



# Social Innovators Programme (SIP)

2024 Endline  
Evaluation Report



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2024



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# Acknowledgement

Great endeavors are rarely the work of one; they are the symphony of many hands, minds, and hearts committed to a shared vision. This *Endline Evaluation Report* of the Social Innovation Programme is no exception as it stands as a testament to the dedication, expertise, and unwavering commitment of individuals and institutions who believe in the power of social transformation.

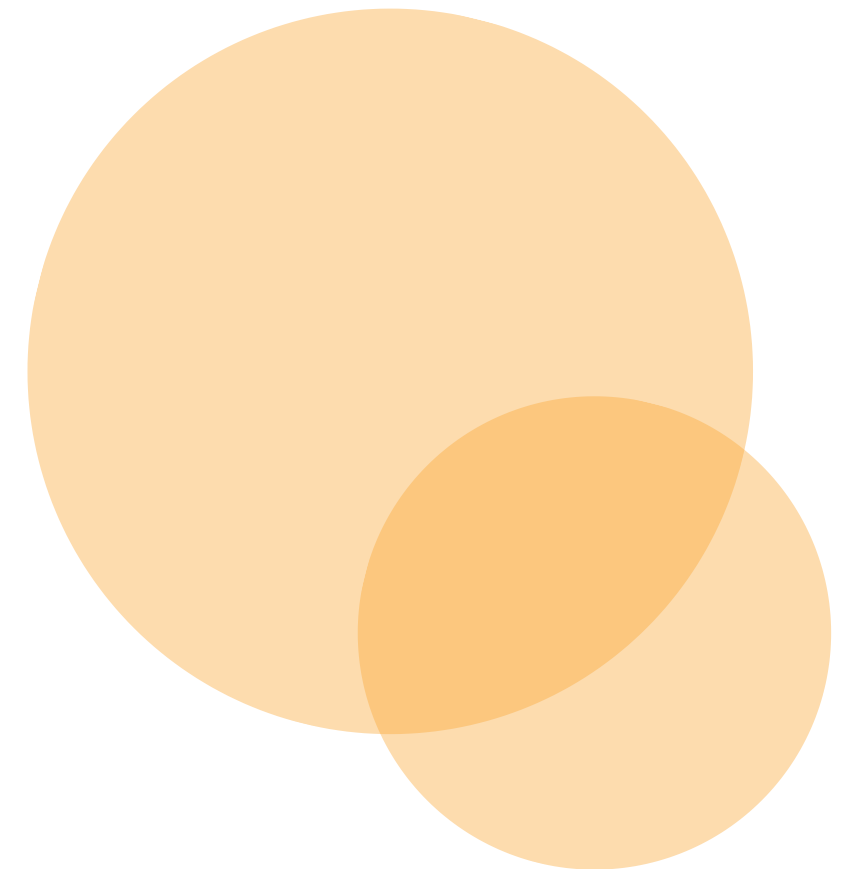
At the helm of this vision, we extend our deepest gratitude to Kehinde Ayeni, Executive Director of LEAP Africa, whose leadership continues to shape a future where innovation meets impact, and to Diana Amabelle Nwakanma, Director of Programmes, whose strategic foresight and stewardship guided this initiative to completion. Our heartfelt appreciation also goes to Joy Godwin Kalu, Programme Manager, for her steadfast coordination and relentless pursuit of excellence.

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Abdullahi Ibrahim  
MERL Senior Coordinator



# Executive Summary

Social entrepreneurship in Africa has emerged as a transformative force, addressing critical social, environmental, and economic challenges across the continent. As Africa confronts the complexities of rising urbanisation, economic inequality, and environmental degradation, the need for innovative, sustainable, and inclusive solutions has never been more urgent. Social entrepreneurs, leveraging business models designed for both financial sustainability and social impact, are at the forefront of this change. However, despite the growing number of social enterprises, many still face significant barriers to scaling their impact due to systemic challenges such as limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure, and weak ecosystems of support.

In this context, LEAP Africa's Social Innovators Programme (SIP) plays a pivotal role in nurturing early and mid-stage social entrepreneurs, equipping them with the critical tools, knowledge, and networks to overcome these challenges and drive long-term positive change.

Since its inception, SIP has become a cornerstone for supporting the next generation of African social innovators. In its 2024 edition, SIP supported 20 fellows from 8 African countries, providing a comprehensive 9-month curriculum designed to enhance leadership, organisational capacity, and sustainability. Through tailored mentorship, workshops, and networking opportunities, fellows were empowered to scale their social enterprises and deepen their impact on pressing global and regional challenges.

This report details the independent endline evaluation of the 2024 edition of the Social Innovators Programme, conducted in accordance with LEAP Africa's MERL policy. The evaluation emphasises accountability, learning, and knowledge sharing, focusing on programme outcomes and the lessons derived from them.

## Key Findings

### 1 The Enterprise Sustainability Workshop (ESW) is Valuable for Strengthening Social Enterprises' Operations and Sustainability

The ESW sessions have proven to be highly relevant and valuable, with 82% of fellows rating them as very useful. These sessions provided actionable insights into sustainable business practices, strategic planning, market access, and resource mobilisation. Fellows reported gaining confidence in driving organisational change, enhancing leadership capabilities, and improving operational efficiency. Notable impacts include improved financial planning, refined business models, and strengthened team growth. Fellows also emphasised the importance of networking opportunities and how the sessions inspired creative solutions to challenges, ultimately strengthening their organisations' long-term sustainability.

## 2 Mentorship as a Critical Support System for Social Entrepreneurs

The feedback from fellows clearly demonstrates the significant value of mentorship in navigating challenges and enhancing business growth. 100% of the fellows indicated that they believed having a mentor could significantly help them address challenges in their social enterprises. Further feedback revealed that their mentorship sessions have provided strategic guidance, skill enhancement, network expansion, and increased confidence, all of which have contributed to the fellows' personal and organisational development. One fellow noted that "Regular mentorship sessions boosted my confidence to implement new ideas and expand our services to new markets."

## 3 Fellows have Formed New Partnerships and Gained Recognition while in the Fellowship

Since joining the fellowship, 76% of fellows reported developing new partnerships, leading to both local and global opportunities. Notably, 59% of fellows have applied for and secured a variety of competitive grants, accelerators, and recognition awards. Key accomplishments include the *Mastercard Foundation-EARTH University Fellowship Award*, the *Global Young Entrepreneur of the Year by Youth Business International (YBI)*, the *JCI Nigeria's Creative Young Entrepreneurs Award*, *Google AI Fund*, the *Tony Elumelu Foundation Grant*, and being selected as a speaker at the *UNCCD COP16* in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. These achievements highlight the contributions of the fellowship in expanding fellows' networks and enhancing their visibility on the global stage.

## 4 Fellows have Developed New Sources of Funding and Improved Financial Processes for their Social Enterprises





Since joining the fellowship, 76% of fellows have successfully developed new sources of funding for their organisations, positioning them to secure additional financial resources for growth and sustainability. In addition, 71% of fellows have implemented financial systems to enhance accountability and transparency within their organisations. As one fellow noted, "The mentorship and resources provided by the fellowship helped us streamline our financial processes, which has been crucial in managing our funds more effectively and ensuring transparency in our operations."








## 5 Analysis of Programme based on Evaluation Criteria

The following deductions were made from evaluation of the SIP based on the OECD/DAC criteria, supplemented by gender considerations.

### Overall evaluation rating and what they mean

-  Strong achievement across the board. Stands out as an area of good practice where the programme is making a significant positive contribution.
-  Satisfactory achievement in most areas, but partial achievement in others. An area where the programme is making a positive contribution, but could do more.
-  Unsatisfactory achievement in most areas, with some positive elements. An area where improvements are required to make a positive contribution.
-  Poor achievement across most areas, with urgent remedial action required in some. An area where the programme is failing to make a positive contribution.

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Outcome	Overview
Relevance		The programme is highly relevant to the needs of the fellows, addressing key challenges like organisational capacity, access to funding, and market access, while also focusing on gender inclusivity.
Effectiveness		The programme is effective in building fellows' capacities and impacting their enterprises, but mentorship and some logistical challenges (e.g., inconsistent mentor availability) need improvement.
Efficiency		The programme utilises resources effectively overall, but challenges with mentor engagement hinder overall efficiency.
Sustainability		Findings indicate that the programme outcomes would be sustained. Fellows are confident in the sustainability of their enterprises through diverse revenue streams, social impact, and scalability.
Gender		The programme promotes gender equality through inclusive design and equitable outcomes, with strong performance by some female fellows.

### Recommendations

#### For the Programme

- **Enhance Networking & Industry Exposure:** Extend networking sessions and introduce more structured events to deepen industry connections.

- **Strengthen Mentorship Engagement:** Improve the mentor assignment process to ensure all fellows receive tailored, consistent and valuable mentorship.
- **Consider Sector-Specific and Regionally Tailored Content:** Consider sector-specific workshops and regionally relevant content to better address fellows' unique challenges.
- **Deepen Investment Readiness Support:** Expand specialised, practical sessions on pitching and funding, led by industry experts to better prepare fellows for capital raising.
- **Improve Access to Investors:** Introduce structured investor engagement opportunities such as pitch sessions and curated introductions to enhance fellows' fundraising potential.
- **Introduce More In-Person Learning:** Incorporate periodic physical sessions to strengthen peer learning, engagement, and overall programme experience.
- **Integrate Financial & M&E Tools:** Embed financial and impact measurement tools into training to improve fellows' sustainability, transparency, and operational effectiveness.
- **Foster Active Alumni Engagement:** Maintain an active alumni network with regular meetups, discussions, and expert insights to keep fellows engaged and informed.

### For Fellows and Social Innovators

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- **Sustain Ongoing Networking and Peer Collaboration:** Continue to build and nurture the relationships developed during the fellowship to foster long-term partnerships.
- **Continue Maximising Mentorship and Tailored Support:** Even after the programme ends, alumni should continue seeking mentorship and expertise to address ongoing challenges.
- **Apply Learnings to Real-World Challenges:** Utilise the knowledge gained to refine business models and scale operations effectively.
- **Engage Actively in Alumni Networks:** Stay engaged with the alumni network for continued support and collaboration, ensuring sustainable growth.

## Testimonials

“

*The SIP Fellowship has been a game-changer for both me and the Read to Learn Foundation. The mentorship, training, and networking opportunities provided the tools to scale our impact and position us for long-term success. My advice to future fellows: embrace every learning opportunity, stay resilient, and trust in the process. SIP will transform your vision into actionable, sustainable impact.*

– **Mago Hasfa** (SIP Fellow, 2024),  
Founder, Read to Learn Foundation, Uganda





# Introduction

Social entrepreneurship has emerged as a transformative force in Africa, driving innovation and addressing critical social and environmental challenges.

With a rapidly growing population, rising urbanisation, and complex socio-economic problems, the need for sustainable and inclusive solutions has never been more urgent. Social entrepreneurs—individuals who leverage innovative business models to create positive social change—are playing a pivotal role in reshaping Africa’s economic and social landscape. By addressing issues such as poverty, health disparities, education, gender inequality, and environmental degradation, social entrepreneurs are helping to foster resilience and social equity across the continent. As Africa aspires to be a key player in the global economy, the contributions of social entrepreneurs are crucial in realising the vision of a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable "Africa's century."<sup>1</sup>

## “Africa Has Too Many Businesses, Too Little Business”

However, despite the growing number of businesses on the continent, a significant challenge persists: Africa has too many businesses, yet too little business. While many African nations are seeing a rise in entrepreneurial ventures, the growth and scalability of these businesses remain limited due to various systemic barriers, such as access to finance, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of supportive ecosystems.<sup>2</sup> Social enterprises, in particular, face unique hurdles in scaling their operations, given their dual focus on both social impact and financial sustainability. Addressing these challenges requires focused support, especially at the early stages of development, where many social entrepreneurs encounter difficulties in accessing essential resources and navigating the complex landscape of social innovation.

## LEAP Africa’s Social Innovators Programme (SIP) responds to these challenges

LEAP Africa’s Social Innovators Programme (SIP) responds to these challenges by providing early and mid-stage social entrepreneurs with tailored support designed to enhance their organisational capacity, increase their access to funding, and facilitate market access. The 9-month fellowship provides a comprehensive curriculum and exposure to a network of investors, experts, mentors, and industry professionals, offering participants the tools and knowledge needed to overcome barriers to growth and maximise their impact.

Inclusion remains a central consideration in the context of African entrepreneurship, particularly given the disproportionate challenges faced by women. While women in Africa are more actively engaged in entrepreneurial activities than their male counterparts, they often encounter significant barriers in scaling their businesses and accessing critical resources, such as funding and market opportunities.

1. Moloi-Motsepe, P., Nwuneli, O. N., & Bonnici, F. (2023). [How social entrepreneurs can drive an inclusive 'Africa's century'](#). Retrieved January 10, 2025

2. The Economist. (2025). [Africa Has Too Many Businesses, Too Little Business](#). Retrieved January 10, 2025

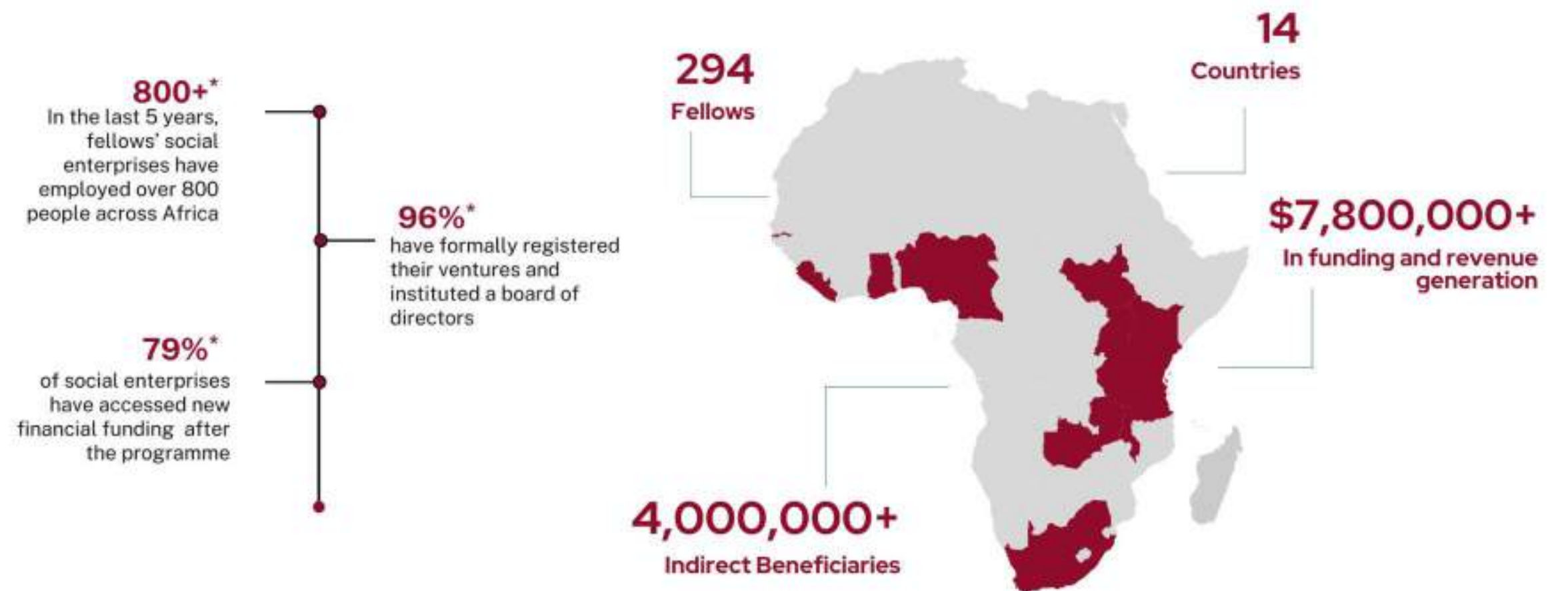
The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) 2020/2021 report underscores these disparities, revealing that African women entrepreneurs face persistent obstacles related to financial access, market entry, and societal perceptions. These challenges contribute to lower business success rates and profitability when compared to their male peers.<sup>3</sup> This gender gap in entrepreneurial outcomes emphasises the importance of targeted programmes, such as LEAP Africa’s SIP, that equip young Africans including women and other marginalised groups with the skills, resources, and networks essential for thriving in Africa’s entrepreneurial ecosystem.

LEAP Africa's SIP has been a beacon of transformative impact over the past 11 years. The programme has empowered over 270 social innovators, positively impacting the lives of up to 4 million individuals across 14 African countries. Additionally, the initiative has facilitated the generation of more than \$6 million in funding and revenue for its alumni, further reinforcing its critical role in fostering sustainable social innovation.

In its 2024 edition, SIP supported 20 entrepreneurs from 8 African countries, equipping them with the strategic capabilities and networks needed to tackle systemic challenges and foster inclusive development within their respective communities.

This long-standing commitment to nurturing high-impact social entrepreneurs underscores SIP’s pivotal contribution to driving economic and social progress across the African continent.

### SIP Reach and Impact (2013-2024)



3. Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM). (2021). 2020/2021 Women’s Entrepreneurship Report: Thriving through Crisis. Retrieved January 10, 2025

\*LEAP Africa (2024). State of Social Entrepreneurship in Africa: Lessons from 10 Years of LEAP Africa’s Social Innovator’s Programme - Research Report

Benin | Cameroon | Ghana | Kenya | Liberia | Malawi | Nigeria | Sierra Leone | South Africa | South Sudan | Tanzania | The Gambia | Uganda | Zambia

# Programme Components

## Goal

**To strengthen and advance youth-led innovation and entrepreneurship in Africa through capacity building, catalytic funding, and access to networks that enhance the sustainability of social entrepreneurs.**

## Objectives

- 1** To **equip** social entrepreneurs with the knowledge, tools and resources essential for strengthening existing organisational structures.
- 2** To **expose** social entrepreneurs to a network of allies, advocates and investors who will support business scaling, strategy and sustainability.
- 3** To **provide** a platform for rewarding, recognising and advocating for the unique contributions of social entrepreneurs through convenings and strategic partnerships within the ecosystem.

## Components

The programme consisted of 4 key components

- **Enterprise Sustainability Workshop (ESW):** The fellowship began with the ESW, where fellows were introduced to modules and activities designed to equip them with the skills, knowledge, and tools necessary to operate successful and sustainable social enterprises. Facilitated by leading business development professionals, the workshop covered key topics such as corporate governance, financial management, design thinking for social innovation, and crafting impactful pitches. At the end of the workshop series, fellows applied their learnings to milestone and capstone projects, developing practical solutions that demonstrated their ability to integrate sustainability and innovation into their social enterprises. This hands-on work allowed them to showcase their growth while addressing real-world challenges.

- **Specialised Sessions:** Fellows further benefited from specialised sessions that provided additional technical assistance and support in priority areas identified during their organisational capacity assessments.
- **Mentorship:** Fellows were matched with mentors—seasoned professionals selected based on their expertise in areas relevant to the fellows' enterprises. This mentorship phase fostered continuous learning and development, as mentors provided strategic advice and guidance crucial to ensuring the sustainability of the fellows' social enterprises.
- **Fellow Showcase & Alumni Induction:** The programme culminated in the Social Innovators Programme and Awards (SIPA)/West Africa Deal Summit, held in partnership with the Impact Investors Foundation (IIF) on November 12-13, 2024, in Lagos, Nigeria. Fellows had the opportunity to present their social enterprises to potential investors, funders, and policymakers. Outstanding fellows were honoured during the SIPA event, and the fellows were inducted into the SIP Alumni Community for ongoing post-fellowship support.

## Testimonials

“

*To future fellows, I encourage you to embrace every opportunity SIP offers—be open to learning, stay committed to your vision, and collaborate with peers and mentors. My favorite quote, “True impact begins when you align your purpose with the needs of those you serve.” SIP is not just a program; it’s a transformational journey that equips you to make a lasting difference.*

— **Abdulai Barrie** (SIP Fellow, 2024),  
Founder, Salone Agro Market, Sierra Leone







# Evaluation Approach

The endline evaluation draws on the theory of change and results chain developed for the SIP, which clearly outlines the programme’s logic and pathways to achieving its goals.

## Evaluation questions

The endline evaluation is structured around key questions that align with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)-Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria. The evaluation also incorporates gender considerations to ensure that the experiences of women entrepreneurs are appropriately examined throughout the evaluation process.

The primary evaluation questions address the following:

**Relevance:** How well did the programme meet the needs of the fellows, particularly in terms of organisational capacity building, access to funding, and market access?

## Results Chain

	Input	Activity	Output	Outcome
<b>Equip</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online call for application</li> <li>Curriculum review</li> <li>Fellow selection</li> <li>Induction of fellows</li> <li>Seasoned facilitators for workshop and specialised sessions</li> <li>Virtual platform</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA) for fellows’ social enterprises</li> <li>Organise Enterprise Sustainability Workshop for 20 fellows on topics such as corporate governance, financial management, and crafting impactful pitches.</li> <li>Fellows execute capstone projects</li> <li>Organise specialised sessions for additional technical assistance and support in priority areas identified during OCA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20 fellows are equipped with skills, knowledge, and tools required to run successful and sustainable social enterprises.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced effectiveness for fellows and their organisational sustainability.</li> </ul>
<b>Expose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Virtual community of practice platform</li> <li>Identifying mentors</li> <li>Identify/Notify partners and investors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create virtual community of practice for the fellows to encourage peer networking and learning</li> <li>Mentor Matching for 6 months</li> <li>Organize an impact investment and pitching session with partners and investors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20 fellows actively engage, share learnings, and collaborate on the virtual platform</li> <li>Fellows interact and learn from mentors.</li> <li>Selected fellows are supported with partnership building and investment resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased organisational growth and expanded networking opportunities as a result of fellows engagement with peers and mentors.</li> </ul>
<b>Provide</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fellow evaluation</li> <li>Identifying judges</li> <li>Grants</li> <li>Online platforms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awards event</li> <li>Documentary</li> <li>Live and online visibility and spotlighting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outstanding fellows are recognised and awarded.</li> <li>Fellows are provided with visibility and exposed to potential funding and support opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local and international recognition for fellowstranslates to increased investments and partnerships.</li> </ul>

**Effectiveness:** To what extent has the programme successfully equipped fellows with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to strengthen their enterprises and scale their impact?

**Efficiency:** How efficiently were programme resources utilised in delivering activities and achieving the intended outcomes for the fellows?

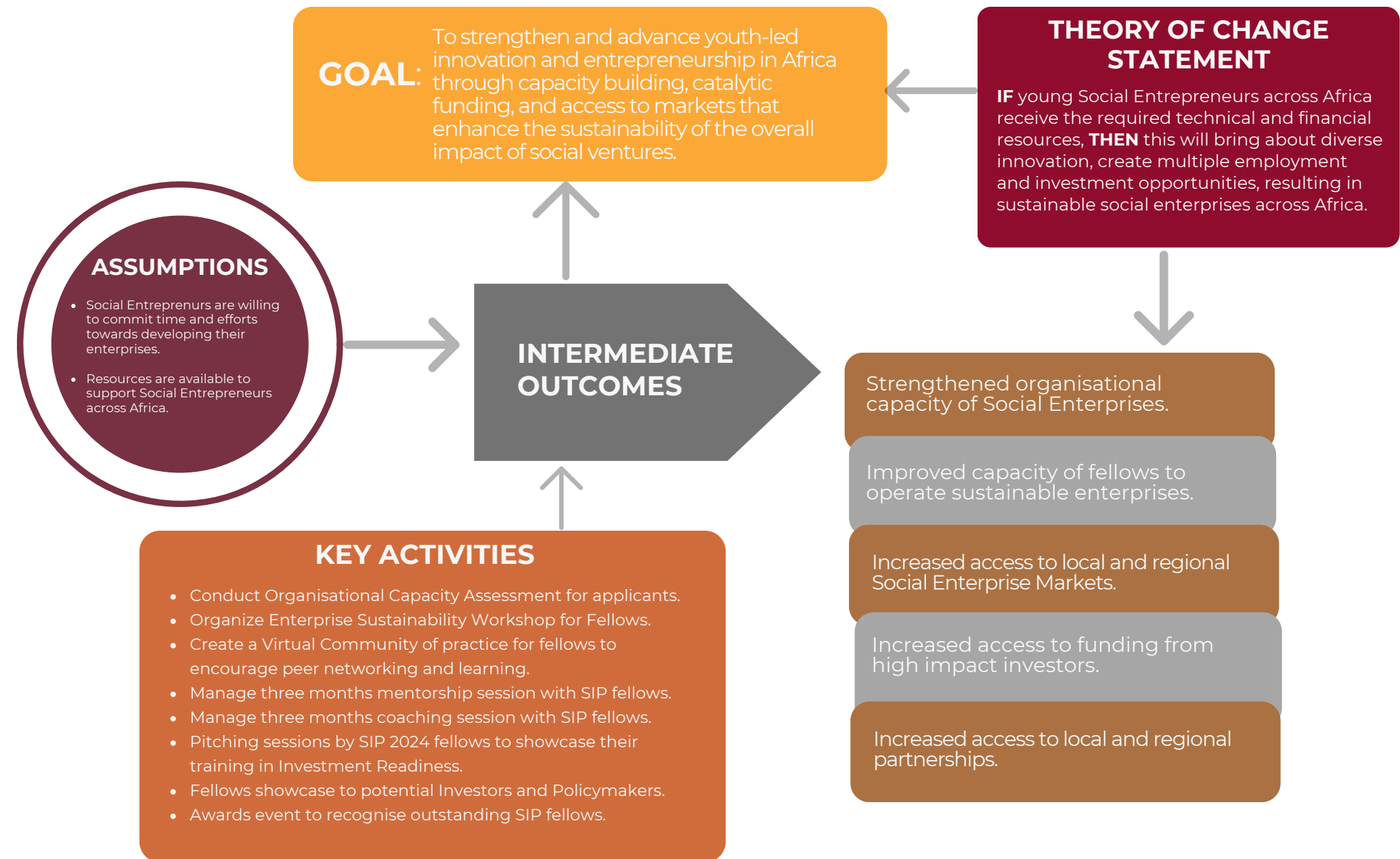
**Sustainability:** To what extent are the skills, networks, and resources gained by the fellows during the programme likely to contribute to the long-term sustainability and growth of their enterprises?

**Gender:** How effectively has the programme addressed gender-specific challenges and supported the professional growth of female social entrepreneurs, ensuring equitable opportunities for all participants?

**Secondary learning question**

The evaluation also seeks to answer a key secondary learning question that aim to extract broader insights from the programme. The key secondary question is: What key lessons have been learned from the programme, and how can they inform future iterations or similar initiatives across other regions or sectors?

**Theory of Change**



## Data Collection

The data collection process for the evaluation was designed to align with the programme's results chain and theory of change. In order to comprehensively assess the evaluation and learning questions, the evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach, utilising a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection tools. These tools were selected to ensure triangulation of data and provide a well-rounded understanding of the programme's outcomes. Each data collection tool was chosen to capture data from multiple sources—fellows, mentors, and other key stakeholders—to ensure that findings were grounded in diverse perspectives. The following data collection tools were employed:

### Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA) Tool

This tool was used to assess the initial capacity of fellows' enterprises at the start of the fellowship and track their progress at the end of the programme. The OCA evaluated key areas such as governance, financial management, and strategic planning, allowing the evaluation to measure changes in the organisational health of the fellows' social enterprises at the end of the programme.

### Baseline and Endline Surveys

Surveys were administered at both the beginning and end of the programme to collect data on fellows' knowledge, skills, and organisational performance. These surveys focused on capturing self-reported changes in areas such as business management, access to capital, market strategies, and social impact. The endline survey also gathered feedback on fellows' experiences with the curriculum, mentorship, and networking opportunities, providing valuable insight into the overall effectiveness of the programme's components.

### Enterprise Sustainability Feedback Forms

These forms were completed by fellows during various sessions of the ESW to provide feedback on their ability to apply what they had learned in real-world contexts. The forms focused on assessing how the fellows were learning and how they were implementing lessons related to sustainability practices, financial planning, and innovation within their enterprises.

### Mentor Feedback Forms

Mentors provided ongoing feedback on the progress and development of their mentees through structured feedback forms. These forms gathered qualitative data on the effectiveness of the mentorship phase, including the degree to which fellows were able to apply the advice and guidance offered by their mentors. Mentors also provided insights into the strengths and areas for improvement within the fellows' business models.

### Programme Documentation and Observations

A review of programme documents, such as workshop materials, mentorship reports, and fellows' capstone projects, was conducted to complement primary data collection efforts. In addition, observational data was collected during key events, such as the Enterprise Sustainability Workshop (ESW) and the Fellow Showcase. This allowed to capture the dynamics of the learning environment and the level of engagement with the programme components among fellows.

## Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with fellows through virtual Enterprise Site Visits and programme visits to fellows from PowerWheels Electricals, Read to Learn Foundation, and Gewuza Foundation in Uganda. These interviews were aimed to gain deeper insights into their experiences and perceptions of the programme. The semi-structured format allowed fellows to share personal reflections on the programme’s impact, the challenges they faced, and the effectiveness of its components, such as mentorship and curriculum.

## Success Stories

Success stories submitted by fellows were also included as part of the data collection process. These stories provided a qualitative dimension to the evaluation, offering personal, narrative-driven insights into how the programme directly impacted individual fellows, their enterprises, and the communities they serve. Fellows were invited to share their experiences, highlighting specific examples of transformation, innovation, and resilience that may not have been fully captured through quantitative data alone. These success stories highlighted the fellows' journeys and the programme's real-world outcomes, deepening the understanding of its impact.

## Summary of Data Collection

Data collection tools	Number of responses
Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT)	20
Baseline Survey	20
Endline Survey	17
ESW Feedback forms:	
• Design Thinking for Social Innovation	16
• Marketing and Branding for Social Enterprises	14
• Strategies for Accessing Markets	14
• Fundraising: Identifying Your Funding Model	17
• Financial Management	12
• Strategy Development and Implementation	15
• Corporate Governance	14
• Hiring and Retaining the Right Team	12
• Developing Winning Pitches	14
• Outcome Harvesting and Measurement	14
Mentor Feedback Forms	5
Monthly Mentor Log	14
Key informant interviews	4
Success stories	14

## Limitations

Few limitations were identified in conducting this evaluation, these included

### Absence of Physical M&E Visits

The evaluation did not include in-person monitoring and evaluation visits, which would have served for direct observation and assessments and provided deeper insights into the day-to-day challenges and successes experienced by participants.

### Short Evaluation Timeframe Post-Programme Completion

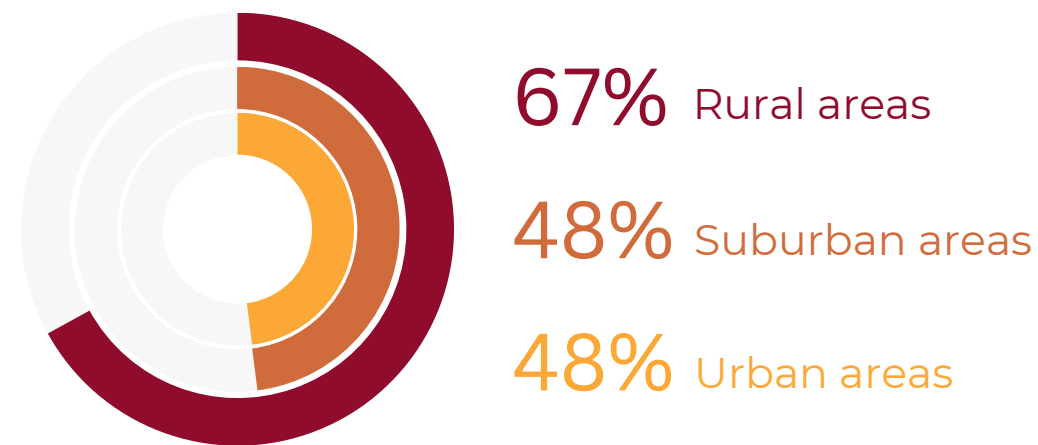
The timeframe for conducting the evaluation was relatively short, with the assessment taking place shortly after the completion of the 2024 fellowship edition. This limited period for post-programme evaluation posed challenges in fully capturing the long-term impact of the programme on the fellows' social enterprises. The evaluation may not have been able to capture the full extent of the programme’s influence on business growth, sustainability, or market expansion, particularly for fellows who are still in the process of implementing the strategies and learnings gained during the fellowship.

# Beneficiary Breakdown

## Countries and Gender of Fellows



## Geographical Focus of Enterprises\*



\*Total exceeds 100% due to overlap of enterprise operations across Rural, Suburban, and Urban areas.

## Map Showing Countries of Fellows



## Outstanding Beneficiaries

### Seyi Bickersteth Award

This award recognises a fellow who has translated the learning and professional insights acquired from the fellowship programme into upholding financial accountability, transparency, and sustainability in their social enterprise. The award was won by Mago Hafsa of Read to Learn Foundation, Uganda.

### Outstanding Fellow Award

This award celebrates fellows who have exemplified the tenets of sustainable social innovation and professionalism throughout the fellowship. The award was presented to Adaeze Akpagbula of Farmspeak Technology Ltd., Nigeria, and Justine Asiimire of Power Wheels Electricals, Uganda

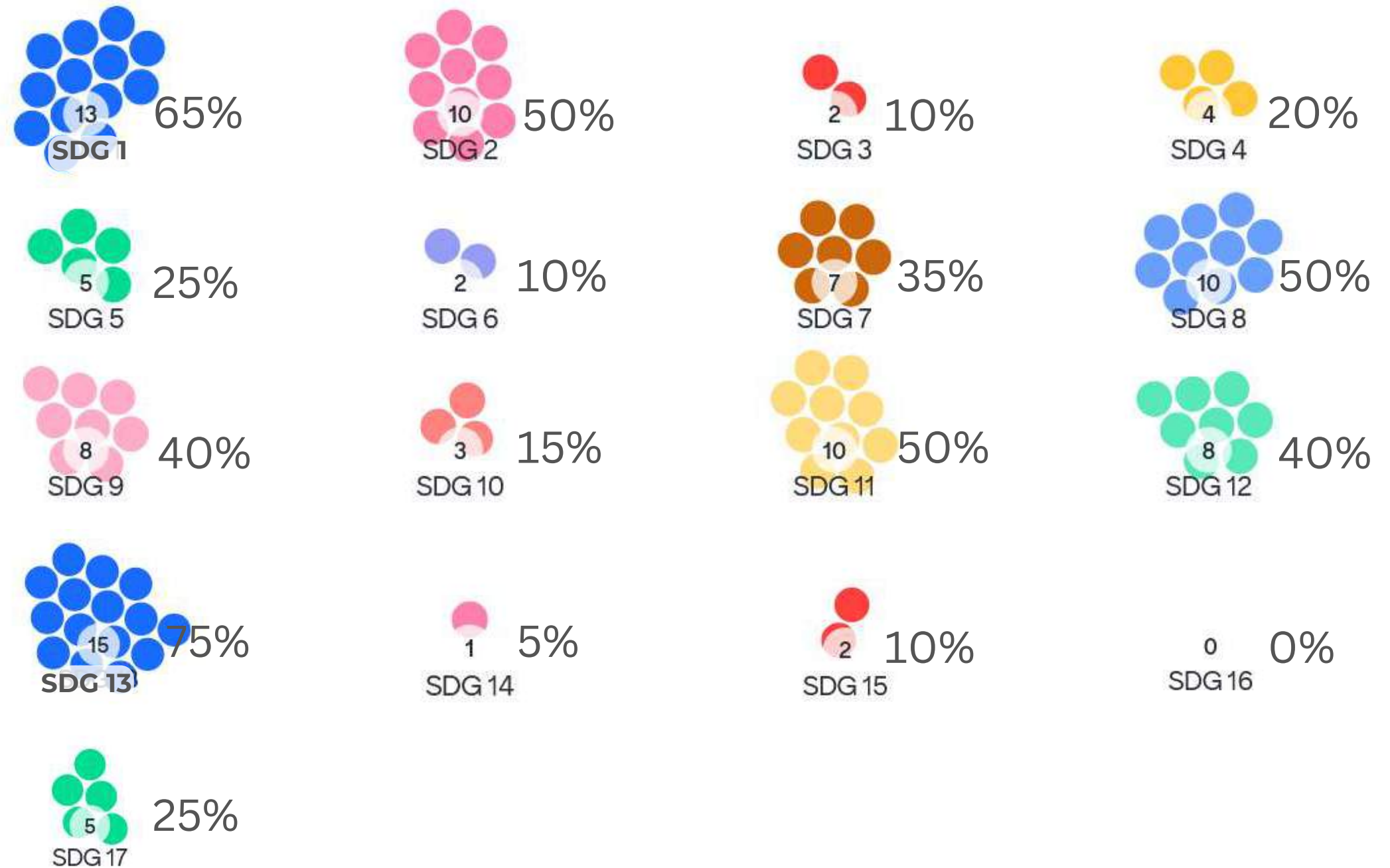
## Sustainable Development Goals

A single enterprise can contribute to multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), creating a ripple effect beyond its primary focus. The fellows' enterprises focus on the following SDGs.

SDG 13: Climate Action leads with 75% of fellows prioritising environmental sustainability, reflecting growing climate change awareness. SDG 1: No Poverty (65%) and SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth (50%) emphasise the fellows' commitment to reducing poverty and fostering economic opportunities. SDG 2: Zero Hunger (50%) and SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities (50%) address food security and sustainable urban development.

Additionally, SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy (35%) and SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production (40%) highlight energy access and sustainable practices. SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (40%) reflects the fellows' efforts to drive innovation for Africa's growth.

## Fellows' Enterprises' SDG Focus Areas



## Testimonials

“

*SIP marked a turning point in my entrepreneurial journey. It empowered me to communicate our story, connect with strategic partners, and envision greater possibilities for Trash Monger. The program has significantly increased both my visibility and that of our enterprise. To prospective fellows, SIP will undoubtedly be one of the most impactful programs you'll undertake—one that shapes not just your enterprise but also your entrepreneurial outlook.*

— **Femi Owoeye** (SIP Fellow, 2024),  
Co-Founder, Trash Monger, Nigeria







# Findings

## A Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA)

The results of the Organizational Capacity Assessment indicate that fellows' organisations have made considerable progress in several key areas over the course of the program. The most notable improvements were seen in Leadership and Corporate Governance and Financial Management, where a larger percentage of organisations reported higher levels of capacity at endline.

### 1 Leadership and Corporate Governance

At baseline, 41% of organisations recorded medium-high capacity in leadership and governance, while 18% had low capacity. By endline, organisations showing medium-high capacity has increased to 53%, and no organisations reporting low capacity. The results indicated that most organisations demonstrated ongoing improvement.

Organisational Capacity	BASELINE					ENDLINE				
	Very Low	Low	Medium-Low	Medium-High	High	Very Low	Low	Medium-Low	Medium-High	High
Leadership and Corporate Governance	0%	18%	18%	41%	24%	0%	0%	29%	53%	18%
Systems and Structures	0%	35%	12%	18%	35%	0%	18%	35%	12%	35%
Financial Management	6%	24%	35%	24%	12%	12%	12%	24%	6%	47%
Monitoring, Evaluation, and Impact	0%	24%	29%	35%	12%	0%	24%	29%	29%	18%
Branding and External communications	35%	6%	24%	12%	24%	18%	18%	35%	6%	24%

**Note:** The following scale was used for categorising OCA scores.

- Very Low (0-19%)
- Low (20-39%)
- Medium-Low (40-59%)
- Medium-High (60-79%)
- High (80-100%)

## 2 Systems and Structures

At baseline, 35% of organisations assessed their systems and structures as low, and 35% as high. By endline, the proportion of organisations with high capacity remained the same, but 35% now assessed their capacity as medium-low. While this shift suggests some progress, it also highlights that fellows view systems and structures as an area in need of ongoing improvement.

## 3 Financial Management

At baseline, 35% of organisations had medium-low capacity in financial management, with only 12% reporting high capacity. By endline, 47% of organisations reached high capacity, and 24% remained at medium-low. This marks significant progress in financial management, within the period of the fellowship.

## 4 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Impact

Some progress was also observed in the fellows' organisations' capacity for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Impact. While there were no changes in the percentage of organisations with medium-low

capacity and lower, the organisations recording high capacity has increased from 12% to 18% from baseline to endline.

## 5 Branding and External Communications

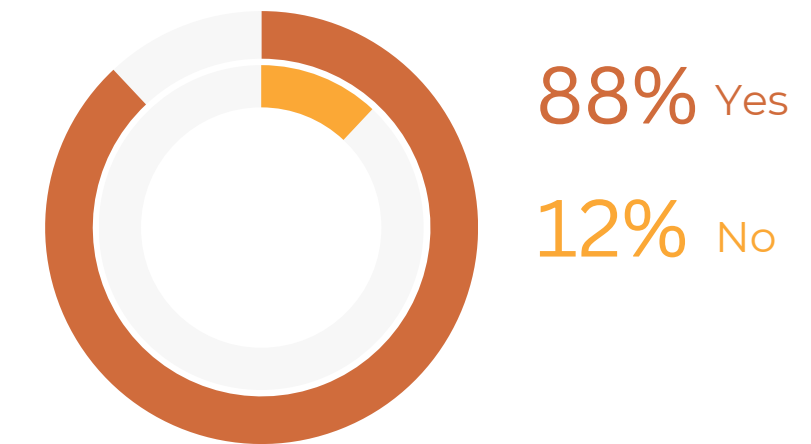
The results here were similar to those for Systems and Structures. While the proportion of organisations reporting high capacity remained the same, the percentage with very low capacity decreased from 35% to 18%. However, the majority of organisations still assessed their capacity as medium-low or lower (80%), indicating that external visibility and communication remain areas where significant improvement is needed.

## B Sustainability

The sustainability of fellows' organisations was a key consideration during the fellowship. At the end of the programme, 88% of respondents stated that they believe that their organisations are sustainable. When asked to elaborate on their reasons, fellows highlighted a combination of economic, environmental, and social factors, alluding to their participation in the fellowship.

Their responses suggest that participation in the fellowship provided tools, networks, and frameworks necessary to build organisations that are not only economically viable but also socially and environmentally responsible. This has contributed to the fellows' confidence in their organisations' long-term viability.

Do you think your organisation is sustainable? ▬



The following key points were raised by the fellows regarding the sustainability of their enterprises.

## 1 Diverse Revenue Streams and Business Models

Many fellows emphasized their diverse and resilient business models, which include multiple revenue streams. For example, **Farmspeak Technology** integrates economic, environmental, and social aspects into its operations, ensuring recurring revenue through subscriptions, licensing, and advisory services. Similarly, organisations like **Pugu Hills Eco Cultural Tourism** have diversified income sources such as eco-lodge accommodations and cultural experiences, which support both their financial and social sustainability.

## 2 Social Impact and Empowerment

A consistent theme across responses was the focus on social sustainability. Several fellows highlighted how their organisations are designed to empower local communities, particularly underserved groups like women and youth. For instance, **Revnics Energy's** model supports local communities through e-waste recycling and sustainable agriculture, creating jobs while also contributing to environmental protection.

Similarly, **Project MEND**, through its vocational training programmes, empowers women with skills to generate income and contribute to the local economy. This focus on community empowerment aligns with the fellowship's emphasis on building sustainable, community-driven solutions that contribute to social equity and long-term resilience.

## 3 Environmental Responsibility

Environmental sustainability was another key aspect of respondents' assessments of their organisations. **Farmspeak Technology's** climate-smart solutions, such as AI-based disease diagnosis and resource optimization tools, are designed to reduce waste and promote sustainable farming practices. Likewise, **Trashcoin** promotes circular economy principles by incentivizing waste recycling, reducing landfill waste, and fostering environmental responsibility. These initiatives align with global sustainability goals and demonstrate how the fellowship's emphasis on integrating environmental consciousness into business practices has helped fellows develop sustainable operations that are both economically viable and environmentally responsible.

## 4 Scalability and Growth

Several organisations noted their ability to scale and grow, which further solidifies their long-term sustainability. For example, The Book Drive Store's model of producing recycled educational materials has created a self-sustaining revenue stream that supports its literacy programs. Similarly, **Revnics Energy's** expansion into solar kiosks and digital platforms demonstrates clear growth strategies. The fellowship played a crucial role in providing fellows with the skills and networks necessary to build scalable models, positioning their organisations for continued success.

## C Mentorship

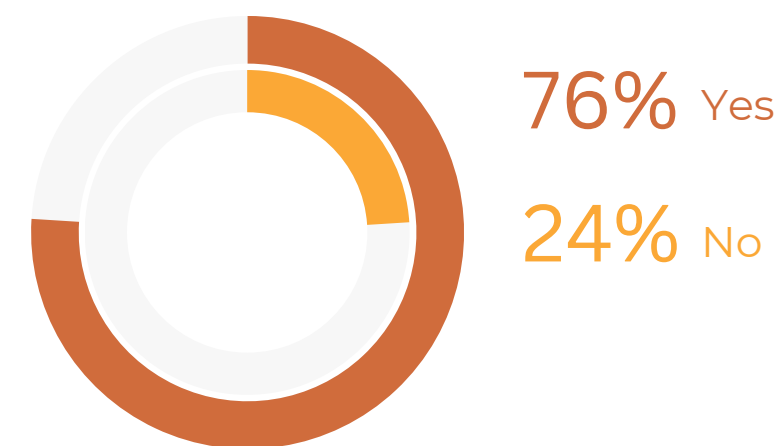
Mentorship is a key component of the Social Innovators Programme. The findings from the endline survey highlight both the positive impacts and the challenges faced in the mentorship process. Findings showed that for mentorship to be more effective, improvements are needed in the assignment process and mentor availability.

While programme records show that all fellows were assigned mentors, 17 within the programme timeframe and an additional three shortly after the programme concluded, only 76% of fellows reported being assigned a mentor at the time of the endline survey.

### 1 Mentor Assignment

The majority of fellows (76%) indicated that they were assigned a mentor. However, a notable 24% of fellows reported that they did not receive a mentor, citing issues such as the unavailability of mentors, time constraints, and an overly bureaucratic system. One fellow mentioned, "The system kept cancelling my requests," while another shared, "I contacted mentors but never received responses." These challenges highlight the importance of ensuring that the mentorship assignment process is timely, responsive and adaptable, particularly to accommodate the diverse needs of fellows.

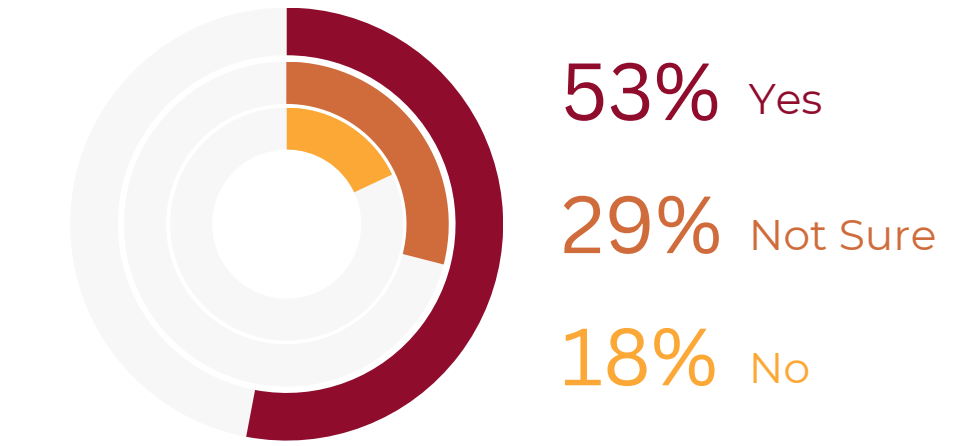
Were you assigned a mentor? 



### 2 Satisfaction with Mentorship

Satisfaction with mentors was mixed, with 53% of fellows indicating they were satisfied, while 18% expressed dissatisfaction. The remaining 29% were unsure. One fellow commented, "We did not get the chance to meet up," indicating that unmet expectations related to frequency and quality of engagement were a source of dissatisfaction. This emphasises the need for more consistent mentor-mentee interactions to ensure productive engagements.

Were you satisfied with your mentor? 



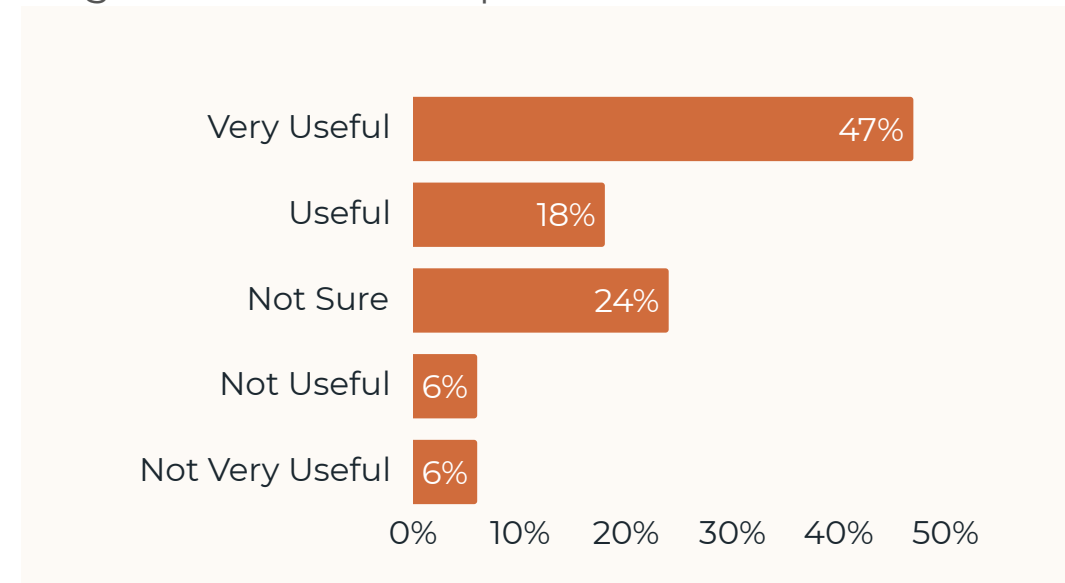
### 3 Usefulness of Mentorship sessions

The usefulness of the mentorship sessions was rated positively by most fellows. A considerable 47% found their mentor engagement "very useful," while 18% found it "useful." However, 24% were unsure, and 12% rated it as "not useful" or "not very useful." Mentorship played a key role in several areas of fellows' development, as one fellow noted, "The mentorship introduced innovative approaches to tackling challenges, such as leveraging digital tools for marketing." Additionally, fellows mentioned receiving strategic guidance on aligning their goals with sustainable development objectives and enhancing operational efficiency. One fellow shared that their mentor helped refine their marketing materials and strategy, which significantly impacted their business. Another mentioned, "The mentor provides motivation and checks on our business milestones every fortnight," underscoring the importance of regular, constructive feedback. These insights reflect how mentorship facilitated both personal and organisational development, offering critical skills in leadership, decision-making, and project management.

“ Regular mentorship sessions boosted my confidence to implement new ideas and expand our services to new markets.

\_ SIP Fellow, 2024

Mentor Engagement Usefulness for Personal & Organisational Development



In contrast, some fellows expressed frustration with the mentorship engagement due to lack of availability or inconsistent meetings. As one fellow

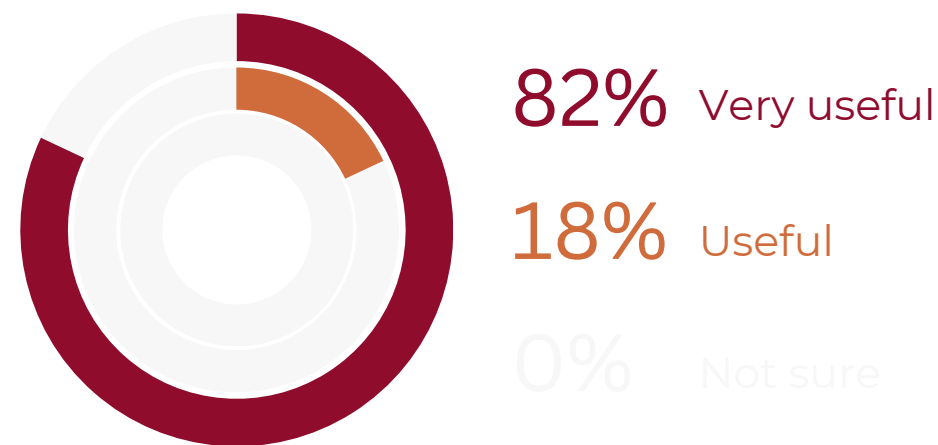
stated, "We haven't been able to engage much given his political assignments," and another shared that after initial meetings, their mentor "didn't keep up with our subsequent engagement schedules." These responses point to the need for mentors to be both accessible and committed to a regular meeting schedule, ensuring consistent and impactful engagement.

In addition, some fellows emphasised the need for tailored, sector-specific mentorship to address the unique challenges of their industries. For instance, a fellow shared, "This is me just saying; he doesn't really have a deep knowledge about what we do. In terms of other technical aspects, he doesn't really give much." This highlights the gap in mentorship where general business advice falls short in addressing the specific technical or operational issues fellows face in their respective sectors, particularly in specialized fields. Tailored mentorship, ideally with industry experts, would provide more targeted guidance to help fellows navigate sector-specific challenges and accelerate their growth.

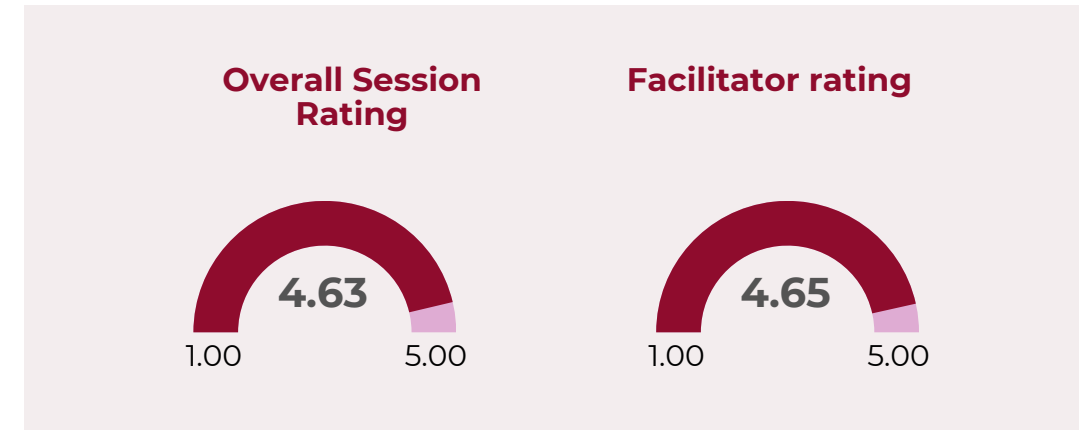
## D Enterprise Sustainability Workshop

The Enterprise Sustainability Workshop is a cornerstone of the Social Innovators Programme, playing a pivotal role in advancing the personal and organisational growth of the fellows participating in the programme. The endline survey results reveal that the ESW sessions had a significant positive impact on the fellows, with 82% of respondents finding the sessions "very useful" and 18% rating them as "useful." Notably, no respondents rated the webinars as "not useful" or "not very useful," indicating that the content was highly valued and applicable.

ESW Usefulness for Personal & Organisational Growth?



## 1 Design Thinking for Social Innovation



Key feedback

“The session on Design Thinking for Social Innovation was incredibly insightful. I learned how crucial empathy is in developing solutions that truly address social issues. Understanding the five stages of the Design Thinking process: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, and Test, gave me a structured approach to tackling problems creatively. I also gained practical techniques from the video presented for brainstorming and ideation, like mind mapping and sketching, which will be invaluable in generating innovative ideas for our projects.”

## 2 Marketing and Branding for Social Enterprises



Key feedback

“(I learned that) founders should brand themselves as much as they are branding their services and company in general. Branding is also beyond LOGO, COLORS, etc, it is beyond what we see but rather branding is how we are perceived.”

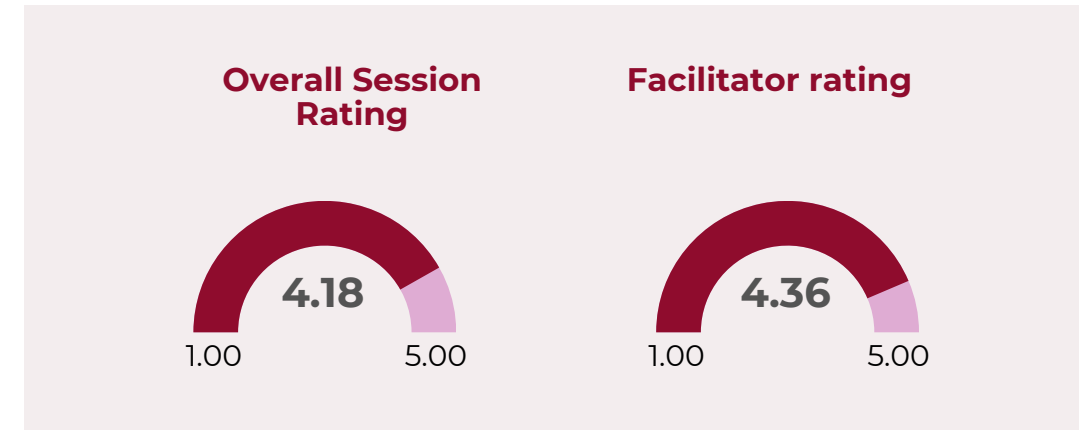
### 3 Strategies for Accessing Markets



Key feedback

“ I plan to implement targeted market segmentation and enhance our digital marketing efforts to increase customer engagement and reach. The real-world examples and case studies made the concepts relatable and actionable.

### 4 Fundraising: Identifying Your Funding Model



Key feedback

“ We will take a more strategic approach to financial planning; we'll develop a sustainable financial roadmap that adapts to changes in funding landscapes and organizational priorities. This involves creating clear goals, timelines, and metrics to measure our fundraising success.

### 5 Financial Management



Key feedback

“ I gained insights into strategies for achieving long-term financial sustainability, such as establishing reserve funds and exploring investment opportunities. These approaches can help safeguard our organization against financial uncertainties and ensure ongoing operations.



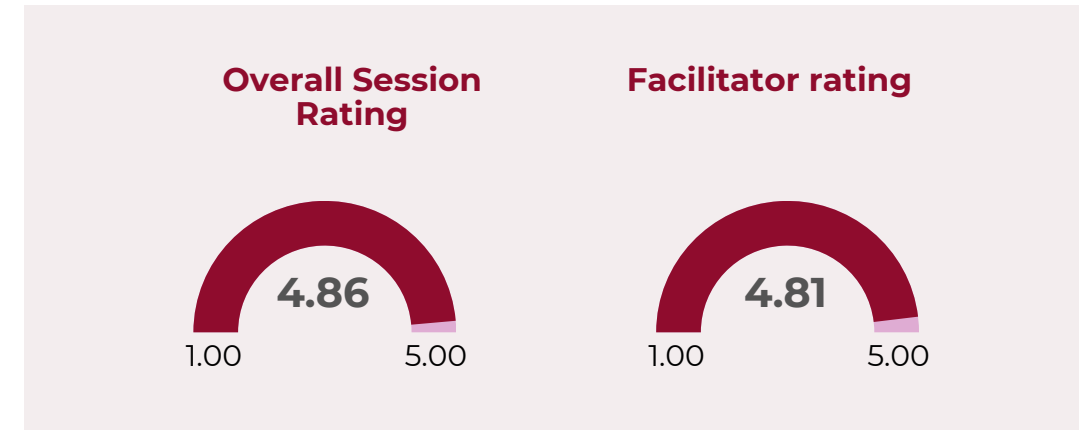
## 6 Strategy Development and Implementation



Key feedback

“ I gained key insights into the importance of aligning strategic initiatives with our core mission and values to ensure coherence and direction. I plan to apply insights by aligning our initiatives with our mission, conducting a thorough SWOT analysis, setting clear measurable objectives, developing actionable plans, implementing continuous monitoring, and engaging stakeholders.

## 7 Corporate Governance



Key feedback

“ I plan to enhance our company governance by establishing a strong governance framework, defining board responsibilities, implementing robust risk management practices, improving stakeholder engagement, and fostering a culture of ethical conduct and compliance. These measures will support our sustainable growth and success.

“ Corporate governance was the best for me. If I could join the next cohort, that’s a session I would love to attend. I don’t mind paying for that session. It was really wow!

## 8 Hiring and Retaining the Right Team



Key feedback

“ The session provided valuable insights on using behavioral and situational questions during interviews. These techniques help to better assess a candidate's fit for both the role and the organizational culture... I gained a deeper understanding of how creating a positive work environment and fostering employee engagement can lead to higher productivity and retention.

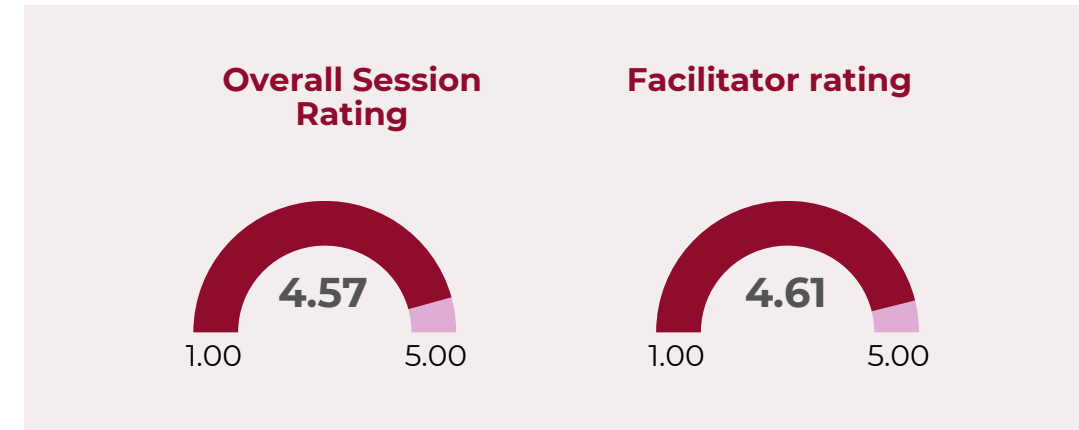
## 9 Developing Winning Pitches



### Key feedback

“The session was extremely helpful, providing practical tips on creating compelling and effective pitches. I appreciated the focus on tailoring the pitch to the audience and the emphasis on storytelling.”

## 10 Outcome Harvesting and Measurement



### Key feedback

“I learned the need to establish clear, measurable goals and key performance indicators (KPIs) to track our progress. I plan to enhance my impact measurement by setting clear, measurable goals, developing specific KPIs, and conducting regular reviews.”

The following key themes emerged from the fellows feedback regarding the ESW sessions.

### Sustainability

True to its name, sustainability was a notable theme in the fellows responses. Fellows noted that the webinars provided "insightful and impactful" content, enabling them to gain a deeper understanding of sustainability principles and practical strategies for implementing them within their organisations. One fellow stated, "I gained further insights on building a sustainable business model," while another reflected, "The webinars deepened my knowledge of sustainable business practices, including practical strategies for balancing economic, social, and environmental priorities." These comments highlight the value of the webinars in equipping fellows with the knowledge to enhance their organisations' sustainability in multiple dimensions.

## Practical application

A recurring theme from the feedback was the practical application of the webinar content. Fellows emphasised how the knowledge gained was directly applied to improve their organizations' operational efficiency, strategic direction, and sustainability practices. For example, a fellow shared, "Insights from the webinars helped us refine the Book Drive Store's role as a sustainability arm of the Read to Learn Foundation," illustrating how the workshop directly influenced their organisational model. Another fellow noted, "We have been able to track and avoid unnecessary revenue leakages, simplified our standard operating procedures which have reduced burnouts," showcasing the tangible operational improvements driven by the workshop.

## Improved Processes and Operations

The fellows expressed notable improvements in their operational capacities, particularly in team structure and process optimisation. A fellow working on waste recycling shared how their operations, including waste collection and conversion into polyester fibers, became more streamlined after joining SIP. As he noted, "We are going back to developing tech tools to make our processes more seamless."

The introduction of new tech, such as vending machines for waste collection, aligns with his team's goal to scale operations using tech-enabled processes. Similarly, a fellow from Farmspeak Technology Ltd. detailed an internal restructuring, stating, "We adjusted our structure, made some people take up management roles, and leveraged third parties for M&E." This shift aimed to improve operational efficiency and ensure the team could manage growth more effectively. She further emphasised the value of practical tips during the fellowship, citing an example of how she applied the participatory approach she learned: "We brought some farmers who used our products into the office, we asked them what features they used and which they didn't. This helped us optimise our product." This practical application of lessons helped fine-tune product offerings to better match market needs.

## Networking and Collaboration Opportunities

Another valuable aspect of the workshops was the networking opportunities they provided. Several fellows noted that the webinars facilitated connections with like-minded organisations and potential collaborators, which has helped to expand their professional networks.

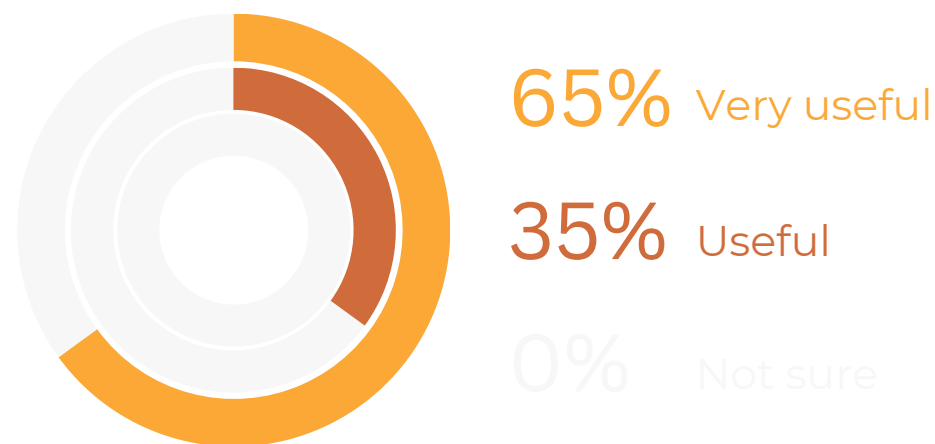
One fellow mentioned, "The webinars facilitated connections with like-minded organizations and professionals, fostering collaborations that align with our goals and values." This underscores the importance of networking in strengthening the sustainability of fellows' organisations by opening doors for future partnerships and collaborations.

The feedback from the ESW sessions indicates that the programme effectively met its objectives of enhancing both personal leadership capabilities and organisational sustainability. The webinars provided fellows with actionable frameworks and strategies to integrate sustainability into their operations, refine their business models, and innovate within their respective sectors. The positive feedback suggests that continued emphasis on practical tools, networking opportunities, and hands-on application will further strengthen the programme's impact. Additionally, given the evident value in topics like financial planning, market analysis, and resource mobilisation, future workshops should expand on these themes to provide even deeper insights and support.

## E Specialised Support Sessions

The Specialised Support Sessions (SSS) within the fellowship programme was meant to provide tailored support to fellows in priority areas identified during their organisational capacity assessments. The endline survey results reveal that these sessions were highly regarded, with 65% of respondents finding them “very useful” and 35% rating them as “useful.”

How Useful were the SSS for your Personal & Organisational Growth?



The following key points were raised by the fellows regarding the value of the Specialised Support Sessions.

### Targeted Support

Respondents valued the targeted nature of the sessions, particularly in areas critical for scaling their social enterprises. One fellow highlighted, “The specialized support webinars were very useful as they offered targeted guidance on specific business challenges, particularly in areas like fundraising and impact measurement,” while another noted, “The calls to have us go through our financials was a great way to show social businesses in the programme that they really cared to see us grow.” This feedback underscores the personalised and impactful approach of the support provided.

### Immediate Applicability

The feedback highlighted the immediate applicability of the tools and strategies from the specialised sessions, which equipped fellows with valuable problem-solving skills through real-world case studies and interactive learning. Fellows emphasised

the practical benefits of the sessions. One respondent shared that the sessions “provided a detailed explanation for key concepts that were previously fragmented.” This shows that the support not only filled knowledge gaps but also provided actionable steps for improvement.

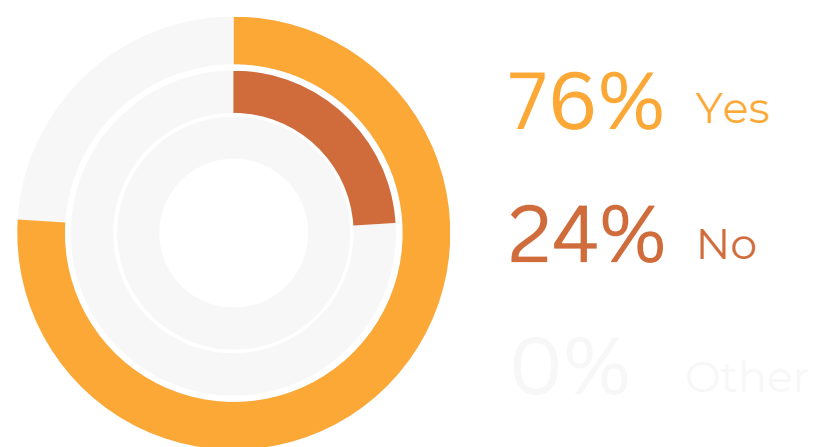
### Confidence

The sessions contributed to the fellows' confidence and motivation. One fellow explained, “Learning from seasoned experts and peers reinforced my confidence in implementing innovative projects like the clean energy initiative and permaculture farming.” This feedback suggests that the specialised support sessions not only provided technical expertise but also fostered a supportive environment that encouraged fellows to take bold steps toward achieving their goals.

## F Partnerships and Recognitions

The Social Innovators Programme has contributed to the development of new partnerships and enhanced visibility for fellows, with 76% reporting new collaborations since joining the fellowship. Notable partnerships include global and regional organisations such as Google AI, G20 Global Land Initiative, Access Bank, and Oando Plc, as well as networks like the Nigerian Young Farmers Network and the Small and Medium Enterprise Development

Have you developed new partners since joining the Fellowship?

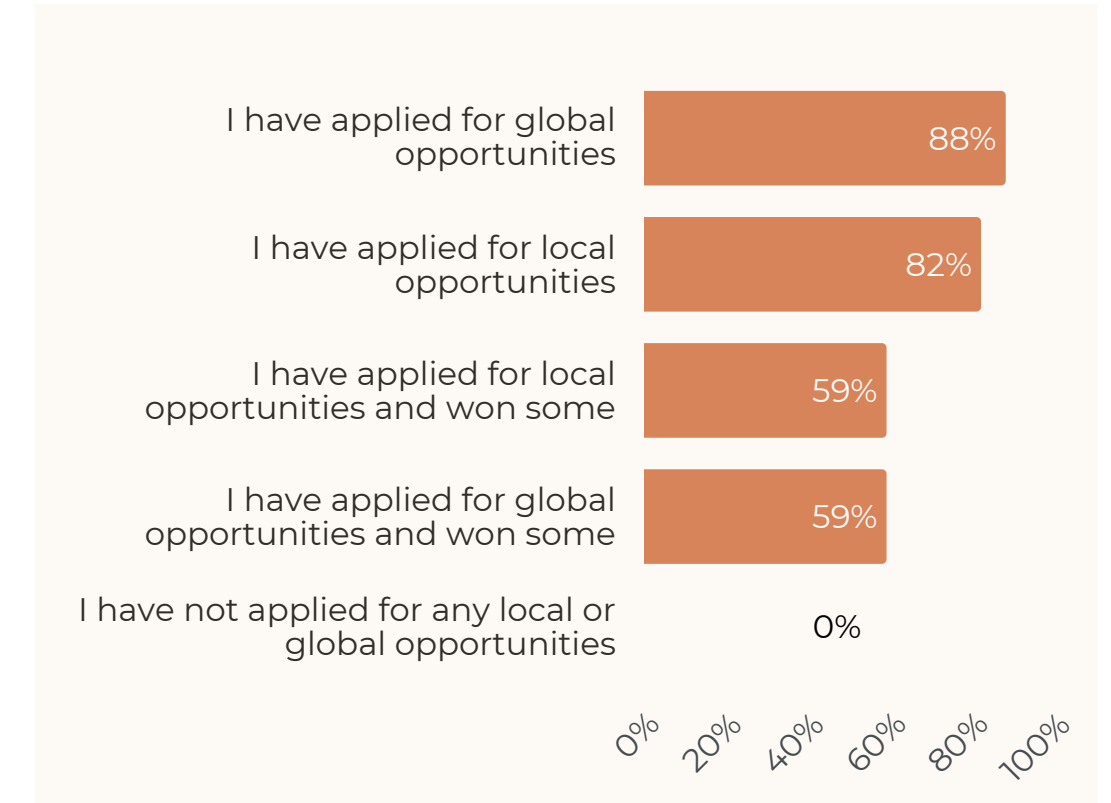


Agency of Benin Republic. These partnerships represent a diverse spectrum of sectors, ranging from finance and technology to agriculture and environmental sustainability, illustrating the programme's ability to connect fellows to impactful networks.

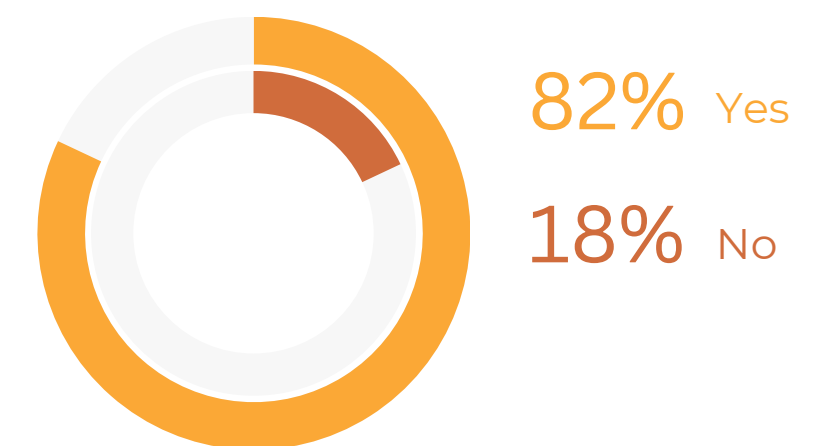
In addition to partnerships, fellows have actively pursued and secured local and global opportunities, with 88% applying for global opportunities and 82% applying for local ones. Fellow success in winning such opportunities is evident, with notable recognitions such as Google AI Fund, The Tony Elumelu Foundation Grant, Mastercard Foundation-EARTH University Fellowship and YALI East Africa Fellowship. These opportunities not only validate the fellows' business innovations but also provide them with platforms to scale their impact.

Furthermore, 82% of fellows have been acknowledged with awards or media recognition since joining the fellowship.

## Fellow Responses on Global and Local Opportunity Applications



Have you received Awards and Media Recognition for your Innovation since joining the Fellowship?



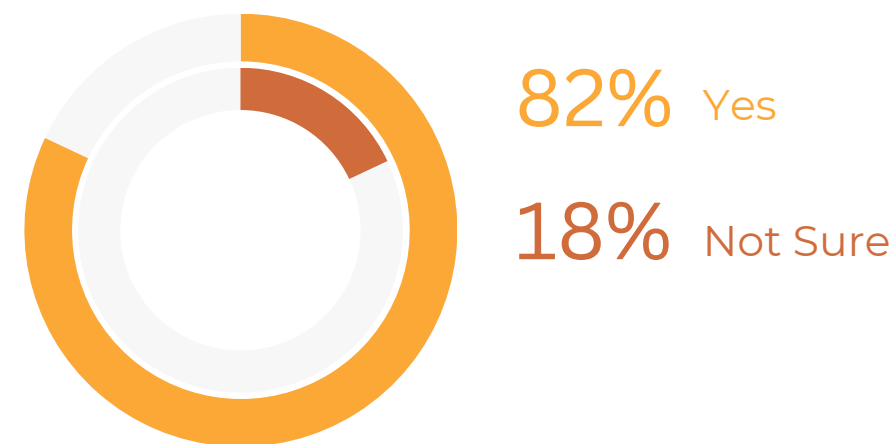
Examples of recognitions received by the fellows include coverage in prominent outlets like The Cable and Context News. And awards such as Adaeze Akpagbula winning the Global Young Entrepreneur of the Year and Climate Entrepreneurship Award by Youth Business International (YBI), and Most Innovative Enterprise by Impact Hub Lagos; Christian Adoh being listed on the 30 under 30 EVWA Changemakers list by the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens and selected to speak at the UNCCD COP16 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; and Amidu Mohammed winning the JCI Nigeria's Creative Young Entrepreneurs Award. These recognitions not only enhance the fellows' personal profiles but also serve as a catalyst for attracting investors, partners, and additional media attention, fostering long-term sustainability for their ventures.

These findings indicate that the fellowship has proven to be a powerful vehicle for facilitating strategic partnerships and enhancing fellows' reputations on both local and global stages. The achievements highlight the programme's success in providing fellows with the tools and recognition needed to scale their businesses, access funding, and establish meaningful collaborations that will drive sustainability and impact.

## G Virtual Community of Practice

A Virtual Community of Practice (VCOP) was created for the fellows on WhatsApp. The findings demonstrate that a large majority of participants (82%) feel their expectations have been met. This positive response to the VCOP suggests that it has been a highly effective tool for connecting fellows, sharing knowledge, and fostering a collaborative community.

Do you feel your expectations for joining the VCOP are being met?



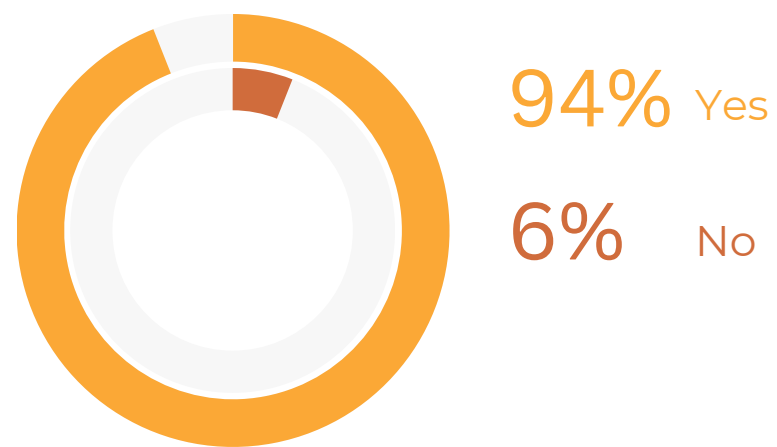
## Expectations and Engagement

When joining the WhatsApp group, fellows expressed clear expectations of networking, collaboration, and gaining relevant resources. One fellow shared, "To gain access to a community of like-minded fellows for networking and collaboration," while another hoped to "receive timely updates, resources, and information relevant to organizational development." These expectations were largely fulfilled, as indicated by 82% of fellows confirming that their expectations were met. Fellows appreciated the group for facilitating "real-time feedback," connecting them with "industry experts," and offering "a knowledge base all for free." The group thus served as both an information hub and a platform for peer-to-peer learning, providing fellows with the tools and support needed for their entrepreneurial growth.

### Resource Sharing and Outcome

The WhatsApp group also served as a crucial space for resource sharing. A significant 94% of fellows reported that the group supported them with relevant information and resources for their organisational development. As one fellow stated, “The group facilitates regular sharing of resources, opportunities, and experiences among fellows.” The access to “exclusive resources” and “continuous support and valuable advice from fellow entrepreneurs” has been instrumental in providing practical knowledge, making the group a valuable tool for organisational growth.

Has your participation in the VCOP supported your Organisational Development?



One key benefit of the group noted by fellows was the provision of updates about the programme and opportunities for collaboration. These updates were considered critical for keeping fellows informed and engaged in real-time, enabling them to take advantage of timely opportunities for their businesses. The group’s role in this was described as a “platform for collaboration and peer-to-peer learning,” which indicates its effectiveness in supporting both individual and collective growth.

### Other findings

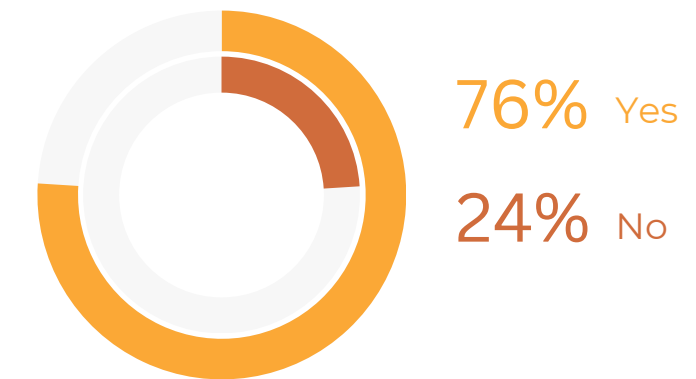
Findings also revealed that the Social Innovators Programme has improved the fellows’ financial systems, networks, and approaches to measuring impact, all of which are key drivers for organisational growth and sustainability.

### Funding and Financial Accountability

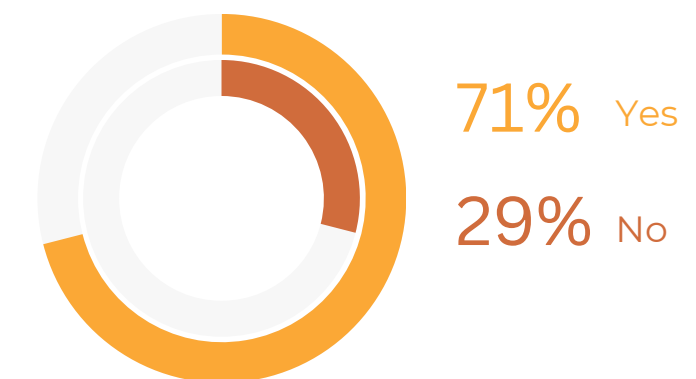
A key outcome of the fellowship is the ability of fellows to secure new sources of funding, with 76% reporting successful diversification of funding streams. This reflects the programme’s influence in

strengthening fellows' access to financial support. However, there is a notable divide in financial transparency: 71% of fellows now have financial systems in place to ensure accountability, indicating progress but also highlighting areas where some organisations may still need to improve in formalising their financial operations.

Have you developed new sources of funding for your organisation?



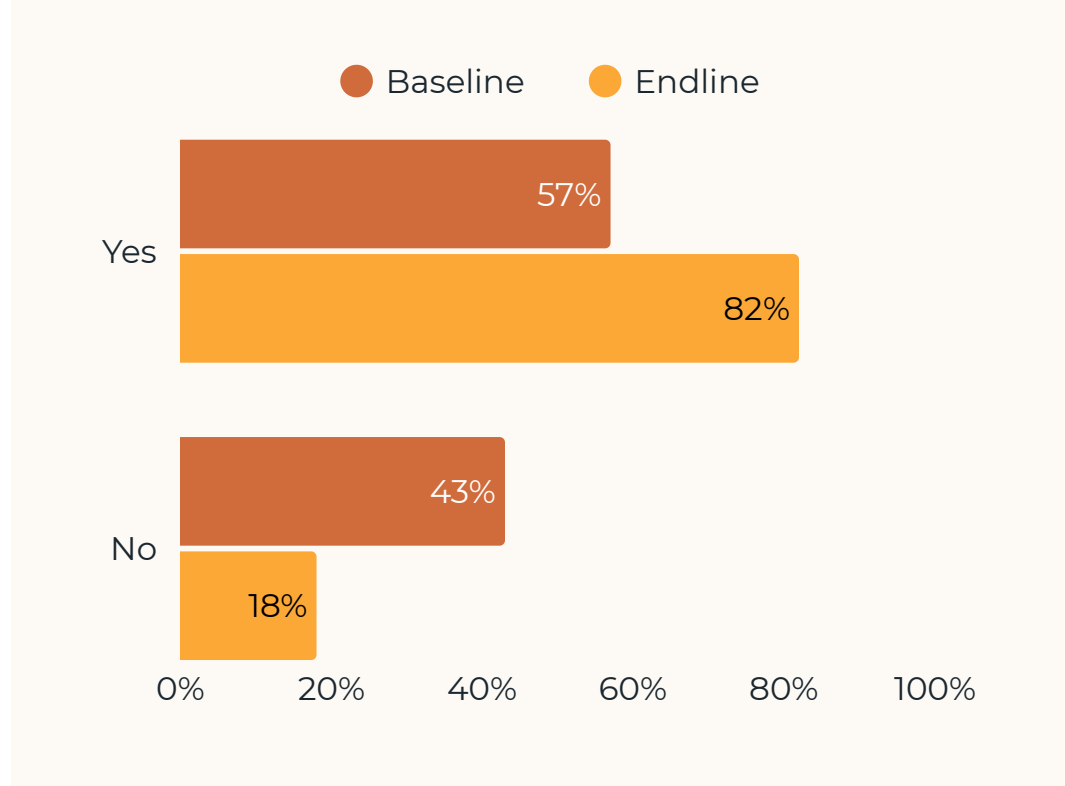
Do you have financial system(s) in place to enable accountability & transparency in your organisation?



### Building Networks for Investment

A notable 82% of fellows now belong to networks that help attract impact investors, a significant increase from the 57% at baseline. These networks are vital for accessing funding and investment opportunities, positioning them for long-term growth.

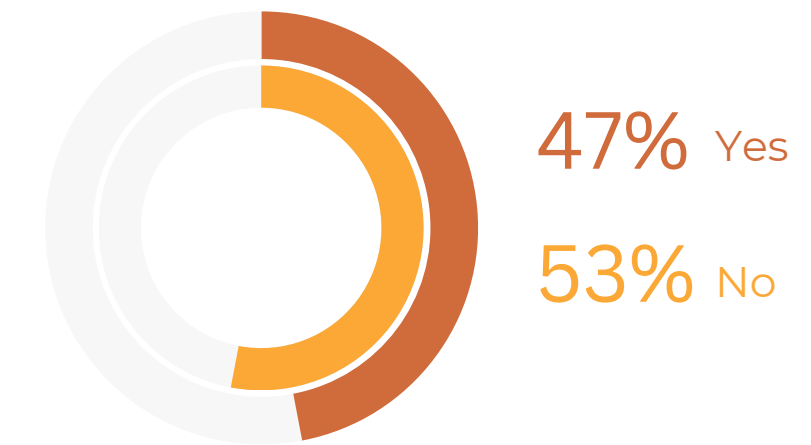
Are you part of any network to access or attract impact investors/investment?



### Enhanced Impact Measurement

The fellows' approach to measuring impact has evolved significantly, with 47% reporting changes since joining the programme. Key developments include the integration of “both quantitative and qualitative data analysis”, the introduction of “community-centered metrics,” and the “alignment of impact measures with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”. For instance, one respondent shared that they now track “the number of youth and women beneficiaries (SDG 5 and SDG 10)” and “assess environmental conservation outcomes (SDG 13 and SDG 15).” This reflects a more structured and comprehensive approach to measuring impact, going beyond outputs to capture deeper community and environmental outcomes. These refinements not only enhance the credibility of the fellows' work but also position them to effectively communicate their impact to stakeholders and investors.

Have you made changes to how you measure impact since joining the programme?





# Analysis by Evaluation Criteria

The findings from the analyses of data from the Social Innovators Programme were further evaluated in the light of the OECD/DAC criteria, supplemented by gender considerations. As results of this process, the following conclusions were reached:

## 1 Relevance

The relevance of the Social Innovators Programme is highly evident in its alignment with the needs of fellows. The fellowship effectively addresses the critical challenges faced by early and mid-stage social enterprises in Africa, particularly in organisational capacity building, access to funding, and market access. The diverse range of fellows' primary SDG focus areas; spanning climate action, poverty alleviation, food security, and sustainable economic growth; demonstrates the programme's alignment with pressing regional development goals.

Furthermore, the programme's design is responsive to the distinct barriers experienced by African social entrepreneurs. As highlighted by the fellows, the combination of tailored workshops, specialised

support, and mentoring directly responds to these gaps by enhancing their leadership skills, financial management, and operational sustainability. This makes SIP highly relevant to the broader context of fostering youth-led innovation and entrepreneurship in Africa.

## 2 Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the SIP is demonstrated by its ability to equip fellows with the necessary tools, skills, and resources to strengthen their enterprises and scale their impact. The results from the Organisational Capacity Assessments (OCA) reveal notable improvements in Leadership and Corporate Governance and Financial Management, with many fellows reporting significant gains in these areas by the end of the programme.

Fellows highlighted the practical utility of the Enterprise Sustainability Workshop (ESW) in providing actionable insights on sustainable business models. The positive feedback from 82% of respondents, who found the workshops "very useful," illustrates the programme's success in meeting its

capacity-building objectives. Additionally, the mentoring sessions were regarded as particularly impactful in offering personalised strategic guidance, although the mixed satisfaction levels indicate the need for improvements in mentor availability and engagement consistency.

The creation of a Virtual Community of Practice (VCOP) has also contributed to the programme's effectiveness, fostering continuous peer-to-peer learning and resource sharing. This community has proven to be an invaluable source of support for fellows, helping them remain connected and engaged throughout the fellowship.

## 3 Effectiveness

The efficiency of SIP in utilising resources to achieve intended outcomes is evident, although there are areas where resource allocation could be optimised. The programme's key components—workshops, mentorship, and specialised sessions—are strategically designed to address the multifaceted needs of the fellows while maintaining a focus on measurable impact. The fellowship successfully

integrated these elements within the 9-month timeframe, offering a well-rounded curriculum and a robust network for each fellow.

However, some challenges were identified, particularly in the mentorship component. A significant percentage of fellows (24%) reported not receiving mentorship at all, with others expressing frustration regarding the irregularity of meetings and limited availability of mentors. Addressing these logistical issues could improve overall efficiency in mentor engagement, ensuring that all fellows benefit equally from the mentorship opportunity.

The programme has also been successful in fostering new partnerships and attracting funding for fellows. With 76% of participants forming new collaborations, SIP has effectively facilitated network-building, though future iterations could benefit from streamlining the matchmaking process between fellows and potential partners to maximise the impact of these connections.

## 4 Sustainability

Sustainability is a central theme within SIP, both in terms of the long-term impact on fellows' enterprises and the programme's overall legacy. A majority (88%) of fellows expressed confidence in the sustainability of their ventures, citing diverse revenue streams, social impact, and environmental responsibility as key contributors. The programme has contributed to the development of organisations that balance financial, social, and environmental sustainability, such as Farmspeak Technology and Revnics Energy, both of which integrate climate-smart solutions into their operations.

Furthermore, the increased number of fellows who now belong to networks supporting investment (82%) and those reporting enhanced impact measurement (47%) demonstrates that SIP has laid a strong foundation for long-term growth. These improvements in financial systems and impact measurement will help fellows attract funding and demonstrate their social value to potential investors and partners.

The programme's alumni network and ongoing support after the fellowship also contribute to sustainability, ensuring that fellows remain connected and continue to benefit from resources and mentorship. This long-term engagement is vital for fostering sustainable development in the social entrepreneurship sector.

## 5 Gender

The programme's focus on gender equality is reflected in both its design and outcomes. Female participation was encouraged, with 40% of the fellows being women. The programme outcomes demonstrated that both male and female fellows had equitable access to resources, including mentorship, networking opportunities, and specialised supports. Notably, female fellows recorded remarkable achievements, with three out of eight receiving awards for their outstanding performance on the programme.

## Secondary Learnings and Lessons for Future Iterations

### 1 Mentorship Accessibility and Consistency

One of the key lessons learned from the SIP is the importance of mentorship accessibility and consistency. While mentorship proved valuable for many fellows, the uneven distribution of mentor availability impacted the effectiveness of the programme for some participants. Additionally, there was a strong need for tailored, sector-specific mentorship, as some fellows felt that general advice often did not fully address the unique challenges of their industries. Ensuring that mentors are readily accessible, committed to regular engagement, and have expertise in the specific sectors of the fellows will improve the overall experience and effectiveness of the programme for all participants.

### 2 Hybrid and Extended Sessions

Fellows expressed a clear desire for more interactive and in-depth learning experiences. Some participants noted that certain sessions, such as Design Thinking and Financial Management, would have been more impactful if conducted in-person rather than online.

As one fellow shared, "I wished we had the online sessions in-person; Design Thinking would have been great if it was in-person." Additionally, the demand for more practical and simplified financial management sessions suggests that such topics should be taught in a hybrid format, where fellows attend in-person, bringing their financial records for hands-on learning. Fellows also requested longer sessions, particularly for complex topics like corporate governance, where extending the session into multiple classes would enable a deeper understanding.

### 3 Virtual Community of Practice (VCOP) and Networking

The success of the Virtual Community of Practice (VCOP) suggests that future iterations of the programme should continue to leverage digital platforms to maintain connections, share resources, and facilitate peer learning, even after the fellowship ends. This virtual network could be expanded to include a wider range of stakeholders, including potential investors and sector experts, to further enrich the support available to fellows.

### 4 Streamlined Pairing for Specialized Support and Investment Opportunities

Feedback from fellows also highlights the need for a more streamlined process for pairing fellows with specialised support and investment opportunities. Improving the efficiency and responsiveness of these services could significantly enhance the programme's overall impact.

### 5 Increasing Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs in Africa

The findings also underscored the crucial role that female participation plays in social entrepreneurship, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, where women account for 26–30% of entrepreneurial activity, the highest rate globally.<sup>4,5</sup> This highlights the immense potential women have in driving economic growth and innovation across the continent. However, despite this high participation compared to other continents, female entrepreneurs in Africa still face significant barriers, including limited access to financing and gender-based income disparities.

4. Akinyoade, A. (2023). [African women entrepreneurs](#). African Studies Centre Leiden. Retrieved January 10, 2025

5. Harvard University Center for African Studies. (2020). [Women and the changing face of entrepreneurship in Africa](#) Retrieved January 10, 2025

According to a recent report, women-led startups received only about 1.5% of startup funding between 2019 and 2023, and female entrepreneurs typically earn 34% less than their male counterparts, despite reinvesting around 90% of their earnings into their communities.<sup>6,7</sup>

This programme's outcomes reflect the potential for female entrepreneurs to thrive when given the right opportunities. The outstanding performance by three female fellows in this cohort demonstrates that, with access to resources such as finance, networks, and mentorship, women can significantly contribute to the social impact and entrepreneurial ecosystem.

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6. Agwaibor, S. (2024). IWD2024: [Driving digital gender inclusion in Africa](#). TechCabal. Retrieved January 10, 2025

7. Yoka, N. (2024). [Women entrepreneurs: Persistent financial obstacles](#). Africanews. Retrieved January 10, 2025

## Testimonials

“

*The Social Innovators Programme has been a game-changer for me and Pugu Hills Eco-Cultural Tourism. It not only provided the tools and mentorship I needed to overcome challenges but also instilled in me the confidence to lead with purpose. I am grateful for the opportunity to grow and contribute to sustainable development in Tanzania. I encourage every aspiring social innovator to seize this opportunity—it will transform your vision into impact.*

— **Sairis Lucia Bugeraha** (SIP Fellow, 2024),  
Founder, Pugu Hills Eco-Cultural Tourism, Tanzania





# Recommendations

## A Recommendations for the Programme

### 1 Enhance Networking and Industry Exposure

Several fellows highlighted that networking sessions felt rushed and lacked depth, limiting meaningful connections. To address this, the programme could extend networking sessions or organise smaller, more focused groups. Additionally, many fellows expressed a desire for greater exposure to industry leaders and external partners. The programme could introduce more structured, facilitated networking events, industry insights, and collaborative projects with key stakeholders. This would provide fellows with more opportunities to engage, make valuable connections, and foster partnerships that could support their enterprises and enhance their sustainability.

### 2 Strengthen Mentorship Engagement

The mentorship component needs improvement, as 24% of fellows did not receive mentorship, and others expressed frustration with irregular meetings. Moving

forward, the programme should ensure that all fellows are matched with mentors and that mentorship engagement is consistent and standardised. Additionally, there is a clear need for tailored, sector-specific mentorship to address the unique challenges faced by fellows in various industries. The programme could also explore mentorship structure within its control to provide personalised support and ensure that mentors are available and responsive to fellows' needs.

### 3 Consider Sector-Specific and Regionally Tailored Content

Fellows have called for more specialised workshops and regionally relevant content to address the unique challenges they face in their specific industries or geographical contexts. As one fellow shared, “Provide sector-specific workshops and ... adapt some aspects of the fellowship to address regional and cultural contexts.” To better serve a diverse set of participants, the programme could consider offering sector-specific learning sessions and customising content to reflect regional and cultural considerations.

This would ensure that all fellows are equipped with practical, localised knowledge that can be directly applied to their enterprises.

### 4 Expand Practical, Specialised Sessions on Investment Readiness

Introduce more hands-on, specialised training that focuses on investment readiness. These sessions should include industry-led pitch preparation, funding strategy workshops, and real-time feedback from investors or sector experts to better prepare fellows for capital-raising opportunities.

### 5 Facilitate Access to Investors

Fellows highlighted the need for stronger connections with potential investors. Future iterations of the programme should consider structured investor engagement opportunities, such as pitch sessions, demo days, or curated introductions, to support fellows in securing funding and scaling their ventures.

## 6 Increase In-Person Learning Opportunities

Fellows expressed a desire for more physical learning engagements. Introducing hybrid or more in-person sessions would enhance peer-to-peer learning, deepen engagement with facilitators, and improve overall programme immersion.

## 7 Integrate Financial and M&E Tools into Capacity Building

Incorporate financial management and Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) templates into relevant sessions, particularly those focused on sustainability. Doing so would improve fellows' operational transparency and equip them with practical tools to measure and communicate impact for long-term credibility.

## 8 Foster Active Alumni Engagement

With the alumni community in place, it's crucial to maintain an active and engaged network. To ensure long-term support and collaboration, SIP could facilitate regular alumni meetups and create structured opportunities for continued networking and knowledge sharing. The addition of thematic discussions or expert-led industry insights would enhance the alumni community, keeping fellows connected, informed, and motivated.

## B Recommendations for Fellows and Social Innovators

### 1 Sustain Ongoing Networking and Peer Collaboration

Post-fellowship, it is important for alumni to continue leveraging the networking opportunities created during the programme. Maintaining and building upon these connections can lead to long-term partnerships and collaborations. Alumni should take the initiative to engage with their peers, share resources, and collaborate on projects that will drive mutual growth.

### 2 Continue Maximising Mentorship and Tailored Support

While formal mentorship may have ended, alumni are encouraged to keep in touch with their mentors for periodic check-ins and advice. If needed, fellows can also seek out other mentors or experts in the field to address specific challenges. Alumni should remain proactive in seeking personalised guidance to continue developing their enterprises.

### 3 Implement Learnings to Tackle Real-World Challenges

Alumni should apply the practical knowledge gained during the fellowship to address ongoing and future challenges in their social enterprises. By integrating strategies for impact measurement and scaling, fellows can refine their business models and operational strategies. Using insights from the specialised sessions and case studies will be key to driving sustainable growth.

### 4 Engage Actively in Alumni Networks

Fellows should remain actively involved in alumni networks to continue benefiting from ongoing support. Participating in alumni events, knowledge-sharing platforms, and discussions will provide opportunities for continued mentorship, networking, and accessing new funding opportunities. Engaging with the alumni community will foster a collaborative environment for sharing best practices and furthering the impact of their work.



## Testimonials

“

*The SIP programme has been transformative for both me and Farmspeak. It has provided us with the skills, resources, and networks to strengthen our business while staying committed to our mission. I would encourage any entrepreneur who wants to scale their impact while ensuring financial sustainability to take part in this programme.*

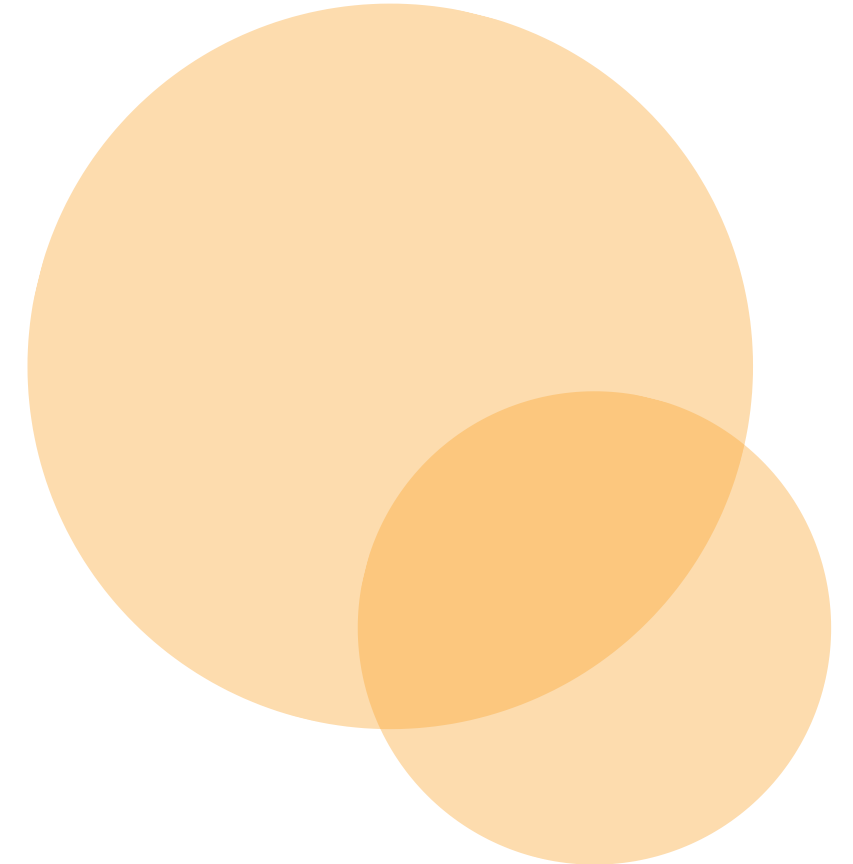
– **Adaeze Akpagbula** (SIP Fellow, 2024),  
Co-Founder, Farmspeak Technology Ltd., Nigeria





# Social Innovators Programme (SIP)

2024 Success Stories



# Mago Hasfa

Founder, Read to Learn Foundation, Uganda

My name is Mago Hasfa, a literacy specialist and social entrepreneur from Uganda. I am the founder of the Read to Learn Foundation, a women-led nonprofit dedicated to improving foundational literacy among underserved communities. Our mission is to ensure that every child has access to quality education through grassroots literacy programs, in-school book clubs, and sustainable production hubs that recycle waste into educational materials.

## The Challenge/Gap

Before joining SIP, my enterprise faced several challenges:

- 1. Financial Constraints:** Limited funding restricted the scalability of our programs and sustainability model, particularly the Book Drive Store..
- 2. Operational Gaps:** Weak governance structures and inefficiencies in program delivery hindered our ability to expand impact.

**3. Knowledge Gaps:** I lacked expertise in impact investment readiness, strategic partnerships, and scaling social enterprises..

**4. Visibility and Market Access:** Expanding the reach of our AI-powered SOMA Reading App and literacy tools required strategic guidance and stronger networks.

## SIP's Role

SIP played a pivotal role in addressing these challenges and accelerating the growth of the Read to Learn Foundation:

- 1. Capacity Building:** Enhanced my leadership and strategic planning skills, enabling me to refine operational structures and improve team performance.
- 2. Mentorship and Networking:**
  - Connected me with mentors who provided invaluable guidance on scaling operations and preparing for impact investment.



- Networking opportunities at the 7th Annual Convening for Impact Investment opened discussions with three organizations:
  - i) Development of the SOMA App.
  - ii) Strategic guidance on setting up for impact investment.
  - iii) Authorship and publication of a book to amplify our work globally.

**3. Financial Support and Recognition:** Winning the Seyi Bickersteth Award (one million Naira) reinforced our credibility and allowed us to invest in expanding financial and accountability systems.

### Impact and Results

- **Program Expansion:** Increased the reach of our literacy programs to impact over 3,800 children, 600 youth literacy champions, and 200 teachers since 2020.
- **Strengthened Systems:** The award money enabled us to upgrade financial systems and enhance operational transparency, building trust with current and future partners.
- **Increased Visibility:** Presenting at the convening raised the foundation's profile, leading to strategic partnership discussions.

- **Environmental Impact:** Diverted 0.5 tons of waste annually from landfills, producing 1,000+ recycled educational tools for underserved communities.

### Key Learnings and Success Factors

- **Strategic Leadership:** The importance of setting clear goals and fostering teamwork for program success.
- **Resilience and Adaptability:** The ability to pivot in response to challenges and feedback.
- **Mentorship is Key:** Guidance from SIP mentors provided clarity on navigating growth challenges and entering new markets.
- **Innovation:** Integrating AI (SOMA App) and sustainability models (Book Drive Store) has ensured long-term relevance and impact.

### Future Plans

- **Scaling Programs:** Expand the Literacy Champions Fellowship to East Africa and roll out the SOMA App across multiple countries by 2025.
- **Impact Investment Readiness:** Strengthen financial and governance systems to secure larger-scale funding.
- **Global Reach:** Publish an impactful book and grow partnerships to amplify advocacy and literacy solutions globally.

## Testimonial

“

The SIP Fellowship has been a game-changer for both me and the Read to Learn Foundation. The mentorship, training, and networking opportunities provided the tools to scale our impact and position us for long-term success. My advice to future fellows: embrace every learning opportunity, stay resilient, and trust in the process. SIP will transform your vision into actionable, sustainable impact.

# Raphael Asiba

Co-Founder, Solakilimo Solutions Limited, Kenya

Solakilimo provides reliable and efficient solar powered cold storage and logistic solutions to smallholder farmers in East Africa. Solakilimo enables farmers address food spoilages and energy poverty simultaneously. We empower farmers to preserve their produce, access better markets, and improve their income all while promoting sustainable and resilient agricultural practices.

## The Challenge/Gap

**Business model-** As an early-stage company refining our business model and product offerings was a great challenge. Working in informal regions with limited revenues was making it difficult to charge and sell our products and services.

**Team and management-** We had a mix up in roles and most of the time some team members got overworked.

## SIP's Role

**Refined business model and market segments-** Through SIP specialised sessions we have been able to identify the most appropriate business model. We

have also segmented the market and it has enabled us to charge depending on the income levels of different segments.

**Team efficiency-** We have been able to define roles and each team member works in a given line and we have reduced burn outs and conflicts.

## Impact and Results

**Scaling-** Alongside serving fish farmers and traders, we are now serving 100 dairy farmers who use our solar freezers to preserve and transport products.

**Partnership-** We partnered with Ecobora and Power Africa in advancing productive use of energy appliances and serving at least 30 women groups. **Clean water bodies-** We began collecting and recycling plastic waste from water bodies used in part of solar freezers manufacturing. We have so far recycled 30,000kgs which has created clean water bodies and increased economic activities for these communities.



## Key Learnings and Success Factors

**Market segmentation-** Different segments have different characteristics and income levels. One revenue model will not work across all segments.

**Adaptability-** We have been able to adapt and overcome different business challenges as a team. There is increased team work and role sharing.

**Innovation-** We have been able to iterate and produce different versions of the solar freezers depending on the produce preserved and transported. We are also incorporating technology to develop a fresh produce market place which will enable customers access better priced markets.

## Future Plans

**Scaling solar freezers and cold units access-** We will market and provide services across the lake Victoria basin in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

**Marketplace development-** We are working on developing a fresh produce marketplace for customers.

**Logistics development-** We will develop the 3rd party platform where customers can request for cold transport services from owners of the vehicles.

**Rural solar kiosks-** We will increase the number to ensure at least 50 are set up annually where households and businesses can access solar lights and clean cooking appliances.

## Testimonial

“

The SIP fellowship program has been a pivot in our growth journey. The wonderful networks created, SIP buddy matching and the amazing guests for the specialized sessions created and brought renewed energy and strength to focus on our goals. The mentorship program provides a learning experience from mentors who have gone through the same venture building experiences. You realize you are the only one who faces the various enterprise challenges and that keeps the spirit alive.

“Some years you win, some years you build character”- Steve Jobs

# Agnes Onyekwere

Founder, Project MEND, Nigeria

My name is Agnes, and I am the founder of Project MEND, a social enterprise committed to empowering young women in low-income communities by equipping them with vocational bagmaking skills and entrepreneurial training. We also create high-quality school bags and souvenir pouches to generate sustainable income for the women and fund our impact activities.

## The Challenge/Gap

Before joining the Social Innovators Program (SIP), our biggest challenges included:

- Lack of structured guidance to scale our operations and optimize our impact.
- Limited access to resources and networks that could support our growth.
- A need for stronger organizational systems to enhance our production efficiency and sustainability.

## SIP's Role

SIP provided transformational support that empowered both me and Project MEND:

- Access to expert mentorship, which guided me in refining our business model and pitch.
- Training sessions that enhanced my leadership skills and helped us design scalable structures for the enterprise.
- A supportive network of like-minded fellows and industry professionals who inspired collaboration and growth.

## Impact and Results

Since participating in SIP, Project MEND has achieved the following milestones:

- Increased financial accountability and structure on my team
- Received the Humanitarian of Africa Award
- Expanded our market reach through e-commerce platforms like Jumia and Selar, resulting in higher sales and visibility.



Strengthened organizational systems, enabling us to track impact, scale effectively, and build sustainable partnerships.

### Key Learnings and Success Factors

The most valuable lessons I gained from SIP include:

- **The importance of collaboration:** Leveraging partnerships amplifies impact and opens new opportunities.
- **Data-driven decision-making:** Monitoring and evaluating impact ensures that resources are used effectively.
- **Resilience and adaptability:** Staying committed to the vision, even in the face of challenges, drives long-term success.

### Future Plans

The future of Project MEND is focused on growth and sustainability:

- Launching MEND 2.0, which includes scaling our production capacity and introducing new product lines.
- Expanding our impact to empower more women, aiming to train 5000 women over the next five years.
- Strengthening our revenue streams by entering the corporate souvenir market and securing bulk school bag contracts.

## Testimonial

“

SIP has been an invaluable part of my journey as a social innovator. I started off not taking a lot of things seriously, like my finances but now I am on my way to positioning my organization for higher funding opportunities. To prospective fellows, this is one of the best decisions you can make for your social enterprise.



# More Success Stories ...

Use the link or QR code below to access the full Success Stories shared by the 2024 SIP Fellows

<https://bit.ly/SIPSS24report>





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