

LEAP!

DECEMBER 2018 / VOLUME XXX

leadership | effectiveness | accountability | professionalism



***Supporting
Innovation,
Enabling
Communities***

Serving Communities,
Serving One Another

Accelerating The Growth
of Social Innovators in
Nigeria

Exploring The Imperatives Of Youth
Engagement in Community
Development and Peace
Building Processes



...Raising leaders, transforming Africa

WHO WE ARE

"LEAP is a youth-focused, leadership development organization raising dynamic, innovative and principled African leaders".

Since 2002, Leadership, Effectiveness, Accountability and Professionalism (LEAP) Africa has stayed true to its mission to equip a new cadre of African leaders. Its journey started with the realization that LEAP can transform Africa, one community at a time by changing the mindset of the people, promoting ethical leadership across sectors and influencing governance.

The organization has enjoyed success in its field as it has inspired and equipped about 50,000 youth, teachers, CSOs, business owners and social entrepreneurs to lead ethically while implementing initiatives that transform their communities, organizations and contribute to national development since inception. LEAP achieves this through its training programs, publications and most recently e-learning. Through its training programme, its overall objectives is in changing the mindset of youth; equipping them to lead ethically and motivating them to deliver positive changes in their communities and building sustainable social enterprises and for-profit businesses.

However, through technology, LEAP is creating a digital curriculum with tech-enabled tools to provide access to its courses on a Learning Management System. LEAP's premier e-learning course on ethics, launched in April 2016, equips participants to be dynamic and principled leaders through interactive learning and animated scenarios that help build awareness on ethics and empower users to resist corruption.

Beyond its programmatic activities, the organization is known for thought leadership in business sustainability and youth development. The evidence of its research are documented as resources and curriculum for self-development and driving corporate sustainability. It has published 11 books ranging from topics such as ethics, governance, talent management, succession planning to corporate culture. These are action-oriented guides to creating positive and lasting change in individuals, organizations and communities.

OUR VISION

To be recognized as the premier resource centre for developing dynamic, innovative and principled leaders, who will drive Africa's realization of its full potential.

OUR MISSION

To inspire, empower and equip a new cadre of African leaders by providing the skills and tools for personal, organizational and community transformation.

OUR FOCUS AREAS

Leadership & Life Skills: Changing the mindset of youth, equipping them to lead ethically, and motivating them to deliver and scale positive impact in their communities.

Enterprise: Supporting entrepreneurs in instituting systems and structures that are crucial for business sustainability.

Digital Learning: Creating an online resource centre with technology-enabled tools for developing innovative, dynamic and ethical leaders.

OUR VALUES

Respect: We recognize and celebrate diversity in our society and demonstrate respect in all our interactions with different stakeholders.

Integrity: We consistently demonstrate transparency and truthfulness in all our dealings.

Synergy: We build communities and ecosystems for our beneficiaries through strategic partnerships.

Excellence: We demonstrate excellence in all our activities going the extra mile to ensure that our programmes, services and operations are world class and of the highest standards.

OUR BOARD MEMBERS

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Enquiries: +234 01 2706542;
info@leapafrika.org; www.leapafrika.org

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Leaping from the Bottom Billion:

The Role of Soft Skills in Poverty Alleviation. By: Femi Abraham

Over the past few decades, there has been a collaborative effort amongst world leaders & various institutions to reduce poverty levels across nations. These efforts have led to the creation of an ambitious deadline to make the world free of extreme poverty by 2030. Between 1981 and 2016, poverty levels have reduced by 34% (people living below \$1.90 a day). Interestingly this reduction also coincided with a 69% increase in population globally.

Even with this significant decrease, the World Bank 2017 global poverty update reports about 770 million people living in extreme poverty across the world. These population mostly reside within the "bottom billion"- countries who are mapped at the end of the development scale; who have failed to grow, or the rate of development has been on a decline. Even more striking, a large concentration of the impoverished population exists in Africa. Among the countries in the Bottom Billion, 74% are from Africa; with countries like

Madagascar, D.R. Congo and Burundi each having over 70% of their population living below the poverty line.

Among the several theories that have evolved to explain why these countries remain in the Bottom Billion, Paul Collier's school of thought - which suggest four major traps that these countries can find themselves: The Conflict Trap, Natural Resource Trap, Bad Governance Trap, and The Land-locked-with-the-bad-neighbours trap - resonates with most African countries. In a bid to save these countries from these traps, there has been an enormous aid flow from developed nations to implement poverty alleviation and human capacity development programmes.

The several causes of poverty among most nations in the Bottom Billion can be linked to an enormous industrialization deficit and lack of quality education. While not downplaying the effect of industrialization on national development, investing in improving the levels of education can

provide practical solutions to the problem of poverty across these nations. This, therefore, posits the question: what form of education has the highest potential to reduce poverty and increase personal well-being.

According to the Africa Learning Barometer developed by the Brookings Centre for Universal Education, only about half of Sub-Saharan Africa's children, currently attending school, are likely to acquire the necessary skills needed for them to live healthy and productive lives. While technical skills development is necessary to improve a nation's likelihood for industrialization, today's complex and dynamic world requires individuals to be equipped with soft skills. These set of cognitive & social skills do not only improve the economic status of individuals, but they are also critical to success in the workplace and all facets of life.



A Teacher and iLEAD Students during a curriculum delivery session

With the scale of youth unemployment and working poverty amongst the Bottom Billion, youth within these countries need to be equipped with the right skillset that can enable them identify and leverage opportunities, become adaptable to changing requirements of the labour market and consequently enable them to contribute to the growth of the national economy.

In addition to positive economic outcomes, soft skills development also empowers individuals with the ability to manage emotions, relationships and provide them with an improved ability to mobilize people and resources towards achieving set goals. There is also a wealth of evidence to show that soft skills development influences aspirations and reference income which translates to improved employment and mental and physical well-being.

While some governments and development-focused organizations have identified the need for soft skills development to be part of a comprehensive macroeconomic development strategy, there is still a need to improve investment on soft skill development across these nations.

Recent analysis in MasterCard Foundations' report on effective programming methodologies that have worked for top implementing partners in soft skills development across nations; reveals that skills development programmes focused on building communication skills, high-order thinking (problem-solving, critical thinking

and decision-making) and components of emotional intelligence (self-control, self-motivation, self-identity, and social skills); provides the highest development outcomes.

In addition to focusing on these core areas, creating effective programmes requires pedagogies to be designed around experiential learning focused on causing long-lasting mindset change among beneficiaries. Furthermore, Lessons from nations that have witnessed positive socio-economic outcomes from investing in soft skills development have shown that equipping citizens with soft skills at an early age can make a significant impact on long-term outcomes. A recent analysis of Sri Lanka's skills education reforms has shown that increasing early childhood soft skills development increases income in adulthood from 6–17%.

Developing individuals with soft skills do not provide a one-size-fits-all solution to alleviating poverty. There is a need to ensure these skills development strategies form part of a holistic national socio-economic development strategy. Governments must rigorously invest in infrastructures and systems of support that ensures individuals equipped with skills seamlessly develop solutions that lead to national development.

International development-focused organizations also need to support local implementing institutions with competency-based training that will enable the design of innovative programmes and provide technicalities in monitoring and

evaluating the effectiveness of skills development interventions among beneficiaries.

Insights from the Marshall plan for revitalizing Western Europe has shown that providing Aid in form of grants and debt relief should not be a stand-alone support for nations seeking economic development. Increasing the potentials for smooth flow of trade between high-income markets and the bottom billion can also serve as a panacea for these countries. However, these supports need to be built on a solid foundation involving a multipronged approach to educational development by providing citizens with the knowledge and skills needed to leverage opportunities, develop solutions to critical societal problems and most importantly promote the well-being of communities.

While the opportunities for these nations to make that uneasy leap from the bottom billion seems possible, the real development work lies in the collective effort of both private and public partners. This can be in form of funding support for implementing institutions and the development of policies that further enhances soft skills development programmes across all educational levels. Beyond this, citizens must see themselves as change makers harnessing the limited opportunities available to drive innovative solutions across various communities.



Primary school pupils in a classroom session during LEAP's Community Site Visit to Ajegunle

Addressing Possible Ways to Mainstream Leadership and Life Skills in Nigeria Secondary Schools

“Leadership is not in the position you hold, but in the actions, you take to change the community you belong to.”

-Dr. Sidiq Okanlawon

While implementing projects is important, LEAP has identified that the impact of our projects is intrinsically tied to the level of support we get from key players in those sectors or communities where we work.

In his keynote address titled “State of Nigerian Youth: Skills Gaps, Trends and the Future” Gbenga Sesan of Paradigm Initiative noted that young people should not be pitied rather they should be supported. Particularly young people that are passionate about learning and demonstrate the promise of being innovative. He explained Nigeria’s high school drop-out rate with the ‘funnel effect’. According to him, “Current data suggests that 30% of students in Nigeria drop out of primary school, and while only 54% of the remaining 70% get into junior secondary school”. There is, therefore, the need to not only support young people in schools but also build inclusive systems to support young people who are off the radar and exist on the margins of society. One of the critical ways to support young people according to Gbenga is to expose young people to digital skills.

The meeting was designed to disseminate findings from LEAP’s iLEAD Programme (Be the Change) which provides leadership/life skills training and support to public secondary schools students in some parts of the Lagos metropolis. To adequately demonstrate LEAP’s findings, the meeting opened with an Alumni Talk; a plenary session led by student and teacher beneficiaries of our in-school programmes across the years.

Baliki Akinjobi, a beneficiary and alumnae of LEAP’s Youth Development Training Programme (YDTP) in 2008/09 and a graduate of Economics gave her testimonial on that training’s impact on her. In her words, “The programme changed my life”. Baliki was equipped to build a trajectory of transformative leadership and in the university, she functioned in several leadership capacities. She led a team to refurbish a medical facility in Enuwa community in Osun State. Baliki is continually working to ensure she contributes meaningfully to her immediate environment.

Njoku Hyginus – an iLEAD student at Opebi Senior Grammar School, Lagos tells a very inspiring story of how the programme has challenged him to intentionally change the perception of his friends, family and most importantly teachers about him. Until he joined the iLEAD class, Njoku was extremely carefree and this affected his attitude to school and life. He realized early in the programme he needed to approach life differently if he was going to succeed. Time management was his big hindrance - Njoku made a simple change – he invested in a wristwatch to track his activities. This action changed his grades and helped him set his priorities.

The concluding section of the forum was a second plenary tagged “Exploring innovative interventions and opportunities for bridging the skill gap: Reflections from key stakeholders”. The panelists included Dr. Dabesaki Mac-Ikemenjima - Program Officer, Ford Foundation; Mrs. Abosede Alimi - Director of Strategy, LSETF; Mrs. Grace Akande - Principal, Opebi Senior High School, Mr. Seyi Ojuronbe; Manager, Sahara Foundation and Mrs. Margaret Fagboyo Regional Programme Officer, DFID.



A cross section of participants and education stakeholders at the SEM in Lagos.

These professionals shared perspectives which has been summarized into highlights:

i. Innovative Pedagogy: Integrating leadership and life skills does not mean that they must be taught separately from regular subjects, rather they can be embedded as a pedagogy into mainstream curricular. This means a more creative, engaging and practical ways to deliver lessons in and out of the classroom to improve lesson outcomes.

ii. Teachers Commitment: Teachers need to be properly motivated, remunerated, provided with affordable living (i.e. teachers quarters) options provided with health insurance if they will have to commit to scaling leadership and life skills.

iii. Parents Engagement: Institutionalizing Parents' Engagement Forum to help them understand their role and the imperatives of these kinds of initiatives in the development of their children.

iv. Synergy at the Ministry levels and with other partners: Collaborating and fostering partnerships that will enable exceptional learning outcomes for the

future generation. This will mean closer working ties across ministries involved with education and curriculum while also paying attention, acting on the emerging evidence and recommendations.

v. Continuity and Follow up: LEAP should continue to monitor and follow-up on schools or sites where they desire to deepen their foot prints and understand their impact even more.

The implicit notion here is that social transformation begins with a mindset change which also includes developing attitudes, values and skills that puts young people in charge of their own lives. Some of these skills may be learned in the classroom, but many are not. Beyond basic literacy and numeracy skills, young people need to learn how to prepare themselves for the world of work, how to work in teams, solve problems, think critically and communicate effectively. These not only prepares them for better work opportunities, but also for more substantial and influential ways to become transformative leaders.



Mr. Gbenga Sesan, ED, Paradigm Initiative delivering a keynote address at the SEM in Lagos



L-R: Balikis Akinjobi (an LEAP beneficiary), Abraham Femi Abraham (Programme Officer, LEAP Africa) during a panel session at the SEM in Lagos

VOICES

We Need Parents by FearGod Okeke



FearGod Okeke

If we are going to recline in our couches of complaints and do nothing to change the station of misery, we look upon;

Then I've come to remind us that we have a need: PARENTS

In a society where morality is looked upon as an antiquity and responsibility has been replaced by liability; We need parents.

In a nation where corruption is looked upon with admiration and vision has been put in detention; We need parents.

But it's so sad that while we have so many couples, We have few parents. While we have many families, We have few parents.

While we have many children, We have few parents.

Being a couple and able to pay rent, Does not automatically qualify you as a parent.

Having a bride and being the groom, Does not guarantee your children will be well groomed.

Being mature enough to be a wife, Does not guarantee competence to raise a life.

Parents are custodians; taking care of the child till they are ready to be of society's use.

Parents are guards; keeping the child safe and away from the clutches of abuse.

Parents are teachers; teaching the child wisdom so they don't walk amongst fools.

Parents are mentors; showing the child how to win and not loose.

Parents are instructors; instructing the child on the way to choose and the path to refuse.

Parents are examples; showing the child how-to pass-through life's ruse.

You might be thinking "I'm not old enough yet to be a parent" But know that whether you are a parent according to biology or not,

Parenting is much more than just genealogy.

-FearGod Okeke is an iLEAD fellow

Serving Communities, Serving One Another

“Before joining the iLEAD programme, I used to be very shy and never socialized with friends. But now, I am not only confident of myself, I am also impacting the lives of my friends and advising them.” - Fatima Musa (an iLEAD Student)



A group of iLEAD students, Teacher and a LEAP Staff during an outreach visit to Sabokarji Community in Lagos

After a year-long engagement with about 400 students in five secondary schools (under 20 years), LEAP wrapped up the iLEAD programme 2017/18 cycle with a graduation ceremony in Lagos in August 2018. In the last one year, students were exposed to learning and mentorship and taken through a deliberate journey of a mindset shift while teachers were equipped with 21st teaching skills and served as positive role models to their students.

Emerging findings from the programme reveals that 90% of students have clearer picture of who a leader is, while 72% now understand how to manage their lives to achieve specific goals from practicing good time management being a core module in the programme. 90% of them have also demonstrated visible improvement in their academic performance; from being at bottom of the class to leading tutorials for peers.

The event also doubled as a presentation of some of the change project initiatives these students implemented in various communities. See some of the change projects showcased at the graduation ceremony:

SERVING WITHIN COMMUNITIES

Waste Management through Waste Recycling: Focusing on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Good health and well-being for people), Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), Goal 13 (Climate action) and Goal 15 (Life on Land), iLEAD student from Gbaja Boys Senior High School sought to reduce the level of dirt in their environment using innovative means. These students distributed themselves into working groups to collect waste plastic pet bottles which hitherto littered the community causing plastic pollution and wreaking havoc. They expertly assembled these plastic bottles to create unique waste bins to collect and positioned them in strategic locations in the school environment to collect dirt.



Bespoke waste management equipments designed and produced by iLEAD students at Gbaja Boys High School, Lagos



A cross section of panelist during the graduation ceremony in Lagos



Doctor volunteer administering drugs to beneficiaries during the medical outreach



iLEAD Students posing with some of the materials donated to the community

Health Outreach to Sabokorji Community: Sabokorji is an area with limited access to affordable healthcare in Apapa area of Lagos state. To reduce some of the killer disease outbreak associated with child and maternal mortality among inhabitants, iLEAD Students from Apapa High School responded to this challenge, partnering with health professionals (volunteer) to embark on a massive health outreach to provide treatments and drugs for Malaria, Cold, Pains, etc., for inhabitants of the community. This intervention also aims significantly to reduce the number of children dying from malaria in the community. Mosquito nets were distributed to breastfeeding mothers and parents with children under-five. However, many families in the community still need proper medical attention, iLEAD students are looking for opportunities to do more.



Instructional signpost powered by iLEAD Students of Fazil Omar Senior High School placed at strategic locations in Surulere, Lagos.



Campaign against Drug Abuse: Responding to Goal 3 (Good health and well-being for people) of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, iLEAD students from Fazil Omar Senior High School identified that drug abuse is a norm among young people in the community. According to the latest WHO data published in 2018 life expectancy in Nigeria is: Male 54.7, female 55.7 and total life expectancy is 55.2 which gives Nigeria a World Life Expectancy ranking of 178. They therefore embarked on a street-wide awareness on the dangers of the illicit use of drugs. To achieve this, they positioned signpost at strategic points in the community bearing some of these dangers and possible ways to avoid drug abuse.



A refurbished library donated by iLEAD students of Opebi Senior High School, Ilupeju, Lagos.



Fitting a school library with books: To ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, iLEAD students from Opebi Senior High School donated facilities and books to their school library. The school library which has been lying moribund over the years has crippled the reading culture of students in the school. iLEAD students took the initiative to purchase chairs, tables, and some books to furnish the library. They are always seeking opportunities to do more.

In attendance were representatives from Lagos State Ministry of Education, School Administrators - Principals and Vice-Principals, iLEAD facilitators/teachers and volunteers. The programme which started in September 2017 with Gbaja Boys Senior High School; Apapa Senior High School; Fazil Omar Senior High School; Opebi Senior High School and Ilupeju Senior Grammar School was made possible through a United Way Worldwide grant on behalf of the generosity of Citi Foundation.

The event featured a panel session involving teachers, a volunteer, a parent and students to discuss their individual experiences and how the programme has influenced their lives. The panel was aimed to demonstrate some of the impact of the programme while discussing the visible changes from the beneficiaries' perspective.

From the teacher's point of view, significant attitudinal changes in their students, improvements in classroom attendance and participation were some of the outcomes that were rated. On whether there are improvements on students learning of regular subjects, teachers unanimously admitted that students' willingness to learn other subjects which were adjudged to be difficult has increased remarkably.

It is interesting that parents are equally able to contribute to this discussion. Mrs. Comfort Manus; a parent to Bernard Manus (one of the iLEAD students) narrated an extremely emotional account of how the iLEAD module has brought out the greatness in her son. Bernard was born pre-mature and right from birth, they have always seized every opportunity to inspire him towards greatness. According to her, he was christened Bernard as a reminder that he can be whatever he wants to be in life. Mrs. Manus stated that her son is now confident and bold, he approaches issues wisely and has assumed a leadership posture domestically.

With its Pathway to Progress, inspired by goal eight of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Citi and Citi Foundation are partnering with organizations - nonprofits, universities and municipalities to help build skills, expand their networks and become career ready through first jobs, internships and leadership and entrepreneurship training.¹

LEAP further launched the iLEAD CLUB in these schools which will be championed by students and managed in collaboration with teachers to create a platform for students interaction to aid sustainability of the programme in schools.



A group of iLEAD students, ED, LEAP Africa and some education stakeholders present at the graduation.

LEAP has signed up new schools into the iLEAD Programme

“This training has awakened the leadership traits in me and I know the learning will improve my relationship with my students.”



A cross section of participants (school representatives, volunteers, school administrators & LEAP staff) at the iLEAD Training of Teachers (ToT) in Lagos.

Recently, LEAP signed up new schools in District III into the Programme. Falomo Senior High School, Victoria Island; Birchfreeman Senior Secondary School, Mushin; New Era Girls Senior High School, Surulere; Lagos Citi Senior College, Yaba; and Ijeshatedo Senior High School, Okota have been carefully selected with support of the State Ministry of Education.

With this new cycle which commenced in September 2018, the new teachers, volunteers and administrators participating in the programme were immersed in training at a Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop which held in October 2018.

The ToT provides a platform for training teacher beneficiaries to become change agents and facilitators of LEAP's leadership curriculum (which entails leadership, employability, civic participation and entrepreneurship) to a control group of students within the schools; to widen participants' awareness of self-leadership and how this translates to leading others.

Our teacher alumni, Mrs. Ojo Esther (Gbaja Boys Senior High School) and Mr. Paul Kuyoro (Ilupeju Senior Grammar School) were at the induction session to lead onboarding conversations.

“One of the most essential quality every iLEAD teacher must develop is passion”, says Mrs. Ojo. According to her, the task of delivering the curriculum is a challenging one and only a passionate teacher will make the most out of it for the benefit of the students. Mr. Kuyoro, on the other hand, challenged the new iLEAD teachers to always find the most innovative ways to consciously infuse learning from the ToT into their regular teaching

engagements. He stated that this will give the students a complete experience outside of the iLEAD curriculum.

The new facilitators were able to identify their individual roles as teachers in the collective development of transformative leaders in Nigeria. They had insightful and educative experiences and are work ready for the next iLEAD Programme project cycle.

In 2018-2019, LEAP will provide 450 more youth in five (5) public secondary schools in Lagos State with the skills and tools for personal and community transformation through the iLEAD Programme.

LEAP has taken its leadership and life skills curriculum to ten (10) public secondary schools within Lagos State in its iLEAD Programme with the support of a United Way Worldwide grant on behalf of the generosity of Citi Foundation.



Chiamaka Oguonu facilitating a session during the Training of Trainers (ToT) in Lagos



A cross section of participants listening to a facilitator during a session at the Training of Trainer (ToT) in Lagos

Birthing A Generation of Social Catalysts

“The training of trainers was an eye opener for me. It helped me to find a purpose for myself and opened my eyes to see the problems around me which I was ignorant of. I now understand what it takes to have a sustainable business and I am already putting structure to my business to ensure its sustainability.” - Noadiah A. Babas

Learning in classroom can be improved to match current realities if we want to begin the process of self-actualization early. A major aspect of this is the leadership skills gap that exists among Nigerian youth. To tackle this challenges head on, LEAP designed and implemented several leadership programmes across the country with tremendous success rate. Recently, Ford Foundation's partnership is ensuring that LEAP expands to reach more youth with its leadership and life skills training in Akwa Ibom State.

For two years, the iLEAD Fellowship will provide 450 youth in five public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State with skills to achieve personal success and transition into higher education or paid employment. Unlike the iLEAD Programme, the fellowship model works with youth corps members within their one year primary assignment in public schools to leverage their time, energy to develop young champions across communities in Akwa Ibom.

Running in its second year, the iLEAD Fellowship is equipping dynamic graduate youth, selected from the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), who have demonstrated passion for social development, with the knowledge, skills and experience to become change leaders in their communities and key contributors to the development sector through the programme.

Between 2nd – 7th September 2018, LEAP organized a Training of Trainers (ToT) for 15 new Fellows alongside other education stakeholders which was held at Luton Park Hotel, Uyo, Akwa Ibom

State. This also served as the commencement of major programmatic activities for the second phase of the iLEAD Fellowship for the 2018/19 cohort.

The Training of Trainers featured a panel session which had stakeholders from the private and public sector to discuss the topic “Driving Social Change: Opportunities and Challenges”. From the topic of discussion, panelists drew out themes ranging from *purpose discovery, starting a Non-profit or Enterprise, sustaining the venture against odds, networks, and partnership, leading change in the development, political and business space.*

A key highlight from the session is the need for young people to identify their purpose and skills, develop and add value to self, deploy skills and stay consistent in the face of obvious challenges. Fellows have truly started to see possibilities of this programme and begun to demonstrate the willingness to drive change and influence their communities positively.

Through LEAP's youth intervention programmes, young people across various communities have been able to achieve their potentials; through the provision of mentorship, training and internship opportunities. Our beneficiaries have made meaningful transitions into higher education and are functioning in various roles to contribute tangibly to community development in Nigeria.



A cross section of Facilitators, mentors, iLEAD Fellows and LEAP Staff after the Training of Trainers (ToT) in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

Lead The Way – The Time is Now!

“When I sent Beluchi to sign up for this programme, I was not quite sure of what to expect. But in retrospect, as I watched her up there, one thought in my heart was that this programme is such that every parents should subscribe for” – Mrs. Akabogu (A Parent)



Lead The Way participants posing with LEAP Staff and members of the Dreams from the Slum Initiative during a community site visit to Ajegunle, Lagos.

Engineering a future where young people can take responsibility and pioneer a community of change agents who will take the torch of social change beyond this generation can only be possible if deliberate steps are taken to nurture the present generation. LEAP is ensuring that this becomes a reality.

Between 23rd-27th July 2018, LEAP trained 27 teenagers in the Lead The Way summer programme (LTW). They were trained on modules like time management, building confidence and a positive self-confidence, problem-solving skills, introduction to Sustainable Development Goals SDGs, etc.

The training modules were specifically designed to inspire empathy, community participation and participants had a site visit to Makoko community in Yaba Local Government Area of

Lagos State. A community largely built on stilts, houses a population of about 80,000 people who live below the United Nation \$1 threshold. At Makoko, poverty is seen as a normal lifestyle and this affects the growth and development of boys and girls.

In partnership with Slum2School initiative, the visit helped participants to garner knowledge on innovating solutions for some of Nigeria's underserved communities. They also took turns to ask questions in order to tease out possible innovative ways they can also become social change agents.

Ultimately, the visit sparked the consciousness in the participating teenagers to now continue to believe that they are not too young to pioneer the change they want to see in the nation.

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Empowering Young Nigerian Entrepreneurs Through the Graduate Entrepreneurship Fund

“The training session is very impactful, insightful and an eye opener for my business. There were some things I didn't realize were important for starting and running a business.”

In recent times, improving competence to develop business plans have become imperative as it is a major hindrance for young entrepreneurs who require financial supports to start up and scale up their businesses effectively.

In July, LEAP Africa, facilitated an enterprise training for Youth Corp Members at the Delta State NYSC Orientation Camp, Issele Uku under the Graduate Entrepreneurship Fund (GEF-3), a Bank of Industry (BOI) project to create bankable businesses.

The four-day programme saw a total of eighty (80) participants engaged in robust interactions around key concepts of 'Entrepreneurship' as it relates to value creation. Participants had the opportunity to learn from diverse set of topics and acquire varied skills required to strengthen them as leaders, successful entrepreneurs, value creators and problem solvers within the society.

The programme also offered mentorship to corps members as they were guided to develop bankable business plans; empowered with basic entrepreneurial skills and confidence required for building sustainable businesses; inspired and challenged to solve some of the unemployment problems in the country.

A quick look at the insights from the feedback garnered from participants provides an independent reflection on the immediate outputs of the programme. The data suggests that 77% of participant's now have improved confidence in developing a business plan. With 80% of participants already running their businesses, there is a likelihood that majority of them are more interested in the potentials of the training and believe there is no need to access loan facilities to scale their businesses.

Post Training Support

As a way of following up and tracking their progress, LEAP paired participants with business analysts and other professionals who served as mentors to assist them with the review process of their business plans. During this process of handholding and providing post training support, most of the participants gained the required knowledge needed for the businesses to scale.

To a large extent, the Graduate Entrepreneurship Funds (GEF-3) was impactful in developing the capacity of young people and reducing the rate of unemployment in Nigeria.



A cross section of Youth Corps Members and LEAP Staff posing after the enterprise training at the NYSC Orientation Camp, Issele Uku Delta State

SIPA 2018: Accelerating the Growth of African Social Innovators

“To create an ecosystem of sustainable Enterprises, Social Entrepreneurs must always reflect on the collective good of giving opportunities and platforms to start-ups”
– Olufunbi Falayi, ceo, Passion Incubator

This year's edition of SIPA, themed **Equipping African Youth for Social Transformation**, had the President and founder of a non-for-profit institution; Ashesi University; **Dr. Patrick Awuah Jr.**, give the keynote. In his address, Dr. Patrick shared insights along the lines of social capital, capacity building, job creation, launching a social enterprise and working with the SDGs.

Expertly using the narrative of a French professional footballer; N'golo Kante, to drive home his point, Dr. Patrick believes that social entrepreneurs must possess “The fifteen lungs” in order to see the change they desire in their enterprises. N'golo Kante is adjudged by teammates to have “fifteen lungs” as he never gets tired on the field of play. According to Dr. Patrick, persistence on the mission of your enterprise is a powerful posture every African social entrepreneur must put on to become successful. The fireside chat anchored by Yewande Apatira, LEAP Africa exposed more about the birth of Asheshi, the urgent need for African solutions by Africans to bridge some of the challenges of raising leaders for the continent.

The panel session brought SIP Alumni and youth agencies to discuss interventions that cuts across the 3 E's - Education, Entrepreneurship and Employment. Moderated by Kehinde Ayeni, LEAP Africa, the session had Olufunbi Falayi, Partner Passion Incubator, Folawe Omikunle, CEO, Teach for Nigeria; Akintunde

Oyebode, Executive Secretary LSETF, and Nkem Okocha, Founder Mamamoni. Issues around building an ecosystem, safe spaces for social innovators to thrive, local and global partnerships, opportunities were brought to the fore as well as possible actions young people can run with. They shared personal stories of their journey and inspirations for how they use their platforms for young Africans to fulfil their potential.

Honours were presented in two categories to three (3) Outstanding Fellows and the Dr. Pamela Hartigan Prize for Social Innovation winner. The Dr. Pamela Hartigan Prize for Social Innovation created by Mrs. Ndidi Nwuneli in 2017, recognizes an outstanding SIP Alumni who has translated the learning and professional insights acquired from the fellowship into channeling innovative solutions to address critical social problems in society.

Three Outstanding Fellows; **Okoroleju Alero, Amusa Victor, and Ayeni-Babajide Olamide** won the prize of #1,000,000 (One million naira) each for demonstrating the most growth and excellence during the fellowship year. All the outgoing fellows join the SIP Alumni of 140 innovators and will continue to receive support on their ventures.



Mrs. Ogochukwu Ekezie-Ekaidem, Head- Corporate Communications, Union Bank and Mr. Udemefor Ufot, LEAP Board Chair & GMD, SO&U presenting the Outstanding Fellow Award to Mrs. Alero Okoroleju at SIPA 2018 in Lagos.

2018/2019 Incoming SIP Fellows Unveiled!

1. **Oscar Udebuana** (CEO/Founder, EduPoint)
2. **Ugonna Ginigeme** (CEO, Vasiti.com)
3. **Kperrun Elizabeth** (CEO/Co-Founder, Zenafri Limited)
4. **Idehai Rita** (MD, Ecobarter)
5. **Adegbite Mayowa** (CEO, Ashake Foundation)
6. **Adereni Abiodun** (CEO, HelpMum)
7. **Tochukwu Egesi** (Co-Founder/ED, RemindMe)
8. **Alayande Abiola** (Strategy & Product Lead, TREP Labs)
9. **Ucheaga Chizaram** (Head, Corporate Strategy & Operations, MAVIS Computel Ltd)
10. **Ubah Ikenna** (Founder/CEO, Ubabio Biomass Energy Solutions, UBES)
11. **Olaosebikan Kabir** (CEO, Craft Planet)
12. **Adeyemi David** (CEO, Ecogenic Solutions)
13. **Ajayi Tobiloba** (Chief Responsibility Officer, The Let CP Kids Learn Project)
14. **Sunbola A. Michael** (President, Lagos Food Bank Initiative)
15. **Abdulazeez Oguntoyinbo** (Founder/CEO, Electronic Esusu)
16. **Mmekidmfonabasi Umana** (Founder, Aimcare NG)
17. **Oluwatomi Solanke** (Founder, Spotted)
18. **Kumesine Beauty** (Executive Director, Blazing Heart Autism Center)
19. **Olumide Ogunbanjo** (Founder, AgroData Network)
20. **Ugonna Nwekuru** (Recyclers)

The Social Innovators Programme and Awards (SIPA) is an annual event which seeks to identify, develop and support young Nigerians who are creating social change in different communities with their social ventures or enterprises. Since the relaunch of the event in 2013, SIPA has directly impacted over 100 young social entrepreneurs with funding, mentorship and support system. its Alumni have gone on to massively scale their social ventures and attracted international recognitions and grant; some of who include Olanrewaju Adelaye (BabyMigo), Chioma Uguonu(Recycle Points), Lawrence Afere (Springboard), Sipasi Ayodele (ProtectOzone), Kelvin Ogholi(UNFIRE NIGERIA), and Emmanuel Owobu (MobiCure).



L-R: Mr. Tosan Jemide, CEO CakesByTosan; Mr. Femi Taiwo, ED LEAP Africa; Dr. Patrick Awuah Jr., Founder Ashesi University (Ghana); Mr. Fem Olujobi, CEO Vetex Energy; Dr. Nadu Denloye, Director CDNet; Mr. Ufot Udeme, LEAP Board Chair & GMD, SO&U, Mrs. Ugochukwu Ekezie-Ekaidem, Head Corporate Communications, Union Bank; Ms. Babi Isma, Director, Etisalat Leadership and Organizational Development standing to recite the national anthem at SIPA 2018 in Lagos.



Femi Leye performing at SIPA 2018 hosted by LEAP Africa in Lagos



Dr. Patrick Awuah Jr., Founder Ashesi University (Ghana) delivering a keynote address during the conference in Lagos.



L-R: Ms. Babi Isma, Director, Etisalat Leadership and Oganizational Development; Mrs. Ugochukwu Ekezie-Ekaidem, Head Corporate Communications, Union Bank; Dr. Nadu Denloye, Director CDNet; Mr. Ufot Udeme, LEAP Board Chair & GMD, SO&U; Dr. Patrick Awuah Jr., Founder Ashesi University (Ghana); Mrs. Uche Pedro, Founder BelleNaija; and Mr. Femi Taiwo, ED LEAP Africa during an award presentation to Dr. Patrick Awuah at SIPA 2018 in Lagos.



L-R: Olufunbi Faloyi, Partner Passion Incubator; Kehinde Ayeni, Manager, Communications/PR, LEAP Africa; Folawe Omikunle, CEO, Teach for Nigeria; Nkiem Okocha, Founder Mamamoni; Akintunde Oyebo, Executive Secretary LSETF; and Femi Taiwo, ED, LEAP Africa.



L-R: Mr. Femi Taiwo, ED LEAP; Mrs. Uche Pedro, Founder BelleNaija; Mr. Amusa Victor, a winner of the Outstanding Fellow Award; Mr. Ufot Udeme, LEAP Board Chair & GMD, SO&U and Mrs. Ugochukwu Ekezie-Ekaidem, Head Corporate Communications, Union Bank during the award presentation at SIPA 2018 in Lagos



Abraham Owoseni, an outgoing SIP Fellow, Founder & Team Lead, YoungBreed receiving his certificate of participation from Mrs. Ugochukwu Ekezie-Ekaidem, Head Corporate Communications, Union Bank during the conference in Lagos.



Dr. Patrick Awuah Jr., Founder Ashesi University (Ghana) sharing his thoughts with Yewande Apatira (Programme Coordinator, LEAP Africa) during a fireside chat at SIPA 2018 in Lagos.



A cross section of 2018/19 set of LEAP Africa's Social Innovators Programme Fellows posing after receiving certificates of acceptance at SIPA 2018 in Lagos.

School2work – Enabling Transition To The Workplace

“The training changed my mind and mental reasoning and approach towards life in general. I have been empowered by great facilitators, who diligently and perfectly exceeded in delivery.”

Given the increasing number of young people in the overall population of the country, it is safe to argue that young people form a reasonable number in the unemployment chart. Therefore, both reactive and proactive steps need to be taken to tackle this fundamental problem and salvage the future of young people in Nigeria.

The School2Work programme, organized by LEAP Africa, is focused on equipping young graduates with leadership, employability and basic entrepreneurship knowledge and skills; as well as to create a platform to access work-based learning opportunities that will enable the effective transition into meaningful employment or enterprise. This approach is mostly aimed at bridging the wide gap between the employed and unemployed young Nigerian graduates.

The programme, which was sponsored by DOW Chemical Company comprises of modules and activities that equipped participants with 21st Century Skills such as problem-solving, productivity, social and cross-cultural skills, collaboration/teamwork, leadership, lifelong learning, professionalism, and social responsibility.

A career fair, speed recruitment, CV workshop and panel sessions were held to further develop their capacity or address their needs. The training faculty drew from their robust wealth of experiences in different fields to offer guidance to participants.

With experiential learning methods using case studies, participants were taken through a journey on the basics of choosing a career path/career pathway. Victoria Ibhawa; an HR professional and Abiola Orojo; an HR consultant both had significant career switches at one point in their career and they shared on what influenced their decisions and the accompanying challenges. On the panel also was Kenneth Nwachi; a professional photographer and Yewande Apatira; a youth development professional whose career journeys can be characterized by a single word- Grit. Having built a viable career in the field of Marketing and physiotherapy respectively, they veered off to pursue their passion.

Another panel session focused on identifying and accessing business opportunities. This session gave insights to enable participants realise that problems are opportunities in waiting; identifying and maximising this is key to becoming financially independent. The compelling stories of Ifedayo Durosinmi who runs a business that manufactures locally made furniture and clothing for children; Wunmi Ogunde who runs a recycling company; Peace Itimi who is a digital marketer and Kunle Idowu (aka Frank Donga) a successful comedian/entrepreneur, is purely that of early starters. One common factor in their career journey is that while many saw problems in the society, they saw a pool of opportunity and took advantage of it for the good of themselves and their communities.

With soft skills being a critical requirement by many employers of labour today, the programme also featured highly skilled professionals who coached participants on various topics like Emotional intelligence (Abiola Orojo), Becoming a Star Employee (Ivive Martins), Business model Canvas and Running a Successful Business (Deji Agboade), Networking (Chude Jideonwo), Digital Marketing (John Obidi), Preparing for Interview (Gbenga Totoyi), Grooming and Etiquette (Temitope George), Values and Ethics (Nissi Madu), Effective Communication (Kehinde Ayeni), Creativity and Innovation (Daniel Emenahor), Working in a Team (Femi Taiwo).



Mr. Deji Agboade facilitating a session on Business Model Canvas and Running a Successful Business at School2Work



e integrity

Get in touch with us to design onboarding, mid-year or executive training programmes, rethink organizational policies that will promote an ethical culture within your teams.

LEAP Africa launched its premier e-Learning course; e-Integrity, focused on values, moral ethics, integrity and moral courage.

e-Integrity is founded on years of research and classroom-based course which equips users with the knowledge and skills required to make ethical decisions. It is a powerful tool for developing ethical leaders, promoting strong values system and shaping ethical business practices.

CONTACT US

13, Omorinre Johnson Street Off Admiralty Way, Lekki Phase 1, P.O Box 75427 Victoria Island, Lagos.

Tel: (234) 01-2706542

Website: www.leapafrika.org
info@leapafrika.org

LEAP announces partnership with Mastercard Foundation

Taking Transformative Leadership Programme beyond Nigeria

LEAP and Mastercard Foundation are exploring partnership opportunity for Teachers Mentors in the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Programme in five African countries.

The Mastercard Foundation seeks a world where everyone can learn and prosper. Their focus is helping economically disadvantaged young people in Africa find opportunities to move themselves, their families and their communities out of poverty to a better life.

LEAP Africa has over the years pioneered youth-centred initiatives channeled towards developing dynamic, innovative and principled African leaders. LEAP seeks to empower, inspire and equip a new cadre of African leaders by providing skills and tools for personal, organizational and community transformation

This collaboration is a school-based project aimed at building teachers to become transformative leaders in Africa. This project will be implemented across five African countries - Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and Uganda.



Karen Meyer and Shona Bezanson with LEAP Staff at LEAP Africa's office in Lagos during Mastercard's visit.



Karen Meyer and Shona Bezanson with LEAP Staff, iLEAD students, teachers, and volunteers during a courtesy visit to Gbaja Boys High School, Surulere, Lagos.



Shona Bezanson addressing some iLEAD students during the courtesy visit to Gbaja Boys High School, Lagos.

Exploring the Imperatives of Youth Engagement in Community Development and Peace Building Processes

By: Femi Balogun

There is a growing shift in how youth in Africa are being understood and the role they can play in community development and peace building processes. This is following many years of youth being constructed as victims and villains, despite evidence of structural disinvestment, and the rare opportunity to participate in their communities. Events such as the Arab spring, the surge in violent extremism as well as the youth bulge in parts of Africa has occasioned the need for a rethink. This has necessitated the evolving of international policy frameworks (such as the UNSCR 2250) that mainstream the positive relationship between youth agency and its implications for peace, security and development. Nevertheless, there is still the paucity of an appreciation of youth engagement in community and peace building initiatives in parts of Africa.

The reality of many young people in parts of Africa is that they have become a marginalized, disenfranchised and powerless population. These forms of exclusion have culminated in young people becoming unpatriotic and disillusioned by the prospects of living long, living well and contributing to society. As such, many young people from the continent would rather seek the opportunity of a better life elsewhere. This puts a big question on the notion of 'African solutions to African problems', given the continued exit of young people from the continent. According to the Pew Research Center, between 2010 and 2017, Europe received about a million asylum applications from African migrants alone. The situation is such that young women and men are ready to risk everything including their lives to cross the Mediterranean in make

shift boats that are not sea worthy and are willing to pay as high as \$3500 a piece to get into Italy for instance. Beyond seeking to escape poverty and conflict, the paucity of access to basic services such as education and health care as well as the limited opportunity for social mobility, exercising citizenship and participating in political life also contributes to youth wanting to migrate.

Youth form 60% of Africa's population, and they are 100% its future! While it seems that the prospects for a better situation appears distant, now is that time to prioritise youth issues and support them in channelling their agency towards social change and to see themselves as part of the solution rather than fleeing. Hence, expanding their capacity to own and change the future of the continent should be a priority beginning now. One way of doing this is to start early by getting them to participate in community and peace initiatives and by helping them connect classroom learning with real world situations in their communities. This holds the potential of broadening their horizon to see the world from a holistic perspective, while they also begin to think about ways to initiate change and support the realisation of the global goals.

LEAP Africa exists to fill this gap, and as a result community change projects have remained a key component of its leadership and life skills curriculum for more than a decade with useful outcomes both for youth and the communities where these interventions have been implemented. During this process, teenagers are taken through the task of identifying challenges within their communities and are



A bridge construction work-in-progress by iLEAD students from Fazil Omar Senior High School



Students of Fazil Omar walking through the completed bridge constructed as part of their change project initiative

expected to come up with innovative ideas to solve these issues. For young people, becoming aware of their role and responsibilities to better their community is not only important for their development into adulthood, but also an imperative for citizenship, patriotism and ultimately strengthening our nascent democracy. Strengthening democracy therefore means supporting the capacity of young people to interrogate and consciously examine how to improve society, while also challenging established norms that stereotype youth and restrict their ability to become change agents.

Since 2004, LEAP Africa has supported about 5000 young change agents who have implemented over 1000 community and peace building initiatives through its leadership and life skills program with more than 50,000 beneficiaries. This article provides an introduction into LEAP Africa's experience by mainstreaming its meaning, relevance and implications for youth development. Subsequent episodes of this article will show case some of the community and peace building initiatives implemented by innovative young Nigerians through case studies. These will tease out the key lessons and demonstrate how youth engagement in community development and peace building processes fosters citizenship, leadership and patriotism.

What does it mean to engage youth in community development and peace building processes, and why is it important?

Poverty, exclusion and vulnerability negates youth development as well as their ability to transition and contribute to society. Youth from low income contexts, must endure the hurdles of extreme physical and emotional suffering in isolation, leading them to indulge in varying forms of risky and unlawful behaviours. Amid this disadvantage, there has been the tendency for youth to be constructed as threats to peace and community development. Similarly, there are established narratives that portray youth as passive actors on social, economic and political issues,³ despite their demonstrated agency in change processes over time.

Unfortunately, these kinds of analysis downplay the structural conditions that limit young people by adopting a deficit approach to framing youth. While there is a gradual shift from this thinking, there is still a leaning within the academia and policy spaces to frame youth as a homogeneous group and interpret youth agency in terms of resilience. Proponents of this understanding interpret youth from a neo-liberal lens that constructs social reality from the definitions of what is considered formal and informal, private and public or real politics and community involvement.

However, recent studies suggest that young people are not totally unconscious of the social, economic and political issues that shape their reality, neither are they passive actors in a society constructed by others. Rather they are citizens who are constantly seeking ways to engage their agency and interact with social systems, private and political institutions in non-traditional -

innovative - ways.^{[5][6]} The implicit notion is that our understanding of how youth agency interacts with social and public realms is fundamentally limited.^{[7][8]} This notion is further reinforced by evidence emerging from grey literature which suggests that youth are changing the narrative by depicting themselves to be highly spirited, creative - socially mindful of their situations, leaping above their circumstances and inserting themselves within the core of the transformations occurring across the continent.^{[9][10][11]}

Although, part of the agency narrative acknowledges that young people can be equally inclined towards crime and predatory armed movements, this is often explained by their tangible despair, their search for role models and opportunities to exercise leadership and be a part of society. These possibilities and tendencies reinforce the imperative to inspire hope and a change of mindset to act as principled and value-based leaders; equip them with the knowledge, tools, skills and role models to realise and identify the attitudes that help them become complete and healthy human beings; and empower them by creating opportunities and platforms to contribute to community and peace initiatives. All these transforms them into positive change agents exercising leadership and channelling their agency towards social transformation.

The experience of young people on LEAP Africa's leadership and life skills programme essentially captures how youth agency can be directed towards positive development. This is realized by inspiring, equipping and empowering them with the requirements to become effective leaders. Exposing them to leadership training and giving them the opportunities to practically deploy learning that would help them to develop a wealth of skills.

(Excerpt from the article *Exploring the Imperatives of Youth Engagement in Community Development and Peace Building Processes*. Please read full version on www.leapafrika.org)



Students and Teacher of Fazil Omar with some community members after the completion of the bridge at Ago-Egun

¹ Tsekoura, M. (2016). Debates on youth participation: from citizens in preparation to active social agents. *Revista Katálysis*, 19(1), pp.118-125.

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ Ismail, Wale, Olonisakin Funmi, Picciotto Bob and Wybrow Dave (2009), Youth Vulnerability and Exclusion (YOVEL) in West Africa: Synthesis Report', *Conflict Security and Development Group Paper*, 21.

⁵ Harris, A.; Wyn, J.; Younes, S. (2010). Beyond apathetic or activist youth 'Ordinary' young people and contemporary forms of participation, *Young*, v. 18, n. 1, p. 9-32

⁶ Sir Fazle Hasan Abed & Reeta Roy (2013). Taking Lessons from Africa's Youth, *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, June 13. Available at:

https://ssir.org/articles/entry/taking_lessons_from_africas_youth

⁷ Harry, N.U. (2013) African Youth, Innovation and the Changing Society, *huffpost*, November 09. Available at:

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/njideka-u-harry/african-youth-innovation-b_3904408.html

⁸ Ibid 8

⁹ Ibid 9

Alumni Corner *A Date with Adeola Oyinlade*

Winner of the International Bar Association Award of Outstanding Contribution to Human Rights in Nigeria.



Born and raised in Akure, Ondo State, Adeola started his career as radio presenter before leaving to get a first degree (LL.B) and second degree (LL.M) in Law at the University of Lagos. His late dad and late Chief Gani Fawehinmi influenced his choice of becoming a lawyer. Today, he is the lead partner for Adeola Oyinlade & Co and consults for International and Intergovernmental organizations as a law expert. He is a

strong advocate of human right and has spoken on many International and intergovernmental platforms including the African Union, United Nations.

How and when did you first get involved with LEAP?

In 2010, I was LEAP Awardee at the 7th edition of LEAP Africa Awards alongside 4 other youth change markers. My first encounter with LEAP was the invitation to appear before experts from different sectors after being shortlisted for the 2010 Awards. Days after, I got to know that I made it with 4 other colleagues. The day of the award was a special one for me and my colleagues. Seeing many personalities from nooks and cranny of Nigeria celebrating us was a memorable day and inspiring for us all. I could remember I was selected by my colleagues to give the acceptance speech. Malam Nuhu Ribadu was the Keynote Speaker. The LEAP Award that year laid the foundation of much other national and global recognition that followed thereafter.

The other four colleagues are also doing great. Esther Agbarakwe is currently with the United Nations at UN Headquarters in New York. Jennifer Ehidiamen I have met after our LEAP Awards in 2010 at global events as a media consultant. Muhideen we love to call E-farmer is doing an amazing work while Chinasa Ukandu is still using sport as a tool of social engineering.

You recently won the International Bar Association (IBA) Awards for Outstanding Contribution by a Legal Practitioner to Human Rights, tell us about it.

Thank you. I must say winning the 2018 IBA Human Rights Award in Rome, Italy was a big one for me, my team, family and Nigeria. It was a big one for me because I had wanted to be a lawyer against all odds. It took me 8 years after completing Senior Secondary School before I finally gained admission to study law at University of Lagos after several attempt to many other universities. The recognition was a mission accomplished with icing on the cake for me especially when it appeared impossible many years ago. If law experts across the globe without any direct or personal relationship with me can single me out from thousands of colleagues who are expanding the frontiers of human rights globally, it is a dine favour and that day was a great moment for me as the recognition and celebration came from the world body of the noble profession I cherished so much. It also confirmed that my work in Nigeria and advocacy on human rights issues and humanitarian crises in many African countries are being noticed.

For my team, they have worked so hard to see that ordinary people on the street get empowered on their rights under my leadership. They are motivated the more that selfless service is not about the gain of today but for verdict of posterity.

To my family, it was something to cheer about after the loss of my mother in law. To my beloved country Nigeria, it shows to the world again that Nigerians are social engineers and problem-solvers. The Nigerian Bar Association under the leadership of Mr. Paul Usoro, SAN and members of the Nigerian Bench celebrated it at the venue of the IBA Conference in Rome. Everyone at the venue would like to be a Nigerian that very day. No one talked about ethnicity or tribe among Nigerian delegates on the day of the award. I kept hearing 'He is our own', 'He is our man'. 'We must celebrate him', 'Thank you for doing our country proud'.

How has your participation and engagement with LEAP contributed to your success story as a legal practitioner/ Human Rights Expert?

Before the presentation of the 2010 LEAP Africa Awards, LEAP organized a week leadership training for us (Awardees). Resource persons came to train us about

project management, ethical and professional issues, time management, professionalism, and many other important areas as we were preparing for life.

I must state that I learned a whole lot and they have become part of me and my efficiency today. Prior to LEAP Award in 2010, it was all about a one young man with a radio show educating Nigerians on their rights. The training taught me about sustainability of the human rights work. Today, the work has it's legal personality in Constitutional Rights Awareness and Liberty Initiative called CRALI, over 50 lawyers as team members, 75 volunteers nationwide, and members of staff. The training has also helped in my professional life. Integrity is key in our work. As a lawyer, clients must trust you before they can ask you to protect their legal interest.

While at LEAP training, I had known a long time ago that the world is looking up to my generation to do things differently. While I wanted to use my legal expertise as tool of social engineering at municipal or national level in Nigeria, I also wanted to use law as a tool of problem-solving at the international plane. Since I did not want to complain about cultural incompatibility of treaties we sign, ratify and transform into local law or join the usual debate of relativism versus cosmopolitan views of some of our global instruments, I felt I needed to have expertise in the thematic areas in order to make my own contribution and get the necessary training I needed to represent well. After 2010 LEAP Award, I have worked as a resource person to the African Union on the implementation of African Youth Charter. I have delivered papers at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa on how AU member States can reform national laws in compliance with African Charter among others with deliverables and relative impact. So also, at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, UNDP, and many others. If young professionals were not available or received the right training that would make them dazzle then, probably the innovation, energy we put into the work alongside other colleagues would not reflect the wishes and aspirations of young people in Africa.

I must say that LEAP contributed to this success story and I must thank the founder, Board members, management and staff for their consistent records of feat over the years.

How can Human Rights encourage Civil Engagement?

Let me say Civil Engagement is a fundamental human right. We have rights to Freedom of Association and Freedom Assembly with wider scope to join political parties of our choice, form coalition, belong to a group that can promote political or social interest, assemble freely to engage government, including right to protest peacefully. Speaking on governance issues, campaigning for good governance or candidate of our choice during election, voting, contesting for elections, demanding for transparency and accountability can be linked to all the rights and freedom of expression. Political participation is an off shot of our fundamental human rights under Chapter IV of the 1999 constitution as amended. We have simplified these rights and safeguards in the 'Know Your Rights Nigeria' app. It is free. When you download it once, you don't even need to have data on your phone before you can access the content of the app at any point in time except only when you want to chat our team of lawyers.

What can be done to scale up the Know Your Rights Nigeria App across the country?

Currently, we have almost 50 thousand users of the app. Over 150 thousand people are beneficiaries as non-smart phone users are also using the web version of the app which is available www.knowyourrightsigeria.com. We want more people to benefit from what the app offers people. I must thank many Nigerian celebrities who have endorsed the app by recording 60 seconds videos promoting the app. The celebrities include the Nigerian female singer; Simi, Nollywood Actor; Yomi Fabiyi, Nigerian Comedian; Akpororo, Dr. Oby Ezekwesili. We need more Nigerians to know about this app and we encourage everyone to spread it so that people out there who have their rights infringed upon on daily basis can have access to our team of 50 lawyers for justice without any monetary charge. You can record a video, share our post on Facebook (Know Your Rights Nigeria), Instagram (knowyourrightsng), Twitter (KYRNigeria), and Youtube. We also seek the support of every individual, corporate organization, donors to support our works as we use mobile technology as a tool of human rights empowerment in Nigeria.

How Interning with LEAP influenced my career journey



Oge Samuel Okonkwo
LEAP's Graduate Intern

“Young people should consider internship from an early stage of their career because it serves as a platform to gain the requisite experience needed for career growth and development.”

1. How did your Internship Programme with LEAP give you an insight into LEAP as an organization, the culture, projects, and type of work?

The Internship Programme made me understand LEAP to be a key player in youth development in Nigeria. The culture was a combination of respect, integrity and excellence and allowed members of staff learn, grow and develop themselves. LEAP's projects and type of work was hinged on achieving some of the SDGs and addressing some of the crucial challenges youth face not just in Nigeria but beyond.

2. What did your work cover during your internship?

I worked in the MERL department, where I assisted in developing monitoring and impact indicators for project success, data collection and analysis, recommending further improvement for logical framework, and contributing to ongoing evaluation, learning, planning, design and documentation.

3. What was the best part of your stay, and how do you think you will use what you learned?

I had so many memorable moments, however I relish the time spent during the field work, collating data from respondents, inspecting change projects and interacting with stakeholders especially the students and teachers, this gave me a sense of fulfillment. The knowledge learnt during this time would be used to influence the third sector particularly in the areas of education and ethical leadership.

4. Did you have any "failures" during your work, which later proved to be something you have learned from?

I would prefer to call them lessons, not "failures" and yes I had many.

5. How has your internship prepared you for your career growth?

In so many ways, but to be specific the mentorship, trainings, and exposure gained during the internship helped me gain the needed experience for career progression and growth.

6. Why should young people consider internship from an early stage of their career?

Young people should consider internship from an early stage of their career because it serves as a platform to gain the requisite experience needed for career growth and development.



Eseoghene Eunice Tialobi
LEAP's Graduate Intern

“The best part of my stay was driving media and learning conversations that I never thought I could do. And I think, it has helped me realize that you will always amaze yourself, if you are willing to push beyond your comfort zone.”

1. How did your Internship Programme with LEAP give you an insight into LEAP as an organization, the culture, projects, and type of work?

Interning at LEAP exposed me to a rich people culture and an intellectually stimulating environment. Everyone was always pushing themselves to ensure they deliver value and proffer cutting edge solutions to programmes and projects we work on. I like the fact that the RISE values were very much embodied especially Synergy & Excellence which was evident in the way everyone worked. Even when an employee is unhappy over something, they always still want to make things work.

2. What did your work cover during your internship?

I worked directly with the Communications & PR team and my work primarily covered digital media, offline communications and sometimes I worked on providing content to some other units like the Programmes Department

3. What was the best part of your stay, and how do you think you will use what you learned?

The best part of my stay was driving media and learning conversations that I never thought I could do. And I think, it has helped me realize that you will always amaze yourself, if you are willing to push beyond your comfort zone. I also enjoyed all the intellectual conversations and strategy meetings which would always be a driving force in contributing my quota in changing the world.

5. How has your internship prepared you for your career growth?

One of the major ways interning at LEAP has prepared me for growing in my career is positioning me to learn how to think on my feet and keeping up with happenings in my field. I realized that it is not enough to know or just keep applying my skills but to go out of my way to read and deeply engage with other professionals. It is a very valuable experience for me which I think will influence greatly my career endeavours.

6. Why should young people consider internship from an early stage of their career?

In Nigeria, it is getting increasingly difficult for fresh graduates to find jobs and even with the few jobs available, young people do not have the qualitative education that can help them acquire skills relevant in the corporate environment. So, I would encourage young people to get internships in good organizations to help them practicalize theories they were taught in school, build good work ethic and decide early on where they want to play in their career.



Tribute to Kofi Annan

– In Pursuit of a Better Africa

1938 - 2018

Africa and indeed the world lost an iconic figure of leadership and a true voice of the African people in Mr. Kofi Annan; the seventh Secretary General of the United Nations and Nobel Peace Laureate when he passed away on Saturday, 18 August 2018.

As we slowly accept the fact that Kofi Annan is no more, a dive to reflect on some of his words will keep us hopeful that Africa will yet produce leaders that will change the world.

Below are some quotes from Kofi Annan:

- 1) Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.
- 2) Gender equality is more than a goal. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance
- 3) Education is a human right with immense power to transform. On its foundation rest the cornerstones of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development.
- 4) We need to keep hope alive and strive to do better
- 5) More than ever before in human history, we share a common destiny. We can master it only if we face it together, and that, my friends, is why we have the united nations
- 6) What government and people don't realise is that sometimes, the collective interest- the international interest is also the national interest
- 7) I have always believed that on important issues, the leaders must lead. Where the leaders fail to lead, and the people are really concerned about it, the people will take the lead and make the leaders follow
- 8) We need to think of the future we are going to leave to our children and their children
- 9) If we can come up with innovations and train young people to take on new jobs, and if we can switch to clean energy, I think we have the capacity to build this world not dependent on of fossil-fuel. I think it will happen and won't destroy the economy
- 10) Unfortunately, very few governments think about youth unemployment when they are drawing up their national plans.

Tribute to a man of many wisdom and tremendous impact; an inspiration to many young Africans. His vision and optimism about the future of Africans and the Africa continent is towering and lives on.

Collated and compiled by: Bernard Ibelih

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- Mr. S.A. Yusuf

Contact Us

LEAP Africa
13 Omorinre Johnson Street,
Off Admiralty Way, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos, Nigeria
W: www.leapafrica.org
T: 234 01 2706542
E: info@leapafrica.org

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