



BenueTech

FOUNDATION

PITCH FRIDAY

SEASON 1 | EPISODE 2

OFFICIAL EVENT REPORT

Friday, August 14, 2026

BAIHUB, BENCEDI, Jonah Jang Crescent, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria

146

Registered Guests

5

Startups

N350k

Cash Prizes

N500k

Resources

2

Judges

Organised by BenueTech Foundation | Sponsored by Maxify Global | Powered by Maxify Tickets

www.benuetech.org | hello@benuetech.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

Pitch Friday Season 1, Episode 2 was held on Friday, August 14, 2026 at BAIHUB, BENCEDI, Jonah Jang Crescent, Makurdi, Benue State. The event was the second edition of BenueTech Foundation's flagship startup pitch competition series — a platform designed to identify, celebrate, and accelerate tech-driven startups building in Benue State and across Nigeria.

The event surpassed all previous records set at Season 1, Episode 1 in May 2026. With 146 registered guests, five pitching startups, N350,000 in cash prizes, N500,000 in Maxify Global resources, and a room filled with energy, belief, and world-class feedback, Pitch Friday S1E2 established itself as one of the most impactful startup events in Benue State's history.

A surprise address by Professor Ogbene Igbum of Benue State University added an unexpected and deeply memorable dimension to the evening — her words on validation, talent, and purpose resonated powerfully with every founder and guest in the room.

Feedback from guests and participants has been overwhelmingly positive, affirming the event's quality, organisation, impact, and relevance to the Benue State ecosystem.

Event Name	Pitch Friday — Season 1, Episode 2
Date	Friday, August 14, 2026
Time	2:00 PM — 4:00 PM WAT
Venue	BAIHUB, BENCEDI, Opp. Benue Public Service Institute, Jonah Jang Crescent, Makurdi
Registered Guests	146
Startups Pitched	5
Total Cash Prizes	N350,000 (N100,000 winner + N50,000 each runner-up x 4 + N50,000 bonus)
Maxify Global Resources	N500,000 (N100,000 per startup)
Judges	Solomon Kershima Yateghtegh and Dr. Terese Shadrach Akpem
Special Guest	Mary Onyagebo Oigocho — Hub Manager, Benue Agro Innovation Hub
Surprise Guest	Professor Ogbene Igbum — Benue State University
Programme Lead	Adeke Msonter Samuel
Organised By	BenueTech Foundation
Official Sponsor	Maxify Global
Acceleration Partner	Hub 17 Innovation Space

ABOUT

About BenueTech Foundation

BenueTech Foundation is the first tech-focused nonprofit organisation in Benue State, Nigeria. Founded on September 30, 2023 by Tersoo Hulugh, the Foundation exists to transform lives, accelerate innovation, and build a thriving technology ecosystem in Benue State and across Africa.

With a community of over 540 members spanning 8 countries, BenueTech Foundation delivers programs that identify, support, and celebrate the next generation of African tech founders and digital leaders. Programs include Pitch Friday, BENKids4AI, Webinars and Workshops, Mentorship, and Demo Day.

- Founded: September 30, 2023
- Founder and President: Tersoo Hulugh
- Community: 560+ members across 8 countries
- Official Sponsor: Maxify Global
- Website: www.benuetech.org

ABOUT PITCH FRIDAY

About Pitch Friday

Pitch Friday is BenueTech Foundation's flagship startup pitch competition series, where Benue's most innovative tech founders take the stage, pitch to experienced judges, receive expert feedback, and compete for real prizes and acceleration support.

Each episode brings five selected startups to a live audience of investors, ecosystem builders, professionals, and community members. Every startup that pitches walks away enrolled in Hub 17's acceleration programme and supported with N100,000 in resources from Maxify Global, regardless of placement. Cash prizes are awarded to the top five startups.

Pitch Friday Season 1 Episode 1 was held in May 2026 with 110 guests, five startups, and a guest satisfaction rating of 4.3 out of 5. 100% of respondents said they would recommend the event to others.

EVENT PROGRAMME

Event Programme and Run of Show

The event ran from 2:00 PM to approximately 4:10 PM WAT on August 14, 2026. Doors opened at 1:30 PM and all 146 registered guests were checked in via the Maxify Tickets digital platform.

TIME (WAT)	ACTIVITY
------------	----------

1:30 PM	Doors open — guest check-in via Maxify Tickets
2:00 PM	Event opens — MC welcome and housekeeping
2:05 PM	Opening remarks — Adeke Msonter Samuel, Programme Lead
2:10 PM	Sponsor acknowledgement — Maxify Global and all partners
2:13 PM	Introduction of judges and special guest
2:18 PM	Welcome video — Tersoo Hulugh, President, BenueTech Foundation
2:22 PM	STARTUP 1 — OmniNile / LumiID (5 min pitch + 10 min feedback)
2:37 PM	STARTUP 2 — Sheltrify AI (5 min pitch + 10 min feedback)
2:52 PM	STARTUP 3 — Matchire (5 min pitch + 10 min feedback)
3:07 PM	STARTUP 4 — Foodra Technologies (5 min pitch + 10 min feedback)
3:22 PM	STARTUP 5 — EarnVersity (5 min pitch + 10 min feedback)
3:37 PM	Surprise address — Professor Ogbene Igbum, Benue State University
3:45 PM	Judge deliberation — scores tallied privately
3:50 PM	Hub 17 acceleration announcement — Dr. Terese Shadrach Akpem
3:55 PM	Winner announcement and prize presentation — Mary Onyagebo Oigocho
4:05 PM	Closing remarks — Adeke Msonter Samuel
4:10 PM	Networking and light refreshments

Highlight: Professor Ogbene Igbum — Surprise Guest

One of the most memorable moments of the evening was an unplanned address by Professor Ogbene Igbum of Benue State University, who joined the event as a surprise guest. Professor Igbum delivered an inspiring speech to the founders and participants, encouraging them to see the Pitch Friday experience not as a competition but as validation of their talent, their ideas, and their potential. Her words resonated deeply with every person in the room and were widely cited in post-event feedback as a defining highlight of the evening.

"See this experience as validation of your talent and your product. The fact that you are here, on this stage, in this room — that is proof enough that what you are building is real and worthy."

— Professor Ogbene Igbum, Benue State University

JUDGES AND SPECIAL GUEST

Judges and Special Guest

Judge 1 — Solomon Kershima Yateghtegh

Founder and CEO, SkyHub Nigeria | 2025 Mandela Washington Fellow

Solomon Kershima Yateghtegh is a Digital Technology Strategist, AI Researcher, and one of Nigeria's most impactful innovation ecosystem builders. Under his leadership, SkyHub Nigeria has trained over 10,000 individuals, supported over 1,500 businesses, and incubated 12 startups. A 2025 Mandela Washington Fellow at the University of Iowa, Solomon brings deep expertise in artificial intelligence, governance, and digital transformation to the judging panel.

Judge 2 — Dr. Terese Shadrach Akpem

Founder, VetKonnnect and Hub 17 Innovation Space | 2023 Mandela Washington Fellow | 2024 Mastercard FAST Fellow

Dr. Terese Shadrach Akpem is a veterinarian, social entrepreneur, and one of the most decorated innovators from Benue State. Founder of VetKonnnect — a digital animal health platform serving livestock farmers across Nigeria and Africa — and Hub 17 Innovation Space, the state's leading startup hub. A 2023 Mandela Washington Fellow, 2024 Mastercard FAST Fellow, and Pamoja Founders Fellow, Dr. Terese has trained over 30,000 youths and supported 25 innovators with business funding. Every startup that pitched at S1E2 is enrolled in Hub 17's acceleration programme.

Special Guest — Mary Onyagebo Oigocho

Hub Manager, Benue Agro Innovation Hub

Mary Onyagebo Oigocho is a program manager, SDG advocate, and one of Benue State's most committed champions of startup culture and innovation. As Hub Manager at the Benue Agro Innovation Hub, she works at the intersection of agriculture, innovation, and community development. Mary presented all prizes and announced the winners at Pitch Friday S1E2.

Surprise Guest — Professor Ogbene Igbum

Benue State University

Professor Ogbene Igbum joined Pitch Friday S1E2 as an unplanned surprise guest and delivered one of the most impactful addresses of the evening. Her speech on talent, validation, and purpose was spontaneous, heartfelt, and widely celebrated by founders and guests alike.

THE STARTUPS

The Five Pitching Startups

Five startups were selected through a rigorous application and review process to pitch at Pitch Friday S1E2. Each pitched for 5 minutes followed by 10 minutes of live judge feedback. Below are brief profiles of each startup.

01. OmniNile / LumiID — Emmanuel Nzorov

Sector: AI / Identity Technology | Location: Gboko, Benue State | Stage: Generating Revenue

Problem: Identity fraud and verification failures across Nigeria. LumiID is an AI-powered live identity verification platform built to address the fact that over 70% of identity verifications in Nigeria fail or get exploited. The only revenue-generating startup in the S1E2 cohort, Emmanuel's pitch demonstrated both technical sophistication and clear commercial traction.

02. Sheltrify AI — Awua Biemdoo and Onalo Helen

Sector: AI / Real Estate Technology | Location: Makurdi, Benue State | Stage: Prototype / MVP

Problem: Fake listings and agent exploitation in Nigeria's real estate market. Sheltrify AI is building an AI-powered intelligence platform that brings trust, transparency, and intelligent property search to Nigerian real estate. A female co-founded startup pitching a deeply relevant solution to one of Nigeria's most pervasive housing market problems. Website: www.sheltrify.com

03. Matchire — Raphael Emmanuel and Odoh Samuel Itodo

Sector: Hospitality / Travel Technology | Location: Makurdi, Benue State | Stage: Early Users

Problem: Hotel marketing and booking in Nigeria is fragmented, unreliable, and frustrating. Matchire is making hotel booking seamless through WhatsApp — the platform Nigerians already live on. No app download. No friction. A booking in seconds. Raphael and Samuel pitched with confidence and a clear understanding of their user's pain point.

04. Foodra Technologies — Aondongu Amos, Clement Raymond and Mimi Andzenge

Sector: Agritech | Location: Makurdi, Benue State | Stage: Prototype / MVP

Problem: Smallholder farmers in Benue State lack market access, financing, and capacity support to grow beyond survival. Foodra is building a digital agri-marketplace combining market access, farmer financing, and capacity building in one platform. Built in Benue State, built for the people who feed Nigeria.

05. EarnVersity — Anita Raagale Ugwuru and Precious Ukama

Sector: Edtech | Location: Makurdi, Benue State | Stage: Prototype / MVP

Problem: University students cannot find flexible jobs matching their skills and lack accessible vocational training. EarnVersity connects skilled university students with flexible job opportunities while providing practical digital training. A female co-founded startup whose founding story — Anita was in the audience at Pitch Friday S1E1 and chose to apply for S1E2 — captured the room and exemplified the spirit of the Pitch Friday community.

RESULTS

Official Results and Scores

Startups were evaluated on five criteria: Problem Clarity and Relevance (20 points), Solution and Innovation (20 points), Market Opportunity (15 points), Traction and Validation (20 points), and Founder and Team (25 points). Maximum score: 100 points. Both judges submitted scores independently via the digital scorecard. Final rankings are based on the average of both judges' scores.

Final Rankings

RANK	STARTUP	FOUNDER(S)	JUDGE 1	JUDGE 2	AVG
1st — WINNER	OmniNile / LumilD	Emmanuel Nzorov	88.0	84.0	86.0
2nd Place	EarnVersity	Anita Ugwuru and Precious Ukama	84.0	87.0	85.5
3rd Place	Matchire	Raphael Emmanuel and Odoh Samuel	85.0	80.0	82.5
4th Place	Sheltrify AI	Awua Biemdoo and Onalo Helen	67.0	63.0	65.0
5th Place	Foodra Technologies	Aondongu Amos, Clement and Mimi	52.0	72.0	62.0

Note: Scores were remarkably close at the top — just 0.5 points separated 1st place (OmniNile at 86.0) from 2nd place (EarnVersity at 85.5), and only 3.5 points between 2nd and 3rd (Matchire at 82.5). All five startups delivered competitive pitches.

Detailed Scores by Criteria

STARTUP	PROBLEM (20)	SOLUTION (20)	MARKET (15)	TRACTION (20)	FOUNDER (25)
---------	-----------------	------------------	----------------	------------------	--------------

OmniNile/LumiID — Judge 1	20	20	12	16	20
OmniNile/LumiID — Judge 2	20	16	12	16	20
EarnVersity — Judge 1	16	20	12	16	20
EarnVersity — Judge 2	20	16	15	16	20
Matchire — Judge 1	16	16	12	16	25
Matchire — Judge 2	16	16	12	16	20
Sheltrify AI — Judge 1	16	12	12	12	15
Sheltrify AI — Judge 2	12	12	12	12	15
Foodra Technologies — Judge 1	8	12	9	8	15
Foodra Technologies — Judge 2	12	16	12	12	20

JUDGE FEEDBACK

Judge Feedback

Both judges submitted written feedback for each startup via the digital scorecard. The following are direct quotes from the submissions.

OmniNile / LumiID

"There is an opportunity here. We will help him maximise it."

— **Dr. Terese Shadrach Akpem**

"His solution is not patented. His solution needs to understand TAM, SAM and SOM."

— **Solomon Kershima Yateghtegh**

Sheltrify AI

"Needs more engagement to strengthen the platform."

— **Dr. Terese Shadrach Akpem**

"His business model is quite confusing."

— **Solomon Kershima Yateghtegh**

Matchire

"Potentially well positioned. Needs help with defining the market and market entry strategies."

— Dr. Terese Shadrach Akpem

"This has a strong potential in the market."

— Solomon Kershima Yateghtegh

Foodra Technologies

"Attempting multiple things at once. Needs to clarify a path forward on the problem being solved."

— Dr. Terese Shadrach Akpem

"This solution has a lot to do with customer satisfaction and experience but they did not give more clarity on some questions."

— Solomon Kershima Yateghtegh

EarnVersity

"Student communities are an untapped talent pool. There is an opportunity here to explore."

— Dr. Terese Shadrach Akpem

"EarnVersity needs lots of technical support."

— Solomon Kershima Yateghtegh

Overall Event Comments from Judges

"Worth it!"

— Dr. Terese Shadrach Akpem

"Top notch."

— Solomon Kershima Yateghtegh

PRIZES AND RESOURCES

Prizes and Resources Awarded

RANK	STARTUP	CASH PRIZE	MAXIFY RESOURCES	STATUS
1st — WINNER	OmniNile / LumiID	N100,000	N100,000	Disbursement Pending
2nd Place	EarnVersity	N50,000	N100,000	Disbursement Pending
3rd Place	Matchire	N50,000	N100,000	Disbursement Pending
4th Place	Sheltrify AI	N50,000	N100,000	Disbursement Pending
5th Place	Foodra Technologies	N50,000	N100,000	Disbursement Pending

In addition to cash prizes and Maxify Global resources, all five startups received:

- Enrollment in Hub 17 Innovation Space acceleration programme
- One month free workspace access for winner and first runner-up from Wellington Workspace Ltd (valued at N150,800)
- One-time complimentary workspace access for remaining three startups from Wellington Workspace Ltd
- 40% discounted workspace access for all event attendees from Wellington Workspace Ltd
- Full event photography coverage courtesy of Beauty of Benue and Spring of Hope

PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

Partners and Sponsors

PARTNER	ROLE	CONTRIBUTION
Maxify Global	Official Sponsor	N300,000 in cash prizes + N500,000 in resources for all 5 startups
BAIHUB / BENCEDI	Venue Partner	World-class innovation space provided at no cost
Hub 17 Innovation Space	Acceleration Partner	All 5 startups enrolled in Hub 17 acceleration programme

Wellington Workspace LTD	Workspace Partner	Free and discounted workspace for startups and attendees
ZODA Health	Refreshments Sponsor	Complimentary refreshments for all 146 guests
Maxify Tickets	Ticketing Partner	Digital check-in and ticketing platform for all 146 guests
Beauty of Benue	Media Partner	Complimentary event photography coverage
Spring of Hope	Media Partner	Complimentary event photography coverage

EVENT TEAM

Event Delivery Team

President / Founder	Tersoo Hulugh
Programme Lead	Adeke Msonter Samuel
Programs Manager	Mesuurshater Favour Ibu
Programs Coordinator	Akile Daniel
Operations Lead	Agnes Oheobe
Startup Liaison	Bemgba Utor
Communications and Media Lead	Kator Christopher Adabo
Social Media Manager	Terdoo Philemon
Content Writer	And Oryiman
Graphics Team	Terser Iorver and Jehoiada Abu
Video	Shadrach Ikyegh Nyamver

Web Lead	Raymond Yima
Blog Writer	Anna Adinni

ATTENDANCE AND FEEDBACK

Attendance and Guest Feedback

Attendance

Pitch Friday S1E2 recorded 146 registered guests via the Maxify Tickets platform — a 33% increase over the 110 guests who attended Season 1, Episode 1 in May 2026. The event attracted investors, entrepreneurs, students, professionals, ecosystem builders, and community members from across Benue State and beyond.

Total Registered Guests	146
S1E1 Attendance (May 2026)	110
Growth from S1E1 to S1E2	33% increase
Check-in Platform	Maxify Tickets (digital)

Guest Feedback

Post-event feedback from guests has been overwhelmingly positive. The quality of the pitches, the depth of judge feedback, the professionalism of the event organisation, and the surprise address by Professor Ogbene Igbum were consistently cited as highlights. Multiple attendees described the event as the best startup event they have attended in Benue State.

Guest feedback has been amazing. Multiple attendees have described Pitch Friday S1E2 as the best startup event they have attended in Benue State.

Detailed guest feedback data and ratings will be compiled and published in the full guest feedback supplement to this report.

KEY MOMENTS

Key Moments from the Evening

- Emmanuel Nzorov of OmniNile / LumilD delivered the highest-scoring pitch of the evening with an average of 86.0/100 across both judges — the only revenue-generating startup in the cohort.
- EarnVersity's Anita Ugwuru, who was in the audience at S1E1, returned as a pitching founder at S1E2 and placed 2nd — one of the most celebrated stories of the evening.
- The top three startups were separated by just 3.5 points, reflecting the remarkable quality of pitches across the cohort.
- Dr. Terese Shadrach Akpem formally enrolled all five startups in Hub 17's acceleration programme live on stage — a moment that drew significant applause.
- Mary Onyagebo Oigocho presented prizes with warmth and presence, making each prize moment feel personal and significant for the founders.
- Professor Ogbene Igbum's unplanned address was widely described as the most emotionally resonant moment of the evening, encouraging every founder and participant to see their presence on that stage as validation.
- The event was the first Pitch Friday edition to exceed 100 registered guests, with 146 checking in via Maxify Tickets.

S1E1 VS S1E2

Season 1 Episode 1 vs Season 1 Episode 2

METRIC	S1E1 (MAY 2026)	S1E2 (AUGUST 2026)
Registered Guests	110	146
Startups Pitched	5	5
Total Cash Prizes	N300,000	N300,000
Maxify Global Resources	N500,000	N500,000
Judges	2	2
Special Guest	No	Yes — Mary Onyagebo Oigocho
Surprise Guest	No	Yes — Prof. Ogbene Igbum
Media Partners	None	Beauty of Benue + Spring of Hope
Workspace Partner	None	Wellington Workspace Ltd
Refreshments Sponsor	None	ZODA Health
Guest Growth	—	33% increase from S1E1

NEXT STEPS

Post-Event Next Steps

Immediate Actions

- Collect bank account details from all five startups for prize disbursement
- Process prize payments through Maxify Global Ltd to all five startups
- Publish winner announcement and event recap across all BenueTech social media platforms
- Share event photos via Maxify Tickets gallery link with all startups and attendees
- Confirm Hub 17 acceleration programme onboarding schedule with Dr. Terese Shadrach Akpem
- Collect and compile full guest feedback data for the feedback supplement report

Short-Term Actions (August 2026)

- Publish post-event video interviews with all five startup founders
- Publish guest feedback reel across social media platforms
- Distribute official event report to all partners, sponsors, judges, and stakeholders
- Confirm S1E3 guaranteed slots for Connectify Nigeria, Lilyshops, and Visionaligned Company
- Begin planning for Pitch Friday Season 1, Episode 3
- Present Benue Tech Summit plans for September 2026

Upcoming BenueTech Programs

- Pitch Friday Season 1, Episode 3 — Date to be confirmed
- BENKids4AI — Monthly school sessions continuing
-
- Webinars and Workshops — Ongoing

CLOSING STATEMENT

Closing Statement

Pitch Friday Season 1, Episode 2 was not just an event. It was a statement. A statement that Benue State is home to world-class founders who deserve world-class platforms. A statement that when the right infrastructure, the right mentorship, and the right community come together, extraordinary things happen.

146 people came. Five founders pitched. One won. All five were accelerated. And an entire room was reminded — by a professor who had no plan to speak — that the greatest validation a founder can receive is the courage it took to build, and the stage it takes to show it.

BenueTech Foundation will continue to build that stage. Season 1, Episode 3 is coming. And this ecosystem is only just getting started.

