

# LEAP!

LEADERSHIP | EFFECTIVENESS | ACCOUNTABILITY | PROFESSIONALISM



**STRONGER TOGETHER:  
PARTNERSHIPS, PEOPLE, AND PROGRESS**

DECEMBER 2025 || VOLUME XXXVIII



**YDOS Alagbole Market  
project**

# WHO WE ARE



## WHO WE ARE

Since 2002, Leadership, Effectiveness, Accountability & Professionalism (LEAP Africa) has been dedicated to empowering young Africans to lead and transform our continent. We tackle societal challenges, inspiring young people to become drivers of sustainable development and nation-building through specific interventions to address the youth leadership gap.

LEAP Africa is a nonprofit organisation working in five programmatic areas called the 3Es+AH: Education, Entrepreneurship, Employability, Active Citizenship, and Health and Well-being. Our programmes are designed to develop essential leadership and life skills, encouraging young people to innovate and lead with integrity and a commitment to social impact. By nurturing entrepreneurial mindsets and enhancing employability, we equip Africa's next generation with the tools to build ventures that fuel economic growth and foster social progress. We are also cultivating a culture of active citizenship, where young leaders feel empowered to launch and lead community development projects and exercise their citizenship in creating lasting change and strong institutions.

Through digital learning, strategic partnerships, and our commitment to advocacy, LEAP Africa is scaling its projects and interventions across Africa. We are building an ecosystem for young leaders to thrive, thereby driving upward social mobility across the continent and securing their future. Our work is anchored in thought leadership, research, capacity building, and personal, organisational, and community leadership.

## OUR MISSION

To inspire and empower African youth by developing capacity and providing resources for transformative personal, organisational, and community leadership.

## OUR VISION

An inclusive and thriving Africa built through dynamic, innovative and ethical youth leaders

### OUR VALUES

#### AUDACITY



We believe in being bold and challenging the status quo to catalyze the change we want to see in Africa.

#### INNOVATION



We leverage new technologies and think-out-of-the box in order to boost the effectiveness of our programmes and interventions.

#### RESPECT



We are committed to working at the highest level of professionalism and upholding the dignity of all our stakeholders.

#### SYNERGY



We collaborate strategically and in unison to achieve a greater impact towards leadership development for youth.

#### INTEGRITY



We consistently demonstrate transparency, and truthfulness and strive to be ethical in all our dealings.

#### EXCELLENCE



We are result-oriented and go the extra mile to deliver the highest standards in our programmes, products and processes.



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A picture of iLead  
Students in Sokoto

# Africa Forward – Leadership, Legacy, and Leverage



As we embark on another exciting chapter at LEAP Africa, I am thrilled to introduce this year's theme: "Africa Forward: Leadership, Legacy, and Leverage." It captures the essence of what drives our work every day, the belief that Africa's future is shaped by visionary leaders, intentional action, and the power of collective impact.

Leadership is not just a title or position; it is the courage to innovate, the wisdom to guide, and the integrity to inspire others. At LEAP Africa, we see this in the young leaders we mentor, the women we empower, and the communities we engage. Each story of growth and transformation is a testament to the potential that lies within Africa's people.

Legacy reminds us that the choices we make today define the world we leave for tomorrow. Our programmes are designed not just to create immediate impact, but to nurture enduring change, leaders who will continue to influence, innovate, and uplift generations to come.

Leverage speaks to the importance of collaboration, partnerships, and strategic action. No individual, organisation, or government can drive Africa forward alone. By working together, across sectors, borders, and communities, we can amplify impact, accelerate progress, and unlock opportunities that benefit all.

This year, as we celebrate achievements and plan bold initiatives, we invite you, our partners, supporters, alumni, and community, to join us in shaping Africa's story. Together, we can harness leadership, honour our legacy, and leverage collective action to create an Africa that is inclusive, innovative, and unstoppable.

Thank you for believing in the vision, standing with us in action, and driving change that matters. The journey forward is bright, and it is ours to lead, Africa Forward!

**Kehinde Ayeni**  
Executive Director,  
LEAP Africa



## Youth Leadership & Governance

# THE YLDP EFFECT: DEBATES, ADVOCACY, AND COMMUNITY IMPACT ACROSS NIGERIA

There's a moment that happens in almost every Youth Leadership Development Programme experience: a participant who came in quietly suddenly speaks with clarity. Not because someone "forced" confidence into them, but because the room became safe enough and the passion became strong enough for their voice to show up. That's one of the most powerful outcomes of the YLDP. It doesn't only teach leadership as a concept; it turns leadership into something practical, personal, and usable. Across Nigeria, young people are taking what they learn through debates, advocacy projects, and community impact initiatives and translating it into real change where it matters most.

66

In my community, many projects are awarded but rarely completed, and I often felt powerless to change that. Participating in the YLDP opened my eyes. I now know how to advocate for my people, engage the right stakeholders in my constituency, and use accountability tools—like social media and collective advocacy—to track projects. The programme also helped me embrace strong ethical values, such as declining gifts during advocacy visits, and strengthened my commitment to integrity"

- Ahmad Usman



Debaters at the South west - North central Regional quarter Final YLDP debate 2025

In Bauchi, Favour's story reminds us that impact can begin with a changed mindset: "Before participating in the YLDP, I had the perception that politics is a dirty game. After implementing our community change project, I discovered that real change begins with each of us. I am now inspired to stand up, collaborate with others, raise voices, and actively contribute to building the Nigeria I want to see tomorrow."

**-Favour Ndulue (Project Team lead, Unity in Action Network, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi)**

Sometimes the most exciting YLDP stories are the ones that begin in the debate room and end in civic action. In Ibadan, Ayinla says, "Prior to the YLDP, I was afraid of taking up leadership roles; I always felt I might fail. Working with my team during the YLDP motivated me to practice teamwork, communication, and coordination skills.

My team successfully organised a 'Leading Without a Title' summit event. This experience built my confidence to take up leadership positions both within and outside the programme, and inspired me to advocate for inclusive leadership, showing others that one can lead even without a formal title."

**-Ayinla Akinbobola**  
**(Project Team lead, Youth Leadership Club, University of Ibadan)**

In Calabar, Golden's impact took a beautiful direction, and she says, "Being selected for the YLDP by LEAP Africa earlier this year was one of the most transformative experiences of my leadership journey. I entered the program eager to grow, but I left with a renewed mindset, clearer vision, and a deeper understanding of what civic leadership and community impact truly meant.

A defining moment of the YLDP experience was when my team, Calabar Civic Champion, was selected for the project grant. Serving as the Project Leader, this experience strengthened my confidence, deepened my project management skills, and taught me the value of teamwork, resourcefulness, and strategic planning.

Since completing the programme, my life has taken a new direction, and I have received several speaking invitations to share insights on civic engagement, youth leadership, and community development. Many young people have reached out to share how my journey has inspired them, and that alone has been one of my proudest rewards. YLDP didn't just teach me leadership, it activated something deeper in me: a commitment to influence, serve, and uplift others."

**-Golden Ibangha**  
**(Project Coordinator, Calabar Civic Champions Team,**

What these stories have in common is that the outcomes go beyond projects. The YLDP builds a mindset. It teaches young people to start with listening instead of assumptions, to define problems clearly enough to solve them, to collect evidence, and to map out stakeholders before rushing into action. It makes follow up feel like a leadership skill rather than an annoying chore. It also changes how communities see youth. When young people show up with solutions, consistency, and results, perceptions shift. Youth stop being seen as "future leaders" and start being recognised as leaders already in motion.

Across Nigeria, the YLDP effect shows itself in big wins and small renewals: a revived debate club, a repaired community water source, cleaner streets, a mentorship circle that keeps girls in school, citizens who ask better questions and demand better services. These shape the everyday reality of communities in ways that matter. The future doesn't arrive fully formed after some distant graduation day. It grows in rooms where young people practice speaking, learn to organise, and realise their voices can do more than fill space. They can move things. They can build. They can lead.

The most hopeful part of it all: Nigeria is full of young people who are not waiting to be chosen. Through the YLDP, they're choosing themselves, and then choosing their communities too.



**YDOS-DOW Project**

# YOUTH DAY OF SERVICE (YDOS): WHERE AFRICAN YOUTH TURN CIVIC ACTION INTO CLEANER ENERGY, SAFER WATER, BETTER HEALTH, AND BRIGHTER CLASSROOMS

*“My experience has been truly inspiring. Leading a project on maternal health was my first project and this was deeply meaningful. The Youth Day of Service programme gave me the confidence and platform to bring my vision to life and to work with passionate young volunteers. The YDOS 2025 journey strengthened my leadership and teamwork skills, and showed me that leadership is really about taking initiative and serving others with purpose.*

Opportunities like Cynthia's are the heartbeat of Youth Day of Service, YDoS. It's a day (and, in many places, a season of action) where young people choose to show up for their communities in practical, visible ways. YDoS projects are built around service with purpose, initiatives that respond to real community needs while strengthening civic responsibility. It's not charity for applause. It's active citizenship in motion: young people learning that participation is a skill, and impact is something you can design.

*Seeing the smiles of pregnant women and the impact we made in Ghana reminded me that even small acts of kindness create lasting change. I am truly grateful to the Youth Day of Service programme for this opportunity and this experience has motivated me to continue serving beyond this campaign.” - Cythnia Koomson (Project Lead, Ghana)*



YDOS - DOW Digital Library Project implemented by LEAP Africa

Across Africa, YDoS projects gather under the SDGs because these goals shape everyday life. With the YDOS, youth volunteers don't just "do a project," they learn, coordinate with local leaders, involve residents in decisions, and document outcomes clearly. In some communities, this shows up as civic engagement with townhall style conversations, short, respectful dialogues that help people understand local issues and how to engage without fear or confusion. In others, it's about creating simple accountability tools, like public notice boards for community initiatives or refreshingly clear community briefs that explain what's planned, what's needed, and how people can contribute. The point is always the same: helping communities move from passive endurance to active participation.

"My Youth Day of Service experience has been overwhelmingly positive and far beyond my expectations. Through my project, young people gained skills in agriculture, and today they have a ready market worth 35 million Kwacha for their produce. The project connected me with influential partners, universities, and government ministries who are now supporting the youth. Seeing the

community embrace the project and dedicate over 45 acres of land has been incredible. Volunteering has truly created lasting change."

**-Blessings Mlelemba (Project Lead, Malawi)**

What makes Youth Day of Service especially powerful is how it blends action with identity. Young volunteers don't just leave with photos; they leave with a changed understanding of what it means to belong to a place. Service becomes a language for citizenship. People learn how to collaborate, how to plan, how to mobilise resources, how to measure outcomes, and how to build trust across different groups. The community benefits from immediate improvements, and the young people benefit from something that lasts longer than the day: the conviction that they can contribute to solutions, not just comment on problems.

Volunteering has helped me discover my purpose. Through giving my time and skills without expecting anything in return, I've found joy, peace, and a deeper understanding of the problems in my community. It allows me to connect with people, empathize with their challenges, and contribute meaningfully. For me, volunteerism is a pathway to purpose and problem-solving."

**- Ssebalanga Eric Elisa, Male  
(Winner Innovation Award)**

And that's why these projects matter. YDoS demonstrates that civic engagement is not an abstract idea reserved for elections or debates. It can be a repaired borehole that restores dignity to a clinic. It can be a clean energy conversation that sparks a long-term shift. It can be a health campaign that helps someone take prevention seriously. It can be an education drive that makes a child believe school is still possible. Across Nigeria, Youth Day of Service shows what happens when young people stop waiting for change to arrive and start building it with their hands, their heads, and their hearts.



Students during the 2025 YDOS- DOW Projects

# STRENGTHENING CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND ELECTORAL INTEGRITY IN ANAMBRA STATE

As Nigeria continues to deepen its democratic journey, citizen trust and participation remain critical to the credibility of elections. In Anambra State, LEAP Africa, through its Campaign Against Voter Apathy (CAVA) initiative, set out to address these challenges by strengthening civic participation, rebuilding trust in electoral institutions, and promoting peaceful and credible elections ahead of the 2025 Anambra gubernatorial election.

CAVA is built on three interconnected strategic pillars designed to address both institutional and citizen-level gaps in the electoral process:

## MOBILIZE

This pillar focuses on strengthening coordination and accountability among key electoral stakeholders. CAVA actively engaged the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), security agencies, political actors, and civil society organisations to encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for credible elections.

## ENGAGE

Recognizing young people and communities as vital drivers of democratic participation, CAVA implemented targeted civic and voter education campaigns. These efforts aimed to inform, inspire, and empower citizens to understand their rights, responsibilities, and the importance of active participation in the electoral process.

## PROMOTE

To counter misinformation and reduce election-related tension, CAVA advanced peace messaging and supported election credibility through observation and reporting. This pillar emphasized non-violence, fact-based information, and transparency across the electoral cycle.

In the months leading up to the election, CAVA implemented a series of preparatory activities that laid a strong foundation for peaceful and credible participation across Anambra State. These efforts included the development and dissemination of advocacy briefs, highlighting the importance of coordinated, transparent, and accountable electoral processes. The briefs served as key tools for stakeholder engagement and advocacy.



Participants and facilitators at the Campaign Against Voter Apathy (CAVA) initiative in Anambra

LEAP Africa also conducted courtesy visits to INEC, security agencies, and the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC). These engagements provided platforms to advocate for fairness, professionalism, and institutional commitment to credible elections.

A major milestone was the multi-stakeholder forum convened by CAVA, bringing together representatives of INEC, the Nigeria Police Force, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, and political parties. During the forum, stakeholders made on-record commitments to support a peaceful election, reinforcing collective ownership of the electoral process. To reach citizens across the state, CAVA executed statewide voter education and civic sensitization campaigns, including radio jingles and community-focused messaging. These campaigns promoted peace, discouraged electoral violence, hate speech, and voter intimidation, and encouraged citizens to participate responsibly.

As part of its broader commitment to election credibility, LEAP Africa, in partnership with the Coalition of Accredited Election Observers (CATYCOL), deployed accredited observers across Anambra State on Election Day. The observers monitored polling unit environments, assessed voter experiences and turnout trends, documented

irregularities, and evaluated the transparency of vote counting and result declaration processes. This observation effort contributed to evidence-based reporting and accountability, reinforcing public confidence in the electoral process.

Through CAVA, LEAP Africa reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening democracy by placing citizens, institutions, and peace at the center of electoral processes. By mobilizing stakeholders, engaging communities, and promoting transparency and non-violence, the initiative demonstrated how coordinated civic action can help rebuild trust and foster credible elections.

As Anambra State looks ahead, the lessons from CAVA underscore a powerful truth: when citizens are informed, institutions are accountable, and peace is prioritized, democracy thrives.



Participants and facilitators at the Campaign Against Voter Apathy (CAVA) initiative in Anambra



## ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION

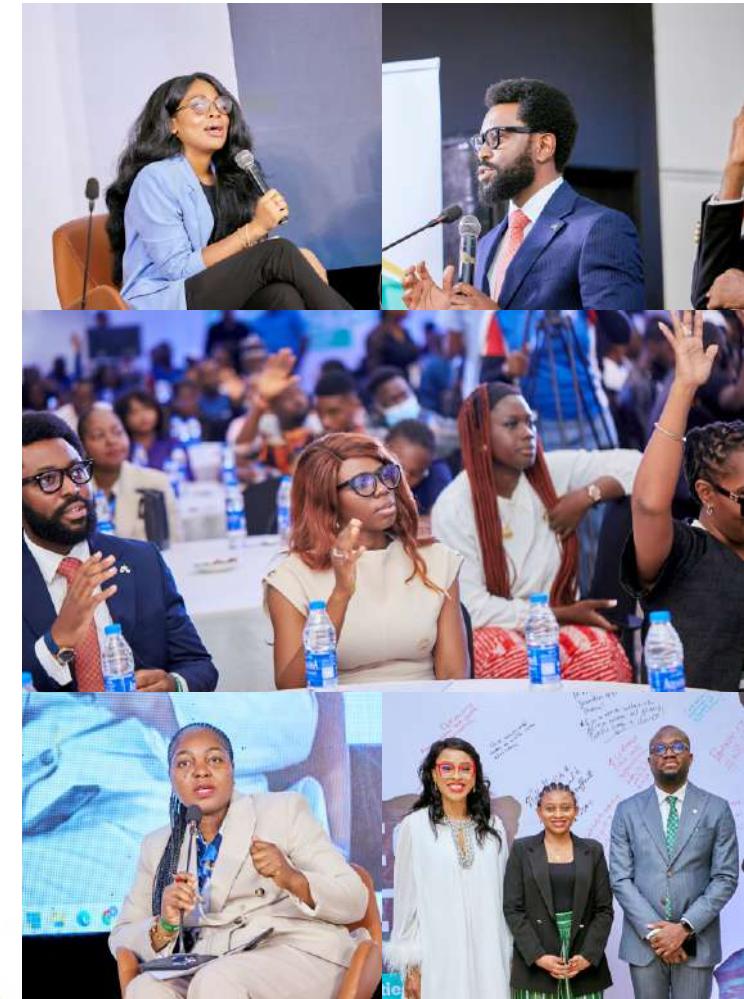
# SIPA 2025: AFRICA IS THE SECTOR, CELEBRATING INNOVATION, COLLABORATION, AND AFRICA'S BOUNDLESS POSSIBILITIES

The 12th Annual Social Innovators Programme and Awards (SIPA) in November brought together some of Africa's boldest thinkers and changemakers under a theme that captured the moment perfectly: "Africa as the Sector: Maximising Possibilities through Technology, Finance, and Policy." It wasn't just a theme for the banner; it was the lens through which every conversation, session, and solution was shaped.

The day opened on a note of clarity and conviction with inspiring remarks from Kehinde Ayeni, Executive Director of LEAP Africa, setting the tone for what would become a powerful gathering of innovators, ecosystem builders, and champions of Africa's growth story. Shortly after, Clare Omatseye, Board Chair of LEAP Africa, offered a warm welcome address that felt both grounding and energising, reminding everyone in the room why SIPA continues to matter. It's not simply an annual event. It's a meeting point for ideas and action, for collaboration and courage, and for people committed to building a continent defined by solutions.

One of the most meaningful parts of SIPA 2025 was the wave of goodwill messages from development leaders who are actively shaping Africa's innovation ecosystem. There was something special about hearing voices across different institutions echo the same belief: that Africa's future will be driven by intentional partnerships and by the innovators closest to the problems we need to solve. We were honoured to receive these messages from Karina Karunmi, Chapter Head of ANDE West Africa; Tochukwu Ezeukwu, Regional Director for West Africa at AVPA; Chizoba Ada Emmanuel, Awakessien, COO of IIF; and Victor Ndiege, CEO of Kenya Climate Ventures. Their words weren't just encouraging, they were affirming, connecting the work happening in communities and startups to the broader ecosystem support required for real scale.

Then came the Speed Talks, and with them, the spark that makes people sit up straighter. These weren't talks designed to impress; they were designed to stretch thinking. Samuel Efosa, Austin, Founder of Eco Platform; Marie, Noelle Nwokolo, G20 Compact with Africa Coordinator; Tunde Onakoya, Founder of Chess



Participants and facilitators at the 2025 Social Innovators Programme & Awards Event

in Slums Africa; Prof. Val Okaru, Bisant, CEO of ACDI; and Amy Gillet, Academy Head at WDI each brought a distinct perspective, but the collective message was clear: Africa's growth story must be intentionally redefined, and this redefinition will require boldness in vision, discipline in execution, and imagination in the way we approach systems.

The programme deepened with two panel sessions that captured some of the most urgent conversations of our time. The first, "From Village to Virtual: Closing Africa's Digital Divide With Smart Policy Investment," explored what it truly takes to ensure technology becomes a bridge rather than a barrier. It pushed the room to think beyond access as a buzzword, and to confront the real infrastructure, investment, and policy decisions that determine who gets included in the future and who gets left behind.

The second panel, "Seed & Servers: Cultivating Sector, Tech Innovation in Africa," brought an exciting intersection to life: how sector specific challenges can be transformed when technology is applied with context, care, and collaboration. It was the kind of discussion that reminds you that innovation doesn't only happen in tech hubs, it also happens when agriculture, education, health, climate, and governance meet the right tools, the right funding, and the right enabling environment.

And because SIPA is as much about doing as it is about discussing, the energy in the room only grew as participants moved into hands on Solution Labs, a dynamic Hackathon, and the highly anticipated Awards segment. This was where ideas became prototypes, conversations became frameworks, and innovation became something you could almost touch. It was also where collaboration became visible, not the polite kind that stays in email threads, but the practical kind that happens when people with different strengths lean into a shared goal.

By the end of SIPA 2025, one truth landed even more clearly: collaboration is the new innovation, and innovation is the engine of transformation. The most compelling work ahead will not be done by isolated brilliance, but by connected ecosystems, where technology is thoughtfully applied, finance is creatively mobilised, and policy actively enables progress rather than slowing it down.

SIPA 2025 wasn't just a celebration of achievements; it was a reminder of what's possible when Africa's innovators are given room to build, partners are willing to co-create, and institutions commit to the long game. Together, we are shaping an Africa where bold ideas thrive, partnerships flourish, and young innovators lead the way, not someday, but now.



Clare Omatseye, Board Chair of LEAP Africa.





**Education & Learning  
for the Future**

# LTW (LEAD THE WAY): LEADERSHIP BOOTCAMPS IN LAGOS & ABUJA WHERE BUSINESS, TECH, ARTS, AND CULTURE MEET

In Lagos, LEAP Africa partnered with Arravo Academy for the Leadership, Business & Tech Summer Boot Camp of the Lead The Way Programme. Participants explored leadership, tech, and business, then stepped outside the classroom to execute a change project at Kids Beach Garden. For one team, the project was the moment leadership clicked: planning together, showing up early, sharing responsibilities, and finishing strong. They didn't just "volunteer", they practised teamwork, problem-solving, and community-minded leadership in action.

In addition, the Spotlight Naija Summer Arts Camp, delivered with Miss Oye Ehikhamhem (Miss Diaspora Nigeria USA), proved that creativity can be a leadership classroom too. Chinwe, who was initially afraid to perform, ended the camp on stage during the final showcase, leading her group through a fully choreographed piece. The applause was loud, but the real win was quieter: confidence, discipline, and the courage to be seen. With leadership training alongside music, dance, and

*When Dara walked into the LTW Leadership, Business & Tech Summer Boot Camp in Lagos, she thought she was there to "learn a few tech skills." By the end of the programme, she was confidently pitching a solution with her team, explaining roles, timelines, and impact like someone who had done it before. The biggest difference wasn't just what she learned, it was how she learned to lead while building.*



LTW students at the summer camp

acting, participants learned how to express themselves, collaborate under pressure, and turn talent into purpose.

In Abuja, the LTW August Boot Camp, delivered with ElAmin International School and Slum2Stage Africa, brought leadership and business training to life through sports, cooking, dance, team building nights, and cultural learning. A standout moment came when participants visited the palace of the Sa’Peyi of Garki and connected culture to community leadership. But the biggest shift happened during their outreach in Gwarinpa Village, where students facilitated conversations on environmental issues. One student who barely spoke during the first days became the voice of his group, calmly educating residents, answering questions, and realising he could lead beyond the camp space.

Across Lagos and Abuja, LTW wasn’t just a programme; it was a set of experiences that helped young people discover what leadership looks like when it’s practical: building ideas, owning creativity, respecting culture, and serving community. And in these small, powerful success stories, you can see the bigger picture clearly: a new generation growing the confidence and skills to lead, and the values to use leadership for impact.



LTW students at the summer camp

# LEAP AFRICA AT eLEARNING AFRICA 2025: CHAMPIONING DIGITAL FUTURES FOR AFRICAN YOUTH

*At the 18th edition of the eLearning Africa Conference held in Tanzania, LEAP Africa joined educators, innovators, and policymakers in conversations shaping the future of learning across the continent. It was a timely reminder that the digital future Africa wants will only be possible if young people are equipped with relevant skills, real-world exposure, and equitable access to learning opportunities.*

Our Executive Director, Kehinde Ayeni, contributed to a high-impact panel session titled “Transforming African Youth Through eLearning: Empowering Skills Development and Real-World Experience.” Alongside global thought leaders, she spotlighted bold and inclusive approaches for preparing young Africans for the demands of the 21st century, sharing insights on how innovation, partnerships, and localised strategies can help close the digital divide and expand access to meaningful learning.

LEAP Africa also played a key role in a dialogue session on “Open Resources and Platforms to Support Green Innovators and Entrepreneurs in Africa,” moderated by our Learning & Innovation Technology Manager, Ferdinand Eruka. The conversation explored how open resources and

digital platforms can power green innovation by making tools and knowledge more accessible to entrepreneurs tackling sustainability challenges. Overall, eLearning Africa 2025 reinforced what we believe strongly at LEAP Africa: inclusive, youth, centred, tech, tech-enabled learning isn’t just possible, it’s essential.



LEAP Africa represented at the eLearning Africa conference 2025

# HILTON “TRAVEL WITH PURPOSE” INITIATIVE, YOUTH EXPOSED TO HOSPITALITY CAREERS AND SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES

Through a partnership with LEAP Africa, the Hilton Travel with Purpose Initiative gave young participants a practical, behind-the-scenes introduction to the hospitality industry, combining virtual learning with hands-on workplace experience.

Participants began by completing LEAP Africa’s core virtual courses on leadership and workplace readiness, building the skills needed to thrive in professional environments. They then moved into physical training with Hilton, where heads of departments across Food and Beverage, Housekeeping, Human Resources, Front Desk, Kitchen, Security, and more shared real insights into how each unit operates. After these sessions, participants were posted to specific departments, gaining firsthand experience of daily operations and what it truly takes to deliver excellent service.

A standout moment was a session on sustainability in hospitality led by LEAP Africa alumna Doyinsola Ogunye, Founder of RESWAYE, highlighting how environmentally conscious practices are increasingly shaping forward-thinking hospitality brands. Another key highlight

was a panel conversation exploring the sector’s unique opportunities, sparking reflections on career pathways, innovation, and emerging trends.

The programme closed with an engaging career fair that connected participants with potential employers and expanded their view of what’s possible in hospitality. More than an introduction, Hilton Travel with Purpose created real momentum, opening not just eyes, but doors, and helping young people take confident steps toward promising futures in the industry.



LEAP Africa facilitating at Hilton Travel with Purpose

# FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE AIRWAVES: HOW iLEAD IS CHANGING LIVES IN SOKOTO

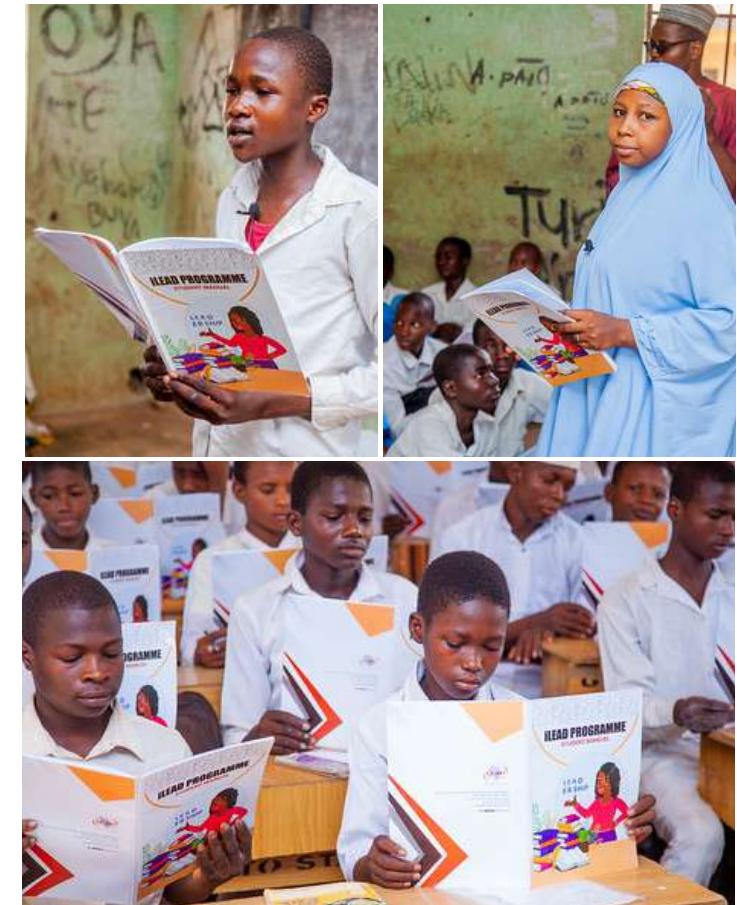
There's a special kind of confidence that shows up when a young person realises their voice can travel further than their classroom. Not just to friends, not just to teachers, but to an entire community listening in. That was the energy on Vision FM, Sokoto, when two iLEAD students, a committed teacher mentor, and representatives from SIHUB took over the airwaves to share what happens when leadership development becomes personal, practical, and truly supported.

The conversation wasn't just inspiring, it was proof. Proof that when young changemakers, passionate educators, and dedicated partners share their stories, impact stops being an abstract idea and becomes something you can hear in real time.

*One of the students, Hauwa, used to be the kind of learner who stayed quiet even when she had the right answer. She described how iLEAD helped her find structure for her thoughts and courage for her voice. Through the programme's activities and leadership practice, she began speaking up more in class, volunteering for responsibilities she would*

*usually avoid, and taking her goals seriously. By the time she got to the studio, she wasn't just "a student on radio"; she was a young leader telling her story clearly, confidently, and without shrinking.*

*Beside her was Usman, who shared a different kind of transformation. His growth wasn't only about speaking; it was about direction. He spoke about how iLEAD sharpened his mindset, helping him think beyond the present moment and start planning for the future with intention. He talked about learning skills that made him believe his dreams weren't too big or too far. For him, iLEAD didn't just motivate; it equipped. And hearing him speak on live radio made one thing obvious: the programme wasn't just inspiring students, it was giving them tools.*



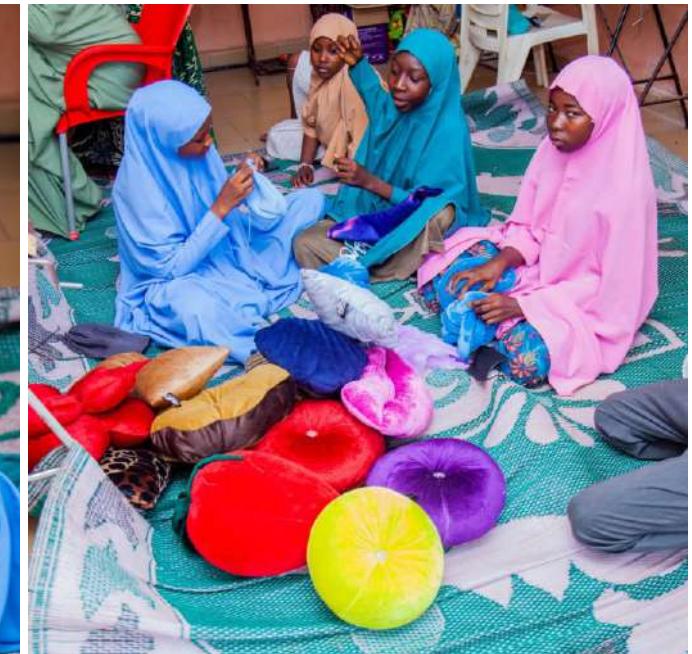
iLEAD students during a learning session

A powerful part of the conversation came from the teacher mentor, who pulled back the curtain on an often-overlooked truth: student transformation becomes stronger when educators are empowered too. The mentor reflected on how iLEAD strengthens teachers' ability to guide students beyond academics, supporting them with encouragement, structure, and practical methods that help leadership skills stick. In the classroom, that looks like students being challenged differently, listened to more intentionally, and encouraged to lead in small ways that build up into bigger

confidence. The mentor's story reminded everyone listening that education isn't only about what students learn, it's also about what teachers are equipped to nurture.

Then SIHUB's representatives brought the collaboration story to life. They reinforced what makes programmes like iLEAD sustainable in the first place: partners who show up with commitment, shared values, and a long-term view of impact. Their message was clear: real change takes more than good intentions. It takes ecosystems. When educators,

communities, and partners align, young people don't just receive opportunities; they grow into them. From the classroom to the community, and now the airwaves, iLEAD continues to shape the future in Sokoto and beyond. One student is finding their voice. One teacher is gaining new tools to mentor better. One partner is strengthening the system that makes growth possible. And one powerful reminder for everyone listening: when young people are equipped, their stories don't just inspire, they spark real change.



iLEAD students in Sokoto during a practical session

A photograph of a diverse group of women of various ages and ethnicities in a classroom or lecture hall. They are all looking towards the right side of the frame, where a presentation is likely being shown. The women are dressed in a variety of casual and semi-casual attire, including a white dress, a patterned top, a purple shirt, and a yellow jacket. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# Women's Leadership & Gender Equity

# FROM 6,000 DREAMS TO 23 TRAILBLAZERS: INSIDE THE LEADERSHIP ACCELERATOR PROGRAMME JOURNEY

When LEAP Africa opened the Call for Applications for the Leadership Accelerator Programme, we expected strong interest. What we didn't expect was the wave that followed. Over 6,000 young women across 50 African countries applied, an overwhelming reminder that Africa's leadership potential isn't scarce, it's abundant. The message was clear: young women across the continent are ready to lead boldly, drive change, and reimagine what's possible.

From that powerful response, 4,540 women were onboarded into the programme's online phase. The onboarding session set the tone: participants were walked through the programme structure, got clarity on what to expect, and engaged in an enthusiastic Q&A that reflected the energy in the room, curious, committed, and ready.

Soon after, the learning began. Participants dove into a rich virtual curriculum focused on leadership, impact, and self-discovery. And the momentum was immediate. One participant summed it up perfectly: "This virtual course is packed. I have already started saving for the physical boot camp in Lagos because I

must be there!" It was more than excitement; it was ownership. The kind of commitment that tells you the programme is meeting a real need.

As the online phase progressed, the stories began to surface. Participants shared how the experience brought clarity to their leadership goals, strengthened their confidence, and helped them think more strategically about the impact they want to create. For many, it wasn't just a course; it was a turning point: a new way of seeing themselves as leaders, and a new urgency to act.

The closeout ceremony for the online phase felt like both an ending and a beginning. It celebrated the growth achieved so far, while building anticipation for what was next: the physical boot camp, where selected participants would deepen their learning, expand their networks, and accelerate their leadership journey in a more immersive space. Even before meeting in person, many were already building connections with one another, forming the kind of cross-country sisterhood that strengthens leadership beyond one programme. Then came Lagos.



Participants at the Leadership Accelerator Programme Bootcamp

From the 9th to the 12th of September, LEAP Africa hosted 23 outstanding young women from South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Nigeria for the Leadership Accelerator Programme Boot Camp. Over four high-energy days, participants engaged in learning sessions, panel conversations, and case study presentations guided by an inspiring lineup of speakers, facilitators, and judges.

Some of the most powerful moments came from conversations that stretched both heart and mind, exploring male allyship, storytelling, emotional intelligence, ethics, and leadership. Participants were challenged to redefine what success means, embrace vulnerability as a strength, and use their voices to shift culture and systems. For many, the

success story wasn't just "I learned something new," but "I'm thinking differently now", about power, purpose, and the kind of leader they want to be.

One standout success story emerged through the team, based on case studies. Participants tackled pressing issues with bold, practical proposals, including a group that made a compelling case for menstrual leave policies in African workplaces. Drawing on global examples from Indonesia, Japan, Zambia, and Spain, they built a thoughtful argument rooted in dignity, productivity, and equity, showing exactly what happens when young African women are equipped to blend research, realism, and courage.

And not all the transformation happened in formal sessions. Community and cultural exchange became

part of the leadership experience, too. As Dr Wanjiru Kigathi beautifully captured after African Heritage Day, the celebration of identity was unforgettable, an atmosphere where participants didn't just wear culture, they carried it with pride, confidence, and joy.

By the end of the boot camp, the most visible success story was confidence, renewed, grounded, and shared. Participants left with sharper leadership tools, stronger sisterhood, and a deeper conviction that they belong in rooms where decisions are made. From 6,000 applications to a growing community of women taking action, the Leadership Accelerator Programme is proving something powerful: when African women are given the space, skills, and support to lead, they don't just rise, they create pathways for others to rise too.



Participants at the Leadership Accelerator Programme Bootcamp



# BREAKING BARRIERS & REDEFINING EMPOWERMENT: A SPECIAL INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY PODCAST

On International Women's Day, we chose to go beyond applause and flowers. Because while celebrations matter, real progress demands something deeper: honest conversations about the barriers women and girls still face, and the intentional steps required to dismantle them.

At LEAP Africa, we believe empowerment isn't only about recognising achievements. It's about challenging the systems that limit opportunity, pushing for fair representation, and ensuring women's voices are not just heard, but reflected in leadership, policy, and decision-making spaces. True inclusion is built when equity moves from a statement to a practice, at home, in classrooms, at work, and across institutions.

To mark the day, we hosted a powerful conversation on the #YouthfulandUseful podcast, featuring Amabelle Nwakanma, Director of Programmes & Partnerships at LEAP Africa, in conversation with Aderinsola Amobi-Daniel, Gender Advisor & Programme Coordinator at LEAP Africa. Together, they unpack what it takes to

break barriers in real life, exploring leadership, women's rights, and why collective action is essential for building an Africa where everyone, women and men, can thrive.

The takeaway was clear: inclusion doesn't happen by accident. It is built through daily choices, better policies, accountable systems, and communities that insist on fairness. And the work becomes easier when more people are willing to listen, learn, and act.

If you missed it, you can listen here: [LEAPImpact](#) on YouTube



2025 International Women's day podcast session



# Sustainability & Climate Action

# YDOS PROJECTS LIKE SOLAR INSTALLATIONS AT OBAWOLE PHC AND ALAGBOLE MARKET STALLS

In celebration of the Youth Day of Service (YDOS) 2025, LEAP Africa, in partnership with Dow and Moon Innovation (founded by LEAP Africa alumnus Michael Osumune), introduced clean energy solutions to Alagbole Market, located along the Lagos–Ogun axis.

Through the Solar Powered Market Stalls for Youth and Women Empowerment Project, ten market stalls were fitted with reliable solar electricity to power lighting, fans, charging stations and fridges/freezers, practical upgrades that immediately strengthened daily business operations. Solar streetlights were also installed around the market to enhance nighttime security, extend trading hours, and reduce dependence on costly, polluting fossil-fuel generators. Beyond infrastructure, market women and youth participated in hands-on training in financial literacy, bookkeeping and small business management, ensuring that the benefits of the installations translate into sustainable income growth and stronger enterprises.

Volunteers joined the effort, sharing knowledge and embodying the YDOS spirit of youth-led action. The

impact is already being felt in the market: “I no longer worry about my goods spoiling,” said **Mama Ronke**, a frozen-foods seller.

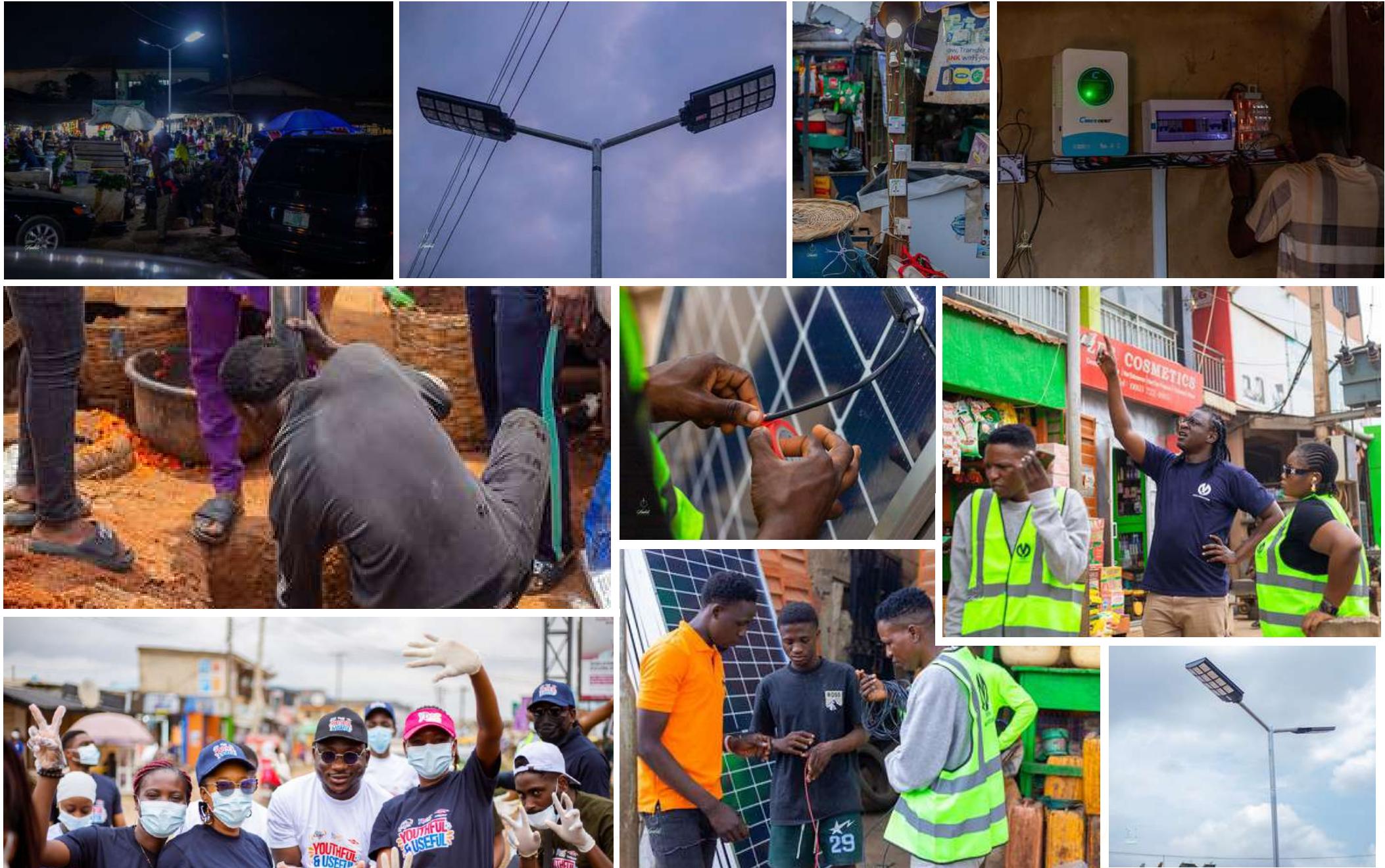
“Sales have increased because I can now stay longer in the market, and customers still come to buy from me even after 7pm” - Ponmo seller.

“The financial literacy session taught me how to keep proper records and separate my profit from my capital. I have started applying it and already feel more in control of my business. The volunteers were very patient and supportive.”

By combining clean energy technology with capacity-building, LEAP Africa and partners are advancing the Sustainable Development Goals on affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), and climate action (SDG 13), while lighting the way for community-led, youth-driven development across the region.



YDOS solar installation Project at Alagbole market



YDOS solar installation Project at Alagbore market



# Partnerships & Collaborations

# STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS: MASTERCARD FOUNDATION (CAREER EVENTS IN LAGOS, ACCRA, NAIROBI, PRETORIA, DAKAR)

The Mastercard Foundation Associates Program, in partnership with LEAP Africa and other regional partners, brought together bright young talent, industry leaders, employers, and changemakers in Lagos, Accra, Nairobi, Pretoria and Dakar for a series of vibrant networking events that underscored one truth: Africa's youth are not waiting for the future of work; they are creating it.

In Lagos, associates, employers and experts gathered for conversations that pushed career growth into action, including a powerful panel on "The Journey in One Year and What Next?" with Ukinnebo Dare (Mastercard Foundation), Toluwani Aina (Jobberman) and Ibukun Owolabi (Terra Academy for the Arts), moderated by Amabelle Nwakanma (LEAP Africa).

Associates left energised, sharing stories of renewed confidence: "This program gave me confidence I didn't know I needed," one participant said. While employers noted the tangible value associates bring: We've seen associates bring fresh thinking into our organisation, ideas that have genuinely improved our workflow."

In Accra, the conversation widened to the future of work for the continent, highlighting how, with over 1,200 associates placed across 15 countries, the programme is closing skills gaps and opening doors to dignified employment through mentorship, exposure and industry placements. Employers in Ghana praised associates' technical strengths and eagerness to learn: "Associates bring technical expertise and a hunger to learn. Their contributions are tangible and deeply valued."

Nairobi's gathering buzzed with innovation and purpose as associates demonstrated curiosity, leadership potential, and a drive for impact. Testimonials there captured transformation in real terms: "I gained real-world skills, mentorship, and a network I never imagined. I now feel in control of my career journey," said an associate, while an employer added, "Our associate introduced new solutions that boosted efficiency. Their perspective pushed us to innovate."

In Pretoria and Dakar, networking sessions created open spaces to reflect on progress, surface real challenges, and co-create improvements that will



Mastercard Foundation Associates and partners at a regional networking event

strengthen the workplace experience for associates and employers alike, reaffirming a continental commitment to equip young professionals with the tools, exposure and support systems they need to thrive.

Alongside these events, LEAP Africa participated in the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Convening in Nairobi, where Kehinde Ayeni and Amabelle Nwakanma led a session on Transformational Leadership, inviting young leaders to reimagine leadership as service rooted in empathy, integrity and community impact; while there, they also engaged the media and strengthened partnerships, amplifying the call for values-driven leadership across Africa.

Across cities and conversations, patterns emerged: associates are gaining confidence, skills and networks; employers are benefitting from fresh perspectives, technical capability and stronger teams; and partners are co-creating pathways that move young professionals from readiness to real, meaningful work.

The Mastercard Foundation Associates Program is more than an employment initiative; it is a launchpad for leaders, problem solvers and innovators who are already shaping industries and communities across the continent. The energy in the rooms was palpable, the connections priceless, and the commitment clear: to keep building bridges that turn talent into opportunity and potential into impact.



Mastercard Foundation Associates and partners at a regional networking event



*Deloitte's Volunteer Day*

# MENTORING THE FUTURE: LEAP AFRICA SUPPORTS DELOITTE'S VOLUNTEER DAY AT PRUDENCE CITY COLLEGE

As part of our ongoing commitment to youth development and purposeful leadership, LEAP Africa joined forces with the Deloitte team for their in Yaba, Lagos. This collaboration brought together experienced professionals and young learners in a shared space of guidance, inspiration, and discovery.

The day was centred on mentorship and meaningful conversations. Staff from both Deloitte and LEAP Africa facilitated mentorship circles, guiding students on how to navigate career choices, set goals, and unlock their potential. From finance to social impact, technology to entrepreneurship, our mentors shared personal stories, practical advice, and insights that encouraged students to explore the vast possibilities before them.

The sessions were filled with curiosity, energy, and the candid questions that only young minds can ask. For many students, this was more than a conversation—it was an opportunity to connect with real-world role models and hear firsthand how to translate passion into purpose.

At LEAP Africa, we believe mentorship is more than just a moment—it is a bridge between today's leaders and tomorrow's trailblazers. Partnering with Deloitte for this Volunteer Day allowed us to create meaningful connections, thoughtful guidance, and impactful learning experiences that go beyond the classroom.

Together, through partnerships and collaborations, we continue to empower young people to discover their potential and shape their futures.



LEAP Africa representative training students at Deloitte's volunteer day

# SHAPING THE FUTURE OF DIGITAL INCLUSION – NITDA DIGITAL LITERACY FOR ALL (DL4ALL) WORKSHOP

We joined a diverse community of changemakers, policymakers, and development practitioners at the NITDA Digital Literacy for All (DL4ALL) Workshop in Abuja. The two-day convening brought together voices from government, civil society, the private sector, and the education ecosystem, all united by a shared ambition: to accelerate Nigeria's journey towards 95% digital literacy by 2030.

LEAP Africa was represented at the workshop by Ferdinand Eruka, Learning & Innovation Technology Manager, who engaged in conversations focused on building a unified, inclusive strategy for digital skills development across the country. Organised by the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), the workshop created a collaborative space for stakeholders to examine gaps, share insights, and co-create practical solutions to bridge Nigeria's digital divide.

Reflecting on the experience, Ferdinand highlighted the workshop as a timely reminder of the immense opportunities to scale LEAP Africa's work in digital literacy, youth innovation, and inclusive development. Beyond policy conversations, the

sessions reinforced the importance of partnerships in expanding access to digital tools and skills, especially for young people and underserved communities.

From students and artisans to traders and entrepreneurs, digital literacy is increasingly essential for participation in today's economy. The DL4ALL Workshop underscored that achieving meaningful digital inclusion will require collective action, sustained collaboration, and intentional investment in capacity building.

As digital transformation continues to reshape how we learn, work, and innovate, LEAP Africa remains committed to championing access, innovation, and skills development for young people across Africa, ensuring no one is left behind in the digital future.



LEAP Africa represented at the NITDA Digital Literacy Workshop

# ADVANCING MSME GROWTH AT THE OMNIVERSE AFRICA SUMMIT 2025

The Omniverse Africa Summit 2025 stood out as a powerful convergence of ideas, people, and possibilities, demonstrating what can be achieved when innovation meets collaboration. Designed to equip Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) with practical digital solutions, the summit brought together entrepreneurs, industry leaders, investors, and ecosystem enablers committed to scaling African businesses sustainably.

LEAP Africa was represented at the summit by Amabelle Nwakanma, Director of Programmes, and Ferdinand Eruka, Acting Lead, Learning & Innovation Technology. Their participation reflected LEAP Africa's ongoing commitment to partnerships that drive inclusive entrepreneurship and strengthen Africa's business ecosystem. Through strategic conversations and engagements, they explored how technology and cross-sector collaboration can unlock growth opportunities for MSMEs across the continent.

A key highlight of the summit was its emphasis on shared learning and strategic alliances. From thought-provoking panel discussions to high-

impact networking sessions, participants exchanged insights on digital transformation, access to markets, and the role of partnerships in building resilient, future-ready enterprises. These interactions reinforced the understanding that no single organisation can drive meaningful change alone, progress thrives when stakeholders work together.

As Africa's MSME ecosystem continues to evolve, one message is clear: the future is digital, collaborative, and full of opportunity. LEAP Africa remains committed to fostering partnerships that empower entrepreneurs, strengthen institutions, and accelerate sustainable economic growth across the continent.



# EMPOWERING AFRICA'S YOUTH FOR A RESILIENT FUTURE

Africa's transformation is deeply interconnected with the strength of its partnerships, and at the heart of this progress are young people. This belief was brought to life at the LSE Africa Summit 2025, held at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), the largest student-led conference on Africa in Europe. The summit convened policymakers, development practitioners, academics, and young leaders committed to shaping Africa's future through collaboration and shared action.

LEAP Africa was represented by Kehinde Ayeni, Executive Director, who joined a powerful lineup of thought leaders and changemakers to advance conversations on youth leadership and continental development. This year's theme, "Securing Africa's Future: Promoting Resilience in a Divided World," underscored the importance of collective solutions in navigating global uncertainty, strengthening economic resilience, and unlocking Africa's innovation potential.

Kehinde participated in a panel discussion titled "Empowering Africa's Youth: Driving Innovation, Overcoming Challenges, and Shaping the AU Agenda," where speakers explored how young

people can leverage growth opportunities, lead transformative innovations, and actively contribute to the African Union's Agenda 2063. Central to the conversation was the role of cross-sector collaboration, between governments, institutions, civil society, and youth-led organisations, in creating enabling environments where young people can thrive.

In her remarks, Kehinde emphasised the need for intentional investment in youth leadership, skills development, and policy advocacy, noting that meaningful progress requires partnerships that move beyond dialogue to action. When young people are supported through collaborative ecosystems, they are better positioned not only to participate in decision-making spaces but to shape policies and solutions that reflect Africa's realities and aspirations.

At LEAP Africa, partnerships remain a cornerstone of our work. We are committed to co-creating pathways that amplify youth-led solutions, break systemic barriers, and build a more inclusive, resilient, and prosperous Africa, one collaboration at a time.



## DAY OF SERVICE

## LOOKING AHEAD: BUILDING AFRICA'S FUTURE TOGETHER

In 2026, LEAP Africa is setting its sights on bold, people-centred goals. We are focused on expanding access to digital learning, deepening women's leadership across sectors, and embedding young people more intentionally in governance and policy reform processes. These priorities reflect our belief that sustainable development is driven by inclusive leadership and shared responsibility.

Our work remains firmly aligned with Africa's Agenda 2063, with a strong emphasis on youth inclusion, innovation, and sustainability as critical drivers of the continent's long-term transformation.

We know that lasting impact is built through collaboration. That is why we invite you to partner with us, support our efforts, and become a stakeholder in the movement. By co-creating solutions, investing in leadership, and advancing opportunities, we aim to amplify our impact and enable Africa's young people and women to thrive.

Together, we can shape a more inclusive and prosperous Africa.



## THANK YOU FOR BUILDING WITH US

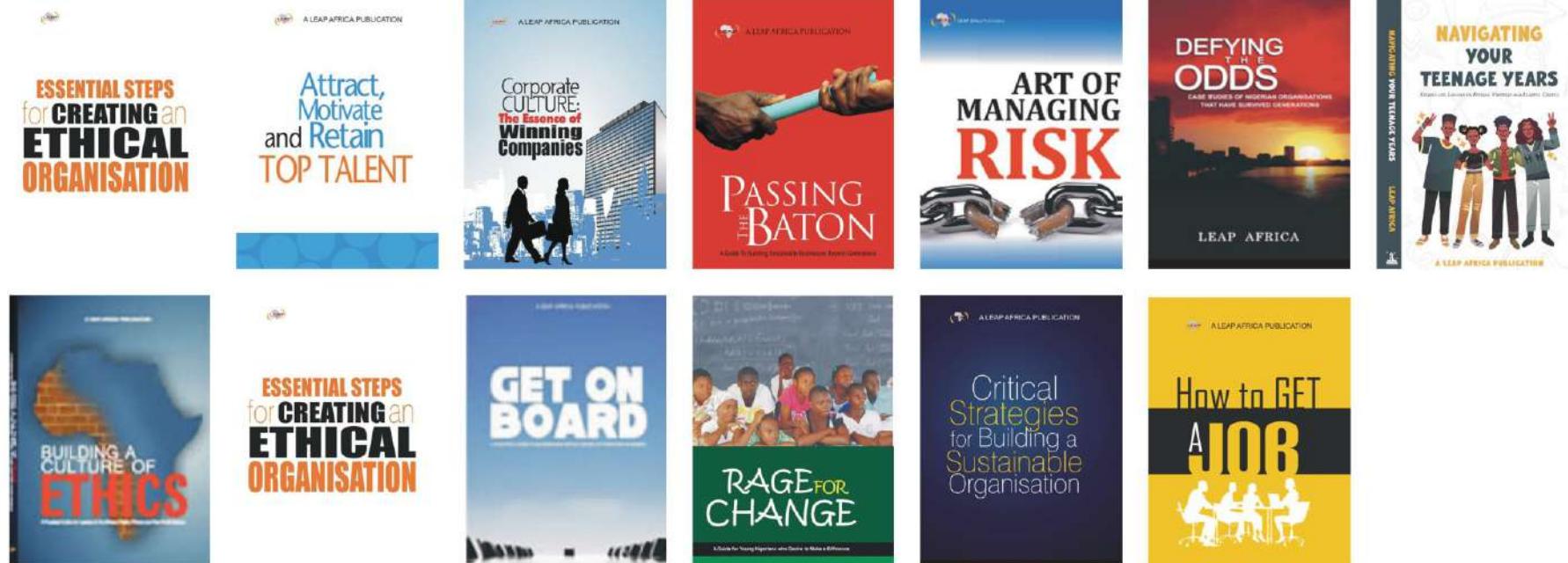
As we reflect on our journey and look ahead, we are deeply grateful to our partners, staff, alumni, volunteers, and the wider LEAP Africa community. Your commitment, collaboration, and belief in the power of young people continue to drive our work and expand our impact across Africa.

Every milestone achieved is a shared success, made possible by the time, resources, ideas, and energy you contribute. Together, we are building pathways for ethical leadership, inclusive growth, and youth-led change.

We invite you to stay engaged by volunteering your skills, partnering with us to scale our impact, supporting our work through donations, and amplifying the voices of young people in your networks and communities. Your involvement matters, and your actions help shape a future where young Africans are empowered to lead and thrive.

Thank you for being part of this movement. The work continues, and we are stronger together.

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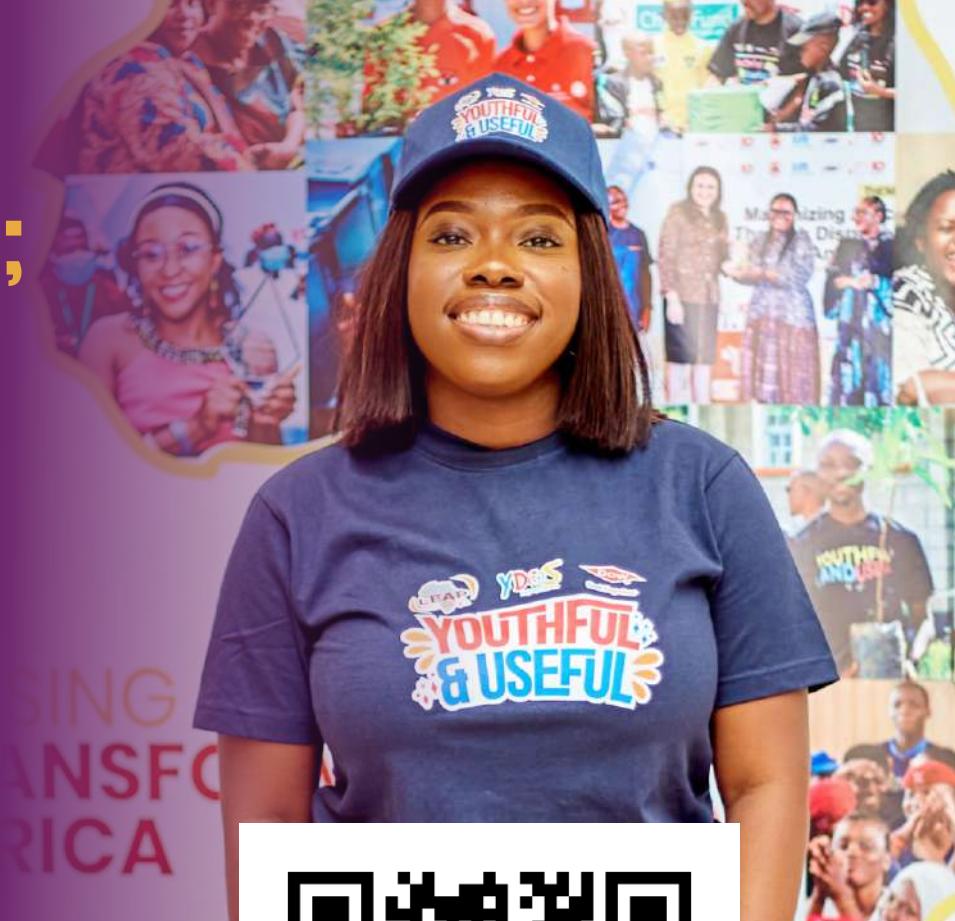
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- World Learning Algeria
- Youth for Climate

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We are dedicated to empowering and increasing opportunities for young people to creatively lead and find solutions to some of Africa's biggest problems; one community at a time.

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