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YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2025 EVALUATION REPORT

Youth Voices, Bold Actions: Pioneering Nigeria's Next Chapter

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Programme Partners

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This report showcases the laudable efforts, and bold initiatives of young people in Nigerian tertiary institutions who are driving positive transformation, and shaping a new future for their communities and the nation at large. Their audacity, innovation, and leadership continue to inspire hope for a better Nigeria.



Acronyms

ABU	Ahmadu Bello University
ATBU	Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University
BUK	Bayero University Kano
CLTC	Citizenship Leadership Training Centre
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FUTA	Federal University of Technology Akure
KII	Key Informant Interview
LASU	Lagos State University
LMS	Learning Management System
NMNA	Nigeria Model National Assembly
NYFF	Nigeria Youth Futures Fund
UI	University of Ibadan
UNILORIN	University of Ilorin
UNN Nsukka	University of Nigeria Nsukka
UDUSOK	Usmanu Dan Fodio University Sokoto
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UACN	Unity in Action Network
YLDP	Youth Leadership Development Programme

Executive Summary



Elisabeth Agibitti-Douglas (Director, NYFF), Hon. Rinsola Abiola (Director-General, CLTC), Dignitaries, Ijeoma Kalu (Programmes Coordinator, LEAP Africa) team during presentation of Debate Prizes to 1st Place Debate winners from Rev. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi

The Youth Leadership Development Programme (YLDP) continues its commitment to nurturing young leaders and amplifying youth voices on issues shaping their communities and Nigeria at large.

In the programme cycle, **45** Community Change Projects and **2** Advocacy Change projects were funded to support community-led initiatives across 20 states, addressing social challenges through evidence-based advocacy and collaboration. The programme also recorded **57** debate entries, reflecting the growing confidence of young people to articulate solutions to national issues.

Learning remained a core pillar, with **1,731** participants from **214** tertiary institutions across all six geopolitical zones completed ten courses on the Learning Management System. These courses strengthened competencies in communication, leadership, problem-solving, public speaking, stakeholder engagement, and inclusive community development. LEAP Africa and NYFF impacted **3,214** direct and **9,275** indirect beneficiaries, with **58.3%** male and **41.7%** female participation, and **1.4%** Persons with Disabilities.

Programme visibility was significant, achieving a traditional media reach of **9.4 million** and social media impressions totalling **8,487** across Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X, and TikTok. Overall, the YLDP continues to inspire a new generation of youth active citizens who are catalysing change and advancing community and national development across Nigeria.

YLDP 2025 Impact Numbers



3,214

Direct Beneficiaries reached



58.3%

Males



41.7%

Females



1.40%

Participants with Disability



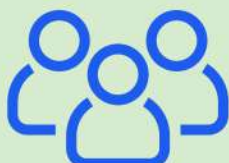
9,275

Indirect Beneficiaries reached



N12 million

Total Funds Disbursed to Change Project Teams



47

Advocacy/Community Change Project Teams Funded



N800,000

Total Funds Disbursed to Advocacy Change Project Teams



57

Debate Entries received



214

Tertiary Institutions within Nigeria reached through LMS courses completed



9,405,000

Traditional Media Reach by LEAP Africa, NYFF & Change Project Teams



4,275

Instagram Reach by LEAP Africa, NYFF & Change Project Teams



1,960

LinkedIn Reach by LEAP Africa, NYFF & Change Project Teams



1,480

Facebook Reach by Change Project Teams



500

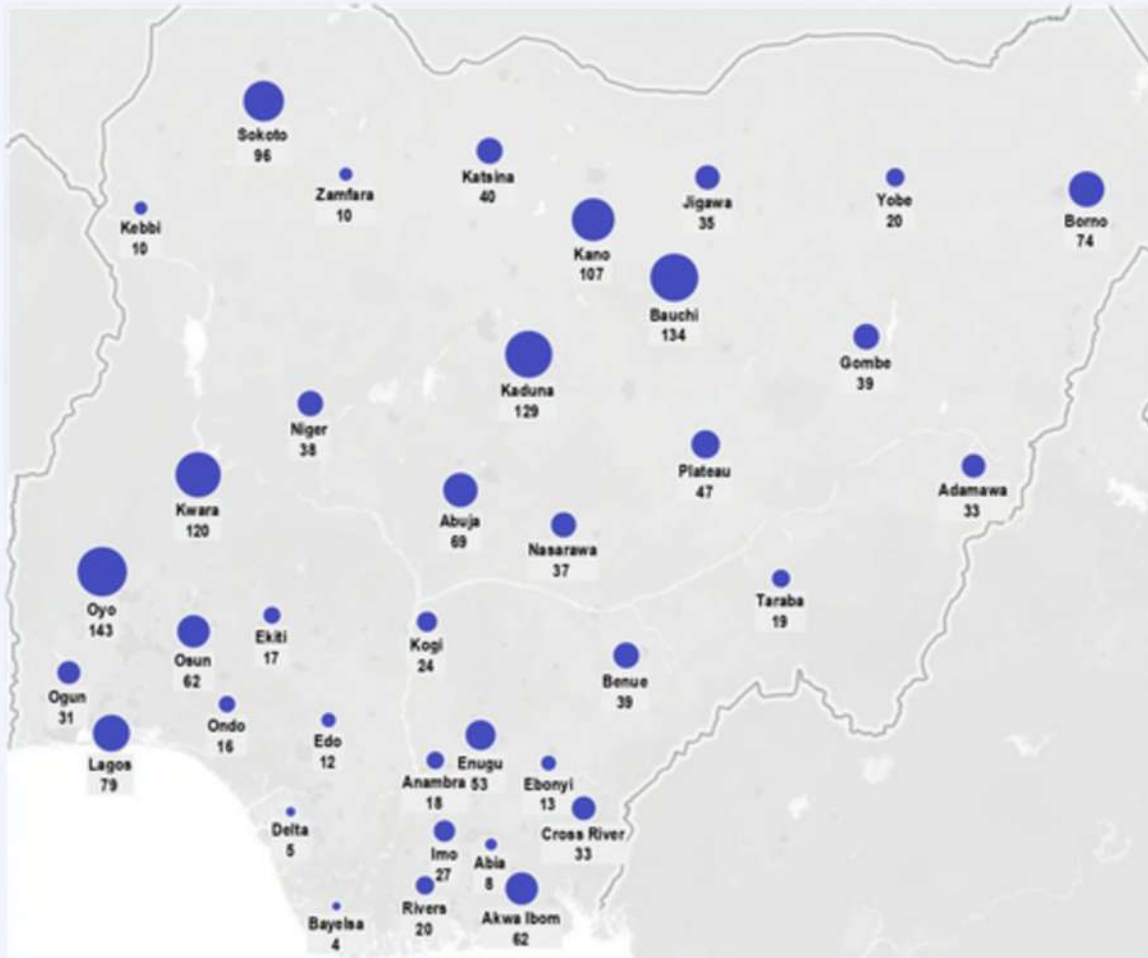
X-Reach by Change Project Teams



272

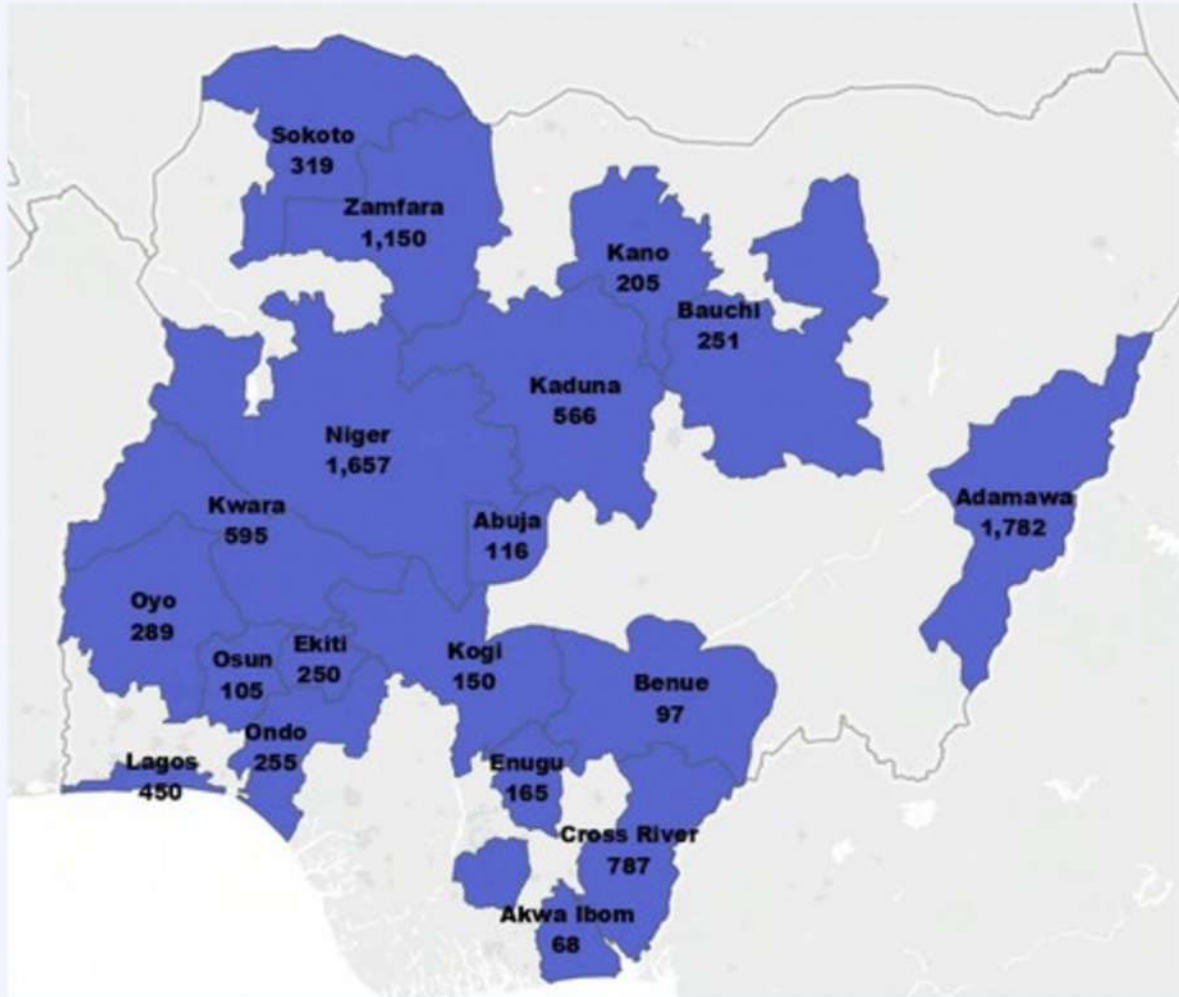
Reach by Change Project Teams

YLDP 2025 Impact Numbers



Density Map of YLDP eLearning Course Participants Across Nigeria's 36 States including the Federal Capital Territory

YLDP 2025 Impact Numbers



Density Map of YLDP Change Project Teams Project Reach Across 20 States including Federal Capital Territory

Programme Overview



Rex Ojochegbe (Team Lead, Students Union Leadership Transformational Initiative (SULTAI)) speaking during Panelist session at Nigeria at 65 event at Abuja

The Youth Leadership Development Programme is a five-month programme that aims to help young Nigerian Undergraduates develop a deeper understanding of their role in nation-building, leading change by taking ownership of their life goals, and driving community development. The YLDP is made possible through the funding support of the Ford Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, and Luminate, and delivered through a strategic partnership framework in which Nigeria Youth Futures Fund and BudgIT serve as Technical Programme Partners, with LEAP Africa leading implementation.

The programme aims to empower young change leaders in Nigerian tertiary institutions to lead evidence-based advocacy interventions for community & national development.

These objectives include:

- Equip 5000 young people with the skills, knowledge, and resources needed to become active citizens, leaders, and contributing members of society.
- Empower young people to be actively engaged in addressing issues of concern in their communities by providing them with platforms and micro-grants to advocate for change through inter-school debates and change projects.
- Foster peer learning among youths from different ethnic and religious groups through clubs, coaching, mentorship platforms, and a virtual community of practice.
- Provide a platform to recognise the achievements of young people leading national development efforts through the Youth Leadership Conference.

The YLDP seeks to achieve these objectives through two programme components: Community Change Project track and Community Advocacy track.

Evaluation Methodology

The Monitoring and Evaluation of the Youth Leadership Development Programme (YLDP) was guided by a robust methodology grounded in the Theory of Change, Logical Framework, and Results Chain, established at the programme's inception. These tools provided a standardised framework for systematically assessing the programme's outcomes

Quantitative Data Collection: Primary quantitative data was gathered through Baseline, Midline, and Endline surveys administered to all participants online, designed on SurveyMonkey. Secondary quantitative data was collected from 43 Change Project reports submitted by the Change Project teams, and these provided additional insights into programme outcomes.

Qualitative Data Collection: A participatory qualitative approach was employed, combining site visits observations and virtual Focus Group Discussions sessions which were conducted between August and October 2025.

These site and virtual evaluations involved seven YLDP Change Project teams and project beneficiaries with projects implemented in Bauchi, Enugu, Ibadan, Nsukka, and Zaria.

Evaluation and Learning Questions were deployed during In-person focus group discussions and Key Informant interviews were also held with debaters from Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Ahmadu Bello University, Al-Qalam University, Federal University of Technology Akure, Kaduna State University, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Prince Abubakar Audu University, University of Calabar, University of Ibadan, University of Ilorin, University of Nsukka, University of Port Harcourt, University of Uyo, and Rev. Father Moses Orshio Adasu University.

Through these interactions, participants shared their experiences and perspectives on the programme's outcomes. Observations and lessons learned during site visits informed ongoing adjustments to programming and enhanced participants engagement, ensuring the YLDP remained responsive and impactful.

Data Analysis: Data Analysis for Qualitative data was carried out through thematic analysis, while Quantitative data collected was analysed using Microsoft PowerBI, and Excel .

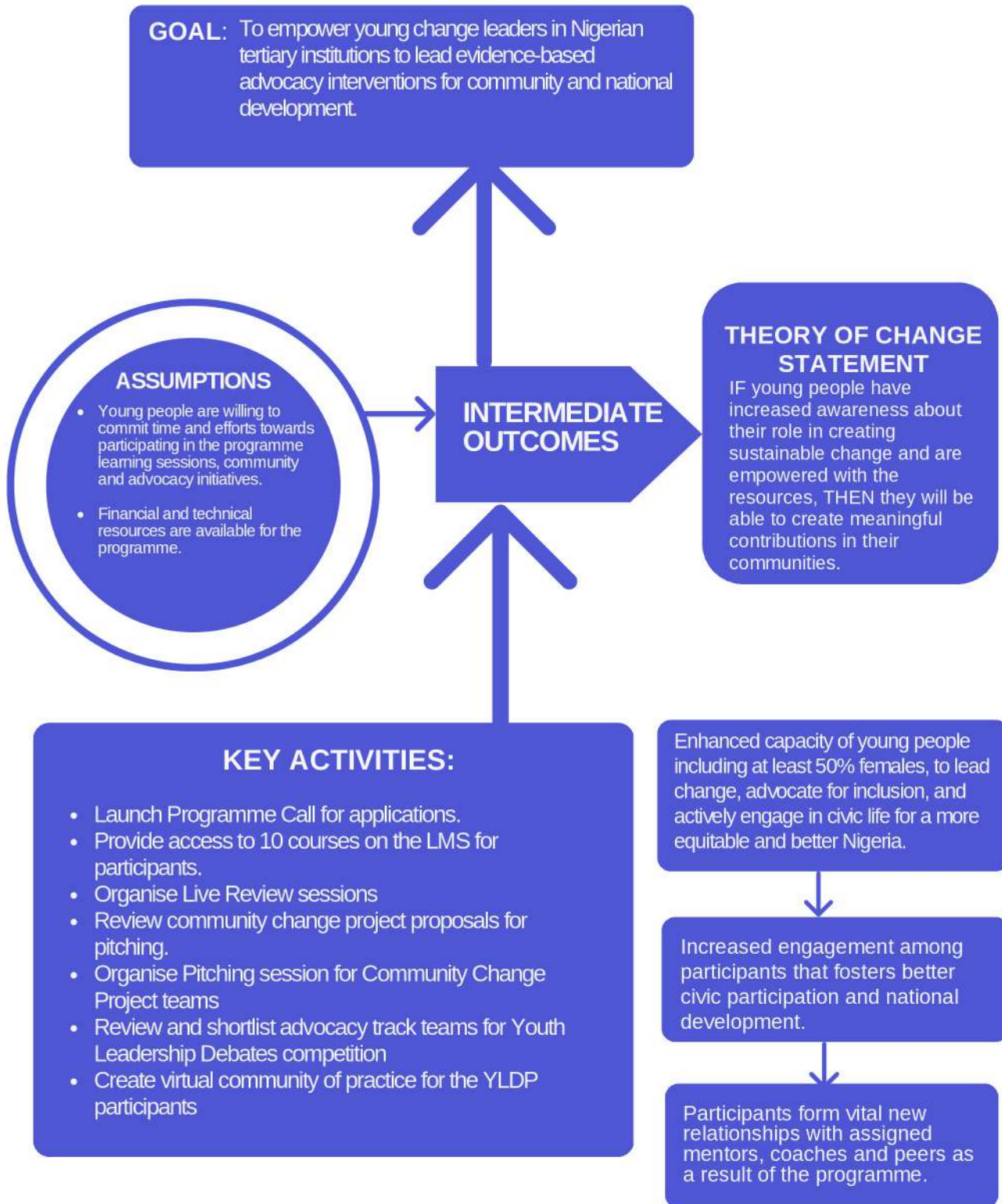
Sample Size - Quantitative Method

Survey Type	Participants
Baseline Survey	7,102
Midline Survey	1,375
Endline Survey	251

Sample Size - Qualitative Method

Interview Type	Participants
Focus Group Discussion	60
Key Informant Interview	30

Theory of Change



Evaluation Findings

After a comprehensive process of data collection, analysis, and evaluation, the key findings below emerged, aligning with the YLDP's intermediate outcomes and logical framework indicators.



LEAP Africa's MERL Team representative, Abisoye Ajose, during Change Project site visit to Youth Policy Amplifiers Change Project Team and Project Beneficiaries at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka Bauchi on 20th August 2025

OUTCOME 1: Enhanced capacity of young people—including at least 50% females—to lead change, advocate for inclusion, and actively engage in civic life for a more equitable and better Nigeria.

At the end of the 2025 Youth Leadership Development Programme (YLDP), **1,731** participants representing **214** tertiary institutions across Nigeria completed courses on the Learning Management System.

Evaluation findings revealed that the YLDP significantly strengthened participants' skills in community development, communication, leadership, emotional intelligence, project management, research, and stakeholder engagement. **Ninety-three percent** of the respondents reported that they have become empowered for Active Citizenship and Community Leadership as a result of the YLDP. The programme was also reported to have strengthened the capacity of **79%** of young Nigerian tertiary-institution students to lead change, advocate for inclusion, and actively engage in civic life for a more equitable and better Nigeria.

While **41.7%** females participated in the programme compared to **58.3%** males, less than the projected target of 50%, respondents reported that the programme served as a catalyst, accelerating their ability to drive community change through their projects, amplifying their voices, and enhancing their critical-thinking skills. The slight disparity in female participation in the YLDP was noted to be due to competing demands of academic work and extracurricular roles which limited the full commitment of female participants.

Overall, the YLDP ignited a powerful mindset shift, equipping participants to step forward as active citizen leaders committed to reshaping narratives and contributing to a better Nigeria.

Testimonials

Testimonials shared by participants during the Evaluation Process are captured below.

"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)

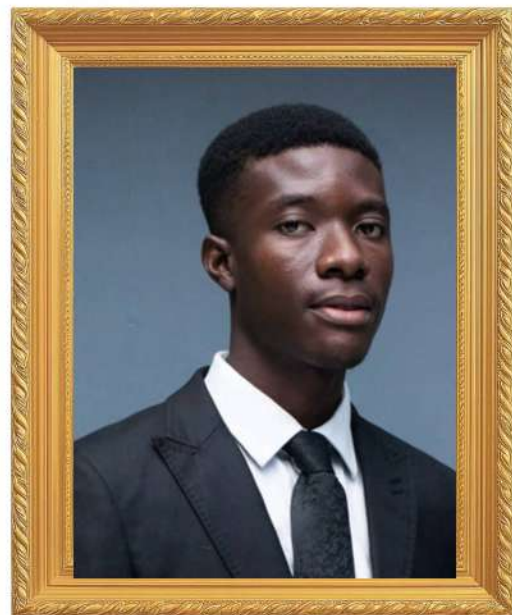


Favour Ndulue (Project Team Lead, Unity in Action Network, ATBU)

"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.

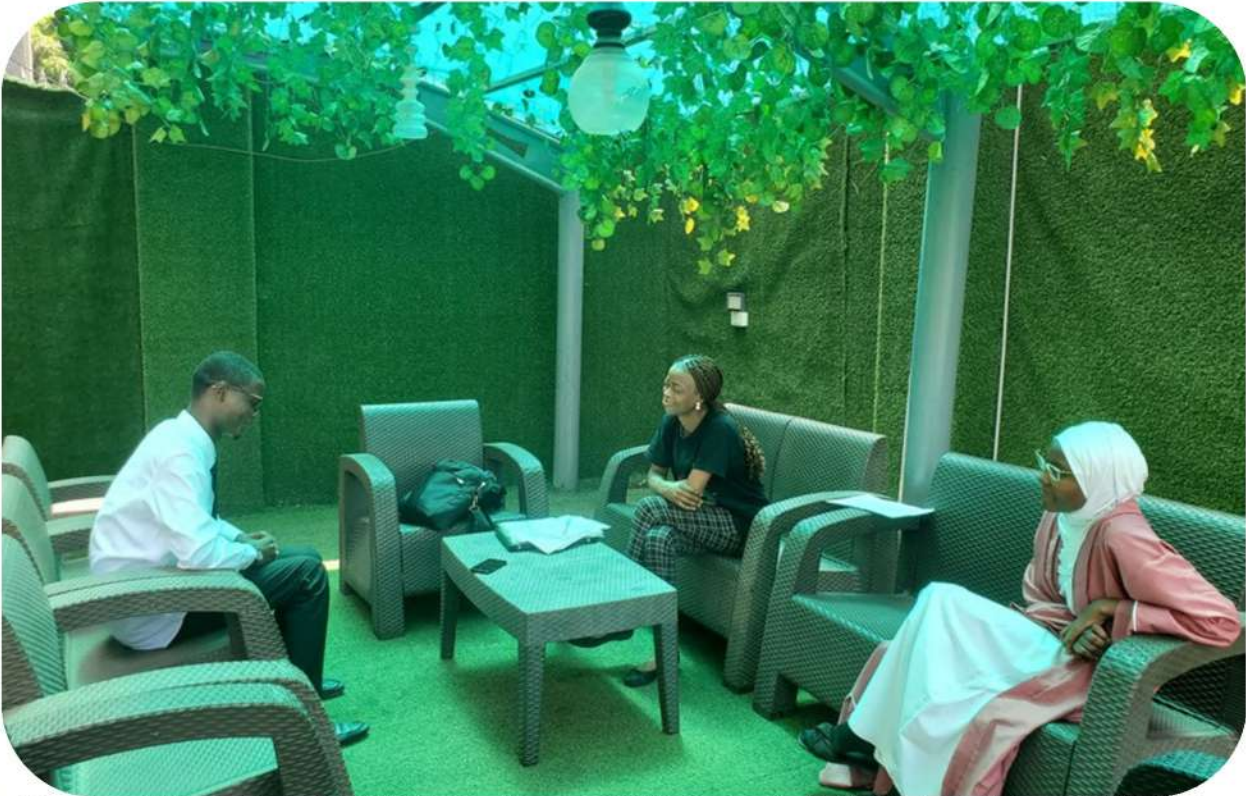
My team successfully organised a 'Leading Without a Title' summit event. This experience built my confidence to take up leadership positions both within and outside the programme, and inspired me to advocate for inclusive leadership, showing others that one can lead even without a formal title."

Ayinla Akinbobola (Project Team Lead, Youth Leadership Club, University of Ibadan)



Ayinla Akinbobola (Project Team Lead, Youth Leadership Club, UI)

Outcome-Level Findings



Abisoye Ajose (MERL Coordinator, LEAP Africa) during a KII session with ABU debaters after the YLDP Finals on October 22nd, 2025 in Abuja

OUTCOME 2: Participants become agents of change, driving positive change in their communities through successful change project initiatives and advocacy engagements.

Findings from the evaluation indicated that **159** Change Project proposals were reviewed, **45** teams were shortlisted for funding, and were awarded grants to implement their Community Change initiatives. **Two** Advocacy teams that emerged in first and second place also implemented Community Change Projects. These teams implemented their Change Projects, which addressed social issues on leadership, climate change, civic engagement, health, governance and youth policy gap.

Fifty-seven debate entries were received from the YLDP Community Advocacy participants located in **26** tertiary institutions. During the Youth Leadership Debate Quarter finals stage, there were **24** teams representing North West, North East, North Central, South-South, South East, and South West Nigeria. These teams debated topical issues on cybersecurity, education, youth development, governance, and agriculture in relation to the Nigerian context.

These Community Change Projects and Debates enabled the participants to be at the forefront of proffering solutions to topical issues on agriculture, education, youth development, cybersecurity, governance, health in their educational institutions and communities in Nigeria.

Testimonials

Testimonials shared by participants during the Evaluation Process are captured below.

”

“I enrolled in the Community Advocacy track because I wanted to lend my voice to national issues. I gained much understanding on how to lead with much clarity. I have been able to apply the knowledge into real life debate.

The leadership courses helped me to lend my voice to issues affecting Nigeria and learn how to cause a reform.

I have been able to lead students around me carry out projects and we work collectively.” **Princess Vanessa Emmanuel (Debater, Kaduna State University)**

”



**Princess Vanessa Emmanuel
(Debater, Kaduna State University)**

”

“Participating in the Youth Leadership Debate brought a new level of consciousness for me. It reaffirmed that my thoughts and passion for driving change are valid and shared by a community of other young people.

I also realised that as youth, we must take ownership of our country and actively participate in shaping policies rather than waiting for the government.

The debates strengthened my belief in using my voice and reinforced the importance of critical thinking in leadership. Overall, it made me feel seen and supported.” **Miracle Inyang (Debater, UNICAL)**

”



**Miracle Inyang
(Debater, University of Calabar)**

Testimonials

Testimonials shared by participants during the Evaluation Process are captured below.

”

“Working with the Girls Education Movement Sokoto Change Project has been an inspiring experience. Being part of a team committed to empowering girls in Sokoto through education, civic awareness, and leadership allowed me to support a mission with real community impact.

One of the strongest achievements was the ability to break complex concepts into simple, relatable messages that young girls could connect with.

This journey transformed me, sharpened my ability to translate raw ideas into impact-driven content, and strengthened my commitment to supporting social development initiatives. I am proud to have contributed to this remarkable movement for girl-child empowerment in Sokoto, and would really love to have another opportunity.”

Zainab Muhammed (Team Member, Girls Education Movement, Usmanu Danfodio University, Sokoto)

”



Zainab Muhammed (Team Member, Girls Education Movement, UDUSOK)

”

“Leading the Civic Guiders Change Project team significantly boosted my confidence, improved my time management skills, and allowed me to connect with other young leaders.

Our civic rights awareness and voter education project reached 100 students. Initially, many students believed that girls and boys do not have the same rights and that youths could not participate in civic activities; we challenged this misconception and taught them about gender equality and equal civic rights for all.

After our sessions, both the secondary school and university students showed a significant shift in mindset, with increased awareness of their civic rights and responsibilities, and greater openness to active participation in democracy.”

Ghapharat Balogun (Team Lead, Civic Guiders Project Team, Federal University of Technology, Minna)

”



Ghapharat Balogun (Team Lead, Civic Guiders Team, FUTMinna)

Outcome-Level Findings



LEAP Africa MERL and Programmes team with Unity in Action Network team, and Project Beneficiaries after FGD session at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University on August 6, 2025

OUTCOME 3: Increased engagement among participants that fosters better civic participation and national development.

Evaluation results showed that **47** Change Projects were implemented across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. These projects have ignited a powerful wave of student-driven political participation, active civic engagement on campus, and would propel meaningful contributions to national development.

Two teams, Students Union Leadership Transformational Initiative from Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi, and Team Referendum from the University of Ibadan, were recognised for their outstanding contributions to promoting political participation among young Nigerian tertiary students.

Six Community Advocacy Track participants represented Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Lagos State University, and the University of Uyo, and were celebrated for their strong performances in the Youth Leadership Debates held on 21st October 2025 at the Monoliza Events Centre in Abuja.

Site visits and the Endline Survey showed that participants deeply valued the mentorship sessions, describing their mentors as highly supportive, encouraging, resourceful, and instrumental in helping them stay on track and navigate every challenge during the Community Change Project. They also reported receiving technical support such as drafting club constitutions and Memorandum of Understanding for Club Patrons, refining pitches, connecting them to potential speakers, and receiving guidance on fundraising efforts, cost-saving ideas, and target-audience mapping.

Outcome-Level Findings



Coaching Session held with Al-Qalam University and Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University Debaters at Candaleux Hotel, Abuja

OUTCOME 4: Participants form vital new relationships with assigned mentors, coaches and peers as a result of the programme.

Findings from the Evaluation revealed that all Community Change Project teams were paired with 45 mentors at the mid-phase of the programme, only **35** mentors were active and provided mentorship to **214** participants who completed mentorship sessions. The mentors supported the participants to learn practical and hands-on skills in project management, budgeting, proposal revisions, and activity planning, and held the teams accountable to project timelines. The participants also reported that they built relationships with their mentors that have outlived the project lifecycle.

Twelve participants from six Community Advocacy teams completed a one-day LEAP Africa coaching session on 18th October 2025, which debaters said sharpened their research-based arguments and provided crucial insights that strengthened their performance for the Semi-Finals and Finale Debate."

The YLDP Youth Leadership Debate finale culminated in a youth leadership conference tagged "**Nigeria at 65 conference**" held in partnership with the Citizenship and Leadership Training Centre at Monoliza Event Centre, Abuja, on 21st October 2025.

Debaters boldly presented their views on pressing political issues to 310 participants, including distinguished figures such as Hon. Rinsola Abiola (Director General, CLTC), Ms. Abiodun Essiet (SSA to the President on Community Engagement–North Central), Brigadier General Nafiu Olakunle (Director-General, NYSC), Mr. Iyinoluwa Aboyeji (CEO, Future Africa), Dr. Titilope Gbadamosi (Special Assistant to the President on Youth Initiatives–Monitoring and Delivery), and the Executive Chairman of the EFCC, represented by Mrs. Aisha Mohammed (Head of Enlightenment and Reorientation Unit).

Testimonials

Testimonials shared by participants during the Evaluation Process are captured below.

”

"Through the Youth Leadership Development Programme, I grew stronger in accountability, teamwork, and ethical leadership. Our Community Change project inspired many students to develop real interest in voting and taking part in student politics.

Our project changed the mindset of many youths on campus, students who previously avoided politics became eager to vote, speak up, and contribute to nation-building. Seeing them shift from apathy to action showed me that young people truly can drive the Nigeria we want."

Jackson Ighiwiysi (Deputy Team Lead, Unity in Action Network, ATBU)

”



**Jackson Ighiwiysi
(Deputy Team Lead, UACN, ATBU)**

”

"The Unity in Action Network team's change project boosted my confidence to speak up for my social rights. The project showed me that driving positive change starts with my own actions, and now I feel empowered to participate in politics and leadership roles on campus.

*Also, I gained the courage to contest for departmental or hostel leadership positions and advocate for my rights while inspiring positive change around me. The sessions during the training organised by the UACN helped me build confidence, understand my civic rights, and become more willing to volunteer and take part in student politics."***Akpan Rita (Project Beneficiary UACN Change Project, ATBU)**

”



**Akpan Rita (Project Beneficiary,
UACN Change Project ATBU)**

Testimonials

Testimonials shared by participants during the Evaluation Process are captured below.

”

“Our coach is a great person. He gave definite perspectives to the semi-finals topic that we were not even looking at from the beginning.

The guidance we received was very helpful. Even though we did our own research and structured our arguments, the coaching opened our eyes to nuances we were not considering before, including those insights helped strengthen our arguments and our overall stance.”

Saheed Sunday (Student, LASU & 2nd Place winner, YLDP Youth Leadership Debate 2025)

”



Saheed Sunday (Second Place winner, Youth Leadership Debate 2025)

”

“Prior to participating in the YLDP, I had some leadership experience, but I never led a community project. Through the programme’s step-by-step guidance and mentorship, I gained the confidence, advocacy skills, and practical know-how to design and implement a leadership summit that inspired my fellow students to see themselves as change-makers, even without a formal title.

Today, I am not just a participant, but also a confident leader nurturing a club that will keep empowering others long after our project ends”

Iyanuoluwa Adebayo 500 Level Student, Educational Management, & Secretary, Youth Leadership Club, UI

”



**Iyanuoluwa Adebayo
Secretary, Youth Leadership Club, UI**

Participants Programme Experience



Figure 1- Participants Programme Experience

Participants' reflections about their experience during the Youth Leadership Development Programme captured in Figure 1 highlights the programme's strong impact on leadership, personal growth, and community engagement.

Key themes such as communication, confidence, conflict management, decision-making, empowerment, network, teamwork, positive connection, leadership, and problem-solving indicate enhanced leadership and practical skills gained by the participants at the end of the programme, demonstrating development in both interpersonal, leadership, and cognitive capacities.

Other key themes, such as civic, coaching, empowerment, mentor, student, and support, reveal that the participants gained the ability to influence and support others effectively. The programme also encouraged active participation in community and civic initiatives, including health, environment, agriculture, campus change, political engagement, and campaigns, showing that skills were applied in real-world contexts.

Words like advocacy, innovation, visibility, mobilisation, and solution suggest participants have become more proactive, solution-oriented, and capable of leading initiatives that address local needs. Overall, the programme strengthened participants' social responsibility, leadership competencies, and practical skills, equipped youth to drive meaningful change in their communities, advocate for positive development, and create lasting impact within their networks and institutions.

YLDP Project Case Studies



Cross-Section of Participants, and SULTAI team at the end of the Amplifying Female Voices in Leadership Workshop

Case Study 1 - Breaking Female Leadership Barriers – How the SULTAI Team reinforced Women’s Participation in Student Governance

In Northern Nigeria, access to taking leadership roles remains limited among women and girls, who are still viewed through the limiting lens of “second gender,” fit for the home but not for positions of power. The Students Union Leadership Transformational Initiative (SULTAI) Team set out to address the low representation of female students in the Student Union Government at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU) through their YLDP Change Project.

The team deployed a questionnaire among 74 students, and findings revealed cultural and religious misconceptions, as well as the absence of gender-responsive provisions like quotas, which discouraged women and excluded persons with disabilities from leadership positions. In response to this issue, the SULTAI team, led by **Rex Ojochegbe**, organised a training for **40** female students to build their leadership skills and challenge stereotypes that limited women’s participation in governance.

The training “Amplifying Female Voices in Leadership Workshop,” held at the Boi Opolo Innovation Hub, ATBU Gubi campus, on 23rd–24th July 2025, fostered a mindset shift, promoted inclusive leadership, and challenged participants to confront their biases. The SULTAI team also secured the support of ATBU Women’s Forum to mentor female participants.

A landmark milestone win for the team occurred after the project, when a beneficiary of the training, Asmau Yero, became the first female Clerk of the Student Representative Parliament at **ATBU, Bauchi**. At ATBU, female representation in the Student Union Government has increased from **18.75%** to **31.25%**, and female candidates have become empowered to take up leadership roles within institution, thereby fostering inclusive governance.

Testimonials

Testimonials shared by participants during the Evaluation Process are captured below.

”

“The mentorship support provided by the SULTAI team was a critical factor in my political journey. The training in public speaking and advocacy gave me the confidence to contest and win the Clerk position—a feat no female student had ever achieved at ATBU.

The YLDP experience strengthened my belief in inclusive governance. It taught me that female voices matter in shaping policies, and it inspired me to ensure that women are fully represented in our Student Representative Parliament”-Asmau Yero (Clerk, ATBU Student Representative Parliament)

”



Asmau Yero (Clerk, ATBU Student Representative Parliament)

”

“YLDP opened my eyes to the power of inclusion and collaboration. Working on our team’s change project helped me understand the importance of engaging Persons with Disabilities and embracing inclusive practices. The courses strengthened my communication skills, which became one of my biggest takeaways.

Overall, YLDP transformed how I approach teamwork, communication, and inclusive leadership.”-Ramatu Haruna (SULTAI Project Team member)

”



Ramatu Haruna (SULTAI Project Team Member)

YLDP Project Case Studies



Youth Delegate speaking during the Nigeria National Model Assembly Conference Day 2

Case Study 2 - From Classrooms to Parliament: Empowering Nigerian Youth for Real Governance

Nigeria is at a critical stage in its democratic development, but many young citizens lack practical knowledge of governance and feel disconnected from the political process. To address this, Team Referendum, led by **Richard Adeyemi** and **Olaoluwa Babalola** from the University of Ibadan (UI), organised the Nigeria Model National Assembly (NMNA) Conference.

The conference was funded by NYFF and LEAP Africa, and also leveraged partnership support of Twelve Eleven Africa, Students' Representative Council UI, Department of Political Science Students UI, The Assembly UI, and University of Ibadan Model United Nations Society, uniting **109** passionate youth delegates from **14 tertiary institutions** across Nigeria. The participants came from Babcock University, University of Ibadan, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ladoke Akintola University, Lead City University, Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta, Federal University Oye Ekiti, Lagos State University, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Kwara State University, University of Ilorin, St. Augustine's College of Education, Osun State College of Technology, and the University of Abuja—creating a vibrant national tapestry of voices, ideas, and innovation.

Participants were immersed in committee simulations, bill drafting, policy debates, and plenary deliberations. The conference equipped youth with practical legislative skills and boosted their confidence to engage in policymaking, with an average attendance of **132 persons**. Delegates drafted and passed **five youth-authored bills** addressing critical national issues, including health workforce retention, creative economy development, artificial intelligence regulation, and education and skills development.

The conference ignited youth-led advocacy and policy innovation, and the establishment of the Nigeria Model National Assembly Alumni network, an initiative that mobilises youth in shaping national policies.

Testimonials

Testimonials shared by participants during the Evaluation Process are captured below.

”

“Many young people just complain without knowing how laws are made or who their representatives are. The Nigeria National Model Assembly conference showed them that they can be the change they want to see.

Rather than waiting for things to change, this conference helped us realize that we can step up, participate, and even become future legislators.

We’re not leaving governance to the older generation anymore. We now know what to do, and how to do it right.” -Richard Adeyemi (Team Lead, Referendum, University of Ibadan)

”



Richard Adeyemi
(Team Lead, Referendum, UI)

”

“Participating in the Nigerian National Model Assembly conference allowed us to express our viewpoint on policies and gain practical skills on how they are formulated. The youth delegates were involved in every aspect: researching policies, debating bills, and representing their constituencies.

The NMNA conference gave students a real taste of governance. We had a huge (90%) turnout despite the long hours and travel commitments. It was a clear signal of the youth delegates’ enthusiasm and passion for policy-making.

The project provided a platform for Nigerian youth to be involved in policymaking and contribute their fresh perspectives to governance. To my fellow Nigerian youth, do not assume it’s over. Embrace initiatives like this, participate, follow up, and make sure your voice counts in places where it matters.” -Toluwalope Ifedayo (Director of Recruitment, NMNA, UI)

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Toluwalope Ifedayo (Director of Recruitment, NMNA conference, UI)

Testimonials

Testimonials shared by participants during the Evaluation Process are captured below.

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“The Nigeria Model National Assembly conference was an eye opener to how the government operates., not just on a surface level but at a depth of Law and Policy Making. It was a run-through of what goes down in the legislature and it sparked up an interest in this aspect for me.

During the NMNA conference, LEAP Africa organised a debate for different students and a panel session, where I understood the essence of the art and learned that you can be a policy maker in any field, pave a way that hasn't been created as long as it for the greater good and selfless service in the long run.

Overall, NMNA was very insightful and a challenge to take up an impactful role in the society.” **Damibola Opemipo (100 Level Law Student , UI)**

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**Damibola Opemipo
(100 Level Law Student , UI)**

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During the NMNA, my committee's bill was considered at the plenary. During the committee session, I was appointed as the unofficial committee chair, this responsibility strengthened my leadership, communication, and facilitation skills as I guided discussions, managed opposing viewpoints, and ensured productive deliberations.

The conference was an incredibly enriching experience that pushed me to think critically, collaborate across diverse viewpoints, and engage deeply with legislative processes, expanded my perspective and helped refine my policy analysis, negotiation, and public speaking abilities.

I was awarded Best Delegate for my committee, a recognition that affirmed the effort, preparation, and passion I brought to the sessions. The conference deepened my understanding of governance, legislative structure, and stakeholder engagement in Nigeria, and reaffirmed my commitment to leadership and civic participation.” **Solomon Okereke (Deputy Senate President Majority Party, NMNA)**

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**Solomon Okereke (Deputy Senate
President Majority Party, NMNA)**

YLDP Project Case Studies



Cross-Section of Students at University of Nigeria, Nsukka during National Youth Policy Domestication workshop

Case Study 3 - From Policy to Practice: Strengthening Youth Engagement at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Despite the existence of the Nigerian National Youth Policy since 1994, many students still lack awareness of its provisions and benefits. Understanding the provisions of the Nigerian National Youth policy is crucial for young people to access support structures, engage in national development programs, and advocate for their rights.

The Youth Policy Amplifiers team organised a National Youth Policy domestication workshop for students at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, on 2nd August 2025. During the workshop, **53** students were equipped with knowledge on the provisions of the National Youth Policy and also given a simplified version of the National Youth Policy, and this was also distributed to faculty libraries within the school. Radio sensitisations were also carried out on Lion FM, reaching over **5,000 students**.

Fifty-three student leaders emerged as Youth Policy Ambassadors who have begun sensitisation on the National Youth Policy in their faculties. The team also set up a functional Youth Policy Resource Center or digital archive serving as a hub for information.

At UNN Nsukka, the students are now actively seeking information and exploring opportunities for personal growth. University administration and the Student Union have committed to sustaining youth policy efforts. The initiative empowered students to become advocates for youth rights and strengthened youth-led development on campus.

Testimonials

Testimonials shared by participants during the Evaluation Process are captured below.

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“Earlier on before the training, I used to be someone that avoided conflict, the training by YLDP Youth Policy Amplifiers team transformed my mindset towards conflict resolution. I am now bold and able to resolve conflicts and also solve problems in my school community.

Since completing the training, I assumed a leadership role and recently volunteered as Chairman, Fundraising Committee, Federal Catholic Medical and Dental Students Association (UNN), leading a ₦200,000 fundraiser for an orphanage outreach.”-
Joseph Chigozie (100 Level Medical Student, UNN Nsukka)

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“Before the training organised by YLDP Youth Policy Amplifiers team, I believed that nothing could change in Nigeria—that no matter our efforts, things would remain the same. My conversations with the facilitators completely shifted my perspective, and I now believe that with effort, some things can be changed, and I have a role to play in contributing to the change needed within my community.

The training helped me unlearn old mindsets, equipped me with practical tools like Tracka and social media, and left me energised. Now, I have revived my non-profit organisation and also begun new initiatives.”
Ruth Okoro (400 Level Soil Science Student, UNN)

”



Joseph Chigozie (100 Level Medical Student, UNN Nsukka)



Ruth Okoro (400 Level Soil Science Student, UNN)

YLDP Project Case Studies



Student Beneficiaries during Girls' Education Movement Sokoto (GEMS Project) at Ahmadu Bello Model School, Sokoto

Case Study 4 - Transforming Girls' Education in Sokoto: From Disparity to Empowered Voices

In 2018, the National Bureau of Statistics revealed a striking reality: for every ten students who completed secondary school in 2017, barely three were girls—while nearly seven were boys—exposing a deep educational gender gap. This glaring gender gap in education limits girls' participation in tertiary institutions and threatens their potential contribution to national development.

To address this challenge, a team of students from Usmanu Danfodiyo University launched the Girls Education Movement Sokoto (GEMS) Project, through the funding support of Nigeria Youth Futures Funds received through LEAP Africa. The vibrant team of young changemakers led by Alhassan Ibrahim collaborated with Usmanu Danfodiyo University Medical Students Association and Medical Women Association of Nigeria to enlighten **254 girls** at Government Girls Secondary School and Hafsat Ahmadu Bello Arabic Model Secondary School, Sokoto between 27th-30th July 2025.

The girls were educated on the importance of completing tertiary education, civic rights and duties, policy engagement, reproductive health and were also linked to mentors. The project significantly boosted the girls' confidence and led to increased engagement in school activities, many of the girls stepped into leadership roles for the first time, while the Schools' administration expressed readiness to incorporate gender awareness sessions into their extracurricular activities.

To sustain the impact, the team established The GEMS Club, creating a safe space for peer learning, mentorship, and ownership. What began as an intervention is now a movement—igniting ambition, empowering voices, and transforming the educational future of girls in Sokoto.

Testimonials

Stories of Change shared by participants during the Evaluation Process are captured below.

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“The Youth Leadership Development Programme experience has been nothing short of empowering. The programme has amplified our voices as young leaders and equipped us with tools to inspire change in underserved communities.

The GEMS Project is not just a one off event, but a seed that has the potential to grow into a broader movement across Sokoto and other Northern states.

We are grateful to LEAP Africa and NYFF for believing in youth-led innovation and investing in dreams like ours. The journey has just begun.”

-Alhassan Ibrahim (Team Lead, GEMS Project, Usmanu Dan Fodio University)

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Alhassan Ibrahim (Team Lead, GEMS Project, Usmanu Dan Fodio University)

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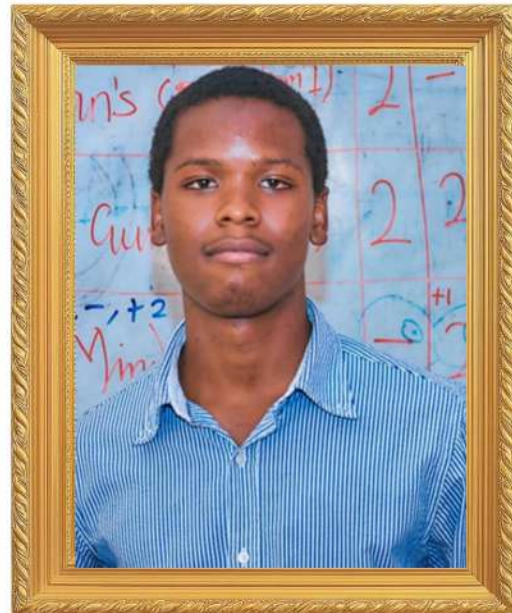
“The GEMS project was an eye-opening experience for me. I went there hoping to inspire and enlighten the young girls, but in the process I got enlightened myself.

We successfully launched the project in two schools, where we motivated girls to aspire for more out of life and to never think they are capable of less because of their gender. Through these interactions, we understood their unique perspectives, fears, and hopes, guided and inspired them to achieve their goals, introduced them to the sustainable development goals, and started a small club to ensure the sustainability of the project.

All in all, we got amazing responses from them and many said they were inspired to achieve more.”

Ayomide Yahya (Deputy Team Lead, GEMS Project Usmanu Dan Fodio University, Sokoto)

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Ayomide Yahya (Deputy Team Lead, Usmanu Dan Fodio University, Sokoto)

YLDP Project Case Studies



Naija Move Electric Wheel Chair Initiative - ABU, Zaria



Naija Move Electric Wheel Chair Initiative - ABU Zaria

Case Study 5 - Wheels of Inclusion: Facilitating Access to Mobility for Persons with Disability at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Navigating movement within Nigerian universities can be a daunting journey for students with physical disabilities, who often encounter barriers due to limited accessible equipment and facilities. Rising to this challenge, the Naija Electric Wheel team at Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria launched a creative project designed to address mobility barriers within the University sickbay for students with physical disabilities.

The Naija-Move Electric Wheelchair Initiative, led by Oluwatosin Obadina, introduced a specially designed Electric Wheelchair at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria sickbay. During the project, students within the Ahmadu Bello University Campus Zaria were also enlightened on how small, everyday actions can make a meaningful difference in the lives of Persons with Disabilities.

The donated Electric Wheelchair was stationed at the university's sick bay. The equipment has significantly improved mobility and access to medical care for students with physical disabilities within the university's sick bay. With weekly use by 12 beneficiaries per week, the Electric Wheelchair supports inclusive movement within the university's sickbay premises and enables prompt response during medical emergencies.

This change project not only integrates innovative solutions to improve accessibility but has also transformed the mindsets of students within the campus.

Testimonials

Stories of Change shared by participants during the Evaluation Process are captured below.

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“Prior to YLDP I wasn't too good as a leader, running away from responsibility and no proper structure for tackling challenges. After the programme, I was able to properly manage my time and gained not only leadership skills, but also a deeper sense of responsibility to serve my community, plan for sustainability, and scale impact.

The YLDP has been a life-transforming journey that redefined my understanding of impact, showed me that meaningful change starts with empathy, vision, and commitment.

The success of my change project, especially seeing it in use daily by people in need, has inspired me to pursue bigger goals.” - **Obadina Oluwatosin (Team Lead, Naija Electric Wheel Team , ABU Zaria**

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Obadina Oluwatosin (Team Lead, Naija Electric Wheel Team , ABU Zaria

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“Our project improved access to education for students with disabilities and gave them a sense of belonging.

Seeing their smiles was proof that we were solving a real, root problem. The session on transformative leadership inspired me to stop waiting for others to act.

That same day, I started cleaning my compound, and neighbours joined in. YLDP motivated me to take initiative and lead by example”-**Enoch (Team Member, Naija Electric Wheel Team, ABU Zaria)**

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Enoch Samson (Team Member, Naija Electric Wheel Team, ABU Zaria)

YLDP Project Case Studies



Cross-section of Participants during Change Project led by Calabar Civic Champions Team

Case Study 6 - Champions of Change - Calabar Youth Powering Civic Action

In Calabar, many young people were disengaged from civic life, showed reluctance to contribute to their community, and underestimated the power of their voices to drive meaningful change.

The Calabar Civic Champions project led by **Lucy Ita**, a student of University of Calabar, set out to change the narrative. The team implemented a Community Change project in partnership with Young African Leaders Initiative Network Cross River, and Calabar Corpers Network where they trained university students on leadership, civic responsibility, and community participation at the University of Calabar on 18th and 21st July 2025.

Taking the message further, the team embarked on school tours across Hebrews High School, Emilis College, and Greater Heights Christian School, educating over **1,000 students** on the importance of civic participation and leadership.

Today, students in Calabar are now eager to participate in elections, take leadership roles, and champion civic conversations in their schools and communities. The project galvanised a civic awakening and ignited a growing movement of youth change-makers in Calabar, Cross River State.

Testimonials

Testimonials shared by participants during the Evaluation Process are captured below.

"My experience in the YLDP was transformative, equipping me with the tools to become a proactive change-maker in my community.

I went from being shy to confidently networking with peers and professionals at YLDP events, forming connections with 30+ individuals passionate about social change.

This network has been invaluable, providing mentorship and collaboration opportunities."

Isaac Daniel (Team Lead, Calabar Civic Champions Team, UNICAL)



Isaac Daniel (Team Lead, Calabar Civic Champions Team, UNICAL)

"Being selected for the YLDP by LEAP Africa earlier this year was one of the most transformative experiences of my leadership journey. I left the programme with a renewed mindset, clearer vision, and a deeper understanding of what civic leadership and community impact truly meant.

Serving as the Project Coordinator, Calabar Civic Champions team strengthened my confidence, deepened my project management skills, and taught me the value of teamwork, resourcefulness, and strategic planning.

After completing the programme, 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."

Golden Ibangha (Deputy Team Lead, Calabar Civic Champions Team, UNICAL)



Golden Ibangha (Project Coordinator, Calabar Civic Champions, UNICAL)

Key Learnings

The following key programme learnings were instrumental in identifying gaps and opportunities in participant support, strengthening stakeholder engagement, and informing more adaptive programme management.



Balikisu Abubakar (Debater, ATBU, Zaria) during North East/NorthWest Debate Quarter Finals at ATBU, Bauchi on August 7, 2025

Youth Involvement fosters Increased Programme Participation:

The involvement of Campus Ambassadors in programme delivery significantly increased participation. Campus Ambassadors contributed to mobilisation of participants during call for applications, Change Project planning, and Debate planning phase. The LMS completion total participation numbers (**1,731**) doubled this year compared to the previous year (**742**), this was largely driven by the combined support of Campus Ambassadors and the LEAP Africa team.

This learning reflects the importance of youth-led co-creation in programming and structured coordination mechanisms by the Lead Implementing organisation, LEAP Africa in amplifying programme outreach.

Another key evaluation learning is that empowering Campus Ambassadors as mobilisation partners could enhance programme reach and participation outcomes.

Strategic Stakeholder Engagement Fuels Programme Success:

Multi-sectoral stakeholder management proved pivotal to programme success. Hosting debates in institutions such as Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, University of Ibadan, and University of Nigeria, Nsukka created opportunities to engage with the Student Affairs Division leaders and Student Union groups.

While turnout was high during the Regional Debate Quarter finals held at ATBU and UI, participation dropped in the South-East and South-South Debate Regional Quarter-finals.

This learning depicts the need to engage Students Division and Student Union stakeholders in tertiary institutions prior to their consideration as host institutions for the Youth Leadership Debates.

Key Learnings

Other key programme learnings gathered from stakeholders in the course of site visits during monitoring and evaluation phase of the programme are highlighted below.



Elisabeth Agibiti-Douglas, (Director, NYFF), Maimuna Sani (Community and Youth Engagement Coordinator, NYFF), Nasir Muaz (Communications, PR and Community Engagement Officer, NYFF) at the Nigeria at 65 conference, Abuja on 21st October 2025

Accessible Expression Platforms Strengthens Youth Agency:

Evaluation feedback indicated that many participants previously lacked platforms to express their views on national issues, which often led to political apathy on critical issues of concern in their tertiary institutions, and community.

The provision of platforms and resources through the Youth Leadership Debate and Community Change Projects, motivated participants to address social issues, boosted their self-confidence, and caused a mindset shift from political apathy to active involvement. These platforms also promoted peer learning, collaboration, and critical thinking, enhancing participants leadership capacity.

This learning reveals that consistent access to leadership platforms and resources can strengthen youth voice, agency, and long-term civic participation.

Access to Coaching and Mentorship Strengthens Programme Delivery:

While **77.8%** of mentors fulfilled their commitments, some remained inactive, affecting the consistency of support received by the Community Change Project teams. This inconsistency limited the remaining teams' ability to benefit from mentorship guidance

Establishing clear accountability systems such as structured check-ins with Community Change Project teams, and integrating feedback loops will help foster mentorship engagements throughout the programme cycle. Maintaining a pool of standby mentors and offering appropriate incentives can strengthen reliability and improve the overall quality of mentorship delivery.

These measures will contribute to a more consistent, supportive, and impactful mentorship experience for all participants.

Challenges

The implementation of the 2025 Youth Leadership Development Programme presented certain challenges. Understanding these challenges provides important insights that will support the ongoing refinement and improvement of the programme.

Resistance by Host Beneficiary Communities:

Data gathered from Evaluation feedback revealed that some participants experienced Community Resistance during their Girl-Child Education advocacy project in the North-West Nigeria. This occurred due to deeply ingrained cultural beliefs and skepticism among the community members, which initially hindered acceptance and engagement.

However, through constant stakeholder engagement and community dialogues, the Change Project team members were able to build trust, and obtain buy-in of the project from the community members.

Bureaucracy within Student Union Bodies:

Delays occurred during some In-Campus Regional Debate rounds.

This was due to delay in approvals from Student Union bodies which required multiple bureaucratic steps including informal financial demands, which slowed down event planning and execution.

These bureaucratic delays slowed down planning and execution of the In-Campus Regional Debate rounds, led to uncertainties around audience turnout and resulted in low participation in the South-East region.

Notwithstanding, the LEAP Africa and NYFF teams secured the Enugu Ministry of Education representative's commitment to support future initiatives.

Technical Connectivity Issues:

Some of the participants reported that they experienced unstable and slow internet connectivity during Zoom Live sessions, which affected their engagement in Live training sessions.

Additionally, participants mentioned that they experienced difficulties in downloading videos on the Learning Management System platform.

The LEAP Africa team supported participants who completed LMS courses with Data Stipend through a third-party vendor, while pre-recorded sessions were made available on YouTube.

Declining Mentor Engagement:

A decline in the engagement of some mentors was a major challenge identified during the programme. About **77.8%** mentors provided mentorship support to the Change Project teams, while **22.2%** did not fully deliver on their mentorship commitments.

This created gaps in the mentoring support structure. The uneven level of mentor participation resulted in some teams receiving limited guidance, and feedback support.

The uneven mentorship engagement placed additional pressure on LEAP Africa's Programme staff to fill support gaps and ensure the teams remained on track.

Recommendations for Funders

This section presents key recommendations derived from the programme evaluation, offering actionable insights to guide funders in enhancing participant outcomes.



Joy Igbinedion (Alumni Engagement and Communications Coordinator, LEAP Africa) during the moderation of the Youth Leadership Debate Finals at Monalisa Events Centre, Garki, Abuja on 21st October 2025

Increase Programme Funding:

A hundred and fifty-nine proposals were submitted by Youth Leadership Development Programme Community Change Project and Community Advocacy track participants this year, but only **47** Change Project teams were supported with funding.

Participants recommended that more funds should be allocated to Community Change projects in order to achieve a wider reach and deepen the project's impact. Additionally, greater financial support could enable better access to resources and training, enhancing the overall quality and sustainability of the programme.

This would also help in maximising the programme's overall contribution to community development, and also enhance equity by providing opportunities to projects from diverse regions and groups.

Strengthen Mentor Engagement and Support:

A key challenge identified during the programme delivery was the decline in some mentors engagement. Strengthening mentors engagement is critical to ensuring that participants receive the requisite support to achieve their project.

To address this, it is recommended that funders consider allocating resources to enhance mentors orientation, tracking tools to monitor mentors engagement, and ongoing support. Investing in stronger mentor support would help to boost participant outcomes by clarifying expectations and reinforcing mentor accountability.

This approach ensures participants benefit from consistent guidance, strengthens their skill development, and advances the attainment of the programme's overall objectives.

Recommendations for Technical Partners

The following recommendations for our Technical Partners are drawn from the Programme Evaluation and reflect insights shared by key stakeholders.



Presentation of Cheque to Second Place Winners from Lagos State University during the Nigeria at 65 conference by Elisabeth Agibiti-Douglas (Director of Programmes, NYFF) and Ms. Rinsola Abiola (Director General, CLTC)

Provide Linkages to Coaches and Mentors at Minimal or No Cost:

Technical partners can provide more support to the programme by providing contact of Resource Persons to facilitate coaching and mentorship sessions for participants in the course of the programme.

This can be achieved through partnerships with networks, universities, Civil Society Organisations, or professionals who can offer low-cost or pro-bono coaching and mentorship sessions.

Facilitating access to a pool of mentors and coaches will ensure equitable access to expert guidance, and minimise glitches that could arise during the project implementation phase. This support will also help participants build confidence and strengthen impact of their advocacy and community projects.

Strengthen Capacity-Building Through Tailored Technical Support:

Technical partners should provide specialised and practical training support that aligns with the programme's leadership, advocacy, and community development goals.

This can include short virtual classes on project management, fundraising, communication skills, stakeholder engagement, monitoring and evaluation and sustainability planning.

Technical Partners can also provide resource toolkits, templates, and advisory hours that directly help participants to design, implement, and scale their initiatives. This ensures participants gain the technical depth needed to achieve measurable outcomes in their advocacy campaigns and Community Change projects.

Recommendations for Implementing Partners

The following recommendations for our Implementing partners are informed by the Programme Evaluation and shaped by the perspectives shared by key stakeholders



Presentation of Cheque to Third Place Youth Leadership Debate Winners from University of Uyo during the Nigeria at 65 conference by Elisabeth Agibiti-Douglas (Director of Programmes, NYFF) and Ms. Rinsola Abiola (Director General, CLTC)

Improve Programme Visibility:

To enhance the visibility of the YLDP, Implementing Partners should adopt a more strategic communication approach by sharing success stories from Programme Alumni and collaborating with Student-led clubs and Associations on campuses.

Programme stakeholders recommended strengthening collaboration with student union leaders, campus influencers, and faculty associations to increase participation and visibility in the South-South and South-East regions.

Another recommendation by Programme stakeholders was on the need to foster increased participation and visibility in the South-South and South-East regions, implementing partners should strengthen collaboration with student union leaders, campus influencers, and faculty associations.

Strengthen Stakeholder Buy-In in Tertiary Institutions:

Implementing partners should prioritise the development of stronger, more structured relationships with universities, colleges, and educational institutions. This should be done prior to the programme implementation phase.

Through active engagement with the Student Affairs Leadership structures, and by presenting the programmes trajectory achievements, stakeholder buy-in within tertiary institutions in Nigeria can be improved.

Strengthening engagement with these stakeholders will improve integration of the programme into campus structures, boost participant recruitment, and foster a supportive environment that enhances the programme's impact on students across various tertiary institutions.



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