



# Counsellors Connect Conference in Nigeria

Powered By IACAC Opportunity Grant to Dr Peter Ojudoro

## Project Report

### 1. Project Background

This project was conceived as a realistic response to poor college admission counselling services available in most schools in Nigeria. The international schools in the country that have functional college counselling units do not constitute up to 1% of the high schools in Nigeria. The universities in Nigeria that run counselling programmes treat college admission counselling lightly. This results in school counsellors arriving the world of work with little or no capacity to guide students in managing their careers. The problem is largely traceable to lack of a comprehensive and industry-focused curriculum for counselling education. The gross shortage of teachers in most schools in the country induces school leaders to burden many school counsellors, where they are available, with subject teaching roles thereby making them unavailable to discharge their primary responsibilities. This compounds a bad situation and results in recurring crisis in transitions into college from high school for most secondary school graduates. This is a problem that exists in a country of about two hundred and fifty million people and that graduates about two million teenagers from high schools annually. By 2050, Nigeria will become the world's third largest country in terms of population after India, and China. It was against this background that the grantee applied for IACAC's Opportunity Grant to facilitate a conference that will help some counsellors in Nigeria acquire the requisite knowledge and skills for effective college counselling and help them become aware of a global body of college admission counsellors so they can join the Association for continuous professional development. The project also aimed at helping the beneficiaries learn how to promote their importance and availability in schools to ensure that they are given an enabling environment to do their jobs.

### 2. The Grantor

The International Association for College Admission Counseling (IACAC) approved an Opportunity Grant of one thousand, five hundred United States dollars for the project. This followed a favourable response to an application submitted for the project by the grantee.

### **3. The Grantee**

Dr Peter Ogidoro is the grantee. He is a member of IACAC and has significant expertise in career management having done graduate studies in it and has practiced it for more than three decades. He leads the Nigerian Teachers Community which has over a million members from more than 100 countries and has started organizing school counsellors in the country into a thriving community.

### **4. Event Date**

The Counsellors Connect conference was held on Saturday, October 4, 2025, the eve of World Teachers' Day (WTD). The conference's proximity to the WTD boosted its significance and has made it memorable.

### **5. Venue**

The conference was held at an event facility in Lagos named after Africa's richest man, Dangote (Hall). That helped the promotion of its authenticity and encouraged the target audience to believe in it. The choice of the city of Lagos which is the country's commercial nerve centre was influenced largely by the fact that the grantee lives and operates his private counselling clinic in Lagos, an environment where he has done professional work for over three decades. The city also has more schools and counsellors than any other city in Nigeria. It is also the safest city in the country. Its transport network is relatively reliable. What is done successfully here can become a model for replication across the country given the advantageous visibility the city enjoys in the country and internationally.

### **6. Event Programme**

#### **Counsellors Connect, 2025 Programme**

1. Opening Prayer
2. Welcome remarks by Project Director and Leader of Nigerian Teachers Community.
3. Participants discuss in groups and make submissions on the state of Nigeria's education system- Students, Counsellors, and school leaders.
4. Student leader's understanding of the challenges faced by Nigerian students and suggestions on how to address them.
5. Nigerian students in the USA compare their Nigerian experiences to their current US experiences.
6. Goodwill message from the Registrar of the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN).
7. A Nigerian educationist and researcher working for a university in the UK shares opportunities and tips for continuous professional development.
8. A Nigerian Scientist at Harvard University in the USA shares on the value of science and how to promote it to students.

9. A Nigerian Entrepreneurship expert currently serving a UK university shares on why Nigeria is losing talents to other countries.
10. A Language expert shares on how to promote reading culture in schools.
11. A passionate swimmer shares on Swimming as a life skill.
12. An Optometrist shares on 20:20 vision for students' excellent academic performance.
13. A Psychiatrist shares on Where Mental Health Challenges come from and how to protect members of our school communities.
14. A lawyer shares on Essentials of Employment Contract.
15. Lunch break, Group Photos, and Networking.
16. Tools for growing schools and review of books read in preparation for the conference. The participants read two prescribed books prior to the event: **Who Moved My Cheese** by Spencer Johnson, and **Acres of Diamond** by Russell Conwell. Those books have their focus on unrecognized opportunities in familiar places and the huge benefits inherent in embracing change and being a change maker. The contents helped the participants to arrive the conference with the open and fertile mind requisite for trying new ideas and leading change-oriented projects.
17. Tools for counsellors to become globally competitive and travel internationally. This was handled by the grantee (himself). He called the attention of the attendees to career management principles and helped them become aware of the opportunities available in the USA and globally for higher education. He also helped them to understand how to work with their students to access those opportunities.
18. The route to **International Association for College Admission Counseling (IACAC)** with headquarters in Virginia, USA. This was also handled by the grantee. Focus was on the steps to registering with IACAC.
19. Relevance of Student Competitions to College Access.
20. Feedback.
21. Closing remarks.
22. Wine toast, dance and celebration.

**The atmosphere was joyous despite the fact that it was a long day for the participants. The event started at 10am and ended at 6pm.**

## **7. Beneficiaries**

A total of 92 attendees benefitted from the conference which all participants attended for free. The breakdown is as follows:

- A. School counsellors- 55
- B. School owners/leaders- 15
- C. Students- 22

Total- 92.

The initial idea was to do the conference exclusively for (70) school counsellors. While trying to understand the problems counsellors face in Nigeria, it became obvious that the people who employ them and or supervise their work account for a significant fraction of the obstacles they face in the school system. Upgrading the knowledge and skills of school counsellors without helping their bosses to appreciate the value of their work was unlikely to procure the desired results. So, the participating school counsellors were encouraged to nominate their school leaders to participate. They showed up and were excited to understand the indispensable place of professional counselling in the school system. We had a good mix of counsellors and school leaders from both private and public schools. Some outstanding recent high school graduates from some of the schools represented by the attendees were invited to attend. All of them are benefitting from an ongoing special college access programme being superintended by the grantee. It is called Rising African Scholars Programme (**RASP**). Their primary destination countries are USA, Canada, and UK. It is a gap-year programme that trains them on leadership, community service, and prepares them for the standardized tests they need to pass to meet the requirements of the colleges they are desiring to study in. Of the 22 students who attended the conference, 13 were drawn from this programme. They served as volunteers for the conference. Their involvement was of mutual benefit. They met high profile people in society, picked up ideas on how to achieve their dreams while serving the education community. This helped in ensuring that we offered attendees an amazing experience with the limited resources at the grantee's disposal. He applied for about three thousand dollars but got approval for fifty per cent of that. The other 9 students were invited by some of the volunteers for the conference and the deputy national president of Nigerian University Students (a recent graduate of Veterinary Medicine) who was a speaker at the event.

## 8. Resource Persons

The conference benefitted from 14 presentations made by outstanding professionals drawn from Nigeria, USA, and UK. Five of the resource persons joined us virtually from the UK (2), and USA (3). The resource persons who joined us from the UK are academics specializing in professional development, and entrepreneurship respectively. One of the resource persons who joined us from the USA is a post doctoral researcher at the Harvard University in Massachusetts. The other two are undergraduates studying Business, and Media respectively. They are beneficiaries of the Rising African Scholars Programme (**RASP**). They helped attendees understand college counselling gaps in Nigeria. It was a giving-back contribution from them which helped to lay the foundation for the presentations made by the expert speakers. The other 9 speakers attended physically. The Registrar of Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), Nigeria's teaching regulatory body sent the

Coordinator of the agency's activities in Lagos to deliver her goodwill message which shared governments plans on how to improve student outcome in Nigeria. Her representative spent several hours with us and took learns home. He promised to make recommendations to government in line with what he learned from the conference. The other resource persons who attended physically included a Psychiatrist, a lawyer, an optometrist, a language expert, a swimming therapist, a university student leader and the grantee who is an educationist, career management practitioner, and leader of the Nigerian Teachers community. Eight of the RASP students started the day's conversations by sharing the challenges they have had in managing their careers and ideas they wanted parents, teachers, school leaders and counsellors to consider when working with young people. Some of them attended private schools while others attended public schools. The syndicate discussions we had prior to their presentation also helped to highlight the challenges in the Nigerian education system. We had three categories of attendees for the purpose of the syndicate discussions: school leaders, school counsellors, and students. They nominated their presenters for the plenary session. The conference attendees heard and learned from people inadvertently creating problems for the school system in Nigeria, and the school counsellors and students grappling with those problems. Everyone including the resource persons took lessons home for the pursuit of better days ahead.

## **9. Outcomes**

This was a project that procured more than I envisaged. We impacted the lives of 92 attendees and 14 resource persons positively and in a remarkable way. Everyone went home rejoicing. The conference was a big eye opener to both the attendees and the resource persons. To manage the conference efficiently and effectively, I set up a WhatsApp group for those applying to attend the conference. The platform as at the date of this report, has 280 school counsellors working for a variety of schools including international schools, local private schools, and public schools (both federal and state), and even from other African countries including Rwanda, Togo, Benin Republic, and Burkina Faso. Many of the schools they serve have as many as four thousand students. So, we have affected the lives of over a hundred thousand students positively through the better services they will receive from their school counsellors. The school counsellors platform the conference motivated has transformed into a thriving community, sharing resources and opportunities that are opening amazing doors for schools in Nigeria and beyond and their stakeholders. The networking opportunity it offered attendees was incredible. Many of the relationships started that day have resulted in new jobs and business opportunities. Many have enrolled for other learning programmes to build on the foundation they laid that day. A good number of them have connected with admission officers in Europe and North America and college recruitment agents following information shared on the platform we have created for counsellors in Nigeria. Some of them

have started processes that will enable them to become members of the IACAC. Virtually everyone of the 280 counsellors on the platform which we call **Counsellors Connect Platform** is interested in joining IACAC. Lack of financial capacity to pay the registration fee because of the limited income of most Nigerian school counsellors, however, remains an obstacle. I am still wondering about how to deal with it. The counsellors have also become visible in their schools. The attendees were taught how to publicize their services within their schools. We have produced T shirts which they now wear on the days they are promoting their services (see the photos section). The grantee presented samples of the T shirts to the current President of IACAC at the Regional Institute which was held in Accra, Ghana from October 24-26 this year (see the photo section). One of the agreements we reached at the Counsellors Connect conference was that a peer **Support Network** should be set up in schools. Outstanding high school students will be trained to support their mates and help fill some of the gaps created by the gross under resourcing of the education system in Nigeria. We started that process of translating it into reality last Saturday (November 15). About 50 parents of some outstanding high school students attended a briefing on it on that day. We have made provisions that will train about 30 of those students on how to support their peers in circumstances of limited professional manpower in counselling and for the individual subjects they offer in school. Truly, the opportunity grant approved for me has become a life-enhancing tool for school leaders, counsellors, and the people they cater for. The ripple effect will snowball into effects that may bless hundreds of thousands of young Nigerians within a few years from now. I also shared some of the lessons learned at the conference while making my presentation at the just concluded Regional Institute in Accra, Ghana. I had college counsellors from around the world including Europe and North America in the hall as my audience. The seeds I planted through my presentation and with gains from the Counsellors Connect event in Lagos, Nigeria may bear fruits on diverse continents. After my doctoral programme, this may be the most uplifting project I have ever handled. I have spread happiness across the world through something that appeared small but has now become life-enhancing for many. The following sample messages from attendees suggest strongly that IACAC has collaborated with me to make something great happen:

*I really appreciate you sir, for that great impact of yesterday.*

*I now know the application of blue ocean* .

*I now understand that in some cases, I should lose the battle to win the war.*

*It was awesome being with you.*

*Thanks very much.*

*-Chidinma Anyadoh*

*I want to sincerely appreciate Dr. Peter Ogudoro for the impactful Counsellor Connect Conference held yesterday. Your dedication, insights, and selfless*

*contributions have inspired us to embrace excellence and professionalism in our counselling practice.*

*Thank you for creating such a rich platform. I'm deeply grateful for your leadership style and vision in shaping the future of counselling in Nigeria and beyond.*

*Remain blessed sir.*

*No doubt, we had a blast with Dr. Peter. Awesome!*

**-Emmanuel Osamudiamen**

Most of the attendees have sent similar messages that convey their gratitude to me and the IACAC for the opportunity to attend such a conference for free.

## **10. Cost**

I had to think outside the box to be able to organize this conference and make the kind of impact it is now associated with. I planned to pay honorarium to all the resource persons since most of them were drawn from outside the counselling profession. I had to change that given the limited fund available. Only one speaker was paid honorarium. That was the university students' leader who spoke at the conference. That was the only way he could make it, not being in employment and coming from outside Lagos. The other speakers agreed to serve pro bono. Most of them are, however, members of my global professional network. Graciously, they served as if we paid them thousands of dollars. Interestingly, they enjoyed serving, obviously because they observed that the conference was very impactful and offered them the opportunity to learn of the challenges in Nigeria's education system. A volunteer of our teachers' community operating a small events business offered to deliver the other cost elements we could not get for free including the transport token given to participating counsellors since they are low-income earners and wait till, I receive reimbursement from IACAC. The invoice is attached. It carries a cost that is a little above the grant approved. That is not a problem. I will find a way to absorb the difference. I have also attached the Expenses Report form which I have completed.

## **11. Gratitude**

Many thanks to the leadership of IACAC for the Opportunity Grant that made this conference and impact possible. We have changed lives together. It is unlikely that we will be able to determine the extent of that impact no matter how hard we try but mobilizing 280 school counsellors from ground zero within a few months is certainly no mean achievement. The goodwill that has come to me and IACAC is inestimable. The incredible results that have come from this outing have motivated me to continue on the path of education advocacy which I have done for over three decades. The Nigerian Teachers Community I founded nine years ago which now has over a million members from more than 100 countries is enjoying that goodwill too. I used the community's channels to promote the conference and recruit the

attendees. Thank you, IACAC for collaborating with me to spread happiness around the globe. For the sights and sounds that come from the conference, please watch the 80 seconds video at <https://youtube.com/shorts/44ofEW6-Cqk?feature=share>.

## 12. Photo Speak



**Speakers who presented Physically at the Counsellors Connect Conference**



## **Counsellors Connect Attendees**



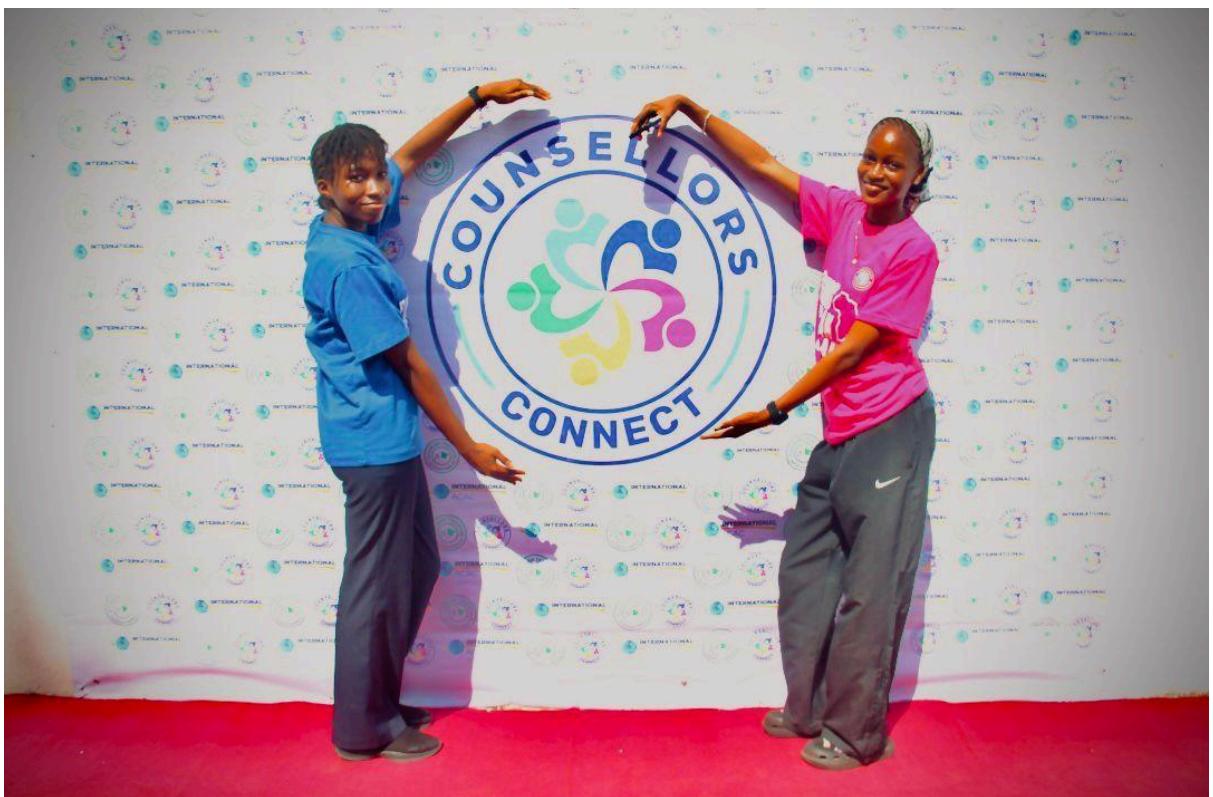
A cross section of the Counsellors Connect audience



Social capital emerging through friendships born at the  
Counsellors Connect event in Lagos, Nigeria



**University aspirants in company of Counsellors Connect Speakers**



**Two of the university aspirants who served as volunteers at the  
Counsellors Connect in Nigeria event demonstrating  
what it means to share and work together**



Some officers of IACAC who shared some interesting moments at the 2025 Regional Institute in Accra, Ghana with Dr Peter Ogudoro, organizer of the Counsellors Connect conference in Nigeria which was made possible by a 2025 Opportunities Grant



President of IACAC receiving Counsellors Connect in Nigeria branded T shirts from Dr Peter Ogudoro, 2025 Opportunity Grant winner and organizer of Counsellors Connect Conference in Nigeria



**Beneficiary of Counsellors Connect in Nigeria Conference  
proudly showing up in the office in her branded counsellors' T shirt**



**One of the beneficiaries of Counsellors Connect in Nigeria conference  
promoting counselling services in her school**



**Dr Peter Ogedoro sharing lessons learned from organizing Counsellors Connect in Nigeria conference at the October 2025 Regional Institute in Accra, Ghana**



**Dr Peter Ogedoro, Leader of Nigerian Teachers Community, and winner of 2025 Opportunity Grant which he used to organize Counsellors Connect conference in Lagos, Nigeria. The conference was held on Saturday, October 4, 2025.**