



Breaking Barriers : Advancing Women's Leadership in Africa

Evaluation Report 2022



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Evaluation Team

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT



We extend our gratitude to emerging leaders of the Leadership Accelerator programme for their commitment to the success of the premier cohort. We are exceptionally proud of these participants of the programme for all their hard work and dedication to taking a step in developing their leadership capacity. The LEAP Africa team is grateful to our partners for investing resources and time to close the gender gap in leadership development across Africa, especially in Nigeria.

To our co-partner, Women in Leadership Advanced Network (WILAN), we are grateful for the immense support and collaboration we enjoyed throughout the implementation of the project. To the board, management, and team at LEAP Africa, we are grateful for the synergy, support, and hard work that went into implementing this project. More importantly, we would like to express our profound appreciation to the faculty who contributed immensely towards the workshop; This report will only be complete with you. We would like to extend heartfelt gratitude to the entire LEAP staff, especially the core project team Adebola Adedoyin, Ahmed Umar, and Aniebiet Udokang, who facilitated the project implementation and provided strategic support during the evaluation activities.

Special thanks go to my colleague in the evaluation unit – Pamela Uzoma, Terhemem Agabo, and Evi Michael- for their tremendous contribution to the evaluation through data collection, analysis, and report writing. We hope this report is helpful to multiple stakeholders as they take lessons and insights to launch similar initiatives across Africa. This is with no exception to policy actors, industry leaders and all organizations working to make Africa an equitable and egalitarian society.

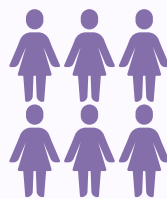
Rasheed Ajao,
Senior MERL Coordinator, LEAP Africa



Programme At a Glance



11
Organizations



16
Participants



The highest number of participants (40%) indicated their age from 26 -30 while about 7% were aged between 18 - 25.



Six (6) of the participants mentioned that they were located in Lagos while other participants were spread across Ogun, Edo and others.



4.4

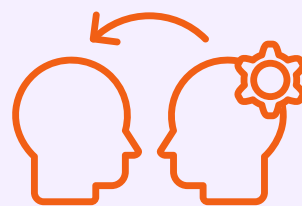
The participants gave the modules covered an average rating of 4.4 out of 5



100% of the participants shared that they enjoyed being on the virtual platform as it grew their network and communication skills.



100% believe that African women can lead the necessary change and development needed in the society



93% were satisfied with their guest mentors

Executive Summary





Moving Women Forward

Despite evidence of women exhibiting leadership qualities that positively impact organizational and financial performance, there need to be more women in leadership positions in Africa (Mckinsey, 2020). Whether self-imposed or due to cultural barriers, the under-representation of women in leadership roles is a missed opportunity for organizations to reap the benefits of diverse and effective leadership.

To address this under-representation, LEAP Institute and Women In Leadership Advancement Network (WILAN) co-created the Leadership Accelerator Programme for Young African Women.

The Leadership Accelerator Programme for Young African Women is an eight weeks Programme for young African women between the ages of 21 to 35 years) aspiring to reach leadership positions in their various organizations/career fields.

"According to WEF 2021, it is going to take an estimated 135 years to close the gender gap so our action starts now."

- Molade Adeniyi



The purpose of this evaluation report was to assess the effectiveness of the Leadership Accelerator Programme for young African women. The programme was designed to support and empower women in leadership positions by providing them with the skills, knowledge, and network they need to succeed. A comprehensive evaluation of the programme's outcomes includes drawing on data from surveys, interviews, and other sources.

The findings of this evaluation were founded on the assessment of knowledge and mindset shift in the participants obtained from the 8 week programme. This evaluation helped determine the programme's strengths and weaknesses and also helped to identify areas for improvement and guide future programming decisions. They include;

- Mentorship support can play a crucial role in facilitating leadership advancement by providing guidance, advice, and support to individuals as they develop their skills and advance in their careers. In the endline, 93% of the participants shared that they were satisfied with their guest mentors. This is because through the intensive conversations, participants gained a deeper understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, and learnt how to navigate complex organizational structures and cultures.
- The VCoP created a sense of belonging among the participants as they were willing to share their common problems and occasional wins with one another. It also served as a bonding ground for the participants to connect outside of learning. It also proved beneficial for the dissemination of information from the team to the fellows. During the FGD, the participants shared that they enjoyed being on the virtual platform as it grew their network and communication skills.

- By providing women with education and training in financial management, investment, and other financial skills, they can improve their financial literacy and become more empowered to make informed financial decisions. The Financial literacy module helped raise awareness about the unique challenges and barriers that women face in the financial world and promote more inclusive and equitable financial systems.
- Leading oneself effectively is a crucial first step toward leading others. Self-leadership involves developing a deep understanding of one's own values, strengths, and weaknesses, and using this knowledge to set personal goals, make effective decisions, and manage one's own behaviour. By taking the module on Self Leadership, participants were exposed to the positivity and power of their identity as females in leadership.

Finally, the report provided valuable **insights and recommendations** drawn from the experiences of the participants and will be an important resource for organizations and individuals interested in supporting women in leadership positions.

1. Balancing physical and virtual experiences for participants
2. Introducing case studies to the curriculum
3. Increased duration of the programme
4. Increased partnership with other organizations.

Introduction



Women Leadership Gap in Africa: A Missed Opportunity

In many African countries, including Nigeria, women face significant obstacles in their quest for leadership positions. Despite progress in recent years, the representation of women in top posts remains low, with few women serving as CEOs, presidents, or in high-ranking government positions. This disparity can be linked to the cultural norms and beliefs that often place women in secondary roles, viewing them as caretakers rather than leaders. Moreover, women often have limited access to education, finance, and networking opportunities, which are crucial for professional development and career advancement (World Economic Forum, 2021).

In addition to these cultural and economic challenges, women face political obstacles. Men dominate political systems in many African countries, and women often lack the support and mentorship necessary to succeed in these male-dominated environments (UN Women, 2020).

Addressing the Challenge



To contribute to the gradually closing gender gap in leadership, LEAP Leadership Institute (LLI) and Women In Leadership Advancement Network (WILAN) co-created the Leadership Accelerator Programme for Young African Women to strengthen the capacity of highly-motivated young professional women aspiring for leadership positions and to create a strong pipeline of African Women Leaders.

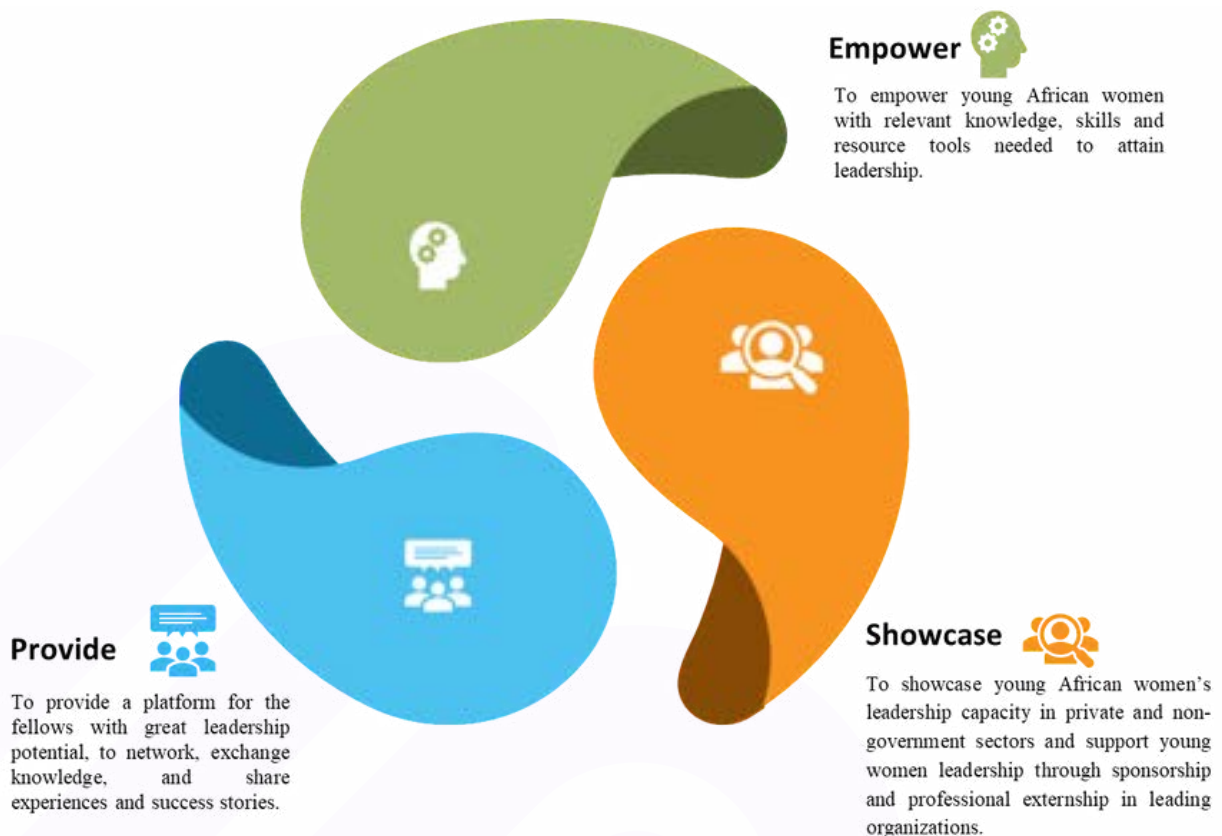
Programme Components



The Leadership Accelerator Programme for Young African Women is an eight weeks Accelerator programme for young African women aspiring to reach leadership positions in their various organizations/ career fields. It is a hybrid capacity-building program that responds to the women leadership gap in the African continent.

Goal

This programme seeks to equip selected young African women with essential leadership skills needed in scaling up their leadership careers.

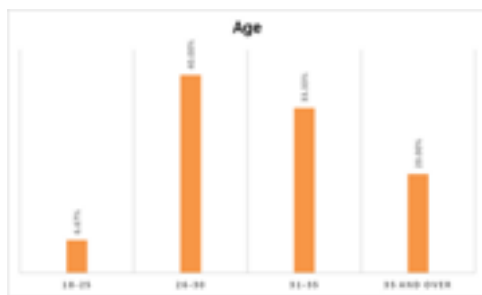


Programme Timeline



Participants Demographic

The LAP adopted a unique model of sponsorship where participants are nominated and sponsored by their organization to partake in the programme. The programme recorded over 100 nominated participants from different organizations around Nigeria. However, only 16 participants from 11 organizations were part of the first cohort. The pioneer cohort was made up of participants from different industries playing different roles. Some of these roles include CEOs, managers, consultants, and coaches/teachers among others.



Age

The highest number of participants (40%) indicated their age from 26 -30 while about 7% were aged between 18 - 25.



Location

Six (6) of the participants were located in Lagos while other participants were spread across Ogun, Edo and others.



Organization

Citibank Nigeria LTD recorded the highest number(3) of participants in the programme.

Evaluation Framework

In order to improve performance and strengthen capacity building in our interventions, our monitoring and evaluation policy emphasizes the significance of meticulously monitoring and critically evaluating our work. The results-based methodology and theory of change were used to inform the assessment of the Leadership Accelerators programme. This strategy places a focus on ongoing analysis of how to increase outputs, outcomes, and impact while also communicating these to clients, partners, and donors in ways that adhere to international standards.

The evaluation used a combination of quantitative and qualitative data sets to gain a comprehensive understanding of the changes in participants from different viewpoints. The triangulation method was employed to assess the three outcomes' overall activities. The monitoring and evaluation tools utilized during the programme included baseline/endline surveys, feedback forms, focus group discussions, and interviews. While this study is not exhaustive and has limitations, we believe it offers an important contribution to the discussion on creating leadership opportunities for young African women. We hope that other actors will benefit from this study and build upon these findings.

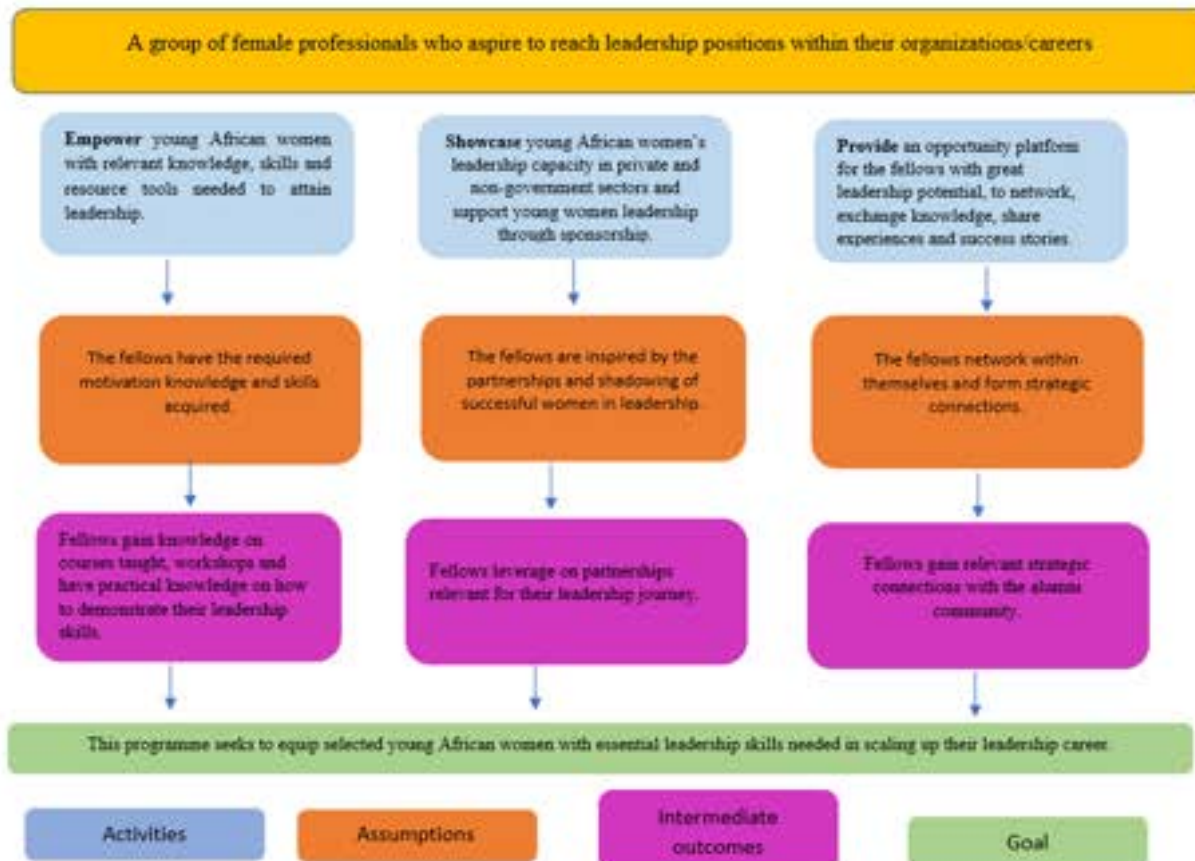
Evaluation Metrics

The evaluation of Leadership Accelerator Programme (LAP) is informed by the results-based framework and theory of change (TOC). The figures below illustrate how the programme activities link to the participants' expected outcomes in a stepwise progression. As seen by their involvement in the learning sessions and other activities, the programme will ultimately translate into the fellows becoming leaders within their field.

Result chain

Input	Activity	Output	Outcome
Empower <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call for application. • Development of curriculum • Selection of nominated fellows • Setting up of zoom platform for lectures/workshop • Selection of seasoned facilitators to facilitate a module in the Leadership accelerator courses. • Virtual tool bag kit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise virtual 5 weeks classes on Introduction to identity and Self-leadership, financial literacy and salary negotiation, women's rights in the workplace, inclusion and diversity etc. • Organise a feedback session at the end of the courses for the participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 young female professionals participate in the virtual Leadership accelerator programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fellows gain knowledge on courses taught, workshops and have practical knowledge on how to demonstrate their leadership skills.
Showcase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying sponsors/ Sponsorship from Organizations • Identify Top female leaders/ Guest mentors • Physical venue for session • Human resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsor matching with fellows. • One-day externship training with top female leaders / Guest mentors 	Fellows interact and learn from top female leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fellows have gained practical knowledge on how to demonstrate their leadership skills.
Provide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curate resources (links to articles, pdfs, videos) for the participants. • create a virtual community of practice. • Identify/notify alumni 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share resource links to participants after the course • Fellows are exposed to a network of other participants from various works of life to encourage peer to peer learning. 	20 young professionals interact with the shared resources and actively participate on the VCOP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fellows utilized the vast knowledge sharing of covered modules. • Fellows gain relevant strategic connections with the alumni community.

Theory of Change



Limitations

This evaluation was not devoid of limitations although deliberate efforts were made to reduce them. The limitations acknowledged are;

Internet issues: Limited participation in the mentorship session due to internet issues caused virtual participants to not have a fully immersive experience.

Impact of Work Schedules on Wednesday Corner Participation Limited weekday participation in the "Wednesday Corner series" due to the occupied schedules of participants.





Key Outcomes



This section highlights the programme outcomes, which are majorly expressed in mindset change, attitudes, and behaviours. For context, the results were measured based on data obtained from the baseline (15 participants) and endline (16 participants). A focus group discussion was also held with 10 of the participants.

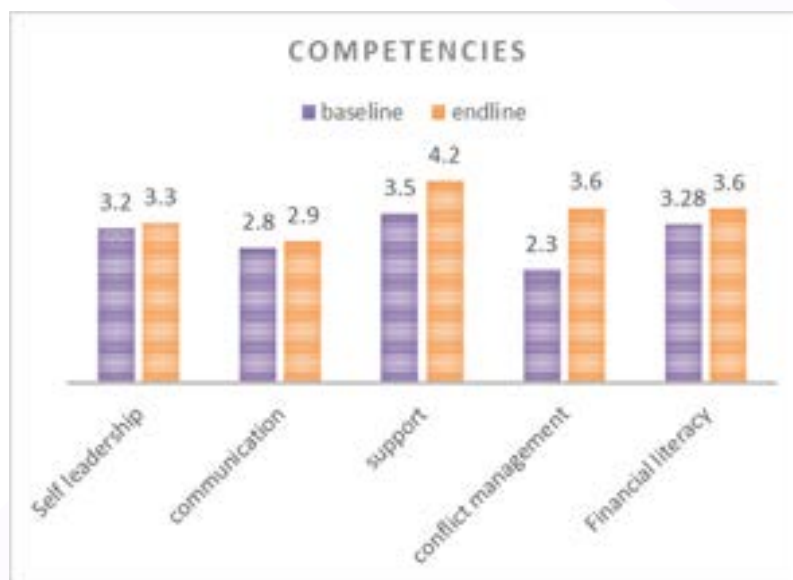
Module Rating

The programme exposed the participants to 5 modules which helped them learn critical concepts in women leadership and develop the necessary skills to implement them. These modules, Self Identity- Yourself as a leader; Financial Literacy and Salary Negotiation; Women's rights; Office Politics and Conflict Management in Workplace; Effective communication and Leadership; Building Leadership Influence and Network, were administered over five weeks.



During the endline, the participants gave an average rating of 4.4 to the modules taught. Self-identity had the highest rating of 4.6, while financial literacy had the lowest rating of 4.2. When asked about their experience during the learning sessions, the participants shared that the financial literacy module needed to be more extensively covered and would require further reading.

The aggregate average of the modules in baseline and endline were **3.0** and **3.5**, respectively. This implies a slight increase in the participant's knowledge after the modules were cascaded. Noticeable changes were recorded in support and conflict management. This may connote that participants have an improved understanding of relationship management in an office environment and how to navigate identity struggles and conflicts faced by women in a complex workplace.



Curriculum Delivery (virtual experience)

87% of the participants indicated they enjoyed the zoom platform virtual experience. However, compared to the qualitative data, 75% indicated that they preferred more physical sessions.

They further revealed that the classes would be more immersive if they learnt physically as it would eliminate barriers of network issues and "virtual platform fatigue".

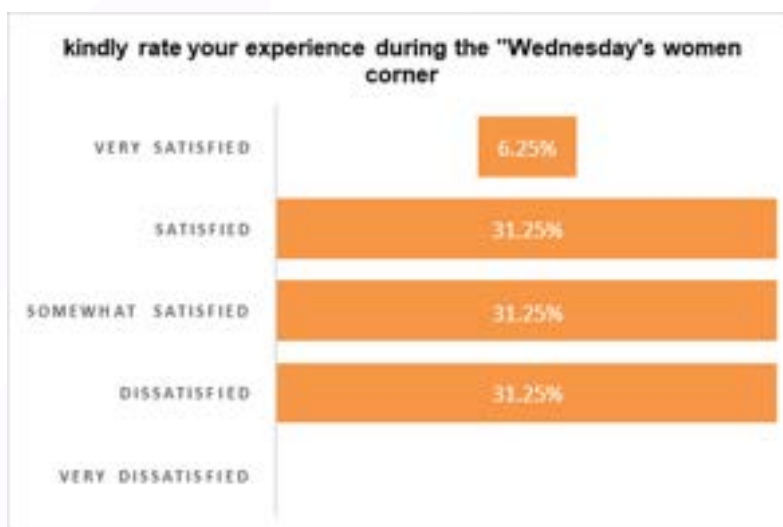
Wednesday corner

The Wednesday corner was another critical component of the LAP. It was scheduled every Wednesday on the virtual platform (WhatsApp), where the participants had conversations about women in general and any topic about leadership development. Learning videos, Ted talks, and articles were shared to steer discussions among the participants.



However, during the focus group discussion, over 80% of the participants indicated they did not enjoy the Wednesday corner. This is because it took place at the end of the day when they were too tired to chat or learn.

Some participants further shared that the Wednesday corners were ineffective on the chosen platform because, if they were not fully participatory during the set time (5 pm), there was a probability of being met with unending unread messages, which become overwhelming.



Group Mentorship Support

At baseline, the participants shared that they would need mentorship support to build their capacity. With this, Mentorship was a significant component of the LAP as the participants were paired in groups of four. The mentorship session included a one-day intensive training where participants gained first-hand knowledge of female leadership in a complex world from top female leaders. At the physical activity, guest mentors share their leadership stories and experience with the young career women aspiring to attain leadership positions.

The physical session created a semi-formal interactive space for guest mentors and participants to interact on critical issues centred on female leadership and how to navigate it. Some of the mentors were Uche Pedro, and Uduak Ayeni among others.



At the end of the mentorship session, 93% of the participants indicated they were satisfied with the guest mentors.



Close out Ceremony

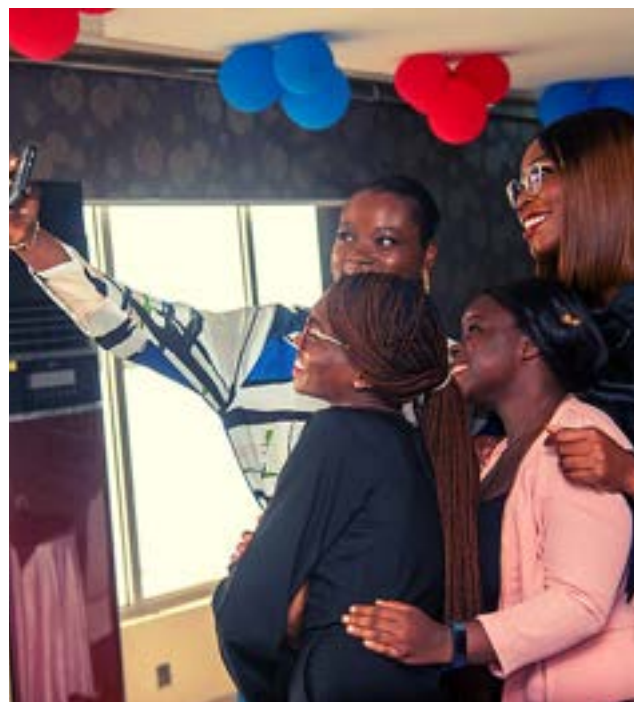


The closeout ceremony featured a live panel session on the 3rd of December, 2023. The panel was made up of mentors from the programme. The theme of the panel session was "Addressing the gender gap in leadership through capacity building programmes". An estimated 40 persons were in attendance, including 10 participants from the Leadership accelerator programme.

"Developing the right network is very critical to climbing the leadership ladder "

-Hansatu Adegbite

The five panelists included Hansatu Adegbite, ED of WIMBIZ; Mojisola Saka, COO of Soulcomms; Molade Adeniyi, CEO of WAVE; Kehinde Ayeni, ED of LEAP Africa and Abosede Goerge-Ogan, Founder WILAN Global. These panelists are top female leaders in their different sectors and contributed immensely to the knowledge gained. This closeout ceremony showcased the participants and provided a platform to network, exchange knowledge, and share experiences and success stories.



Ceremony in Pictures



Key Findings





Key learnings from the final evaluation are as follows:

Mentorship support in facilitating leadership advancement

Mentorship support can play a crucial role in facilitating leadership advancement by providing guidance, advice, and help to individuals as they develop their skills and advance in their careers. In the endline, 93% of the participants said they were satisfied with their guest mentors. Through the intensive conversations, participants gained a deeper understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and learnt how to navigate complex organizational structures and cultures.

Virtual community of practice as a bonding tool

The VCoP created a sense of belonging among the participants as they were willing to share their common problems and occasional wins with one another. It also served as a bonding tool for the participants to connect outside learning. It also proved beneficial for the dissemination of information from the team to the fellows. During the FGD, the participants shared that they enjoyed being on the virtual platform as it grew their network and communication skills.

Closing the gender gap through financial literacy

By providing women with education and training in financial management, investment, and other financial skills, they can improve their financial literacy and become more empowered to make informed financial decisions. The Financial literacy module helped raise awareness about women's challenges and barriers in the financial world and promote more inclusive and equitable economic systems.

This is evident where at baseline when asked to rate this question- " All workers deserve to be paid equally regardless of their gender" with the rubric of True, Not sure and Not True, 67% of the participants picked "True". However, there was a slight increase at the endline as 82% selected "True" for the same question.

From leading ones self to leading others

Leading one's self effectively is a crucial first step toward leading others. Self-leadership involves developing a deep understanding of one's own values, strengths, and weaknesses, and using this knowledge to set personal goals, make effective decisions, and manage one's own behaviour. By taking the module on Self Leadership, participants were exposed to the positivity and power of their identity as females in leadership.

At the baseline level, 87% of the participants picked "True" for the statement "I am a leader, whether I am in a place of position or not". However, a noticeable increase was observed at the endline level with 100% of the participants agreeing with the statement. This indicates that participants now have an increased understanding of self-leadership skills. With this, while self-leadership skills can be a valuable foundation for leading others, participants should be willing to continue learning and growing as leaders.



Recommendations



Physical VS virtual experience

75% of the participants on the programme indicated that they preferred physical sessions to virtual sessions. This is because it offers the benefits of in-person interaction with instructors and peers, engaging in hands-on activities, and developing soft skills such as teamwork, communication, and networking. A balanced blended approach can be employed in subsequent cohorts to ensure a 100% immersive experience.

Duration of Programme

The duration of a programme can impact the level and type of learning that takes place. The LAP had a duration period of 8 weeks. However, an extended duration of 12 -14 weeks would offer a more comprehensive and immersive experience. Participants will be able to dive deeper into leadership topics, receive individualized feedback and coaching, and apply what they have learned through hands-on projects and shadowing exercises.

Introducing Case Studies

Incorporating case studies into a Leadership accelerator programme can be an effective way to enhance learning and engagement. Case studies are real-life examples illustrating leadership challenges and situations and provide participants with opportunities to analyze, discuss, and apply what they have learned.

Increasing Partnership with other organizations

Increased partnerships can bring various benefits to a leadership accelerator programme, including access to expertise, diverse perspectives, networking opportunities, and increased resources. By carefully selecting and nurturing partnerships, the LAP can create a more dynamic and impactful learning experience for participants.



Meet the Participants





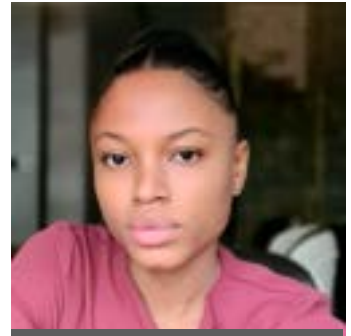
Chioma Obiakolo
Senior Technology Consultant



Francisca Okodi
Coach



Elizabeth Ibiyemi
Branch Operation
Officer/Transaction Service Analyst



Ihiese Aigbogun
Lead Learning Experience
Designer



Faith Ezedi Onarinde
Project Lead/STEM Educator



OGUNRINOLA BOLANLE
Sales Executive



Sommie Maduagwu
Political Consultant



Aderinola Oladipo
Key Account Manager



Christabel Atraide
Co Founder, Innovative Recycling
Limited



Kuma Sewuese Mary
Founder, Angel Support
Foundation



Ogechi Ndukwe
Officer- Operation & Technology
Group



Seun Odufuwa
Key Account Manager



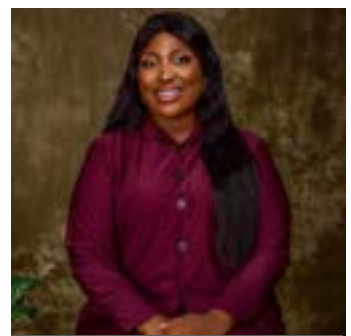
Jemima Nnamdi-Iweha
Teach For Nigeria Coach



Karima Abdulaziz
Business Development Executive



Akpewe Abale
Officer- Operation & Technology
Group



Victoria Fasuyi
Lead business Development

"What will you do differently"?



These are a few responses that the participants shared for their roadmap to leadership development.

"Work towards setting goals for myself. Network more".

"I will continue to develop myself while striving to be the best, also I will engage and support more women."

"Be more confident in how I show up in the world and be more deliberate about leading from a place of influence rather than authority".

"Work on my finances and investments readiness".

Evaluation Team

Rasheed Ajao

Rasheed Ajao is the Senior coordinator Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) at LEAP Africa. He is highly skilled and keenly interested in leveraging research and data analytics for evaluating social development impacts relating to youth, women, and children. He is currently completing a Master's Degree in Statistics at the Nasarawa State University, Keffi. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics from the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. He recently obtained the Certified Scrum Master (CSM) Certification from Scrum Alliance

Pamela Uzoma

is a development practitioner and a researcher with over 3 years' experience in data analysis, impact evaluation, and action research. She obtained her BSc. in international relations from Afe Babalola University with a second-class upper division and master's degree in the same course from Covenant University. As a Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (M.E.R.L) officer, she manages and coordinates the implementation of data collection, analysis and evaluation of programs and research projects. She is very enthusiastic about youth development and gender issues as it relates to women and young people.

Terhemem Agabo

has a background in development economics with over three years of experience in the international development sector. He currently works as a monitoring Evaluation Research and Learning Officer at LEAP Africa. Before joining LEAP Africa worked on development research projects for organizations such as the French Development Agency (AFD), French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA) and Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF). He holds a Bachelor of Economics degree from the University of Ilorin, Nigeria, and a master's degree in development economics from the University of Sussex, United Kingdom.

Evi Michael

is a Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) Officer at LEAP Africa. She is highly enthusiastic on monitoring and evaluating projects aimed at driving development in Africa and is a strong proponent of social change. She is currently undergoing her Master's degree program in Public Health at the University of Lagos, Nigeria. Evi possesses a keen interest and proficiency in data analytics and research of which she has continually engaged in opportunities to hone this skill on various platforms. Through these opportunities, she has been able to effectively contribute towards the achievements of purposeful and socially impactful projects through data driven and sustainable solutions..

ABOUT US

LEAP LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The LEAP Leadership Institute (LLI) is the centre of excellence for evidence-based knowledge and resources relevant to activating and scaling youth leadership development on the African continent. Through the diverse programmes, innovations, and research outputs from LLI, LEAP Africa aims to develop an ecosystem of thoughtful and transformative leaders who would be the advocates for the urgent and ambitious change Africa needs.

WILAN

Women in Leadership Advancement Network WILAN is a nonprofit organization working to catalyze the advancement of women into leadership positions across all levels of political, economic, and public life.

Its mission is to ensure women's leadership advancement in Nigeria by providing access to the community, knowledge, resources, opportunities, and support that women need to become effective leaders that thrive.