

‘You Can Be Anything’, Blind Tech CEO Returns to Inspire Students

former Pacelli student leads digital skills training for Y'ello Care



Years ago, Opeolu Stephen Akinola walked the corridors of the Pacelli School for the Blind & Partially Sighted Children in Surulere as a student with big dreams and uncertain pathways. On Wednesday, June 18, 2025, he returned, not as a student, but as a CEO, a mentor, and living proof that being differently-abled is no barrier to destiny.

Opeolu is the Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Accesstech Innovation and Research Centre, a nonprofit committed to empowering individuals with vision loss through assistive technology and digital skills training.



Since launching in August 2023, the organisation has provided over \$26,000 worth of assistive tech and trained more than 200 blind persons in digital literacy, from foundation to advanced levels, across Nigeria and parts of East and West Africa. Born out of his own experience of rejection and discrimination, Opeolu has dedicated his life to ensuring blind and partially sighted people are equipped to thrive, not just survive. He is a certified accessibility professional and former member of several global disability and inclusion bodies, including the World Blind Union and the International Council for the Education of Visually Impaired Persons.

Opeolu was one of the key speakers at MTN Nigeria's Digital Upskilling Bootcamp held as part of its 21 Days of Y'ello Care initiative, now in its 18th year. The session, organised by MTN Nigeria staff, aimed to equip visually impaired students with digital skills and inspiration for the future.

Standing before the young students in the same space that once shaped his formative years, Opeolu's message was personal and powerful: "I graduated from Pacelli and later returned to teach here for a time. Today, I'm the CEO of my own company. Start learning now so you're not playing catch-up later."



He spoke passionately about the accessibility revolution in tech, from screen readers and optical character recognition tools to AI-powered assistive technologies, emphasising that the digital world is becoming more inclusive. He urged the students to take advantage of these tools early. "This is the best time to start building your foundation," he said, citing

examples of visually impaired people who were making strides in their fields to drive home the point that the world is full of possibilities for those who dare to dream and do.

The emotional weight of Opeolu's homecoming wasn't lost on anyone. For the students, he became more than a speaker; he was a reflection of who they could become, and a motivation to dream beyond societal limitations. His story was a centrepiece in a day filled with impactful moments, from digital skills sessions to eye-opening discussions about the potential of inclusive technology.

Other MTN leaders also shared messages of hope. Uto Ukpanah, Company Secretary, [MTN Nigeria](#), offered a simple but profound reminder to the students: "You can be anything you want to be." She went on to say, "At MTN, we believe that everyone deserves the benefit of a modern connected life, and that includes those who are visually impaired, because accessibility is important. If we have a connected Nigeria, a connected Africa, then indeed the future will be brighter than today."

Ibe Etea, General Manager, Internal Audit and Forensic Services (IAFS), MTN Nigeria, highlighted the company's deep commitment to people, saying, "We are a people-centric organisation; everything we do is about people." He added that the impact being made through the Y'ello Care initiative is a collective effort by MTN staff themselves: "Everyone here (MTN staff) has donated from their own pockets to be part of this impact." According to him, MTN's goal goes beyond profit: "MTN is not all about making profit, but about reaching out to people, connecting lives, and ensuring everyone enjoys the benefits of a modern connected life."

MTN's Y'ello Care campaign continues until June 21, with the 2025 theme "Connecting at the Roots: Digital Tools for Connected Communities," focusing on rural, underserved, and special needs populations across the country.

For the students of Pacelli, the message was clear: the future isn't just possible, it's already being built, and they are more than capable of shaping it.