



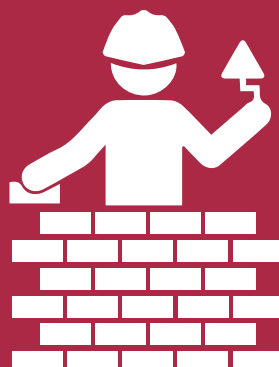
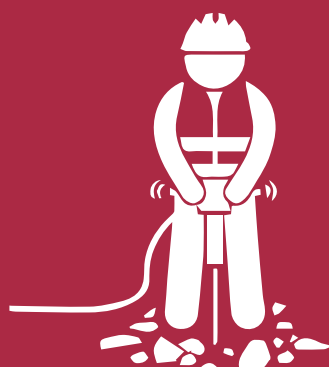
EVENT REPORT

INVESTING IN THE PEOPLE OF NIGERIA

Date: March 28, 2018

Venue: Civic Hive, Yaba, Lagos

INVESTING == IN == PEOPLE



ABOUT BUDGIT

Established 2011, BudgIT's founding goal is making the Nigerian budget simpler and accessible for the average citizen. The availability of budgets in non-readable PDF formats on government websites provided an initial opportunity for BudgIT to stretch forward its innovative idea, by simplifying the budgets using infographics and interactive applications. Initially conceptualized and developed in Nigeria's foremost technology hub, the Co-Creation Hub,

We believe that active participation in government finance is a key to a functional society, and therefore citizens need to know how government revenues are expended in the delivery of public infrastructure, meeting debt obligations, or funding the recurrent component of the budget. BudgIT not only safeguards citizens' right to know, but works to ensure citizens know in a clear, timely and transparent manner.

EVENT BACKGROUND

Nigeria, Africa's strongest in terms of population, is a laggard with regards to global socio-economic and health indicators. The country is ranked 114th, of 130 economies, in the 2017 Global Human Capital Index.

Nigeria also has a poor infant and maternal mortality ratio, with the death of over 750,000 children in 2015; recently, the economy fell into recession; growth languished in negative territory for five consecutive quarters. To flee recession, the Nigeria government began investing heavily in infrastructure, raising capital spending from N560bn to N1.3tn on an annual basis.

Meanwhile, despite accelerated spending on roads and railways, investments in the health and education sector have been less than 10% of annual budgets. Although the country halved the maternal mortality ratio over 20 years, from 1200 in 1990 to about 560 in 2013, the current ratio puts Nigeria worse than Africa's 53 other countries. The number of women in Nigeria dying needlessly from pregnancy-related issues is second only to India.

Specifically, investments in the health sector by the Federal Government (now at N340bn) have not surpassed 4% of the entire budget. Of the total 2018 budget, N269.3bn (or 78% of the budget), will be spent on recurrent items, including the payment of salaries and

emoluments of government workers as well as overheads, if the budget is fully implemented. The balance of N71.11bn will be spent on capital projects.

While politicians are incentivised to put funds in short-term investments and physical infrastructure, there has been poor attention to the long-term health of the country. Nigeria's medium term plan, which is the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), places little emphasis on investing in health and education, with scant mentions or non-inclusion of projects related to these sectors in the listed execution priorities.

Philanthropist Bill Gates' speech to the expanded session of the National Economic Council was played at the event. Mr Gates reiterated his concerns on Nigeria's weak investments in health, education and agenda that create equal opportunities for Nigerians. He said: "to anchor the economy over the long term, investments in infrastructure and competitiveness must go hand in hand with investments in people. People without roads, ports, and factories can't flourish. And roads, ports, and factories without skilled workers to build and manage them, can't sustain an economy."

The key message in Gates' speech is that Nigeria cannot achieve economic progress without active investment in its citizens, and the country must find urgent solutions to the fiscal constraints and a pervasive lack of transparency that retard economic growth.

THE EVENT REPORT

A welcome address by journalist Tolulope Adeleru-Balogun began with a quote from Bill Gates: "Nigeria is now the biggest economy on the continent, but growth is not inevitable. Nigeria has unmatched economic potential, but what becomes of that potential depends on the choices you make as Nigeria's leaders.

The most important choice you can make is to maximize your greatest resource; the Nigerian people. Nigeria will thrive when every Nigerian is able to thrive."

Tolulope added: "when we all believe in the potential of Nigeria, the reality staring us in the face calls many things into question. Nigeria's illiteracy rate is just above 59%; one of the lowest rates on the continent. In 2017,

unemployment rates rose to over 8.8% and unemployment or underemployment figures were at 18 million in the third quarter of 2017. While this is slowly increasing, it still stands lower than many other poor countries in Africa. On many charts and in many studies, Nigeria's ranking is not impressive. But as many say, Nigeria's strength is in its people. How do we build more for Nigerians and in turn do more for Nigeria? We hope that by the end of today's conversation, we would have some answers to that question."

Tolulope's introductory speech set a great tone for the event, which led to an airing of the video of Bill Gates' presentation to the expanded session of the National Economic Council. The video, which ran for 21 minutes, relayed Gates' concerns, expectations and his plea for urgent investment in the Nigerian people. With 135 people in attendance, the audience paid rapt attention and were given the choice to provide immediate responses.

NIGERIA'S ILLITERACY RATE IS JUST ABOVE

59% 

ONE OF THE LOWEST RATES ON THE CONTINENT

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES ROSE OVER

8.8% 

IN THE THIRD QUARTER OF 2017



FEEDBACK TO BILL GATES' PRESENTATION



PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

Transparency and Accountability: There was a prevalent theme among speakers on the need for transparency and accountability. Participants believed that it was not enough to stimulate or advocate for increased domestic resource mobilizations such as taxes and extractive resource taxes, when the administration of these funds was not fully public and open to debate. There was a unanimous call that more transparency will strengthen accountability and provide efficient allocation of resources.

Domestic Philanthropy: There was an understanding that Mr Gates hit the right notes from his standpoint for more investment in the Nigerian people. However, there were more calls for private affluent Nigerians to invest in and shape the narratives in human capital development. A clear case in favour of the session is the stagnant state of Nigeria's university system, which a few people believed would not have produced the right economic material for Bill Gates, necessitating the irony of him requesting information on Nigeria from the University of Washington, US.

Health workers' Welfare: The audience expressed alarm at the growing emigration of medical personnel in Nigeria, especially to Canada and the United Kingdom. The general belief was that this is linked to non-competitive pay, and a lack of prospects. Pointers given were that the government should increase salaries in these sectors, and also address bad customer service, particularly within the public health sector.



PANEL SESSIONS

Oluseun Onigbinde

Lead Partner, BudgIT

Oluseun Onigbinde gave an introduction, explaining that Nigeria must prioritise its health and education sectors. He also emphasised that Nigeria cannot have the broad growth desired, if the government neglects the wellbeing, voice and feedback of the people. Oluseun cited specific areas for more investments and funding in education (curriculum, entrepreneurship and workplace readiness) and health (infrastructure & people). He ended by making a case for Nigeria to improve her fiscal position as the tax to GDP is currently less than 6%, the lowest worldwide.

Adebola Williams

Co-founder, Red Media Africa

Adebola Williams as keynote speaker noted that if Nigeria invested in health, education and opportunities, its human capital will exhibit sustained growth. He agreed with Mr Gates that Nigeria has a long way to go, but asked that this must not be seen as an indictment on Nigerians. Rather, it should be taken as an objective assessment on the need for Nigeria to focus on approaches that maximise human potential across all demographics. Adebola observed that Nigeria's current ruling elite

PANEL SESSIONS

have failed to provide the advantages they enjoyed, to the emerging generation. He however affirmed that the youth have not been helpless; he praised the ability of youth to equip themselves and attain professional excellence.

According to him: "A large percentage of the people of Nigeria between the ages of 18–31 years have a powerful advantage to harness the creative indemnity of the nation. African countries like Rwanda, Ghana, Mauritius and Kenya are rated far above Nigeria, considering the 115th position out of 130 on the global human capital scale. With this position, it is obvious that the Nigerian government needs to take the issue of Human Capital more seriously."

Adebola stated that the Nigerian government should encourage collaborations and partnerships between all sectors, i.e educational institutions, government and businesses (both private and government owned) to improve human capital development. He regretted the rising exodus of medical personnel in Nigeria and unemployment rates in the country. Adebola explained that indexes for growth include: Human Capital development, demography counts and a booming labour market, finishing his statement by emphasizing the global hunt for talent. "In this era of industrial revolutions, where other countries are celebrating technologies and the rest, (that) we are celebrating the production of pencils and toothpicks in Nigeria is a shame."

PANEL SESSIONS

Dr. Ify Aniebo

(Senior Research Scientist, Health and Delivery Foundation)

Ify Aniebo spoke passionately on weak investment in healthcare and how Nigerians are without health insurance or the best facilities to stay healthy. According to Dr Aniebo: “investing in healthcare is beyond purchasing MRI scanners and machines; investing in professionals and medical research is necessary.”

She said some of those hospitals are now shells of their old selves, adding that investing in healthcare is not restricted to replacing and refurbishing equipment; it is more about investing in health professionals’ training, to facilitate the application of updates in technologies and disease control mechanisms. Dr Aniebo noted that the vast differences between Rwanda and Nigeria in terms of health insurance coverage are puzzling, considering the East African nation only recovered from a genocide two decades ago. She maintained that public health needs a thorough “tear-down,” as malaria kills more Nigerians than Boko Haram on an annual basis.

PANEL SESSIONS

Bisi Ogunwale

(Senior Research Scientist, Health and Delivery Foundation)

Bisi illustrated the reckless abandon of Nigeria's education system through the point that 5% of foreign currency allocated to banks is used for payment of tuition into foreign universities. Bisi noted that the national school curriculum is not being looked into and said recent experiences in Kaduna State showed that most teachers are not well trained. Bisi's list of statistics compared Nigeria's education budgets in the last two years (all below 8% of the entire budgets) with her West African neighbours like Benin Republic (lowest in same period was 19%). He described as "depressing" the annual 'scamming' of 1.5 million students seeking tertiary education, while there is only space for 30% of these students in the nation's institutions.

Bisi bemoaned a situation where politicians use teaching jobs as compensation for those who helped them win elections; seeking a stop to the practice. He canvassed for massive investments in education, citing this as a crucial element towards boosting human capital development in Nigeria.

Cheta Nwanze

(Research Head, SBM Intelligence.)

Cheta started with an age-long Northern Nigerian quote that: "it is better to build Muslims than to build mosques. He was using the analogy to argue the standpoint that it is far better to invest more in people, than infrastructure. Cheta said there is a need for Nigeria to ramp up productivity – to influence her health and education sectors. He noted that rising insecurity in Nigeria is due to weak investments in these areas, and that there was a rising element of idleness that continually expands the country's security challenges.

PANEL SESSIONS

Fati Abubakar

(Founder of Bits of Borno)

Fati Abubakar stated that Boko Haram is currently in its 9th year of operation, submerging an entire region in ruins. She maintained that the lack of opportunity for young people in an environment of crushing poverty, created this worsening security situation. According to her, Nigeria needs to address issues of education from a learning and empowerment perspective, either through Western education or informal education.

Fati added that the Nigerian government needs to invest more in agriculture, and intense skills acquisition should be encouraged. Fati noted that skilled and unskilled labour should be a priority for the government, in order to reintegrate employment, particularly as long-term fixes to the problem of the region. For her, the fastest solution lies in building the human capital of the Northern region. Fati added that the focus of government should be to ensure that young people of every social class have equal opportunities and access to education, healthcare and every means legally possible,

QUOTES



- Adebola Williams
Co-Founder, Red Media Africa

“

That Nigerians are the best doctors in America is no longer a thing to boast about, because many patients are languishing on hospital beds in Nigeria.

”



- Dr. Ify Aniebo
Senior Research Scientist,
Health and Delivery Foundation

“

1.5 million people write JAMB every year, but the tertiary institutions have only about 30% carrying capacity of that number.

”



- Bisi Ogunwale
Chief Financial Officer,
Essential Infrastructure Corporation

“

1.5 million people write JAMB every year, but the tertiary institutions have only about 30% carrying capacity of that number.

”

QUOTES



- Cheta Nwanze
Research Head, SBM Intelligence

“

We need to up our productivity however we can, to be able to invest in education to meet our expanding population; do we have the political will?

”



- Fati Abubakar
Founder, Bits of borno

“

Radicalization started because we did not invest in our people; it followed from idleness.

”

SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

1. Leadership matters

There is a prevalent theme that the challenge of investing in people is exacerbated by the absence of leadership. Participants believed that the current Minister of Education and Health lack the capacity to understand and advocate for increased spending in both sectors. The conversation centred on the collective need to pay attention to the leadership process in Nigeria and how more citizens across wider demographics can influence policy decisions. Bisi Ogunwale asked if anyone understands the plans for education, a question which ended in a general answer in the negative.

2. Participation matters more

The consensus was that not only does the quality of leadership matter, it is also important that citizens, especially young people, participate within the system and raise their voices for a better brand of democracy. There were conversations on how influential youths need to use their voices to advance ideas that can transform Nigeria. This was via critical feedback from Jude Feranmi, who wants us to use our voice to demand the change we want to see, through youthful thinking.

3. Domestic Resource Mobilization

At the event, there was huge concern - as equally raised by Bill Gates - on Nigeria's domestic resources, especially taxes. This was complemented by various expressions of a lack of trust in government, due to a dearth of transparency and accountability. Noted was the fact that Nigeria's tax-to-GDP is weak, and the reality that considering how all levels of government share central revenue on a monthly basis, there is no incentive to fix the tax-to-GDP bracket. Respondents stated that fixing this situation with a holistic plan will ensure Nigeria has the capability to shore up resources to truly invest in its people.

SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

4. Social Inequalities remain a problem

There was a continuous theme around how corruption and the political settlement culture of the Nigerian space has expanded inequalities along socio-economic divides. There were concerns that the Northern part of Nigeria faces the most acute poverty rates and needs urgent help, as the ongoing insecurity does not only destroy lives and properties, but actually decimates the opportunities available to young people and the entire economy.

5. Advancing Merit is critical

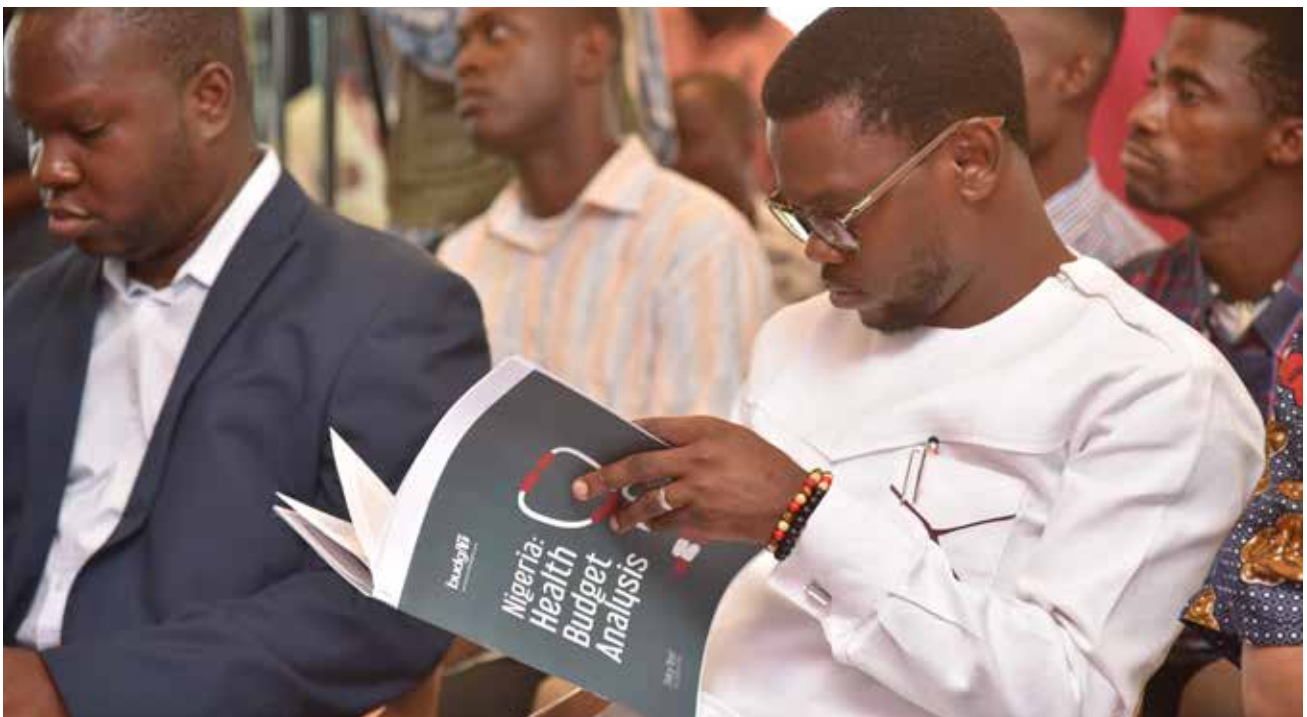
Participants made key points on the need to elevate meritocracy within the Nigerian system. A few noted that the quota system that allows fair representation from all groups was a disincentive to investing in people. Examples of candidates with low entry marks into tertiary institutions who still get access solely due to their ethnic background, were copiously cited.



OUTPUTS

With over **174 people** in attendance and at least **500,000 viewers via a live broadcast**, the event facilitated conversations that will undoubtedly give more edge to Nigeria's democracy, based on the context set by Mr Bill Gates. The resulting conversation has articulated a generation's voice on the need to implement policies and reinvent systems that cover the specifics of investment in the Nigerian people.

Participants online and at the event were able to share ideas on the dangers of an expanding population, amid insignificant human capital investment. The event also provided an opportunity to curate ideas for the Nigerian government and build a basis for increased participation by all stakeholders in the political process, as a pathway to influence increased funding for critical education, health and social investments.



NEXT STEPS



More voices are needed, specifically with regards to engagement with more groups on investing in the people and developing messages with this central theme in the build-up to the elections. We suggest six more engagement programmes across Nigeria: Abuja, Kaduna, Maiduguri, Enugu, Ibadan and Port Harcourt.



Hold a public roundtable with political aspirants on “What is in it for us?” to properly allow candidates define how their political manifesto is geared towards youth inclusion and their investment plans in critical sectors such as education and health.



Continuous engagement with state governments during the July launch of BudgIT’s “State of States” report and via a special insert report on the current situation of healthcare/education at sub-national levels.



A platform specifically built to track Nigeria’s investment in its people and also linked to our digital campaign with partners such as ONE.

EVENT ORGANIZERS

Oluseun Onigbinde
Lead Partner
+2347034944492
oluseun@yourbudgit.com

Abiola Afolabi
Civic Hive//Communications Manager
+2348038625637
abiola@yourbudgit.com

Segun Olaleye
Admin and Logistics Officer
+2348066015929
segun.olaleye@yourbudgit.com



Address: 55 Moleye Street,
Sabo, Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria

Web: www.yourbudgit.com

Twitter: [@BudgITng](https://twitter.com/BudgITng)

Facebook: facebook.com/budgitng