

THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS WAS GIVEN BY THE HONOURABLE COMMISSIONER, PLANNING AND BUDGET COMMISSION, HAJIYA UMMA YUSUF ABOKI.

In her speech, she mentioned that

Data science is having a great impact on governance in Kaduna State. She said that as a people-centered government, they tapped into the use of data for evidence-based policymaking because they understood the importance of leaving no one behind in the drive to achieve Sustainable



Development Goals. They observed that the increasing availability of data, along with advancements in technology, is transforming the way that governments across the world make decisions and provide services to their citizens, and so the question, "Why not Kaduna state?"

Since 2018, when the state government

partnered with the Gates Foundation to launch the Data Lab Project, they have never had one single cause for regret. Yes, mantles of leadership have changed several times within the PBC and even the Bureau, however, all the partners have stayed true to the vision of the Data Lab Project.

Work has been done assiduously to revolutionize the way data is used for evidence-based policymaking, and the many successes achieved in key sectors like health, education, and agriculture are a testament to this fact.

By analysing vast amounts of data, the KDSG has gained insights into complex problems, such as healthcare outcomes and economic trends. This, in turn, has helped the government make decisions that are good for the people.

As a government that cares about the plight of its people, they have become more responsive to the needs of the citizens. Projects like the Health Facility Analytics Platform, the Integrated Supervision Support, and the General Household Survey have helped them to tailor services and policies to better meet the needs of the good people of Kaduna State that are being served.

She mentioned that their operations have become more efficient and cost-effective. By automating routine tasks and streamlining processes, the data lab project has helped the government reduce costs and improve the delivery of service.

She also mentioned that the Data Lab Project has enabled increased transparency and accountability in governance. By making data publicly available, they have been able to promote greater transparency in decision-making processes, and make it easier for citizens to hold the government accountable for their actions.



The data lab project has had a profound impact on governance in Kaduna State, no doubt. But there was no way they could have achieved any of them without upskilling the workforce. Yes, the Kaduna state Bureau of Statistics has grown a lot in terms of digital transformation, and the project has been focused on building the staff's skills.

The Data Science Fellowship Programme is also one of the major

objectives of the Data Lab Project. It was designed to provide a fellowship programme in data management and handling to selected youths in Kaduna State.

The programme was launched under the "Click-on Kaduna" brand, a state-led initiative designed to expose youths to digital skills to increase their employability and also launch the state as a global talent hub.

She stated that the programme was launched back in 2020, and this year's graduating cohort, tagged DSFP 2.0, the second in the series, and was designed to develop human capital around data science and the use of data for decision-making.

In June 2022, 40 young people selected from a pool of over 5,000 applications had the exclusive opportunity to work closely with the Kaduna State Bureau of Statistics at the state-of-the-art Amina J. Mohammed SDG's Data Lab. For three months, the fellows received practical and hands-on data science training under the tutelage of expert data science instructors selected from all around the state. Fellows were trained in research ethics and data governance, ODK scripting and data collection, data preparation using advanced Excel, SPSS, R, and Python programming languages, data visualization with Excel, R, and Power BI, including the use of GIS and Leaflet in data management. The fellows also gained soft skills in leadership, communication, teamwork, and work ethics.

During the class training, the fellows undertook practical field activities to help them build their experience, gather relevant data, and aid the government in solving pressing issues. At the DSFP 2.0



first fieldwork exercise, fellows of the Click-On Kaduna Data Science Fellowship Programme assisted the Kaduna State Contributory Health Management Authority (KADCHMA) as enumerators in a validation and enrolment exercise for pregnant women, children under 5, and the elderly in the state who receive free medical services from 254

Primary Health Care (PHCs) centers throughout the state's 255 wards registered in the Basic Health Care Provision Funds (BHCPF), and the Vulnerable Program (VP). The fellows also joined the Kaduna State Bureau of Statistics as enumerators in the second phase of the "Out of School" census in order to collect accurate data on every out-of-school child in the state during their second fieldwork. They were specifically tasked with finding the kids who weren't in school at the moment, collecting their demographic information, and determining why they weren't in school. The fellows were attached to various local government areas (LGAs) for the exercise in Kaduna North, Kaduna South, Igabi, Chikun, Sabon Gari, and Zaria LGAs.

She also mentioned that the second phase of the fellowship programme was all about helping the fellows gain practical experience implementing real-life end-to-end data management solutions in the state. They were integrated into the day-to-day activities of the Kaduna State Bureau of Statistics and relevant MDAs in the Kaduna State Ministry of Health to help the state build streams of pipelines that can provide more insights into the structure, form, and content of the health system in Kaduna State. The fellows also supported NFTI in achieving the minimum milestone requirements as provided in the BMGF grant proposal by working with KDBS and other stakeholders from the health sector to show strong use cases that can enable evidence-based decision-making.

She also stated that the Kaduna State Government is proud of them and their achievements. She is



more excited to hear that some of them are already making giant strides in their communities.

She encouraged the graduates to continue learning, growing, and pushing the boundaries of what is possible in data science as they embark on the next chapter of their professional careers. The fellowship has

equipped them with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed, but the real test lies ahead. She advised them to be brave, to look for new and different ways to solve problems, and to never be afraid to take calculated risks.

As data scientists and ambassadors of Kaduna state, they are at the forefront of a rapidly changing world, and the impact they will have on the society will be significant. They have the potential to transform industries, drive innovation, and improve people's lives. However, great power comes with great responsibility. She urged them to use their skills and expertise to make a positive impact, to use their knowledge to create a better world, and to always act with integrity and ethical principles in mind.

She thanked the Executive Governor of Kaduna State, His Excellency Malam Nasir Ahmad El-Rufai, for his inspiring, strong leadership and direction in setting up a strong statistical system in the state.

She also appreciated the Gates Foundation for their never-ending support given to the programme.

The unflinching support and dedication to duty displayed by the Statistician General, the directors, as well as all the Bureau staff was also acknowledged. The tireless efforts in overseeing the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data have been instrumental in shaping the decisions and policies that impact Kaduna state.

She thanked the NFTI for the great work they do around using data for the good of Nigeria and Africa at large.

They have shown a lot of technical know-how by giving technical advice at different stages of putting these programmes into action.

She wished the graduates the best in their future endeavour on behalf of herself, the Planning and Budget Commission, and the Kaduna State Government.