



Converging The  
Creative Industry for  
Narrative Change

The First Climate Story  
Lab in West Africa

# THE CLIMATE STORY LAB LAGOS

HOSTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

THE CLIMATE  
STORY LAB

HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG  
ABUJA  
Nigeria

THE CLIMATE  
STORY LAB  
LAGOS

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The Lagos edition of the Climate Story Lab created an immersive experience for creatives by showcasing numerous social change works to inspire change. It convened a space for intimate discussions with artists about their perspectives on emerging issues such as climate change and activism - including the role of technology in providing innovative ways to connect and tell stories. Beyond this, the space convened social and climate activists, journalists, communicators, and storytellers to deliberate about creating pathways to sustainable urban development, extending to grassroots storytelling, while engaging with decision makers, and strategic political communications, among others.**

Lagos is known for many things; a major African financial center, the economic hub of Nigeria, a melting pot of creative talent, and a city of arts and culture. The city provides endless inspiration for storytellers through visual feast of dance, folklore songs and colorful costumes. Lagos city has a significant influence on commerce, entertainment, technology, education, politics, tourism, art, and fashion in Africa. Food, culture, language and heritage in Lagos is shaped by not only traditional ethnic groups but also by many emancipated Africans from neighboring countries such as Sierra Leone, Benin, and Ghana who returned to Lagos due to cultural, missionary and economic reasons.

Originality in telling compelling stories from the grassroots, stories that seek to inform, educate, advocate and move people to act is one of the key principles of the Climate Story Labs. For the first West Africa story lab, there's no place more fitting to bring together impact storytellers like Lagos, a city with historic ties to social and political activism through creative measures such as music and arts both in the time of Fela Kuti, and with modern artists such as Falz. Lagos is also a city well known to be affected by seasonal flooding, which has been exacerbated by climate change in recent years, this has further increased social tensions in places like Makoko community, Africa's biggest floating slum.

## THE CLIMATE STORY LAB LAGOS



# CREATIVE MEDIA, CULTURE & STORYTELLING



**NASREEN AL-AMIN, FOUNDER & DIRECTOR - SURGE AFRICA**  
WELCOME & OPENING NOTE

Climate Story Lab Lagos began by centering crucial discussions around the role of storytelling in shaping narratives, how cultural nuances most often shape our perspectives on how we approach issues, assess information and communicate amongst ourselves. The day dipped into cultural aesthetics, tradition, community building, and solidarity among practitioners. It reflected on environmental defenders and storytellers at the forefront of not just climate change, but telling stories of change across many social and economic spectrums, where they face backlash and obstacles by simply stating the facts. The Lab laid the foundation for important discussions on the broader role of cultural organisations in movement building, the role of creative media to diversify advocacy models, and its potential for integrating these models with campaigns. This extends to scaling partnerships, advancing co-learning, and conceptualising new ideas.

Ken Henshaw, while delivering his key note speech delved into the concepts of environmental justice, seeking to impart clarity on why the first step to telling any story is to understand the grassroots struggles, and frame narratives around the change that needs to happen - by giving power back to the people through seeking justice and accountability.

Among many important points, he emphasised that the creative movement in the climate space must be moved by lived experiences, and realities of the historical injustice done to indigenous peoples, whether it is colonialism or the destructive extraction of fossil fuels.



**KEN HENSHAW, DIRECTOR - WE THE PEOPLE**  
OPENING THE LAB AS A KEY NOTE SPEAKER



# CAN IMPACT STORYTELLING DRIVE CLIMATE ACTION?

This session speaks about storytelling from a cultural and intergenerational perspective, moving to make emphasis about folklore stories and their impact on beliefs and perceptions, to draw similarities on how impact storytelling through art and media seeks to deliver similar effect. The overarching question here centered around whether our storytelling approach is delivering the change that we aspire, or if we need to revisit cultural strategies to make correlation between climate change and local struggles for our stories to be as purposeful.

The two key stakeholders discussed why storytelling for impact is crucial to advocacy. Habiba Ali, a renowned clean energy expert and an industry leader shared a personal story about being directly exposed to air pollution, and how she was able to connect that with its effect on respiratory systems which propelled her to seek alternative measures. Her short film, which focused on integrating renewable energy into local communities, highlighted the benefits of a stable electricity supply, including poverty alleviation and rural development.

Speaking on the role that research plays in storytelling to arm people with tangible facts and the essentiality of understanding narratives, extending to how government and traditional leaders can use stories to understand issues, Henry Bassey of Green Hub Africa explained that we need to examine the stakeholder community and approach storytelling as an element that need broader collaboration to take root for stories can make people take action.

In using the right language to ensure locals understand the issue of climate change, he said there is a need to break down language barriers by engaging in local dialects among others. Environews, a Nigerian-based environment news dissemination platform, is pivotal in this sense as it conveys news at a multilateral level, ensuring under-represented voices are heard.

**THE STORIES WE TELL NEED TO BE AUTHENTIC. IF THEY ARE NOT AUTHENTIC THEN THEY'RE NOT COMPELLING; BECAUSE STORIES LIKE THAT ARE WHAT WE HAVE SEEN, FELT AND EXPERIENCED, AND NO ONE CAN TELL YOU A STORY LIKE THAT.**

**HENRY BASSEY, GREEN HUB AFRICA**



HABIBA ALI, CEO - SOSAI RENEWABLE ENERGIES



HENRY BASSEY, DIRECTOR - GREEN HUB AFRICA



IKENNA DONALD, PROGRAM OFFICER - HEINRICH BOELL FOUNDATION

# Spoken Word Poetry With ZAKARI EMMANUEL

Zakari Emmanuel delivered two impeccable spoken word poetry performances throughout the Lab. His performances were electric experiences mixing art with social advocacy, drawing the attention of his audience to challenges affecting citizens, ensuring that he delivered pieces that sparked discussions about what we need to do to make change happen.



**"PENNY WISE AND POUND FOOLISH" IS A POWERFUL SPOKEN WORD PIECE THAT CONFRONTS THE UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTH OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN LAGOS, NIGERIA. REFLECTING ON THE POET'S OWN COMPLICITY IN ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION. THROUGH VIVID IMAGERY, USAGE OF YORUBA LANGUAGE AND PERSONAL REFLECTION, THE PIECE INVITES LISTENERS TO CONFRONT THE HARSH REALITIES OF THEIR ACTIONS AND THE URGENT NEED FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHALLENGES IN THE CITY.**



## DEFINING CULTURAL NUANCES IN CLIMATE JUSTICE ADVOCACY: ARE WE HARNESSING OUR COLLECTIVE VOICES?

This insightful session began with a thought-provoking question on whether society could re-integrate folklore into storytelling, and if so, then how do we balance our cultural diversity when it comes to advocacy around climate change? This question sets the pace for further discussion about evolution of culture and societal orientation towards retaining heritage and history.

Speaking on tackling greenwashing by corporate entities and fighting against neocolonialism, Nnimmo Bassey emphasized that the stories we tell control our imagination, and our culture is key in formulating our ways forward.



NNIMMO BASSEY, DIRECTOR - HOMEF



MATTHEW OHIO - MUSIC EXECUTIVE

He continued that the question of art for art's sake is not in our culture. Art was used to check misbehaviour such as defiance to cultural or social norms - where songs were used to shame people into confronting their misbehaviors. More generally, Mr. Bassey spoke on the politics of climate demands, and how the industrial complex is not in the global southern interest. He concluded by calling storytellers to choose carefully how they want to communicate the collective African struggles.

Building up on Mr. Bassey's input, Mr. Ohio emphasised that part of his work is to push for global rights of Afrobeats and channel it in the right way, using it to address societal issues. Doing so can enable us to address many crucial issues such as poverty and climate change through music. On getting artists to speak up on social issues, he explains there are a number of artists that have spoken on social issues such as Burna boy's song 'Whiskey' which is about Soot (air pollution) in Port Harcourt City. Mr. Ohio reiterated the importance of collaborations between CSOs and music artists such as through proceeds of concerts, and strategic collaborations that speaks to wider issues by bringing artists into the fold of the conversations.

IF WE DON'T TAKE DELIBERATE ACTIONS  
TODAY, WE WILL FACE THE  
CONSEQUENCES WHETHER WE ARE READY  
OR NOT. WE'VE SEEN WHAT'S HAPPENING  
AROUND THE POLITICS OF CLIMATE  
FINANCE. WE'RE HEARING ISSUES OF NO  
CLIMATE REPARATIONS, BUT HOW MUCH  
IS SPENT ON WARS EVERY YEAR?  
NNIMMO BASSEY - DIRECTOR, HOMEF

# FILMMAKING IN THE INDUSTRY - A PERSPECTIVE OF CLIMATE STORYTELLERS



OLUWATOFUNMI ADEBAYO -  
DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER



BUNMI AJAKAIYE - PRODUCER/DIRECTOR  
OF GOOD FILM STORY

IF YOU CAN LINK THE CENTRAL  
STORY OF YOUR FILM TO  
INVESTOR INTEREST, ANYONE  
CAN BE OPEN TO BRINGING IN  
THEIR RESOURCES TO IT.

**BUNMI AJAIYE**

This session brought together a producer and a storyteller seeking to identify gaps that exist in the film making space as it relates to storytelling on climate change, and how creatives can shape inspiring narratives of hope and change to shed more light on the climate crisis. The session sought to answer some crucial questions such as emerging issues and accessing resources, tools, networks and financial support needed to promote climate stories.

Bunmi Ajakaiye, the producer of one of the highest ranking films in 2023, *The Black Book*, spoke about her journey to filmmaking, and emphasized that film and storytelling are one of the most powerful, robust vehicles to driving any idea straight home to our target audience. She noted that at this point, regardless of what you're trying to portray, reorientation you want to achieve, or social engineering you want to do - film is accessible and a familiar vehicle to drive that. On practical steps that artists and filmmakers can take to access the right support, Bunmi mentioned that any filmmaker has the same fundamental challenge of accessing funds.

She continued by pointing out that while financial support is important, there are other forms of support available. She concluded that for filmmakers to be intentional about securing funds, they need a different set of skills, which is why collaboration is essential for accessing such opportunities.

Oluwafunmi Adebayo, on promoting films on social media, revealed that consistency, collaboration, and knowing your audience are key to digital marketing and gaining traction. As a visual storyteller, Tofunmi explained that creative content related to nature inspires him. He opined that more stories should be told to strengthen our relationship with the ecosystem, helping people understand that we need nature to thrive and incorporating environmental themes into our work."

Regarding the need to reach a global audience, Funmi expressed that many social issues are universal. While the consequences manifest in different ways such as brutal flooding in Lagos, if we are looking to push the message about climate change, Hollywood will give you an exaggerated version of the scenarios to happen such as those in 2012 or *Avatar*. In a local context, she said we need to wrap it in a happy and easy to swallow context

## Screening of Thank You For The Rain & An Overview of Impact Campaigning

Emily Wanja, Africa Director of Doc Society, took the stage to showcase impact-driven films centred on climate and environmental justice. With a background in filmmaking and storytelling, Wanja is well-versed in using storytelling to drive social impact. She began by providing insightful details about the film "Thank You for the Rain," which follows the story of Kisilu and his family for five years, revealing how climate change affected them.

This film gained global recognition, and exposed the real threats smallholder farmers experience in the face of climate change. After the film premier, there was a community engagement to understand needs of the people and some of the key tasks that came out were a need to provide more information on climate change, agriculture, and needs for adaptation and livelihood development.

The film project could not not have been as impactful without collaboration among different partners. The screening started in the community where it was filmed, extended to schools, and reached an international platform. Through this collaborative approach, the needs of the community were shown on the international platforms Kisilu (the main character) was given.

There was also a need to fundraise for an Impact Campaign, which led to several positive outcomes, such as constructing an earth dam, providing support for beehives, and more.

The storytellers and the community were able to take their work from a local level to a global audience; ran a campaign with local, national and global components. This is not unique to them but rather a strategy that can be tailored and replicated across a broad spectrum of community-based stories seeking for social change.

Wanja concluded by emphasising that storytellers often do not need to reinvent the wheel. Rather, they should reach out to people who have been doing similar work and are committed to fostering new projects, building collaborations, and activating ideas.

# FILM & IMPACT STORY TELLING

WITH EMILY WANJA



## STORIES FROM THE FRONTLINES: HOW DO WE MOVE FROM TALK TO ACTION?

Ifeoma focused on the landscape of creative media in Nigeria and broader West Africa to examine opportunities for creative intervention in addressing various social struggles. The discourse included a vital question about where to position African voices regarding the ownership of their own stories, struggles, and narrative framing, as well as what that would look like in practice.

**“WE WANT PEOPLE TO TAKE ACTION WITH THE STORIES THAT THEY HEAR. WHAT IS SHIFTING FOR YOU IN TERMS OF HOW YOU DO YOUR WORK AND IF IT SHIFTS, HOW DO YOU CARRY YOURSELF AND HOW DO YOU CARRY OTHER PEOPLE ALONG?”**

**IFEOMA MALO, CEO - CLEAN TECH HUB**

Ifeoma carried the session with poise, guiding the audience through the factors that enable local perspective to make a global impact. She took the audience through a series of stories that demonstrate how change happens at the grassroots level. Ifeoma’s first story is about a local trader that utilizes solar cold room on the highway, to provide travelers with fresh food and drinks, showcasing how energy access can transform ordinary lives. The second story speaks of a woman who has experienced domestic abuse and needs a source of income to become independent. Through CleanTech Hub, she accessed Solar Coolers that enabled her to build up her business; today she is a distributor for Solar Sisters. This story demonstrates how clean energy has the potential to create barriers against domestic violence. The final story focused on empathy, and providing safe spaces for people who have gone through traumatic experiences, and need a haven to turn over a new leaf.

Through these stories, Ifeoma took the audience on a profound personal journey of impact and empathy. In the end, she urged the audience to reflect on why they are passionate about their work and how best to tell stories of change.



“ IN ORDER TO ACCELERATE LOCAL STORIES TO FOSTER EMPATHY AND EMPOWER COMMUNITIES, WE NEED TO START WHERE WE ARE WITH WHAT WE HAVE; USE OUR PUBLIC SPACES TO ORGANIZE, REACH OUT AND ENGAGE PEOPLE. THERE’S AN ENTRY POINT FOR EACH ONE OF US TO TELL THE STORIES WE WANT TO TELL.”  
 - BALIQEES SALAUDEEN



“OUR SPIRITUALITY AND CULTURE IS INTERTWINED WITH NATURE. IF SO, THEN HOW CAN WE CREATE SPACE IN THE WAY WE SPEAK ABOUT CLIMATE BECAUSE IT GIVES US UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES TO BREAK AWAY FROM CONVENTIONAL LANGUAGES?”  
 - EMILY WANJA



“NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU PAY FOR LOSS AND DAMAGE, YOU CANNOT PAY FOR DAMAGE OF CULTURE, DAMAGES TO SOCIETAL CONSTRUCT, SO IT’S IMPORTANT THAT WE PRIORITIZE AGENCY IN COMMUNITY BUILDING & NARRATIVE.”  
 - JOY EGBE



ON THE GEOPOLITICAL CONVERSATIONS ON CLIMATE CHANGE, THE POWER IS NEVER VOLUNTARILY GIVEN. POWER IS NOT YIELDED BECAUSE THE PERSON HOLDING POWER LIKES YOU BUT BECAUSE YOU HAVE OUT-ORGANIZED, OUT-PLANNED AND OUT-STRATEGIZE THE PERSON HOLDING POWER. SO, WHEN WE SAY WE AS A BLOC, WE DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH REPRESENTATION AND NO MATTER HOW WE BEG TO BE HEARD, IT WILL NOT BE ENOUGH UNLESS WE ORGANIZE OURSELVES AND TOUCH THE OPPRESSOR WHERE IT HURTS THE MOST. THAT IS WHAT THE WEST NEEDS FROM US. IT’S ABOUT NEGOTIATING, IT’S ABOUT BARGAINING. WE COULD USE EMOTION TO PUSH THE BUTTONS BUT EMOTIVISM WILL NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM. POWER WILL NOT SURRENDER TO EMOTION. POWER SURRENDERS TO POWER.  
 - DANIEL OLADOJA



# SOLUTIONS THAT CULMINATE TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

CSLLA

**Discussions continued as the Lab encompassed interrogative and thought-provoking engagements around emerging social and environmental justice concerns for Lagos city such as flooding, rapid and un-inclusive urbanization, overpopulation and other social issues. More broadly, there was a solution-oriented discourse from progressive voices and individuals within the climate space, focusing on Nigeria and West Africa. The discourse explored strategies and pathways to address crucial social and climate justice issues such as climate security, media democracy, impact storytelling, and financing gaps, among other key discussions.**

# DATA IN STORIES: HOW ARE WE COMMUNICATING THE DEPTH OF THE CRISIS?

This robust discussion examined data and research that exist or the gaps therein as it relates to climate issues such as flooding, climate migration, desertification, and climate induced conflict by comparing them with storytelling and impact documentaries to ask questions around data accuracy and representation of facts and social complexities in these stories. Discussions looked at stories or impact campaigns that have been launched with potential to drive change, examining whether the desired results have been achieved; drawing from examples that exist.

Speaking on why locally derived data from our institutions often fails to provide credible proof for influencing decisions—particularly at the political level—Mr. Idris Akinbajo revealed that public institutions are often not transparent with necessary information. Hence, as stakeholders, we have the right to use the Freedom of Information Act to demand its release. This is crucial because one cannot understand climate, and tell stories about it without data and information about changes in temperature, or increase in severe weather. By utilizing existing laws, we can get relevant info from agencies.

On his part, Mr. Enebi Opaluwa said that due to past levels of governance in the country, data became less relevant because there was sufficient financial capacity to cover fiscal needs. However, data has gained importance in recent decades due to shifts in the economy and the need for data to hold the government accountable. Much of the technical data used in Nigeria is not developed by local entities, leading to data disparity and a low data-acquiring culture in the country. He further implied that our concern about climate change has increased partly because our Western counterparts have become more focused on it. Issues like desertification have been pressing concerns for decades, even before the energy transition debate, making intersecting issues such as deforestation more relevant. However, these issues were not mainstreamed as livelihood threats until the need to address climate change emerged.



IDRIS AKINBAJO - MANAGING  
EDITOR, PREMIUM TIMES



ENEBI OPALUWA - SENIOR RESEARCH  
AND POLICY ANALYST, BUDGET

With regard to methods and strategies for leveraging data from climate impact incidents such as flooding and desertification to advocate for better disaster risk reduction (DRR) measures, Mr. Enebi highlighted the issue of misinterpreting environmental problems related to climate change. He used the example of flooding in Lagos to question whether the impact is due to climate change or poor urban planning, noting that data could help clarify this distinction.

Addressing data constraints amid challenges with acquiring local data more broadly, the speakers acknowledged the obstacles associated with obtaining information from corporate or public entities. They cited the mandatory data disclosure requirements introduced by the new Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) as a positive development, allowing for greater transparency and data availability where it was previously lacking.

**WE NEED TO GET DATA AND PROPERLY INTERROGATE AND INTEGRATE THE DATA IN OUR REPORTS AND STORIES. WE NEED TO EXAMINE LOCAL ISSUES AND HOW THEY LINK WITH GLOBAL**

**MATTER FOR US TO MAKE DEDUCTIONS ON HOW TO PROPERLY NAVIGATE IT TO OUR ADVANTAGE, ACKNOWLEDGING THAT SOMETIMES IT IS NOT THAT THE DATA IS UNAVAILABLE BUT THE LACK OF WILLINGNESS TO MAKE IT AVAILABLE.**

**IDRIS AKINBAJO - MANAGING EDITOR, PREMIUM TIMES**

# LOCAL STRUGGLES VS. GLOBAL ADVOCACY: ARE WE ON THE RIGHT PATH TO CLIMATE LIBERATION?

To unpack the influence of global narratives on local struggles, with a focus on how numerous global campaigns that aim to support local issues often end up amplifying voices from the Global North, the speakers examined what it takes for local campaigns to gain global attention and drive governance and diplomatic change. They explored the role of media and strategic communications in advancing grassroots voices and campaigners.

This session addressed advocacy from within, posing questions such as: Do we truly represent the voices of our struggles? Are we using the right mediums and approaches to advocate for change? Are we aiming to replicate existing models or challenging the status quo? Who are our allies, and what can they do for us? Are we effectively harnessing the collective power of the African narrative?"



GBEMISOLA AKOSA - FOUNDER, CENTRE FOR 21ST CENTURY ISSUES



DANIEL OLADOJA - NIGERIA COUNTRY LEAD, GSCC

Mr. Daniel Oladoja continued the discussion by noting that climate issues are deeply philosophical, but nothing is more profound than recognising that they represent a tragedy of a common resource. While this tragedy affects everyone, it does not impact everyone in the same way. Therefore, he emphasised the need to return to our roots in Africa, adding that the term 'village' which we use to describe ourselves reflects a collective identity. He stressed that we need to think as one people and adopt this unified approach in driving the narrative about issues we want people to hear.

In order to drive progressive change in how we mobilise ourselves and present a united front in the fight against climate change and neocolonial greenwashing, Emily Wanja emphasised the need for a narrative shift through cultural intervention. She highlighted the question of "Whose Agenda?"—noting that the portrayal of our climate experiences is often influenced by who is speaking, who is featured, and who is being elevated. In terms of storytelling, Wanja stressed the importance of building agency within ourselves and our communities. To understand and address the power dynamics, we need to advocate for justice and determine who should be held accountable

**WE HAVE TO ORGANIZE STRATEGICALLY AS PEOPLE WHO UNDERSTAND THEIR IDENTITY AND NEGOTIATE FROM THE STANDPOINT OF WHAT THEY HAVE. THAT IS THE ONLY WAY WE WILL BE LISTENED TO AS WAYS TO ADDRESS SOME OF THE CHALLENGES RESTRICTING GLOBAL SOUTHERN VOICES IN GLOBAL PLATFORMS WHERE OUR LEADERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION IS MOST NEEDED, AND YET WE ARE NOT CARRIED ALONG, EXPRESSING HOW CAN WE ADDRESS GAPS OF INEQUALITIES AND INEQUITIES IN THE PROCESS.**

**DANIEL OLADOJA, NIGERIA COUNTRY LEAD, GSCC**

In terms of harmonising and creating partnership and collaboration among global southern movements, Gbemisola Akosa spoke of people understanding that we have a responsibility to centre movement needs around key issues that affect us, and language in terms of narrative shift plays a key role in that. The issue of ensuring grassroots voices are heard is a continued struggle, and to gain solidarity across board, we need locally developed ideas, with a common position that does not dictate what campaigners do or say.

# MEDIA DEMOCRACY IN CLOSING CIVIC SPACES

The discourse between these two prolific speakers, Dr. Tobi Oluwatola, Director, Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID) and Human Rights and Policy Expert, Tsema Ede, touched base on media democracy and the restriction of creative expression in Nigeria and elsewhere. It explored the root causes and offered viable recommendations for navigating political restraints that limit free and objective media. The well-versed moderator, Doyinsola Ogunoye, began by echoing key dynamics related to media democracy in Nigeria. She reflected on state's arrest of David Oyinde, a documentary filmmaker who covered the Niger Delta pollution in 2021 and noted the Twitter ban that resulted from the #EndSARS protest, underscoring the urgent need for this crucial conversation on freedom of expression.



DR TOBI A. OLUWATOLA - DIRECTOR, CENTRE FOR JOURNALISM  
INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT (CJID)

Dr. Tobi discussed how media can influence policy, focusing on its role as a tool for setting agendas, serving as a public sphere gatekeeper and acting as a watchdog for democracy. He explained that the media uncovers issues and brings them to the government's notice, which can lead to action. Regarding the coverage of climate issues, Dr. Tobi emphasised that funding is vital for sustaining sources from grassroots sources. He also addressed the challenges of limited press freedom and other security concerns affecting media and freedom of speech.

**"WE NEED TO STRENGTHEN OUR LEGAL AND JUSTICE SYSTEMS AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO REMEDIES WITHIN OUR JUDICIAL PROCESSES. PARTNERSHIP IS CRUCIAL IN THIS EFFORT, AS IMPUNITY THRIVES WHEN JOURNALISTS ARE THREATENED. SO, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO ESTABLISH SYSTEMS THAT PROTECT JOURNALISTS."**

**TSEMA EDE, HUMAN RIGHTS & POLICY EXPERT**



MS. TSEMA EDE - HUMAN RIGHTS & POLICY EXPERT

Tsema Ede reiterated the reasons behind storytelling; to evoke emotions, call people to action and ensure that history is not forgotten. However, Africa has yet to figure out how to effectively demand climate justice and get people angry enough to say "this has to change." We cannot rely solely on mainstream media to achieve this; we need to strengthen partnerships amongst ourselves and within the publishing sector, and focus on the impact on development and the economy. With regard to press freedom, Tsema emphasised how journalists and media practitioners are often threatened when reporting on or investigating powerful political figures or influential individuals. This intimidation often occurs when stories involve major companies or notable personalities. She concluded that when the media is given free rein, it can achieve tremendous success.

A woman wearing a white headwrap and a green long-sleeved dress is seated in a light-colored armchair on a stage. She is holding a microphone in her right hand and gesturing with her left hand. A laptop is open on a small wooden table to her left. The background features large white letters spelling '2024' and lush green plants. The lighting is warm and focused on the speaker.

## ARE WE HARMONISING THE COLLECTIVE POWER OF THE AFRICAN NARRATIVE?

BALIQEES SALAUDEEN - FOUNDER, BAYS PLANET FOUNDATION

This session, which concluded the thought-provoking and awe-inspiring discussions held over two days of the Lab, highlighted community building, partnership, and narrative shift as crucial elements of transformative change in telling stories about climate change and broader societal issues.

It posed pressing questions about how we, as Africans, position ourselves within the broader movement building space and how this positioning can amplify calls for justice at local, regional and international levels.

Baliqees Salaudeen led the session with grace, emphasising the importance of partnership in harmonising our common narrative around justice and equality. She grounded her insights in the need to reflect on local issues, whether societal or political, to drive collective action through intergenerational links that exist.

# WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM CSL LAGOS?



One of the key lessons learned is that Lagos is a fertile ground for creative advocacy on climate change and other social issues to thrive. The diversity of the professionals brought together, and the quality of the discussions reinforced this.

Throughout the lab, we've had speakers - and participants reiterate the need for storytellers working on different fronts to reshape narratives about the climate crisis, that through this, our demand for climate justice will be heard at both local and international level.

Another key consideration was that of promoting and actively engaging in strategic collaborations among stakeholders in this field to advance reach of creative projects.

The need for us to understand climate change, and portray it from a very local perspective was fairly raised. After all, understanding the politics of climate means that we fully analyze our own strengths and approach negotiations from a position of power; knowing fully what we can offer as a people.

Some of the key outputs include:

- Ensure that grassroots communities are well-informed about climate change by localising content in traditional languages.
- Encourage individuals to understand the relevant laws and policies related to their creative endeavors and to secure tangible support to reduce or avoid security scrutiny.
- Advance knowledge sharing, enable platforms and opportunities for strategic collaboration and other stakeholder engagement to develop better climate storytellers in the creative space.

## REFLECTIONS & NEXT STEPS

When we began planning for the [Climate Story Lab Lagos](#), we could not have imagined the many inspiring challenges we would face or the individuals who would profoundly influence the scope of the programme. We had the impression that, in Lagos—at least compared to other parts of the country—the creative community was brimming with individuals who had demonstrated impactful and thought-provoking storytelling and documentation on the climate crisis.

However, this was not the case. Although Lagos boasts a thriving, world-renowned film industry, the non-fiction sector struggles with visibility, financial investment, and distribution—particularly when it comes to storytelling about climate change. This was evident when we issued a call for submissions for our “Impact Lab” and were unable to secure compelling projects for the training and funding we were offering.

This experience and our detailed conversations with creative partners in Lagos made us to revisit our initial program design, and we began to restructure it based on the gaps already identified and the ones we intend to bridge during the 2-day immersive lab. What this led to was a very thought-provoking process of “what ifs” and “how much can we do now and in the future.”

With this in mind, we designed a hybrid lab to cater to creative professionals looking to engage, learn and immerse themselves on issues of climate change, and climate advocates looking to create impactful stories about climate change. The Climate Story Lab space made it possible for us to revisit the crucial need for a “bottom-up approach” and why stories of change must be told by people who have firsthand experience of the detrimental effect of climate change.

The Climate Story Lab achieved its goals. We aimed to bring together a diverse array of individuals comprising of storytellers, filmmakers, producers, journalists, campaigners and activists to map pathways that lead to collaborative process among these stakeholders, and we did. We wanted to shift the needle in forecasting how social and political stories about climate change can be portrayed in a way that resonates with people across different cultural and economic class, and we did. We wanted to test whether a platform like the [Climate Story Lab Lagos](#) could bring diverse people together, foster robust discussions on many sensitive and vital topics, and present new ideas and concept around how the creative industry can rally themselves and their resources to tell better and more impactful stories about climate change, and WE DID!!!

For us at CSL Lagos, the space has opened up avenues for us to bring many creative advocates onto our platform and strategically scale our work, exploring models and approaches that will work in the long-term. In this sense, the Climate Story Lab continues.

## ADDRESSING GAPS IN IMPACT MEDIA & STORYTELLING





**ESTHER FAGBO**

**SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR  
SESSIONS' MODERATORS**



**DONALD IKENNA**



**JOY EGBE**



**EZE ISAAC**



**SEVI AGBOOLA**



**DOYINSOLA OGUNYE**

[CLICK HERE TO VISIT OUR SITE AND WATCH SNAPSHOTS FROM THE INSIGHTS LAB](#)



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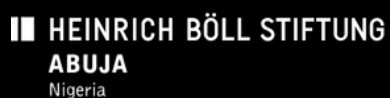


The **Climate Story Lab Lagos** was hosted by SurgeX Media as part of the **Climate Story Labs - Africa**, an initiative of the **Climate Story Unit - Doc Society**. The Climate Story Labs are convenings that supports, elevates and amplifies visibility & access of African perspectives, experiences and solutions on pressing climate issues to global audiences, policy makers, private stakeholders, NGO's, corporates and peers through compelling works of storytelling.

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The Climate Story Lab Lagos is hosted by [SurgeX Media](#) - an initiative of [Surge Africa](#) Organisation.

SurgeX is an initiative of the Strategic Media arm of Surge Africa. Through our work, we have bridged gaps in movement building and creative capacity between storytellers, activists, and environmental defenders within the global southern movement building space by developing a Global Majority network that connects struggles of South-South frontliners as an avenue to convene, connect and create powerful strategies and change narratives around our shared goals of freedom, justice and equality to dismantle oppressive neocolonial systems that undermine our right to fight corporate and political impunity.

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