milestone for the university. “In a rapidly changing economy, the gap between skills and market demand determines whether people thrive or struggle”, he said, describing SIBLING as a strategic investment in human capital aligned with the Mastercard Foundation’s vision of creating over 10 million dignified jobs in Nigeria by 2030.

On his part, the Director of the Centre for Dryland Agriculture, Professor Sanusi Muhammad Gaya, said the initiative reflects a deepened partnership between WOFAN and CDA rooted in shared vision and collective responsibility. He stated that the Centre’s goal is not to train job seekers, but to nurture innovators and entrepreneurs who would strengthen food systems and drive sustainable economic growth, and added that the rice distribution underscores the partners’ commitment to inclusivity and compassion.

The Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Professor Aminu Sulaiman, said the initiative aligns with the faculty’s goal of producing job creators rather than job seekers. He noted that students would receive end-to-end practical exposure across the rice, maize, and groundnut value chains from production to processing, packaging, and marketing. Professor Sulaiman added that newly-commissioned facilities were not merely machines, but platforms for enterprise development.

In his remarks, the Chairman of the Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU), BUK branch, Comrade Abdullahi Nasiru Abdulrafuu, expressed appreciation to WOFAN, noting that nearly 90 per cent of the beneficiaries were NASU members.

Goodwill messages were presented by the former Vice-Chancellor, Aliko Dangote

University of Science and Technology, Professor Shehu Alhaji Musa, the immediate past Director of CDA, Professor Jibrin Mohammed Jibrin and Comrade Abdullahi Nasiru Abdulrafuu.

According to many of the beneficiaries, the intervention came at a critical moment in their lives.

For Zainab Umar, a junior staff member, “This support came at the right time, especially with Ramadan approaching. It has reduced the burden on my family in ways words can’t explain”.

Aisha Ismaila, a cleaner with one of the outsourced companies, admitted she was initially sceptical. “I thought it was just talk”, she said. “But when we heard Dr Salamatu Garba speak during the launch and we then received the rice, I realised this empowerment is real. This is help we can feel”.

A group of five female junior staff members of the Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU) described the distribution as a lifeline, noting that it would significantly bridge food gaps in their households during the fasting period.

From neighbouring communities, Saratu Abubakar and Umma Sani could not hide their joy. “We may not have big words”, they said, “but may Allah continue to bless Dr Salamatu Garba for remembering people like us”.

The SIBLING launch drew university management, academic and non-academic staff, students, and development partners, reinforcing the growing role of the WOFAN-CDA collaboration in strengthening agricultural education, youth empowerment, and sustainable livelihoods in Kano State.

COMMUNITY HEALTH, PROJECT SAFETY, RISKS IN FOCUS AS FUTO CE-SPESS TRAINS EXPERTS

By Chioma Sunny-Adikwu



Some staff of the FUTO CE-sPESS and workshop participants during the February 2026 edition of the Executive and Advanced Certificate Courses workshop organised by the Centre of Excellence

Developmental challenges in Nigeria are increasingly complex and life-threatening. Poverty, inadequate infrastructure, and poorly equipped hospitals and schools are some of the ripple effects of poor procurement practices, mostly due to unskilled officers and sometimes greed.

Recognising the urgent need for actionable, standard-driven solutions that address community health and safety, the Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards (CE-sPESS) at the Federal University of Technology, Owerri

(FUTO), is training thousands of professionals to manage developmental projects effectively, particularly those involving supply chain management, livelihood displacement and social impact.

The February 2026 edition of the Executive Tracks A and B workshops at the Centre blended face-to-face sessions and instructor-led self-paced online learning on the FUTO Learning Management System (LMS) to skill up more than 1000 professionals in procurement management as well as community health and safety risk identification and assessment.

Other components of the workshop were environmental health implications of development projects, preparation and implementation of community health and safety plans, and safeguarding indigenous peoples and project-affected communities, in alignment with the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) requirements and other Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) standards, as well as relevant Nigerian laws and regulations.

Welcoming the participants during the opening ceremony, the Centre Leader, Professor Gloria



Some participants during the workshop, which was organised by the FUTO CE-SPSS for professionals in procurement, environmental and social standards

Chukwudebe, stated that the training was designed to make quality education readily accessible to participants and produce well-informed Procurement, Environmental and Social Safeguard Officers for socially inclusive development. In her words,

“Most procurements impact the environment and social life of the people while non-compliance with environmental and social standards can result in conflicts, outbreak of health issues, worsening climate change, and increasing poverty due to government acquisition of land without the appropriate settlement of indigenes. Once there is adequate capacity to package procurement and mitigate procurement risks in the country, our socio-economic development will triple in a short time”. She urged the participants to actively participate in the workshop and acquire skills to help them improve productivity in their various areas of endeavour.

Under Procurement Management (PRM), participants were exposed to the legal, regulatory and organisational frameworks for public procurement, strategic procurement planning and budgeting, procurement management for goods and procurement management for works.

Environmental Standards (EVS) covered understanding environmental and social assessment as well as the environmental and

social framework and assessment process.

Participants for the Social Standards (SSD) components were taken through the fundamentals of social standards and social impact assessment, understanding social and environmental impact assessment, land acquisition, resettlement, planning and implementation, the Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) and the Livelihood Needs Assessment Plan (LNAP) in World Bank projects.

The workshop modules were handled by well-experienced facilitators from the Centre, drawing examples from real-life situations and field experiences. The workshop also featured focused group discussions, case studies and hands-on tasks.

Participants described the workshop as highly insightful and well-structured, noting that it would undoubtedly enhance their skills, productivity, and efficiency. They commended its practical relevance and the depth of knowledge gained across all three thematic areas, observing that the experience strengthened their understanding of compliance, inclusive development, and strategic project implementation, while also inspiring further academic and professional growth.

BEYOND BORDERS, BEYOND FUNDING: THE ACENTDFB PROMISE

By Dr Murjanatu M. Abba and Yvonne Orekyeh

On a quiet evening in Zaria, far from home for many of them, a group of young scientists gathered around a modest barbecue, laughter rising into the harmattan air. Their accents carried traces of countries across sub-Saharan Africa. Their stories were different, but their journeys had converged in one place: the Africa Centre of Excellence for

Neglected Tropical Diseases and Forensic Biotechnology (ACENTDFB) at Ahmadu Bello University.

For years, Nigerian universities had struggled to attract and retain international students. Then came the Africa Centres of Excellence (ACE) Project, a bold initiative supported by the World Bank



Regional students and some faculty of Ahmadu Bello University's Centre for Neglected Tropical Diseases and Forensic Biotechnology (ACENTDFB)

and the Government of Nigeria, which quietly began to rewrite that narrative. At ACENTDFB, that transformation is not just measured in numbers, but in lives.

Take Monique Yah-Kan Yoboue, for instance, who left her home country, Côte d'Ivoire, with equal parts hope and uncertainty. Like many others, she arrived in Zaria to pursue cutting-edge research in Biotechnology as a tool for combating, diagnosing and treating neglected tropical diseases, fields often overlooked, yet critical to the health of millions across Africa. What she found was more than a laboratory. She found a community.

At the heart of that community is a promise; one that speaks volumes about the Centre's commitment. Even after the official closure of the ACE Project funding, ACENTDFB has continued to pay monthly stipends to its international students. In a region where funding uncertainties often disrupt academic dreams, this decision is nothing short of remarkable.

“We understand what it means to leave home in pursuit of knowledge”,

said Professor Y.K.E. Ibrahim, Centre Leader, ACENTDFB, during the New Year gathering with the students. Speaking not just as an administrator but as someone who had once walked a similar path, he

reminded them that setbacks are part of the journey, but so is resilience. His message to the students was simple: stay focused, stay connected to your supervisors, and finish strong. That reassurance matters because for students navigating new cultures, rigorous academic expectations, and the pressures of research, stability can make all the difference.

Beyond stipends, ACENTDFB continues to open doors. Through grants secured by its faculty, such as those led by Dr Gloria Chechet, students gain access to new opportunities, resources, and networks that extend well beyond the classroom. But the story here is not just one of institutional support; it is also one of shared humanity.

Having been an international student himself earlier in his academic journey, Dr Idowu Aimola, a faculty member of ACENTDFB, now stands on the other side as a mentor. He understands the quiet battles: the culture shock, the self-doubt, the long nights in unfamiliar surroundings and his message to the students is both practical and personal: “My lab is open. You are not alone”.

Across the Centre, that same shared commitment is echoed. Faculty members like Dr Aminu Mohammed and Dr Aliyu Mohammed speak candidly about the discipline required to succeed, but also about patience, collaboration, and the importance of leaning on one another. It is this balance of rigour and empathy that defines the ACENTDFB experience.

Of course, challenges remain. Some



Some of ACENTDFB's regional student scientists representing the Centre's growing network of African scholars and researchers.

students have overstayed their programme duration, and the Centre is addressing this with renewed urgency.

“Time is a resource”, Professor Ibrahim reminded them gently but firmly. “Use it wisely”.

Yet even in these moments of accountability, the underlying tone is one of belief in the students, in their potential, and in what they represent. Because beyond the laboratories and lecture halls, ACENTDFB is shaping something far greater: a new generation of African scientists who are not

only highly skilled but deeply connected across borders. In a world where diseases do not respect boundaries, this kind of collaboration is not optional; it is essential.

As the evening in Zaria drew to a close, conversations lingered over shared meals and quiet reflections. There was laughter, yes, but also something deeper: a sense of belonging.

And perhaps that is the true legacy of the ACE Project at ACENTDFB. Not just that it brought international students to Nigeria, but that it made them feel at home and gave them every reason to stay the course, succeed, and carry that impact back into the world.



Enhanced Global Collaboration for Nigerian Researchers as NgREN is Admitted into eduGAIN

Nigerian higher education institutions have reached a significant milestone in global digital trust and identity infrastructure with the admission of the Nigerian Research and Education Network (NgREN) into the Education Global Authentication Infrastructure (eduGAIN). This was announced by the NgREN, following the signing of the membership declaration by its Managing Director, Dr Joshua Atah.

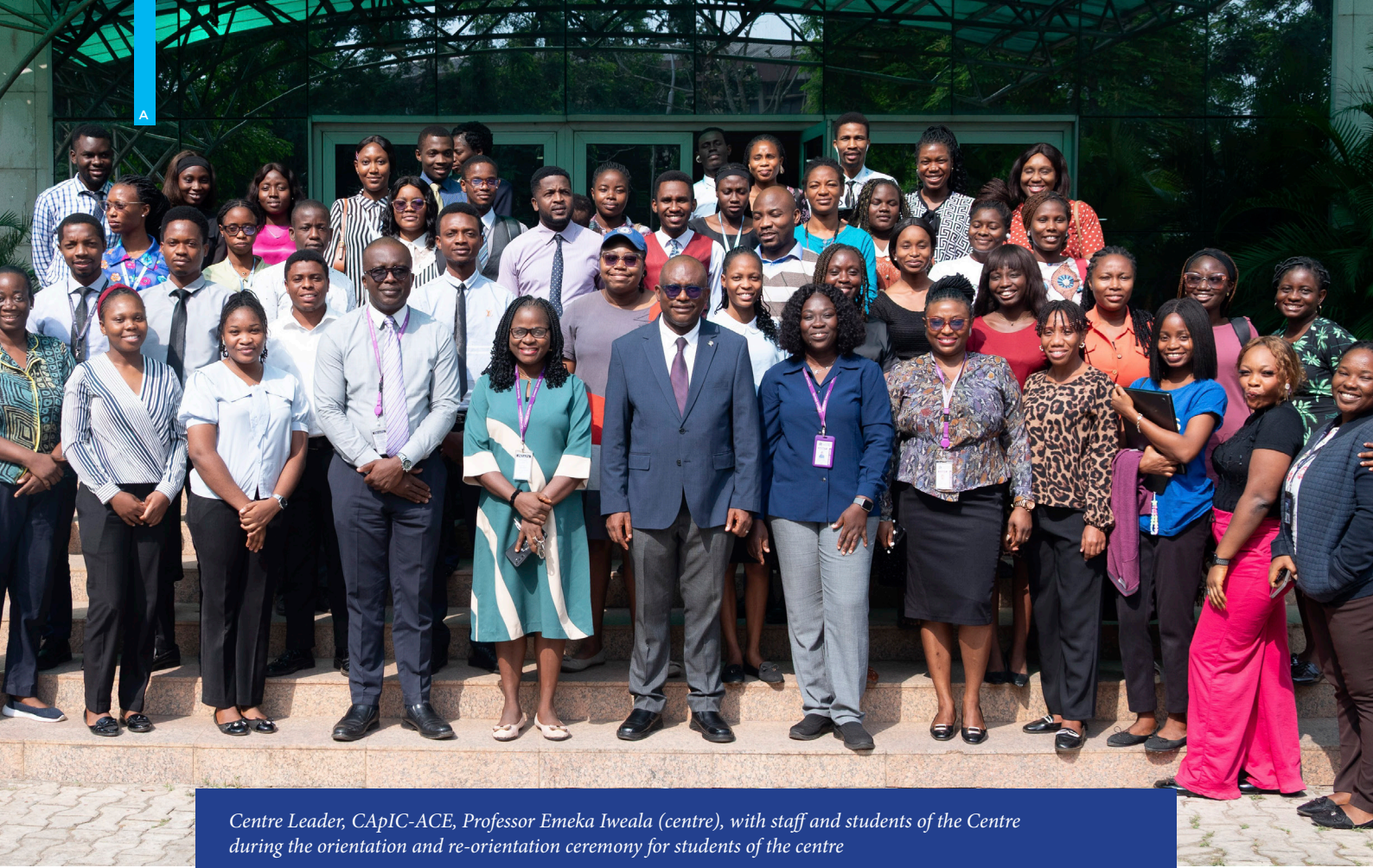
The eduGAIN Inter-federation service connects Identity Federations around the world, simplifying access to content, services and resources for the global research and education community. It boasts of participation from over 100 countries around the world and more than 10,000 Identity and Service Providers.

In a statement issued by Dr Atah, he said that this achievement will greatly benefit Nigerian institutions through enhanced collaboration opportunities, secure access to international scholarly resources, and improved trust frameworks for digital services with the global academic community. He added that this development positions Nigeria's higher education system firmly on the global stage, enabling institutions to access a wide range of international resources and services. This feat by the NgREN followed a rigorous assessment and voting process conducted by the eduGAIN Assembly.

eduGAIN, which operates under the auspices of GÉANT, connects identity federations worldwide, enabling secure, trusted, and seamless access to online research and education services across borders. Membership allows Nigerian universities and research institutions federated under NgREN to participate fully in the global inter-federation ecosystem.

The NgREN expresses its sincere appreciation to the eduGAIN Chair, Steering Committee, and Assembly Members for their diligence in assessing and approving the federation's application. According to Dr Atah, "As Nigeria's National Research and Education Network, NgREN remains committed to strengthening digital trust identity, enabling secure federated access, and supporting innovation across the higher education and research ecosystem".

NgREN is dedicated to providing advanced ICT infrastructure, identity federation services, and collaborative platforms for universities and research institutions across the country. It ensures that research institutions in Nigeria can operate at the frontiers of knowledge and innovation. By providing reliable connectivity, cloud hosting, and digital identity services, NgREN continues to help educational and research institutions translate their research into real-world impact.



Centre Leader, CApIC-ACE, Professor Emeka Iweala (centre), with staff and students of the Centre during the orientation and re-orientation ceremony for students of the centre

CAPIC-ACE SCHOLARS URGED TO DRIVE BREAKTHROUGHS IN MALARIA AND CANCER RESEARCH

...OFFERED 50% TUITION
DISCOUNT

By Thelma Ekanem

At a time when Africa continues to shoulder a disproportionate burden of malaria and cancer, the Covenant Applied Informatics and Communication Africa Centre of Excellence (CApIC-ACE) has challenged its scholars to move beyond theory and develop practical solutions, such as new diagnostics, treatments, and data-driven innovations that can transform health outcomes across the continent.

This charge was delivered during the Centre's orientation and re-orientation programme for postgraduate students, marking the start of the 2025/2026 academic session at Covenant University, Ota. The gathering brought together faculty, leadership, and more than 40 new and returning scholars, setting the tone for a research-driven year anchored on impact, innovation, and accountability.

At the heart of the Centre's message was a clear expectation that research must solve real problems. Students were introduced to CApIC-ACE's three core research clusters, namely malaria, cancer, and Fedgen (genomics and high-performance computing), and encouraged to align their work with pressing health challenges, including the development of diagnostics for malaria, breast and prostate cancers, as well as genomic tools to support precision medicine in African populations.

Welcoming participants, Centre Leader, Professor Emeka Iweala, underscored CApIC-ACE's mission to build a new generation of African scientists equipped to tackle complex health challenges through interdisciplinary research. Hosted within Covenant University's research ecosystem, the Centre integrates disciplines such as biochemistry, bioinformatics, microbiology, chemistry, and ICT engineering.

While noting that the World Bank-supported scholarship model under the ACE Impact Project has ended, Prof Iweala announced that new students would receive a 50 per cent tuition discount alongside full access to laboratory facilities. Efforts are ongoing, he added, to secure renewed funding under the proposed ACE Innovate Project. Although funding structures may evolve, he said, the Centre's ambition and expectations remain unchanged.

Across the programme, faculty emphasised that excellence at CApIC-ACE is defined not just by knowledge, but by discipline, ethics, and global competitiveness. Applied Research Coordinator, Professor Solomon Rotimi, highlighted the centrality of ethical conduct, data integrity, and strong proposal writing, urging students to see grant

acquisition as a core research skill essential to both sustainability and impact.

Similarly, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Professor Olubanke Ogunlana, outlined the Centre's high academic standards. Progression from Master's to PhD requires a minimum CGPA of 4.0, while strict timelines of two years for Master's and three for PhD programmes are enforced to ensure timely delivery. Research, she stressed, must be innovative, relevant, and solution-oriented, with outputs published in reputable, Scopus-indexed journals. Monthly reporting, active seminar participation, and collaboration are mandatory, while professionalism and accountability remain non-negotiable. Scholars are also required to adhere to funding guidelines, with research support capped at \$3,000 for Master's and \$6,000 for PhD projects.

A defining strength of CApIC-ACE lies in its research infrastructure. Students were introduced to seven advanced laboratories, spanning cancer genomics, molecular biology, chemistry, and insectary research, alongside Fedgen facilities that double as a data centre powered by High-Performance Computing (HPC). Equipped with next-generation sequencing technologies, PCR systems, and advanced analytical tools, the Centre has positioned itself as a hub for cutting-edge research and regional collaboration, with institutions increasingly leveraging its computing capacity.

Since its establishment in 2018 with approximately \$6.7 million in World Bank funding, CApIC-ACE has built a track record that reflects both scale and impact. The Centre has enrolled over 200 postgraduate students and trained more



A cross-section of CAPiC-ACE student scientists during the orientation and re-orientation ceremony for newly-admitted and returning students

than 300 African scientists, while reaching over 3,000 community members through malaria and cancer awareness initiatives. Its near-perfect 99.9 per cent performance rating under the ACE Impact Project earned the Centre additional funding and a top development impact score.

CAPiC-ACE's research is also gaining traction. Scientists at the Centre have identified unique molecular signatures of breast and prostate cancer in Nigerian patients. These findings have the potential to inform future diagnostics. In malaria research, new molecular targets have been uncovered for drug and insecticide development. Beyond the laboratory, the Centre has contributed to national cancer treatment guidelines in collaboration with the National Institute for Cancer Research and Treatment (NICRAT), while partnerships with global technology companies, such as Microsoft, IBM, and Google, continue to expand opportunities for innovation and knowledge exchange.

Academic output remains strong, with more than 80 publications in indexed journals and increasing recognition

of faculty among Nigeria's leading AI researchers. Students are also gaining visibility, securing fellowships, grants, and international placements that extend the Centre's influence beyond the country.

Equally emphasised was the importance of a safe and inclusive research environment. Environmental and Social Safeguards Officer, Professor Obinna Nwinyi, highlighted strict adherence to health, safety, and environmental protocols aligned with international standards. From chemical handling procedures to a zero-tolerance stance on sexual harassment and gender-based violence, the Centre continues to prioritise accountability and well-being, maintaining a record free of reported cases.

The programme ended with an interactive question-and-answer session, where the Centre reaffirmed its commitment to sustaining research infrastructure, supporting publications, facilitating grants and fellowships, and upholding strict standards of ethics, safety, and academic delivery.

RESPONSIBLE PROCUREMENT WILL SECURE THE FUTURE – PROFESSOR NNAMONU

By Uche Michael Aondohemba



Vice-Chancellor, JOSTUM, Professor Isaac N. Itodo (centre), flanked on his right by the premier Director-General of BPP, Engr Emeka Ezeh, and on his left by the Centre Director, IPESS, Professor Lami Nnamonu, with participants during the IPESS 2026 Symposium, which took place in Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi

Procurement standards aligned with global best practices is a sure way to build a secure future for the next generation. This was the highlight of a speech by the Centre Leader and Director of the Institute of Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards (IPESS) at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi (JOSTUM), Professor Lami A. Nnamonu, during the

IPESS 2026 Symposium. Speaking during the symposium, themed “Responsible Procurement in Action: Pathways to Environmental Stewardship and Social Equity”, the Director stated that, across the globe, procurement is no longer viewed as a transactional function. It is increasingly recognised as a strategic lever for sustainable development capable of driving environmental

protection, promoting social inclusion, strengthening governance, and delivering value for money.

Professor Nnamonu noted that in Nigeria, public procurement accounts for a substantial proportion of national expenditure. When aligned with environmental and social standards, it becomes a powerful instrument for achieving climate resilience,



Participants at the symposium on Responsible Procurement in Action: Pathways to Environmental Stewardship and Social Equity

protecting communities, promoting gender equity, supporting local enterprise, and safeguarding future generations. She called on participants to take advantage of the symposium to ignite partnerships, inspire reform, and strengthen their collective resolve to institutionalise sustainable procurement practices in Benue State, across Nigeria, and beyond.

Speaking on “Reimagining Procurement: Governance, Transparency, and Accountability for Responsible Public Procurement”, premier Director General, Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP), and Chairman, FCT Civil Service Commission, Engr Dr Emeka Ezeh, asserted that responsible public procurement goes beyond compliance. It includes integrity, value for money, fairness and competition, and social and environmental responsibility. He stated that responsible public procurement that is rooted in good governance, transparency, and accountability is essential not only for saving money but also for building a state that citizens can trust, a market that rewards competence and integrity, and a future where public resources are used to

deliver tangible, equitable benefits to all Nigerians.

Engr Eze added that if governance, transparency, and accountability are strengthened, Nigeria would see improved value for money, reduced corruption, fewer procurement scandals, and greater confidence in government institutions. He advocated continuous training, regular posting, the declaration of assets, and the sectoral development of procurement officers, among other measures, to reduce malpractices in the procurement sector.

In a presentation titled “Greening the Supply Chain: Integrating Environmental Standards into Procurement Decisions”, the Centre Leader of the Sustainable Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards Enhancement Centre of Excellence (SPESSCE), University of Benin, Professor Sylvester Obinna Osuji, said that procurement is not simply a transactional function but a powerful tool for advancing sustainability, resilience, and inclusivity. According to him, embedding environmental standards into procurement processes ensures that organisations ascertain that every contract, supply,



A cross-section of stakeholders and participants at the symposium organised by IPES to foster collaboration and knowledge exchange in procurement, environmental and social standards

and purchasing decision contributes to reducing ecological footprints, promoting social equity, and achieving long-term economic value. Professor Osuji added that greening the supply chain requires collaboration between procurement specialists, environmental experts, suppliers, and stakeholders to build trust, accountability, and continuous improvement, saying these initiatives will not only safeguard natural resources and reduce pollution but also foster innovation, strengthen resilience, and create inclusive growth opportunities.

In a presentation titled “Procurement as a Tool for Social Equity: Advancing Fair Labour, Inclusion, and Local Economic Development”, World Bank Consultant and Social Development expert, Oluwatosin Oso, submitted that procurement is a powerful instrument for achieving social equity. By embedding principles of fair labour, inclusion, and local economic development in procurement policies and practices, he said, organisations can extend their impact far beyond their immediate operational needs. In doing so, procurement transforms from a back-office function to a strategic driver of positive change, building fairer, more inclusive, and more prosperous communities. According to Oso, by aligning procurement policies and practices with the principles of social equity, organisations, both public

and private, can play a significant role in advancing fair labour standards, fostering inclusion, and stimulating local economic development.

Earlier in his welcome address, Vice-Chancellor of JOSTUM, Professor Isaac N. Itodo, stated that universities are not only centres of learning and research but also institutions of leadership and example. Professor Itodo noted that responsible procurement represents a deliberate commitment to environmental stewardship, ethical sourcing, transparency, and social equity, and institutions entrusted with public resources must ensure that procurement systems go beyond compliance.

Commending the organisers, particularly Professor Nnamonu and the Central Planning Committee for putting together the symposium together, the Vice-Chancellor stated unequivocally that IPES remains JOSTUM’s flagship programme, adding that the symposium is another justification of how IPES continues to blaze the trail in implementing the World Bank-supported SPESSE Project.

The Vice-Chancellor reiterated the university’s commitment to supporting initiatives that promote accountability, sustainability, and inclusive growth and encouraged participants to leverage the event to exchange ideas frankly, challenge assumptions constructively, and propose actionable solutions that will influence policy, strengthen institutions, and inspire ethical leadership.



(r-l) Vice-Chancellor, JOSTUM, Professor Isaac Itodo, World Bank Consultant and Social Development Expert, Mr Tosin Oso, and Centre Leader, University of Benin’s SPESSE Centre of Excellence, Professor Sylvester Osuji, during the symposium, which took place in Makurdi

ACEPHAP, OTHERS COLLABORATE TO SAVE 40,000 WOMEN, CHILDREN IN NIGERIA, MALI

By Nusaiba Ibrahim Na'abba



Centre Director, ACEPHAP, Professor Hadiza Shehu Galadanci, with representatives of Every Pregnancy, Pathfinder International, and Islamic Relief, Mali and the United Kingdom, during the training on maternal and child health preservation in Nigeria and Mali

The Africa Centre of Excellence for Population Health and Policy (ACEPHAP), working alongside Every Pregnancy, Pathfinder International, Islamic Relief in Mali and the United Kingdom, recently hosted a collaborative training that brought partners together to rethink strategies for effectively addressing challenges to maternal and child health in Nigeria and Mali. In keeping with the objectives of ACEPHAP, conversations went beyond strategy, focusing on people and families, particularly mothers and newborns, whose lives depend on timely, quality care.

This collaboration is distinct in its scale of ambition and the clarity of its mission. The project is designed with a bold target: to save the lives of 25,000 women and children in Nigeria and 15,000 in Mali.

Rather than relying solely on conventional funding streams, the initiative is anchored in the power of Islamic philanthropy, drawing support from donors and faith-based organisations committed to social impact. This approach not only ensures sustainability but also reflects a model of community-driven responsibility for health outcomes.

Speaking at the event, Centre Director, ACEPHAP, Professor Hadiza Shehu Galadanci, said the initiative would utilise and boost the use of local resources to finance healthcare at community levels. According to her, *“more awareness and funds will be mobilised during the month of Ramadan as it is a month of giving”*.



Chief Operating Officer of Every Pregnancy, Marleen Vellekoop, making a presentation during the collaborative training hosted by the Africa Centre of Excellence for Population Health and Policy (ACEPHAP)

In her remarks, the Chief Operating Officer of Every Pregnancy, Marleen Vellekoop, said the project aims to support around 40,000 women across Mali and Nigeria with a bundle that will reduce maternal and child mortality.

Representatives of Islamic Relief, Mali, at the event include the Commissioner of Health, Timbuktu region, Dr Kizito Dabou, Dr Amadou Diakite and Dr N'fadama Boiré, who explained that their region also faces a high level of maternal and child mortality, making the programme well-suited to strengthening their country's health system.

Throughout the training sessions, partners shared lessons from their diverse contexts: policy, implementation, humanitarian response, and community engagement, thus creating a rich exchange of ideas. There was a shared understanding that reducing maternal and child mortality requires more than isolated interventions; it demands coordinated systems that reach women before, during, and after childbirth. The discussions highlighted the importance of trust, cultural sensitivity, and evidence-based practices in shaping solutions that truly work on the ground.

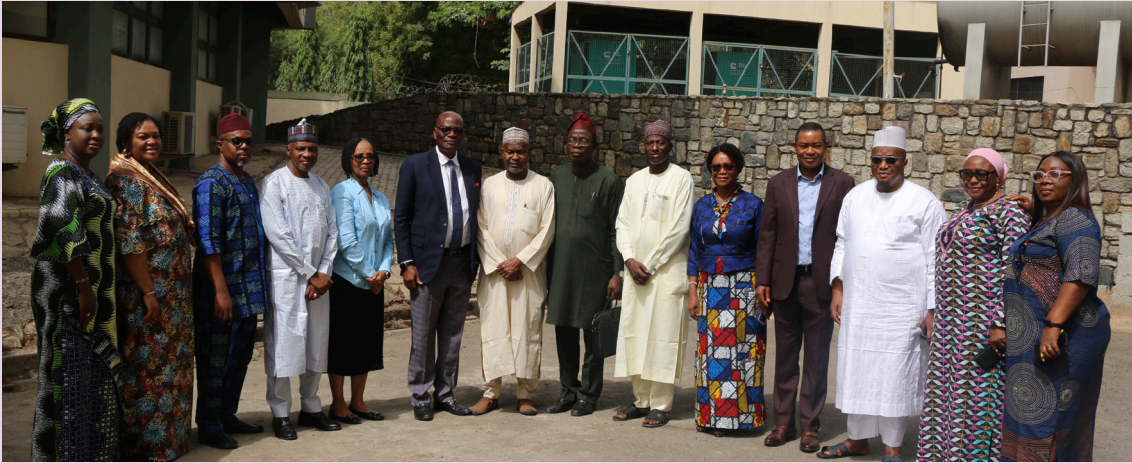
Collectively, stakeholders agreed that maternal mortality is a challenge on the continent, and expressed enthusiasm in using the E-MOTIVE bundle to support successful child delivery.

Central to the project is a comprehensive pregnancy care bundle that will provide women with essential support throughout the entire pregnancy journey. From pregnancy to delivery and the postnatal period, the bundle is designed to close critical gaps in maternal care. It includes the E-MOTIVE bundle, an ACEPHAP innovation aimed at improving the prevention and management of postpartum haemorrhage, one of the leading causes of maternal deaths. By integrating this innovation into routine care, the project seeks to translate research and policy into life-saving action.

In her remarks, the regional portfolio director for West and Central Africa at Pathfinder International, Dr Amina Aminu Dorayi, said "The collaboration will surely ensure the smooth running and overall success of the project". She added that Pathfinder will provide expertise in key thematic areas".

The ACEPHAP/Every Pregnancy/ Pathfinder International/Islamic Relief Mali collaboration goes beyond just being a project to show what can be achieved when institutions, humanitarian organisations, and philanthropic partners align around a common vision. With ACEPHAP at the centre, the initiative stands as a hopeful example of how strategic partnerships can reshape maternal and child health outcomes across borders, turning collective intent into measurable impact.

UNIVERSITIES' TRANSFORMATION TO PRODUCE PROBLEM-SOLVERS, INNOVATORS, JOB-CREATORS – PROFESSOR RIBADU



The Nigerian University System (NUS) is being transformed to produce not just graduates, but problem-solvers, innovators, job creators, and global competitors. This will be achieved through the national Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) transformation strategy for Nigerian universities, which will be implemented by the National Universities Commission (NUC).

The Executive Secretary of the NUC, Professor Abdullahi Yusufu Ribadu, made this disclosure recently, during the inauguration of the Blueprint ICT Development (Blueprint-ICT-Dev) STEM Transformation Strategy Committee in Abuja. He noted that the project aligns with Nigeria's national development priorities, global best practices, and will enable Nigerian universities to remain relevant, competitive, and responsive to industry needs.

Professor Ribadu emphasised that nations that have made remarkable progress in economic growth, industrial development, and technological advancement have done so on the strength of their investments in STEM education. From innovation ecosystems in advanced economies to emerging digital hubs in developing nations, the foundation remains the same: a robust and forward-looking higher education system anchored in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Describing the Committee's task as not merely advisory but transformational, he urged them to critically examine existing frameworks, identify systemic gaps, and propose actionable recommendations that will position universities to meet the demands of contemporary society. "It is in recognition of this pivotal role that the NUC, as part of ongoing efforts at repositioning the NUS for excellence, national relevance and global

competitiveness, deemed it appropriate to constitute a STEM Transformation Strategy Committee comprising reputable academics.

Addressing the committee members, the Executive Secretary stated,

“Your selection to serve on this Committee is a testament to your expertise, integrity, and commitment to national development. The future of our young scientists, engineers, technologists, and innovators depends significantly on the quality of the frameworks you will help design”.

The committee’s Terms of Reference are to: design and formulate a STEM Transformation Strategy for the NUS, develop a medium to long-term strategic plan for the Commission to implement the STEM Transformation Strategy aimed at enhancing STEM education with particular focus on encouraging female participation, and the development and implementation of a Labour Market Observatory (LMO) to provide accurate data and timely information on the evolution of jobs and the employment needs of industry. Other terms of reference are to review and shortlist proposals from beneficiary universities under the Blueprint-ICT-Dev Project to serve as pilot institutions on the implementation of the STEM strategy

and to monitor the implementation of the strategic plan.

The Committee, which is chaired by former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lagos, Professor Oluwatoyin Ogundipe, also has Professor Emmanuel Achor, Professor Bashir Aliyu, Professor Adamu Muhammad Alkali, Professor Edu James Inam, and Professor Stella Ngozi Nwosu as members.

Providing an overview of the processes leading up to the project’s launch and the subsequent selection of committee members, the NUC Director of Special Projects, Dr Joshua Atah, expressed appreciation to the Executive Secretary for his commitment to transforming the NUS and for the confidence reposed in the directorate to serve as the committee’s secretariat.

Speaking on behalf of the committee, the Chairman accepted the responsibility with a strong commitment to advancing the shared vision of integrating ICT into STEM education for the benefit of students, faculty, and the wider academic community. According to him, the committee’s work is pivotal in shaping the future of Nigerian institutions and ensuring that their programmes remain innovative, relevant, and aligned with global standards. He assured that the Committee would draw from the expertise of its members to develop a comprehensive and impactful blueprint and create a framework that not only enhances teaching and learning but also fosters research, innovation, and industry partnerships and positions Nigerian universities as leaders in ICT-driven STEM education.



The Management and Information System Laboratory of the Africa Centre of Excellence on Technology-Enhanced Learning (ACETEL) domiciled in the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)

ACETEL ADVANCING TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN EDUCATION ACROSS SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

By Loretta Edozie

At the heart of Abuja, within the serene campus of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), stands a Centre that has quietly but powerfully positioned itself as one of Africa's leading hubs for digital transformation. The Africa Centre of Excellence on Technology - Enhanced Learning (ACETEL), established in February 2019 and supported by the World Bank, the Association of African Universities (AAU), and the National Universities Commission (NUC) for five years, has, in just a few years, grown into a model institution for research, training, and innovation in technology-driven education on the continent.

ACETEL aims to bridge Africa's digital knowledge gap by developing human capacity, strengthening digital policy, and creating cutting-edge solutions that can drive technological growth across sectors. In a continent where digital literacy varies widely and access to advanced ICT skills remains uneven, the Centre's emergence represents a critical intervention toward building a more inclusive and technologically empowered Africa.

A Digital Vision Taking Shape

From its inception, ACETEL set out to champion the kind of digital transformation that supports sustainable



socio-economic growth. Through its MSc and PhD programmes in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cyber Security, and Management Information Systems (MIS), the Centre equips African learners with the expertise required to thrive in a global digital economy. These programmes attract regional students from across the continent, positioning ACETEL as a truly pan-African learning and research hub.

Beyond degree programmes, the Centre has become a training ground for professionals seeking to upgrade their digital skills through an impressive range of short courses, including Cloud Computing, Database Management, Internet of Things (IoT), Blockchain, Programming, Digital Literacy, IT Essentials, CCNA 1–3, Entrepreneurship, and English language courses for non-English speakers along many others listed on the Centres website. ACETEL ensures that learners at all

levels have access to the tools needed to participate in the digital revolution.

Infrastructure Built for Innovation

One of ACETEL's most remarkable achievements is the establishment of state-of-the-art facilities that now drive hands-on learning and research. In addition to its Basic Laboratory, the Centre houses six other fully equipped laboratories for Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, Management Information Systems, Virtual Reality (VR), Multimedia, and the Cisco Academy. Each laboratory functions as a research space where students and faculty collaborate on real-world digital solutions and gain practical experience that matches international standards.

The completion of the ACETEL building also stands as a testament to its rapid growth and the foresight invested in its long-term sustainability, and to reflect its

commitment to technology-enhanced service delivery, the Centre developed a digital registration platform, streamlining administrative processes.

Building Capacity, Driving Research, Leading Conversations

Since its establishment, ACETEL has actively engaged in knowledge-sharing through workshops, conferences, exhibitions, and capacity-building programmes. These events bring together scholars, policymakers, industry experts, and innovators to examine emerging technological issues and explore solutions tailored to Africa's unique needs. The Centre's research outputs and academic conferences continue to enrich conversations around digital policies, cybersecurity threats, artificial intelligence ethics, ICT infrastructure development, and the future of technology-enhanced learning on the continent.

Most notably, ACETEL has already produced two sets of MSc and PhD graduates, many of whom are now contributing to academia, industry, and government initiatives across Africa, and whose achievements reflect the Centre's profound impact on human capacity development.

A New Chapter: Standing Strong Beyond World Bank Support

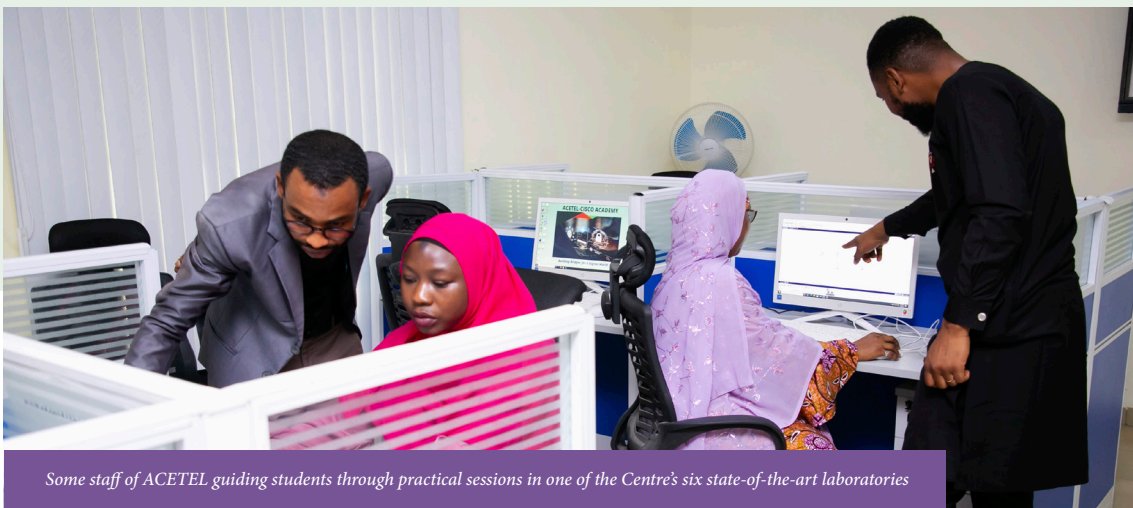
With the closure of World Bank funding for the ACE-Impact Project, ACETEL has entered a new phase, one that relies on innovation, institutional strength, and meaningful partnerships. Rather than slowing down, the Centre is forging ahead and strengthening ties with industries, government agencies, technology companies, and development organisations. These partnerships are expected to support research commercialisation, expand internship and student placement opportunities, and strengthen funding for laboratory upgrades and digital tools. It is expected that ACETEL will leverage its diverse partnerships to also promote collaborative research and innovation and ensure the Centre's sustainability for years to come.

ACETEL's leadership has reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring that the Centre continues to thrive independently, using its foundational World Bank achievements as a springboard for a stronger, more sustainable future.

Lighting the Path for Africa's Digital Transformation

As Africa navigates the rapid pace of technological change, ACETEL's role becomes increasingly vital. The Centre goes beyond being an academic institution to priding itself as a hub for innovation, a bridge to digital empowerment, and a catalyst for homegrown technological solutions.

With its blend of advanced facilities, rigorous academic programmes, forward-thinking leadership, and a vision grounded in service to the continent, ACETEL is shaping a future where Africans are not just consumers of technology but creators, innovators, and global contributors.



Some staff of ACETEL guiding students through practical sessions in one of the Centre's six state-of-the-art laboratories

STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE, DELTA STATE TRAINS PUBLIC SERVANTS AT UNIBEN SPESSCE

By Jeremiah Ugwu

The Sustainable Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards Enhancement Centre of Excellence (SPESSCE) of the University of Benin (UNIBEN), in collaboration with the Delta State Government, has completed a three-week Advanced Certificate Course for civil and public servants to strengthen their capacity in Procurement Management, Environmental Standards, and Social Standards.

The training, titled “Enhancing Public Service Impact Through Strategic Training”, was designed to equip participants with the knowledge, tools, and competencies needed to improve governance processes, ensure transparency in procurement, and integrate environmental and social safeguards into public-sector operations. It brought together participants from various ministries, departments, and agencies across Delta State. Through a blend of lectures, interactive sessions, and case studies, the training promoted best practices in public administration and sustainable development.

The initiative aligns with SPESSCE UNIBEN’s mandate to foster institutional

capacity building and knowledge transfer, contributing to Nigeria’s broader goal of achieving sustainable governance and development.

In his remarks at the opening ceremony, the Centre Leader of SPESSCE UNIBEN, Professor Sylvester Osuji, commended the Delta State Government for its commitment to human capital development and strengthening of institutions. Professor Osuji assured participants of SPESSCE UNIBEN’s dedication to advancing sustainable procurement and environmental and social standards across the public sector. He encouraged participants to approach the training with enthusiasm and a commitment to applying the lessons learned to their respective roles, thereby contributing to the overall development of Delta State.

In her address, the Head of Service, Delta State, Dr (Mrs) Minimim Oseji, expressed appreciation to the Centre for partnering with the state government to deliver a programme of such strategic importance. She urged participants to take full advantage of the opportunity, emphasising that the knowledge gained would not only



Some of the participants during the training on Enhanced Public Service Impact, organised by the University of Benin's SPESSE Centre of Excellence

enhance their individual performance but also contribute to the collective progress of the state. She further noted that the training would help bridge knowledge gaps, improve policy implementation, and foster a culture of accountability and innovation within the public service.

The collaboration between the SPESSE Centre of Excellence in UNIBEN and the Delta State Government underscores the importance of continuous learning and professional development in the public sector. It reflects a shared commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through improved governance, ethical leadership, and institutional reform.

At the conclusion of the three-week programme, participants demonstrated enhanced competence in procurement planning and management, integration of environmental and social standards into policy formulation and project execution, application of sustainable practices that improve governance outcomes and public trust and commitment to serve

as ambassadors of reform within their respective ministries and agencies.

Participants in the Procurement Management thematic area were exposed to strategic procurement planning, ethical standards, and compliance with national and international procurement frameworks. They were trained to adopt transparent and efficient procurement systems that promote value for money and accountability.

The Environmental Standards sessions provided participants with insights into sustainable practices, environmental impact assessment, and climate resilience. Participants were taught how to integrate environmental considerations into public projects and policies to ensure long-term sustainability.

The Social Standards trainees explored inclusivity, stakeholder engagement, and social safeguards. Their sessions highlighted the importance of protecting vulnerable groups, promoting gender equity, and ensuring that public projects deliver equitable benefits to all citizens.

ACE-SPED EXPANDS GLOBAL FOOTPRINT, AS STUDENT WINS OPTICA SCHOLAR GRANT

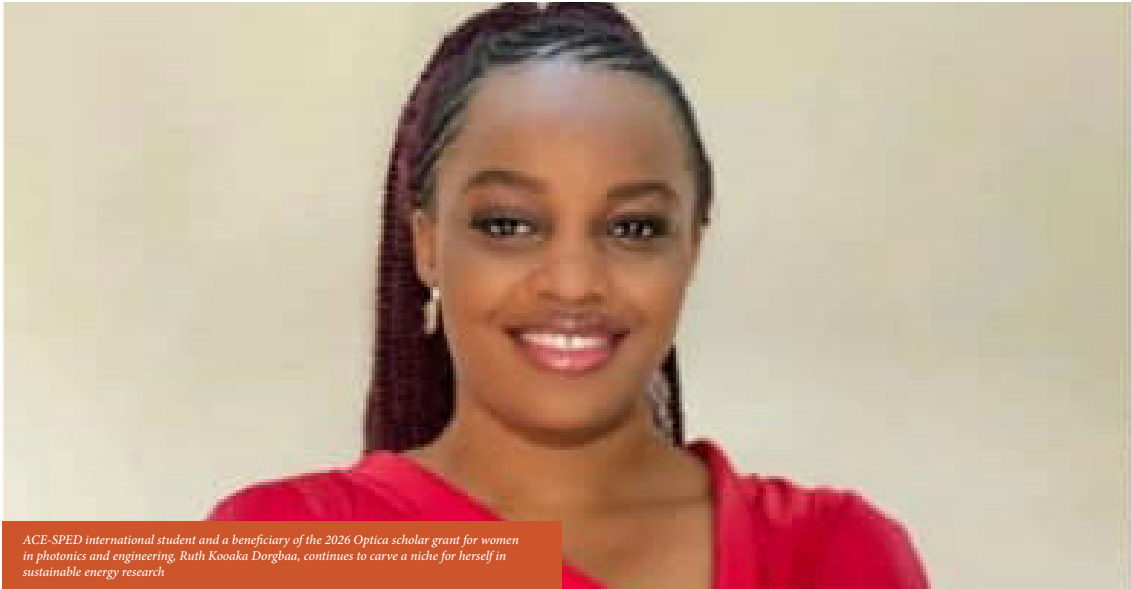
By Inya Agha Egwu



The Vice-Chancellor of UNN, Professor Simon Uchenna Ortuanya (right), and the Centre Leader of ACE-SPED, Professor Emenike Ejiogu (centre), watch as Taiwanese Ambassador, His Excellency Andy Yih-Ping Liu (left), signs the visitors' book during a visit to the university and ACE-SPED as part of efforts to build and strengthen strategic partnerships to drive the internationalisation of education

The Africa Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Power and Energy Development (ACE-SPED), University of Nigeria, Nsukka, is strategically positioning itself at the forefront of global collaboration, leveraging partnerships, knowledge exchange, and innovation to create a model that aligns local priorities with global expertise. In recent months, the Centre has intensified its drive for internationalisation through active participation in global innovation platforms, strategic partnerships with leading universities, and engagement with industry stakeholders to enrich the practical experiences of its staff and students.

A notable highlight was the visit of the Taiwanese Ambassador to Nigeria, His Excellency Andy Yih-Ping Liu, to ACE-SPED, as part of a tour of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where the Centre showcased its cutting-edge research infrastructure and innovation capacity, opening discussions on joint research initiatives, academic exchange programmes, and institutional development. The Ambassador explored key facilities at ACE-SPED, including the Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) Laboratory, the 3D Innovation Laboratory, and the Centre of Competence for Digital Education and Content Creation Studio. Each of the facilities reflects ACE-SPED's



ACE-SPED international student and a beneficiary of the 2026 Optica scholar grant for women in photonics and engineering, Ruth Kooaka Dorgbaa, continues to carve a niche for herself in sustainable energy research

commitment to advanced research and digital innovation. Impressed by the Centre’s capabilities, Mr Liu reaffirmed Taiwan’s commitment to deepening its partnership with ACE-SPED.

Building on this momentum, ACE-SPED participated in the Green Innovation Summit 2026 in March, a high-level global forum convened under the theme:

“Mitigating Pollution Through Green Technology for Climate Resilience, Good Health and Well-Being”. The summit brought together leading researchers, innovators, and policymakers to chart pathways toward a more sustainable future.

Representing the Centre, Professor Wilfred Okonkwo and Dr Alon Razgour, a senior Principal Research Fellow/Research Professor at ACE-SPED, made impactful

contributions that portrayed ACE-SPED’s growing intellectual influence in global sustainable energy discourse.

For the Centre Director, Professor Emenike Ejiogu, participation in such platforms is both strategic and intentional. “Our participation in global platforms like the Green Innovation Summit is not incidental”, he noted. “It is a deliberate strategy to position ACE-SPED as a hub for cutting-edge research, global dialogue, and actionable solutions in sustainable power and energy development”.

Beyond conference participation, ACE-SPED’s collaborative efforts have extended into high-level institutional and industry engagements. A recent visit by Professor Ejiogu and Dr Razgour to the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA) marked a significant step toward forging innovation-driven partnerships. Hosted by Jimmy Chen and Maxim Chen, the engagement explored opportunities

for collaboration in technology transfer, industrial innovation, and sustainable energy systems. “Our engagement with TAITRA signals a new phase in ACE-SPED’s evolution, one that prioritises industry partnerships, innovation ecosystems, and scalable solutions for developing economies”, Professor Ejiogu explained.

The Centre’s international outreach has also deepened within academia. A productive engagement with Professor Philip Hsiaopong Liu of National Chengchi University, which included doctoral researcher, Yimovie Sakue-Collins, focused on advancing joint research, academic exchange, and interdisciplinary collaboration. These discussions bridged energy development with the social sciences, reflecting ACE-SPED’s recognition that sustainable solutions must be not only technologically sound but also socially inclusive.

The cumulative impact of these collaborations is already evident in ACE-SPED’s rising global profile. Through these strategic alliances, the Centre is enhancing research quality through exposure to global best practices, creating opportunities for staff and student exchange, facilitating technology transfer and innovation adoption, and strengthening its reputation as a leading energy research and training hub in Sub-Saharan Africa.

“Every collaboration we build is a step toward making our Centre more visible and globally competitive”,

the Centre Leader affirmed. He emphasised that ACE-SPED’s leadership understands that strong institutions are not built in isolation, but through purposeful and sustained collaboration.

“Our partnerships with leading global institutions are designed to enrich our research capacity, broaden perspectives, and train globally competitive scholars”,

he said.

For ACE-SPED, international collaboration is not merely an option; it is a strategic imperative for sustainable growth.

In another development, a postgraduate student of the Centre, Ruth Kooaka Dorgbaa, has emerged as one of the beneficiaries of the 2026 Optica scholar grant for women in photonics and engineering. Ruth is among 10 researchers selected globally for the highly competitive grant, which is intended to support her studies from the Master’s level to the PhD level. She has carved a niche for herself in sustainable energy research through her work on next-generation solar technologies.

Ruth, a materials science engineer and researcher at the Nano Research Laboratory of UNN, is currently pursuing her Master’s degree.

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