



COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF LEAP AFRICA'S 21ST ANNIVERSARY WEBINAR

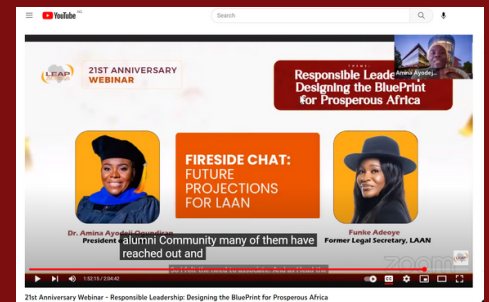
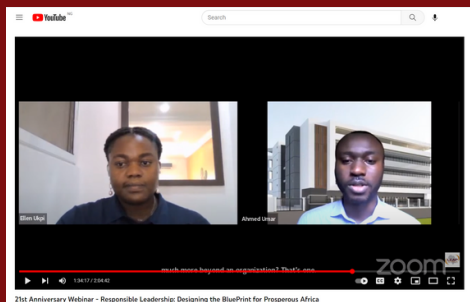
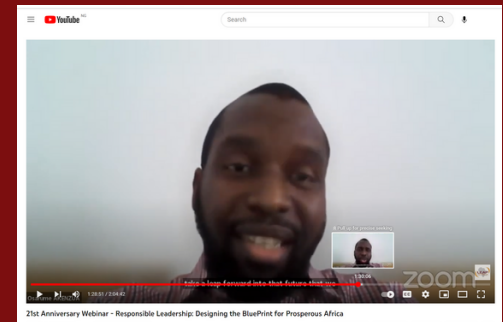
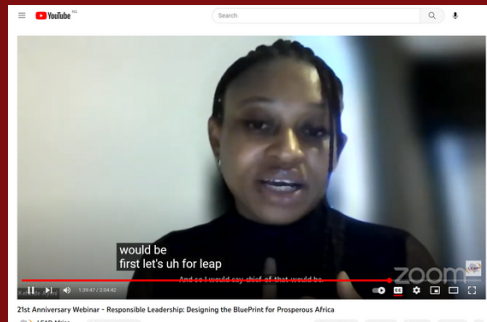
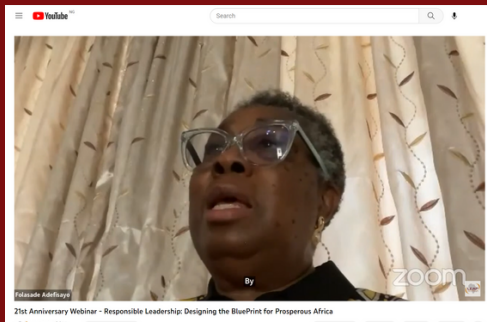
On May 26, 2023, LEAP Africa held a webinar themed "Responsible Leadership: Designing the Blueprint for Prosperous Africa" to commemorate its 21st anniversary. The virtual event, which was anchored by Ellen Ukpi, Communications and PR Manager at LEAP Africa, had a keynote address delivered by Mrs. Folashade Adefisayo, the Lagos State Commissioner for Education, and remarks on LEAP Africa's vision and work shared by Kehinde Ayeni, the Executive Director of LEAP Africa. The webinar also had detailed presentations. The presentation on LEAP Africa's work so far was delivered by Terhemem Agabo, MERL Coordinator; another on our plans to scale via the LEAP Leadership Institute (LLI) by LLI Programme Manager, Ahmed Umar; a call for improved partnerships by Programmes Manager, Osarume Akenzua; and an invitation to the LEAP Africa Alumni Network (LAAN) extended by the LAAN president, Dr. Amina Ayodeji-Ogundiran.

In her opening remark reflecting on LEAP Africa's work over the past 21 years, Executive Director, Kehinde Ayeni, emphasized the importance of the work we do in youth development across Africa. According to her, LEAP Africa's work is pivotal in equipping the continent's youths with the necessary skills and resources to navigate barriers in their times of transition.

Ms. Ayeni underscored the need for ethical, values-based leadership, which drives positive growth and the emergence of better stories for the African continent. In concluding her opening remark, she noted that since the problems we face in Africa are identical, the blueprint that will emerge from solving Nigeria's problems will serve as a template for other African countries.

Having transitioned from working in the private sector for decades to serving as the Commissioner for Education in Lagos State, Mrs. Folashade Adefisayo's keynote speech was packed with tips on how to lead in unfamiliar territories without compromising on one's values. The Honourable Commissioner summarized her motivation for responsible leadership in the Ministry of Education into the following points:

- 1. An Existing Track Record in the Private Sector:** Mrs. Adefisayo emphasized that her track record in the private sector, which saw her rise to the position of CEO, kept her determined to thrive while working for the government. Her past success drove her to push for excellence as Commissioner for Education.



L-R Mrs. Folashade Adefisayo, Former Commissioner for Education, Lagos State, Kehinde Ayeni, Executive Director, LEAP AFRICA, Osarume Akenzua, Programme Manager, LEAP Africa, Ellen Ukpi, Communications & PR Manager, LEAP Africa and Ahmed Umar, Programme Manager, LLI, Terhemmen Agabo, MERL Coordinator, LEAP Africa, and Dr. Amina Ayodeji-Ogundiran, President LAAN

2. A Legacy of Ethical Leadership: The Honourable Commissioner stated that a key source of inspiration was her late father, who was also a Commissioner for Education in the old western region. Noting that she wanted to contribute to her father's legacy of good leadership, Mrs. Adefisayo worked hard to live up to her father's good name.

3. Genuine Care for Students: The Commissioner for Education highlighted her commitment to ensuring that students reach their full potential as one of her motivations to thrive in her role.

4. A Sense of Purpose: Mrs. Adefisayo stated strongly her belief in being called to ensure that students get the best education they possibly can. For her, her work is not merely a job but her entire life's purpose.

The Honourable Commissioner concluded her address by encouraging young people to not only define their values but embody them, so as to inspire those around them to live and lead ethically and responsibly.

Speaking on LEAP Africa's impact in the last 21 years in a report compiled by the Social Investment Consultancy Africa, LEAP Africa's MERL Coordinator, Terhemmen Agabo, captured our reach in certain categories:

1. Youth Engagement in their Early Years: Our work engaging teenagers right from secondary school helps shape them into principled leaders even as young adults and as they navigate transition seasons in their lives.



2. Leveraging Youth Agency for the SDGs: LEAP Africa supports young people with local ideas to drive change in their communities.

3. Partnerships for Scaling: Our partnerships with local and international organizations help us reach African youth at scale.

4. E-Learning for Scale: Our e-learning efforts help us reach youth from different parts of the continent faster.

5. Supporting Entrepreneurs for Social Change: Through our various programmes, we have enhanced the growth of social enterprises across Africa, which in turn helps foster social change.

6. Gender Equality and Inclusion: Our interventions reveal a conscious

commitment to gender equality and inclusion.

7. Pan African Reach: We currently reach youth in 13 African countries with our initiatives.

8. Ecosystem Building: We support an ecosystem of young changemakers in Africa by providing funding and other resources.

9. Thought Leadership: LEAP Africa's publications have positioned us as thought leaders in the youth development space.

10. Advocacy: We serve as champions for Africa's youth, lending our voice and influence to causes that are beneficial to them through lobbying and government engagement.

Ahmed Umar, Programme Manager for LEAP Leadership Institute (LLI), shared that the institute was born out of the need to take positive steps towards harnessing the power of Africa's current youth bulge instead of leaving the youth to vices. Ahmed stated that LLI is a consolidation of LEAP Africa's work so far and a determination to deliver evidence-based best practices on youth development to young people in Africa at scale.

Osarume Akenzua, Programmes Manager at LEAP Africa, also issued a call for improved participation and volunteering in youth-focused initiatives, as the Africa we want will only emerge when the youth exercise agency and take responsibility as leaders. He specifically invited our audience to take advantage of opportunities to serve with LEAP Africa by volunteering for programmes, providing mentorship, and sharing their expertise.

The president of the LEAP Africa Alumni Network (LAAN), Dr. Amina Ayodeji-Ogundiran, joined in the call for participation, saying that LAAN serves as a hub for association and belongingness for past beneficiaries of LEAP Africa's interventions.

In delivering her closing remark, our Executive Director, Kehinde Ayeni, emphasized our drive to reach the unreached through improved strategic collaboration and partnerships with the international community and the media. Looking forward, she underscored the importance of entrepreneurship in building an inclusive and prosperous Africa, our commitment to developing training resources that are up-to-date, and our move to mainstream responsible leadership across Africa.

To rewatch the webinar, click [here](#)