



# INFORMATION BRIEF

NIPSS/dRPC Youth Dialogue on – Digital innovations and entrepreneurship of youth in Nigeria’s creative economy: Research and Policy Implication for expanding access and optimum utilization



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## **Nigerian Youth, digital innovations and the Creative economy**

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The 2026 theme of the Senior Executive Course (SEC) of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) focuses on: “The Orange Economy and Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Growth in Nigeria,” to research into and make recommendations to shape new policy directions on this critical area of development. The dRPC, a long-term partner of NIPSS having signed our first MOU in 2005, is collaborating with NIPSS to deep dive into the youth and digital innovation component of the SEC 48.

The dRPC is supporting NIPSS on the full inclusion of youth facing issues and voices into the curriculum and activities of SEC 48. In doing so, the dRPC aims to strengthen capacity for evidence informed research and policy making on the contributions, challenges and opportunities of youth led digital innovations and entrepreneurship in Nigeria’s creative economy.

The dRPC’s support for NIPSS includes curating and updating data sets on youth in Nigeria’s creative economy for participants of SEC 48. The dRPC will also co-convene a national youth dialogue on Digital innovations, entrepreneurship and the creative economy in Nigeria in line with the World Creative and Innovation Day on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026.

### **World Creativity and Innovation Day April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026**

World Creativity and Innovation Day (April 21) highlight the digital economy by showcasing how technology, creativity, and innovation drive sustainable economic growth, entrepreneurship, and problem-solving. It emphasizes adopting technologies to transform creative industries and encourages digital solutions to meet SDGs. The creative economy is a pivotal driver of Nigeria's rebased economy, with industries such as film, music, fashion, and digital content contributing significantly more to GDP than previously recorded. Collectively, Nigeria’s creative industry, IT, and broadcasting contribute roughly 12.3% to Nigeria's GDP, 3% more than oil, gas, and mining which stands at 8.9%. Nigeria’s creative sector or orange economy acts as a major employment hub, particularly for youth, and is essential for diversifying from oil reliance

The NIPSS/dRPC Dialogue with Young Creatives will serve as a platform for formative engagement between SEC participants and young creative practitioners across the orange economy. The objective is to complement existing course materials with firsthand perspectives from youth on industry realities, including opportunities for growth, constraints to scale, and areas requiring policy responses.

### **Calling all young creatives**

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The dRPC issued the call for young creatives participation, on February 10, 2026, through dRPC’s communication channels, professional networks, and targeting multiple creative communities. It was also amplified digital platforms to ensure national reach. As of March 2026, a total of 176 youth applied to be part of the youth dialogue. The applicant pool reflects broad geographic spread, diverse creative disciplines, and a mix of early, mid-level, and experienced professionals.



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**Table 1: Summary of Applicant Pool**

Category	Breakdown
<b>Gender</b>	Male: 115; Female: 61
<b>Geopolitical Representation</b>	Nationwide spread across all six geopolitical zones, with highest concentration in South West (Lagos), North Central (FCT, Plateau), and North West (Kaduna)
<b>Top Locations (by volume)</b>	Lagos (37; 20.6%), FCT (31; 18.0%), Plateau (27; 15.2%), Kaduna (16; 9.3%), Oyo (11; 6.4%)
<b>Creative Economy Segments</b>	Writing & Publishing (34.3%), Film & TV (18.0%), Digital Content Creation (18.0%), Others (9.3%), Fashion (4.7%), Music (4.1%), Visual Arts (4.1%), Design (3.5%), Photography (2.9%), Gaming & Animation (1.2%)
<b>Years of Experience</b>	0–2 years (14.0%), 3–5 years (31.4%), 6–10 years (26.7%), 10+ years (27.9%)
<b>Prior Policy Engagement</b>	No prior engagement: 68.6%; Prior engagement: 31.4%

From this pool applicants, **68 participants have been** selected to participate in the National Dialogue. Selection was based on three criteria, **experience, relevance, and reach**. Emphasis was placed on demonstrated professional engagement within the creative economy, alignment with the SEC theme, and the ability to contribute meaningfully to policy conversations while influencing broader audiences.

## Profiling some of Selected Young Creatives for the NIPSS/dRPC National Dialogue

**Table 2: Summary Profile of Selected Participants**

Category	Summary
<b>Gender</b>	Male and female representation
<b>Age Range</b>	Predominantly young to mid-career professionals
<b>Experience Level</b>	5 to 10+ years' experience
<b>Sector Representation</b>	Film, theatre, music production, literature, design, journalism, academia, digital media
<b>Academic/Knowledge Actors</b>	Includes lecturers and researchers (University of Jos, University of Nigeria Nsukka)
<b>Digital Reach</b>	Several participants with strong audience platforms



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Notable creatives within the group include Amb. Malami Ibrahim, the current President of the Actors Guild of Nigeria, Kano Chapter. The cohort also features award-winning and high-impact creatives such as Abdul’ahad Dalhat, a TEDx speaker and two-time winner of the Splendors of Dawn Poetry Competition, recognized for his work in spoken word and civic engagement, and Achor Yusuf, an award-winning filmmaker, director, and producer with over two decades of experience across Nollywood and international television, whose work spans major productions and global collaborations.

### Some Selected Participants Profile

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**Umar Gombe** is an actor and filmmaker committed to advancing Kannywood through authentic storytelling and cinematic excellence. As an actor, he delivers emotionally grounded performances that reflect the depth and cultural richness of Hausa narratives.

As a filmmaker, he creates stories rooted in Northern Nigerian heritage with a contemporary edge, aiming to produce high-quality content that resonates locally and competes globally. His work bridges local experiences with universal themes, positioning Kannywood within a broader global conversation.

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**Precious Chidera Ben-Okoli** is a Creative Director and Media Producer specializing in cinematography, video production, brand storytelling, and digital design. Through Highsoft Media, he leads the full creative process, from concept development to directing, filming, and editing. He has worked with a range of clients to produce film, photography, and design projects that communicate clear, engaging stories. His long-term goal is to build a leading creative production agency known for innovation, collaboration, and cinematic excellence.

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**Abdul’ahad Dalhat** is a writer, spoken word artist, and public speaker who uses poetry and storytelling to address social justice, gender equality, and climate issues. He currently serves as a faculty member at the Leadership School of Communication, Lagos.

A TEDx speaker, he has performed on national stages and is a two-time winner of the Splendors of Dawn Poetry Competition. He is also a fellow of True My Voice Nigeria and the founder of IDeA Foundation, where he works to promote youth leadership, civic engagement, and mentorship.

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**Abisola Omolere** is an intellectual property lawyer working at the intersection of law, creativity, and cultural knowledge, focused on helping creators protect and maximise their work in the modern creative economy.

Through the Legally Smart Creators Circle (LSCC), she provides practical legal education and resources on copyright, trademarks, ownership, and licensing for artists, writers, and digital creators. She is also the founder of Rootstump, a cultural media initiative preserving Yoruba knowledge systems through books, audio, and educational content. Their work spans authorship, cultural programming, and audio narration, with a consistent focus on protecting creativity and sustaining cultural heritage.

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**Amb. Dr. Benjamin Anabaraonye** is a researcher with the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, climate advocate, and CEO of Benjy Poetry and Music Global Concepts, with a focus on climate change adaptation and sustainable development.

Through the Project Green Initiative, he uses poetry, research, and public engagement to educate communities on climate action. He has received international recognition for his work, including awards from the United States Department of State and the United Nations Environment Programme, and continues to contribute to global sustainability through research and advocacy.

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**Jessica Ireju** works spans strategic communications, programme support, and content creation that centres people, purpose, and social impact.

She is the founder of HER Green Room, a storytelling platform documenting the lived experiences of modern women across life, faith, career, culture, and wellness, while building a community that informs and empowers. Through her broader work, including digital content and The Career Closet, Jessica creates resources that inspire growth and purposeful living, with a consistent focus on storytelling as a tool for impact.

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**Ogochukwu Umeadi** is an award-winning Producer, Director, Screenwriter, Production Designer, and Archivist focused on telling bold, authentic African stories. His work spans film, television, commercials, and archive-driven projects that explore memory, culture, and identity.

He began her career in production design and has since contributed to a range of notable projects across film and media. Now emerging strongly as a Producer-Director, he has led recent works including *No Let Dem Die*, *Ashawo... Or an Ode to Nigerian "Religious" Men*, and *Black Sands*. Beyond filmmaking, he engages with archives and cultural memory, participating in industry conversations and international programmes that shape storytelling and film practice. Her work reflects a growing commitment to building a distinct, design-informed cinematic voice within the new wave of African cinema.

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**Gwendolyn "LadyGwen" Oshoniyi** is a veteran broadcast journalist, communication strategist, and mental health therapist whose creative work sits at the intersection of media, storytelling, and social impact. With over two decades in broadcasting and media management, she uses storytelling, documentary production, public speaking, and strategic communication to amplify voices and shape meaningful narratives. Through initiatives like LadyGwen Media and True Oasis, she also advocates for children, youth, and mental health awareness.

Her work blends journalism, media training, and advocacy to inspire change, empower young voices, and promote conversations that support emotional wellbeing, education, and purposeful storytelling across communities.

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**Patricia Nnenna Bernard** is a writer focused on exploring human experience, social ideas, and ethical questions through storytelling and reflective essays. With a background in philosophy, her work engages themes such as womanhood, African identity, justice, and community.

She is particularly interested in telling honest, healing stories about women's lives, highlighting resilience and everyday strength while giving voice to often overlooked experiences. Her writing combines thoughtful analysis with accessible language, contributing to conversations on social change, leadership, and cultural awareness.



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## NIPSS/ dRPC Collaboration

The NIPSS/dRPC collaboration stands out as a model of government/NGO collaboration. Starting in 2005 with a MOU signing ceremony, the NIPSS/dRPC collaboration has been sustained and evolved over 20 years to strengthen national policy research, analysis and recommendations by connecting policy makers with stakeholders, interlocutors and affected communities who would not normally be consulted in NIPSS policy review processes. Over the years the dRPC has supported NIPSS to leverage knowledge from such stakeholders in issue areas of education; health; humanitarian response; gender and development; systems reform and many other areas. The new focus on youth in the creative economy is a reflection of the strength and continuing relevance of the NIPSS/dRPC collaboration.

The development Research and Projects Centre (dRPC) is a Nigerian non-profit organisation established in the early 1990s by academics and development practitioners from Nigerian Universities with a mission to expand the policy making space by facilitating the inclusion of marginalized stakeholders while at the same time strengthening capacity for consultative engagements of government policy making bodies with civil society. Over the years, the dRPC has developed and perfected consultative methodologies such as policy dialogues; roundtables; stakeholder mapping and engagement; townhall and village square meetings.

Over the past three decades, dRPC has trained and supported over 1,000 civil society organisations across Nigeria to optimize consultative platforms, engaging with government by presenting data, lived experiences and knowledge from the field.

Since 2005, dRPC has maintained a formal partnership with NIPSS, making it the Institute's longest-standing non-governmental partner. Through this collaboration, dRPC has consistently facilitated platforms that connect policymakers with practitioners, ensuring that national policy conversations are informed by grounded, real-world insights.



**NIPSS in partnership with the Fed Min of Finance, Budget, and National Planning with support from dRPC convened a Technical Workshop for the Review of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Interventions in FCT**



**NIPSS in partnership with dRPC and the Fed Min of Finance, Budget, and National Planning organized a 1-Day Harmonization and Validation Workshop on WEE Indicators in the WEE Policy-Action Plan and WEE M&E Framework with the National M&E Department in FCT**



**NIPSS in partnership with dRPC and the Fed Min of Finance, Budget, and National Planning organized a 1-Day Launch and Dialogue on the National Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and Women's Economic Empowerment in Nigerin held in FCT Abuja 13th Feb 2023**



**NIPSS in partnership with dRPC convened the 3rd Workshop for Directors of States implementing the State Education Sector Plans (SESPs) on Flexible Implementation of Education Sector Plans (ESPs) to address Emerging Issues Impacting on Girls' Education at Basic Education Level in in FCT Abuja, 26th July 2022**



**NIPSS in partnership with dRPC making presentation at the Malala conference on "Gender Review of State Education Sector Plans in Nigeria 2011-2023" held in FCT Abuja. 27th Feb 2023**



**NIPSS in partnership with dRPC organized a 1-Day Final Meeting of the Crises Trajectories Mitigation Planning Technical Working Group to build consensus on Anticipated Crises and to propose recommendation to address Anticipated Crises in FCT Abuja. 28th April 2025**

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