Youth Day of Service (YDoS) Programme

Mobilizing African Youth as Agents of Sustainable Development



YDoS Youth Day of Service

LEAP AFRICA

INNOVISION
Research | Technical Assistance | Project Management





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Executive Summary

The Youth Day of Service (YDoS) was launched by LEAP Africa in 2020 in direct response to two converging crises: Africa's growing 'youth bulge' and the continent's stalling progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Designed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the programme mobilises young people across Africa to implement community-based development projects, supported by micro-grants of between $100 and $500 per Project Lead.

This Impact Evaluation, conducted by Innovision Global Consulting and covering the full five-year implementation period (2020 - 2024), assesses the programme's performance against the OECD-DAC criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability, and Coherence.

Key Statistics at a Glance (2020–2024)

28
African Countries Reached

10,000+
Volunteers Mobilised

$200k+
Grant Disbursed

6M+
Indirect Beneficiaries

76%
Coverage of underserved, rural and semi-urban communities (SURVEY)

216
Survey Respondents (volunteers + project leads) (SURVEY)

100%
Leads Want Future YDoS

99%
Volunteers Want to Return

Key Findings - OECD-DAC Ratings

Criterion	Rating	Key Evidence
Relevance	HIGH	Bottom-up design; SDG alignment; addresses Africa's youth demographic (KIIs)
Effectiveness	HIGH	74% projects achieved outcomes; 28 countries; PHC electrified; 300 peace advocates
Efficiency	VERY HIGH	Micro-grants ($100–$500) catalyse community assets; tri-sector leverage
Impact	SIGNIFICANT	Reduced maternal mortality; inter-ethnic cohesion; social enterprise careers
Sustainability	MIXED	Institutional projects: high. Individual-led: fragile - the 'funding cliff'
Coherence	STRONG	Aligns with SDGs & AU Agenda 2063; near gender parity; disability inclusion improving

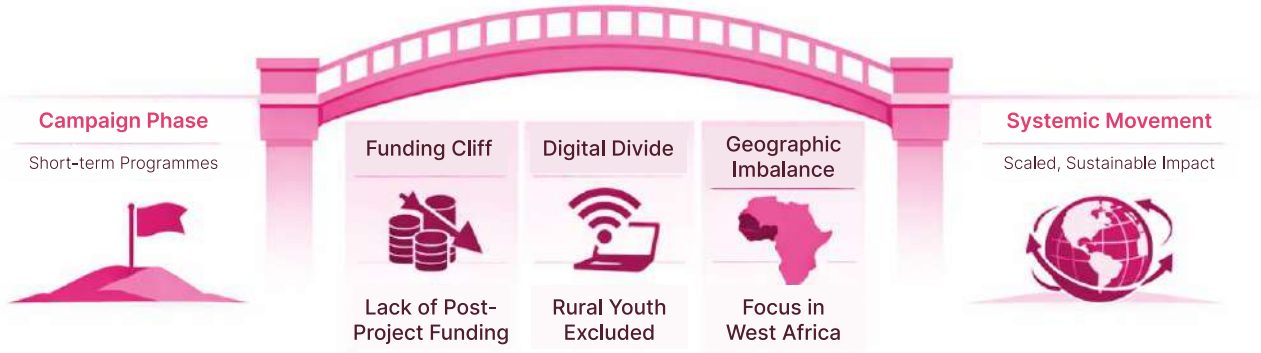
Ratings derived from data collected:

Desk Review	Surveys	KIIs	Case studies

The evaluation confirms that YDoS has successfully proven the concept that African youth, when resourced with even modest micro-grants, can deliver cost-effective, high-impact development solutions. The programme functions as a vital incubator for social entrepreneurship and active citizenship. High-performing projects have electrified health centres, brokered inter-ethnic peace, recovered trafficking victims, and launched careers in social entrepreneurship.

However, to transition from a campaign to a systemic movement, three structural challenges must be resolved: the 'funding cliff' that curtails post-project sustainability; the digital divide that excludes rural youth from programme participation; and the geographic imbalance that concentrates activity in West Africa.

Figure 1: From Campaign to Systemic Movement





> YDoS is a cost-effective, high-impact, and highly relevant development platform. Its core model: micro-grants, structured frameworks and peer mobilisation is validated. The priority now is systemic scaling, not proof of concept.



2.0 The African Youth Demographic

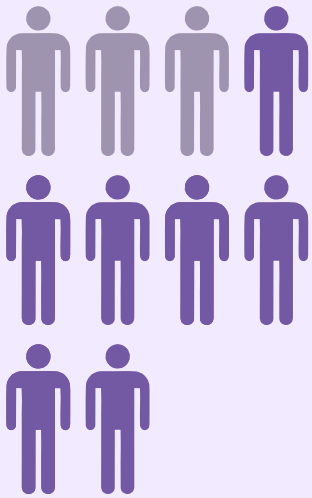
Africa hosts the youngest population in the world. Over 400 million young people are currently aged between 15 and 35, and the United Nations projects that by 2030, young Africans will constitute 42% of the world's youth population. In sub-Saharan Africa specifically, 70% of the population is under the age of 30.

This 'youth bulge' presents a dual possibility. Managed with foresight and investment, it represents a demographic dividend that could underpin economic transformation. Left unaddressed, it risks becoming a demographic disaster characterised by unemployment, instability, and social unrest. Current indicators skew toward the latter: the International Labour Organisation reports that 71.7% of employed youth in sub-Saharan Africa lack formal contracts or social protection, while the rate of youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) stands at 21.9% - above the global average.

This economic exclusion is compounded by a crisis of political representation. Afrobarometer's 2025 flagship report reveals that African youth (18–35) are 18 percentage points less likely to vote than their elders, and significantly less likely to attend community meetings or engage with local government. Political energy is increasingly channelled into protest and unconventional activism - a signal of widening disconnect between state institutions and the aspirations of the young.

70%

of the population is under the age of 30 in sub-Saharan Africa specifically



2.1 The SDG Challenge: A Race Against Time

As the 2030 deadline approaches, Africa's progress toward the SDGs has stalled across multiple dimensions:

Poverty (SDG 1): Sub-Saharan Africa remains the epicentre of extreme poverty, home to 145 million working poor (UN, 2024)

Energy and Connectivity (SDG 7 & 9): Only 38% of Africa's population uses the internet, limiting youth innovation and digital participation (UN Africa Renewal, 2024).

Governance (SDG 16): 8.9 million young people lived in proximity to conflict zones in 2022, while 26.6% of the population reports personal bribery experiences (ILO, 2024).



Against this backdrop, government action alone is insufficient. The UNDP frames young people not as beneficiaries of development, but as critical agents of change whose creativity, digital fluency, and grassroots networks are essential to localising the SDGs.

2.2 Genesis and Rationale of YDoS

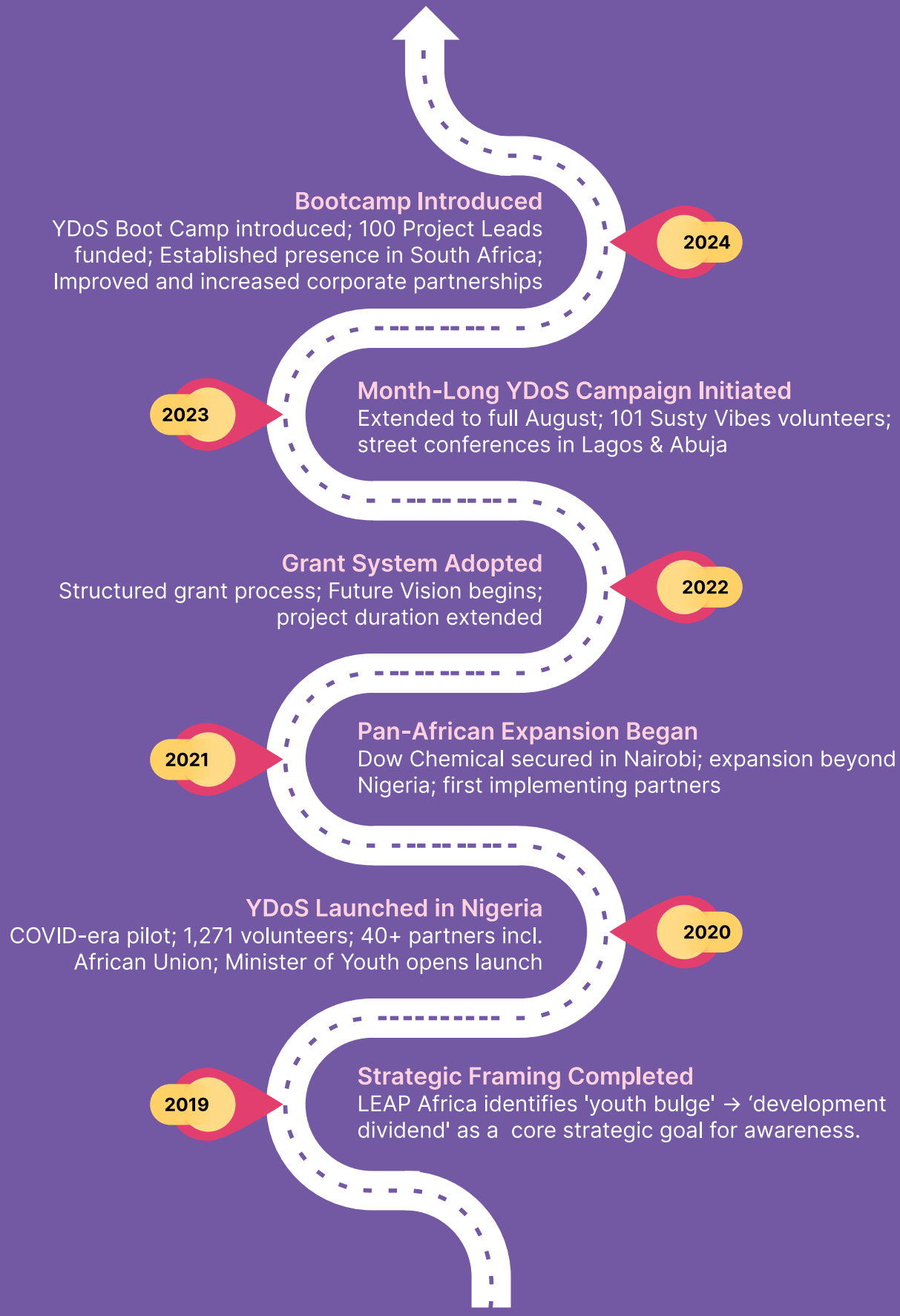
It was within this context that LEAP Africa conceptualised the Youth Day of Service. Launched in 2020, YDoS was designed to answer a fundamental question: how can the demographic 'youth bulge' be converted into a 'development dividend'? By providing a structured framework, branding, and micro-grant support, the programme encourages young people to identify specific community needs - from cleaning local markets to digitising health records - and mobilise their peers to solve them.

Since inception, the programme has grown from an initial cohort of 1,271 volunteers in Nigeria to a continental movement spanning 28 African countries, engaging over 6 million indirect beneficiaries by 2024.

1,271
volunteers in Nigeria to a continental movement spanning
28 African countries



2.3 The Journey



2.4 Study Purpose, Objectives & Scope

Two Objective

- **Assess the contribution of YDoS to the achievement of the SDGs in Africa**

  Indicators: Programme reach, participation scale, collaboration, capacity, sustainability, institutional influence

- **Understand the social and behavioural change brought about through YDoS participation**

  Indicators: Civic engagement, leadership agency, peer influence, norm shift, sustained engagement, GESI inclusion

Scope

TIMELINE

2020 – 2024

GEOGRAPHY

28 African Countries (Focus: Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, Zambia, Malawi, Sierra Leone)

TARGETS

Project Leads, Volunteers, Implementing Partners, Beneficiaries, LEAP Africa Staff

FRAMEWORK

OECD-DAC + IMM (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability, Coherence)





> **Young people are not merely beneficiaries of development - they are critical agents of change whose creativity, digital fluency, and grassroots networks are essential for the localisation of the SDGs**

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2016)



3. Methodology

The complexity of the YDoS programme - spanning 28 countries, multiple thematic areas, and diverse stakeholder tiers - required a rigorous mixed-methods evaluation design. Innovision Global Consulting employed a Layered Approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative methods within the OECD-DAC evaluation framework.

The evaluation was guided by utilisation-focused and participatory principles - ensuring findings are not only rigorous but actionable for LEAP Africa's strategic planning. The team engaged directly with Project Leads, volunteers, implementing partners, and LEAP Africa's Executive Director to triangulate evidence across multiple stakeholder perspectives.

Figure 2: YDoS Program Evaluation Layers

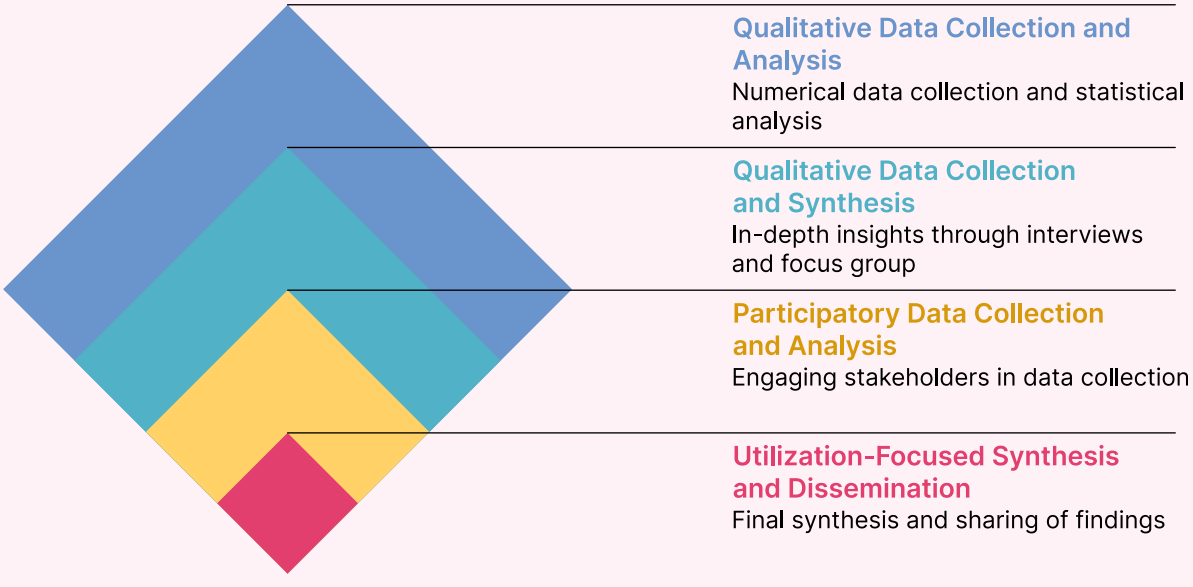
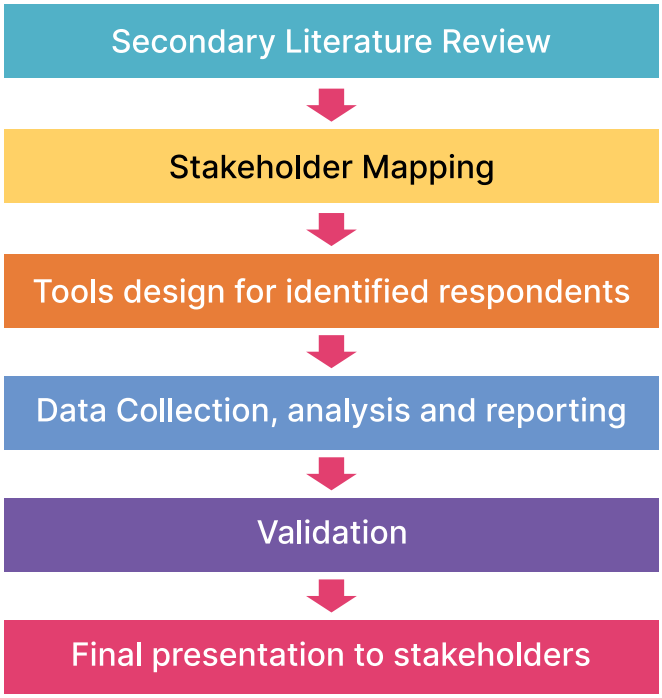


Figure 3: Overall Approach



3.1 Sampling

We employ the Cochran (1977) Sample size formula to determine the sample size for participants in this study. This represents the minimum sample size for both qualitative studies and are spread across the study's sample strata.

$$n = \frac{pqz^2}{D^2}$$

n = sample size
p = the proportion or percentage estimate expected for specific indicators, maximum (50% = 0.5)
q = the proportion who do not share the characteristics (i.e. p=1-q), 0.95
z = z-statistics for specifics confidence level and D is the absolute level of precision 1.96
D = 0.10

> Using this formula, we arrive at a minimum sample of 97, which when corrected for design effect and non-response gives a **total of 144**, approximated to **150 samples.**
>
> This is distributed purposively across the **beneficiaries (100)** and **project leads (50)**

3.2 Evaluation Framework

The evaluation was anchored in two globally recognised frameworks:

- **OECD-DAC Criteria:** Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability, and Coherence, providing international comparability and rigour.
- **Impact Management and Measurement (IMM) Framework:** Described as a viable investor/stakeholder tool to track and assess the social and environmental impact of activities. Applied to assess stakeholder value, depth of change, and risk, particularly the 'funding cliff' risk to long-term project viability.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

The evaluation assesses programme performance for 2020–2024 using retrospective data collection conducted in late 2025/early 2026:

Method	Details	Purpose
Relevance	5 years of programme reports, grant records, M&E frameworks, partner MOUs	Secondary baseline data
Online Surveys	Project Leads (Target=50), Volunteers (Target= 100) via Google Forms; Cochran's Formula applied	Quantitative trends
Key Informant Interviews	Implementing and development partners, Project leads and LEAP Africa staff.	Qualitative depth
Case Studies	High-performing projects selected by innovation, scale, and sustainability criteria	Narrative impact evidence

3.4 Sample Achieved and Consolidation

Sample	Target	Achieved	Percentage
Total	96.4% achieved		
Volunteers (Survey)	100	147	147%
Project Leads (Survey)	50	69	138%
Project Leads (KII)	10	5	50%
Partners (KII)	15	7	47%
LEAP Africa Team	5	5	100%

159 attendees

validated and consolidated the data through their significant contributions at the stakeholder and partner validation exercise, where further insights were generated to support, dispute, and solidify the preliminary findings of this study.



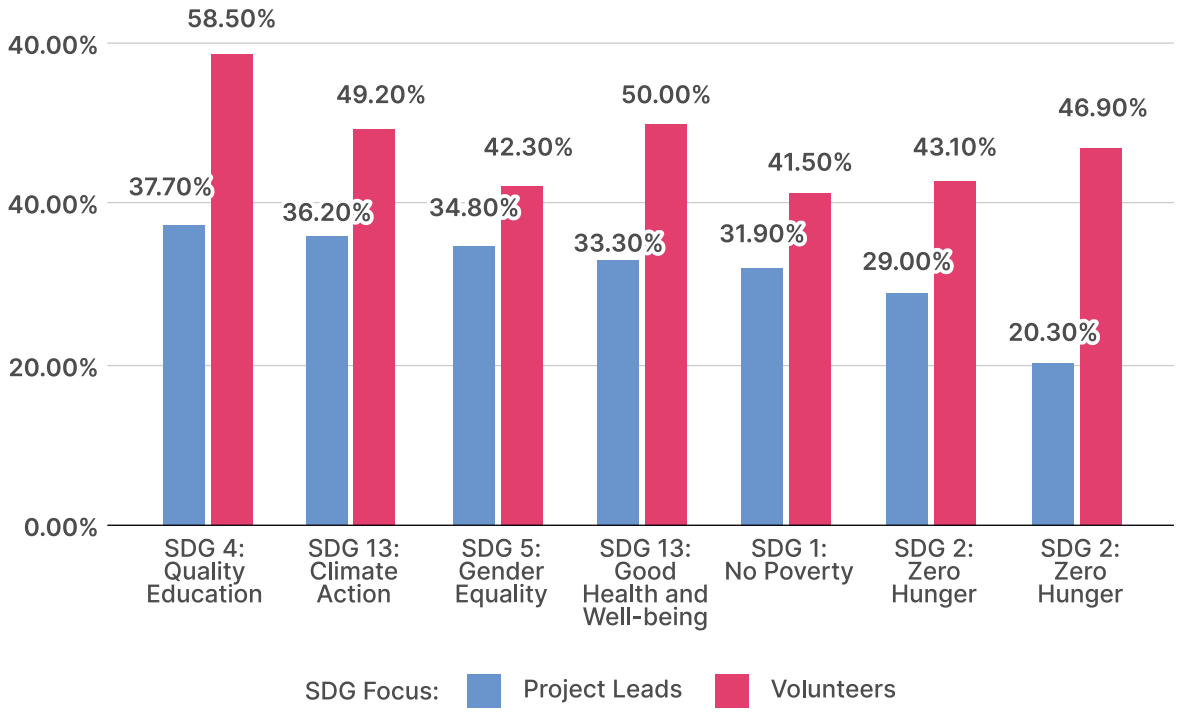


4. Findings

4.1 Effectiveness: YDoS has Contributed to Several SDGs of Focus

YDoS has been highly effective in translating SDG aspirations into tangible grassroots results. The micro-grant model has catalysed youth-led SDG-aligned actions with SDG 4 (58.5% and 37.7%) emerging as the most prominent thematic area followed by SDGs 13, 5, 3, 1, 2, and 6 as the top 6 SDG focus areas

Table 1: Top 6 SDG Focus Areas

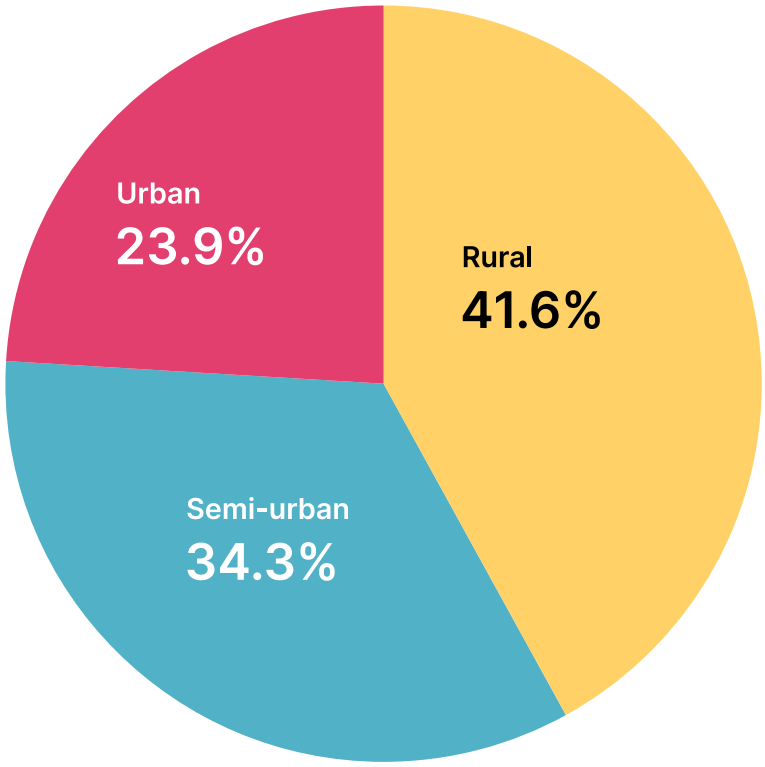


4.1.1 SDGs serve underserved rural and underserved communities

In evaluating the qualitative data, the most reflected SDG focus areas reveals that peace and Justice (SDG 16), and Energy (SDG 7) are also key areas that are implemented within the scope of YDoS.

This shows the high relevance of the initiative in driving sustainable impact through targeted SDG-oriented activities in local communities in Africa. This is confirmed by the Project Lead survey revealing over 76% of projects carried out in rural or semi-urban communities

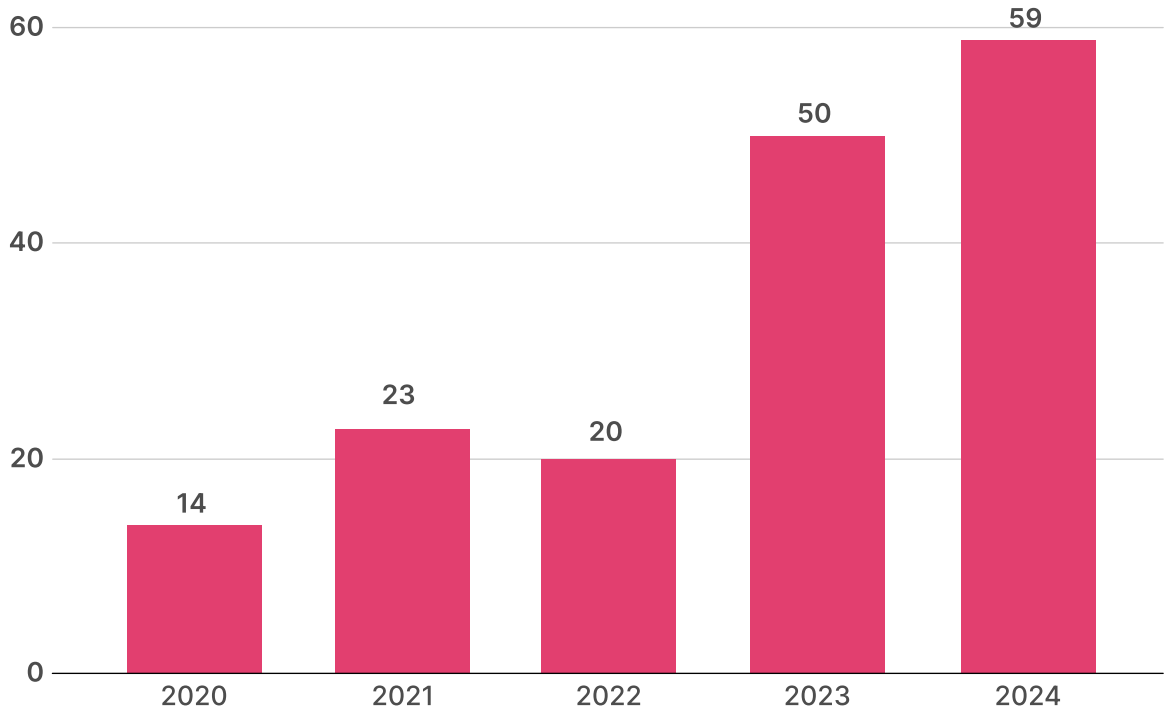
Table 2: SDGs serve underserved rural and underserved communities



4.1.2 Growth in Youth Mobilisation

YDoS shows consistent growth in terms of youth mobilisation as there is evidence of increasing volunteerism among young people participating in the initiative. From the survey, there is evidence to support the upward trajectory in the participation of youth in the initiative.

Table 3: Volunteer survey (YDoS Impact study, 2026)



To support this, there is clear evidence from the qualitative interviews supporting increase in individual level participation. For instance, 8thGear reported their volunteer community growing from 51 individuals in 2023 to 85 in 2024, and 221 in 2025, demonstrating accelerating demand for structured civic platforms among Nigerian youth. This trajectory reflects a broader continental trend of rising youth appetite for purposeful engagement.

4.1.3 Regional Patterns and Disparities

West Africa, particularly Nigeria, remains the dominant region of activity - attributable to LEAP Africa's headquarters and government relationships in the subregion. East Africa shows growing traction, led by Kenya and Tanzania through partnerships with ChildFund International and Dream Defenders. A persistent and significant gap remains in North Africa, where five years of partner outreach have yielded limited traction, attributed to cultural and institutional resistance.





Region	Status	Key Countries	Participation
West Africa	DOMINANT	Nigeria, Ghana, Benin, Togo, Senegal	74% of Project Lead respondents from Nigeria
East Africa	GROWING	Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda	Kenya: 10% volunteer respondents; Dream Defenders Tanzania active
Southern Africa	EMERGING	Zambia, Malawi, Botswana	Zambia 7%, Malawi 8% of volunteer respondents
Central Africa	NASCENT	Cameroon	Very limited; strategic growth priority
North Africa	GAP ⚠	Egypt (entry point only)	< 1% of all respondents; 5 years of outreach - minimal traction

4.1.4 Regional Gap: A Strategy for Northern Africa

Understanding the regional disparity in the participation of volunteers, Project Leads and partners shows a classic diffusion model where the region of first implementation (West Africa) continues to dominate in the Pan-African outlood of LEAP Africa's YDoS.

With regions like East Africa and Southern Africa picking up, it shows potential for the Northern region. There is no doubt that the North African region represents a unique area (in terms of political context, networking gaps, model limitation and language barriers) on the continent, however the plan for entry into the region by identifying strategic partnership in countries like Egypt, remain a strategic leverage for LEAP Africa.

4.2 Impact: Long-Term Social, Economic, and Environmental Change

From Inputs to Impact: ToC

Level	Description	Purpose
INPUTS	Grants, training, LEAP Africa brand credibility, partner networks	$100–$500 micro-grants; BootCamp facilitation; Dow funding
ACTIVITIES	Community service projects; boot camps; partner mobilisation; volunteer coordination	Street cleanups; solar installations; book drives; vision screenings
OUTPUTS	Projects delivered; volunteers trained; communities served	221 8thGear volunteers (2025); 101 Susty Vibes YDOS volunteers; 567 children screened (Husseni, 2024)
OUTCOMES	Increased civic agency; SDG awareness; leadership skills; behaviour change	84% of Project Leads influenced to continue leadership; 70% designed new projects post-YDoS
IMPACT	Systemic community development; policy shifts; social enterprise launches	Solar PHC enabling nighttime deliveries; anti-trafficking norm institutionalised in motor parks; Women Action Party formed

4.2.1 Social Impact

The most significant social impact was recorded in healthcare and community safety:

- **Health System Strengthening:** The Moon Innovations solar project transformed a Primary Health Centre from 7 hours of daily power to 24-hour operations, enabling night time deliveries, on-site vaccine refrigeration, and daily patient care for 4,000 community members.

- **Safety and Child Protection:** An anti-trafficking project in Gwagwalada, Abuja led Motor Park management to institutionalise security checks for adults travelling with minors - a behavioural shift that resulted in the independent apprehension of a child trafficker months after the project had concluded.

- **Social Cohesion:** Peacebuilding sessions in Anambra State reduced ethnic stereotyping and encouraged new business relationships between communities in the Southeast and North.

YDoS has demonstrated a clear pathway from volunteerism to economic empowerment. For instance, 8thGear Partners report that alumni from their YDoS entrepreneurship track have secured the Tech Cabal Female Founders Award and acceptance into the Antler accelerator - demonstrating that the programme functions as a credible launchpad for social enterprise. For beneficiary institutions, projects such as the solar PHC eliminated diesel costs, freeing budget for medicines and supplies.

4.2.2 Environmental Impact

Community norms have shifted in measurable ways. Following the 'Bins for All' environmental project (2021), households in the target community began independently acquiring dustbins and managing waste - a norm shift the Project Lead described as entirely community-driven, without external enforcement. Reforestation initiatives through ChildFund's Regreening Africa partnership have planted trees for ecological restoration and market-linked income generation.

4.2.3 Unplanned Positive Outcomes

> "After we deployed in the first market, three other markets and two hospitals called us independently, asking for the same system. We had not approached them - they came to us." - **Michael Osumune, Moon Innovations**

A highly positive unintended outcome was the 'copycat effect' - Moon Innovations' market deployment generated unsolicited replication requests from adjacent markets and health facilities. Conversely, the 'Cobra Effect' was observed in unorganised settings: beneficiaries used new solar infrastructure in unforeseen ways (e.g. overloading systems), requiring a second phase of behavioural training alongside the technical installation.

4.3 Social and Behavioural Change

4.3.1 Agency Activation in Youth

The most consistent and significant finding across all data sources is the activation of youth civic agency - the shift from passive observation to active problem-solving. This transformation is multi-dimensional:

- **Self-Perception:** Project Leads consistently reported that YDoS fundamentally altered how they see themselves. One project described it as giving him a 'platform to look at myself as a leader' - with a corresponding drive to identify community needs and act on them.

- **Skill Development:** Project Leads reported measurable gains in communication and project management skills, which she credits for her ability to subsequently lead environmental initiatives independently.

- **External Funding:** Alumni have used their YDoS credentials to secure competitive grants from the US Embassy, Palladium, and other major donors - independently of LEAP Africa's facilitation.

4.3.2 From Passive to Active - Shift in Youth Agency

The Agency Transformation

YDoS disrupts the prevalent youth narrative of 'waiting for government' and replaces it with a 'Do It Yourself' civic orientation. This is not an abstract attitudinal change - it manifests in concrete actions: applying for external grants, designing new projects, mobilising peers, and entering governance.

Evidence of Agency Shift

- **Self-Perception:** Aaron Egot described YDoS as giving him 'a platform to look at myself as a leader' - with a corresponding drive to identify community needs and act on them.

- **External Funding:** Alumni have used their YDoS credentials to secure competitive grants from the US Embassy, Palladium, and other major donors - entirely independently of LEAP Africa's facilitation.

- **Project Continuation:** Husseni Muhammed's Future Vision project was instrumental in his selection for a fellowship. During the fellowship, he continued the programme under the name 'Vision Care for Kids' - demonstrating that YDoS projects become career-defining community commitments.



> Even if young people don't receive grants, the process of applying and gaining understanding through the boot camp motivates them to seek similar opportunities and implement projects elsewhere. The agency is the outcome - the grant is just the trigger.
>
> **- Executive Director, LEAP Africa (KII, February 2026)**

4.3.3 Community Norm Shifts

Beyond individual transformation, the evaluation documents durable shifts in community-level behaviour:

- **Child Protection:** Gwagwalada Motor Park management adopted permanent security protocols following youth sensitisation - institutionalising a norm of vigilance that outlasted the project's active phase.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Communities transitioned from apathy to active waste management, independently acquiring dustbins and sustaining clean-environment practices.
- **Political Participation:** A female participant in the Anambra peacebuilding project registered and launched a 'Women Action Party' - a direct trajectory from community volunteering to formal political engagement.

Key Behavioural Finding

Sustained community behaviour change is most robust when it is absorbed into existing institutions - not left dependent on the continued presence of individual volunteers.

4.3.4 Confidence and Leadership Building

Survey Data (n=147 volunteers):

3.97 / 5

Rate their confidence to lead projects increased since YDoS

3.78 / 5

Rate their skills for project design/ leadership improved

92%

Have encouraged others to participate in similar initiatives

Qualitative Evidence

"Before YDoS, I had ideas but didn't know how to turn them into something real. The training gave me a language for development work - and the grant made it credible." - YDoS Project Lead, Survey Open Response

"I learned patience and communication. I now know how to manage teams, manage disappointment, and still deliver." - YDoS Project Lead, KII

4.4 Cross-Cutting Issues: Gender, Equity, and Inclusion

4.4.1 Inclusivity Highlights

LEAP Africa has moved beyond tokenistic inclusion to intentional mainstreaming. The programme targets 50% female participation and 5% representation for persons with disabilities (PWDs), aligned with global GESI standards.

- **Female Participation:** Female engagement consistently meets or exceeds targets. Catherine Oyugi reported 70% female participation in her environmental project; Ibrahim Abubakar recorded 95% female attendance in the Anambra peacebuilding initiative.
- **Non-Traditional Roles:** Moon Innovations trained a market fish seller to manage the technical operation of a solar installation - placing a woman in technical authority within a male-dominated trade environment.
- **Disability Inclusion:** Sign language interpreters and screen translators are provided at virtual boot camps. Ibrahim Abubakar achieved approximately 10% PWD representation by creating dedicated seating and interpreters. Inclusion remains uneven across the portfolio and requires further design attention.
- **Language Access:** Programme materials have been translated into French, Arabic, and Swahili to broaden access for non-Anglophone participants across the continent.

Indicator	Target	Achieved	Evidence	What remains to be done
Female participation	50%	Near parity / exceeded in many projects	Some projects report as high as 95% and 70% female participation70% female; Ibrahim Abubakar: 95% female in Anambra	Sustained and continuous participation of women especially as the programme diffuses into regions where of Africa where women participation is low.
Women in leadership	50%	89–91%	89% of volunteer survey; 91% of Project Lead survey confirm women in leadership roles	Showcase the successes of women-led initiatives to promote increased participation of young women in leadership and agency.
People with Disability	Not speci-fied	58%	40 Project Leads (58%) report that PWDs were represented in their projects. One project lead reports the transition of a PwD-focused project into a fully owned PwD project.	While PWDs have been reported in more than half of the projects, there is a need to specifically design projects that include IDPs and PWDs through quotas and targets.
IDPs	Not speci-fied	-	The inclusion of IDPs has not been structured within YDoS programming.	There needs to be strategic integration and targeting of IDPs for inclusion in YDoS initiatives.
Language	Full	Partial	Sign language interpreters and screen translators provided at virtual boot camps, with translation of materials in some relevant non-Anglophone participants	Regional participation is promoted by language translation and as such broadening the translation scope will promote a rich Pan-African outlook




REDUCE
RECYCLE
REUSE
ONE SMALL CHANGE CAN MAKE A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE!
CONSERVE THE
THE EARTH IS OUR HOME,
LET US PROTECT IT
YOUTHFUL AND USEFUL



5. Case Studies

5.1 Case Study 1: Moon Innovations - From Darkness to Delivery

Project Lead: Michael Osumune, Moon Innovations
SDGs Addressed: SDG 3 (Good Health), SDG 7 (Clean Energy)
Location: Remote community, Nigeria

MOON INNOVATIONS

5.1.1 The Challenge

A Primary Health Centre (PHC) serving approximately 4,000 residents had operated for years on a daily average of fewer than 7 hours of electricity, sourced from a generator the facility could rarely afford to fuel. The consequences were severe: no nighttime deliveries, no vaccine refrigeration, no emergency care after dark. During a pre-intervention needs assessment, the Moon Innovations team documented children suffering from heat, nursing mothers in darkness, and medical staff unable to work - conditions that directly contributed to preventable maternal and infant deaths.



5.1.2 Impact and Outcomes

Beyond individual transformation, the evaluation documents durable shifts in community-level behaviour:

- **24-Hour Operations:** For the first time in the facility's history, the PHC began accepting patients at night and conducted its first-ever nighttime deliveries which reduced the risks associated with nighttime service gaps.
- **Vaccine Cold Chain:** Daily transport of vaccines to a distant storage facility was eliminated. On-site refrigeration ensured uninterrupted immunisation drives and vaccine integrity.
- **Cost Relief:** Diesel and petrol generator costs were eliminated, allowing facility management to redirect limited operational budgets toward medicines and medical supplies.
- **Patient Experience:** Fans and lighting transformed the waiting environment for nursing mothers and infants, reducing discomfort and increasing facility attendance.

5.1.3 Innovation: Beyond Energy

Recognising that energy is an enabler rather than an endpoint, Moon Innovations is now layering AI and IoT solutions onto their infrastructure. In partnership with NigComSat (Nigerian Communications Satellite), they are deploying broadband internet to remote clinics and building IoT-based dashboards that allow a single physician to monitor patient vitals across multiple beds or facilities and receive real-time emergency alerts. Parallel agri-tech solutions monitor soil health and connect smallholder farmers to veterinary services.

5.1.4 GESI Highlight: The Fish Seller Engineer

In a deployment at the Alaba-Rago Market, Moon Innovations trained a local fish seller, a woman with no prior engineering background, to manage the technical operation of the solar installation, including overload prevention and grid management. This placed her in a position of technical authority within a traditionally male-dominated trade environment, demonstrating that GESI is not only a values commitment but an operational strategy for community ownership.

5.1.5 Lesson: The Cobra Effect

The market deployment exposed the 'Cobra Effect', unorganised beneficiaries utilised the new power infrastructure in ways that threatened to overload the system (e.g. plugging in heavy commercial appliances). This highlighted a critical operational principle: in unorganised community settings, technical infrastructure must always be paired with structured behavioural training. Providing power without educating communities on responsible usage does not solve the underlying energy crisis, it creates a new one.

5.2 Case Study: 2 Future Vision Initiative: Sight for Every Child

Project: Vision Care for School Children
SDGs : SDG 3 (Good Health), SDG 4 (Education)
Location: Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria
Lead: Muhammed Husseni

5.2.1 The Challenge

Husseni Muhammed launched the Future Vision initiative in 2022 as part of YDoS, after repeatedly encountering school children from indigent families who had undiagnosed vision problems. Children aged 7–13 often cannot articulate their own visual impairment - and their complaints are dismissed by parents and teachers as behavioural or learning difficulties. Left unaddressed, uncorrected vision problems directly impair educational attainment.



Source: Freepiks

5.2.2 Programme Design

- **Target group:** Primary school children aged 7–13 in underserved communities (Abui, Aaba, Mushi in Lagos)
- **Volunteers:** 30+ in Year 1; ~80% female; predominantly university students and young health professionals
- **Roles:** Medical personnel screened for eye defects; non-medical volunteers registered beneficiaries and coordinated crowds
- **Glasses:** Customised and prescribed for each child; distributed two weeks after screening

5.2.3 Growth and Impact

Year	Funding	Children Screened	Key Achievement
2022	Initial YDoS grant	Baseline (Lagos communities)	Programme established; peer volunteering model built
2023	$5,000 grant (Foundation)	1,000+ in 5 schools (Idi-Araba)	Programme-defining scale; credibility established
2024	$1,000 (US Consulate via fellowship)	567 children	Best project award across 6 geopolitical zones
2025	$137 (£100) post-fellowship grant	Individual interventions	Targeted support for high-need children

5.2.4 Sustainability Innovation

The most significant sustainability design element was training primary school teachers to identify students with eye defects - embedding the project's detection function into the existing educational system. This means the screening continues through ordinary daily teacher observation, without requiring a project team to be present.

> "Training the teachers was the smartest thing we did. The project can continue without us needing to be there every time." - Muhammed Husseni (KII, March 2026)



5.3: Case Study 3: 'Bins for All' Environmental Clean-Up

Project: 'Bins for All' Environmental Clean-Up

SDGs : SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities)

Location: Kenya

Lead: Catherine Oyugi

5.3.1 The Challenge

Catherine Oyugi identified, through community observation, that the lack of basic household waste management infrastructure (dustbins) was the root cause of widespread littering and environmental degradation in her community. Rather than attributing the problem to attitudes alone, she addressed the material and informational gap.



5.3.2 The Intervention

The 'Bins for All' project combined community cleanups with practical household waste management education and distribution of basic waste containment materials.

5.3.3 What makes it remarkable?

The project achieved a norm change, not just a behaviour change. When a community adopts a new practice because they have internalised its value - rather than because they are being watched or rewarded - the change is self-sustaining. This is the highest standard of community development outcome.

5.3.4 Outcome

- Households independently acquired dustbins - without external prompting - after the project.
- Waste management practices were sustained months after the project concluded.
- Project Lead described the shift as 'entirely community-driven, without external enforcement.

5.3.5 Sustained Engagement

Catherine has participated in YDoS across multiple years (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024) - one of the programme's longest-serving Project Leads and a model of the sustained engagement the programme aspires to build across its network.




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6. Overall Assessment Against OECD-DAC Criteria

Rank	Score	Key Evidence
1	LOW	The criterion has not been meaningfully met. There are fundamental gaps in performance, design, or delivery, with little to no evidence that intended outcomes were achieved.
2	MODERATE	The criterion has been partially met. Some progress is visible, but significant gaps remain and overall performance falls short of what was planned or expected.
3	MIXED	Performance is uneven. Genuine strengths exist alongside notable weaknesses, and results vary considerably by context, geography, or stakeholder group. No clear overall direction — positive or negative — can be assigned.
4	SIGNIFICANT	The criterion has been meaningfully met, with clear and attributable evidence of change or contribution. Performance goes beyond outputs, though some limitations or inconsistencies remain.
5	STRONG	The criterion is well met, with consistent and coherent evidence across multiple areas. The programme demonstrates reliable performance and alignment, with only minor areas requiring improvement.
6	HIGH	The criterion has been substantially met across the board. Evidence is clear, consistent, and compelling, with the programme performing well above the baseline expectation in this area.
7	HIGH	The criterion has been met to an exceptional standard. Performance is outstanding relative to the resources, context, and constraints involved, and serves as a model for replication elsewhere.

6. Overall Assessment Against OECD-DAC Criteria

The table below summarises the evaluation team's rating across all six OECD-DAC criteria, supported by the primary evidence underpinning each judgement.

Criterion	Rating	Key Evidence
Relevance	HIGH	Bottom-up design responds to hyper-local gaps identified through situational scans. Programme directly addresses the demographic challenge of Africa's 60% youth population.
Effectiveness	HIGH	24-hour health services restored; 300 peace advocates trained across 8 states; women empowered through GBV response. Volunteer numbers grew from 1,271 (2020) to thousands continent-wide.
Efficiency	VERY HIGH	Micro-grant model ($100–$500 per lead) catalyses significant community assets. Tri-sector network maximises limited funding through technical and financial partner leverage.
Impact	SIGNIFICANT	Systemic changes extend beyond project lifecycle: reduced maternal mortality risk; improved inter-regional cohesion; career launches and social entrepreneurship pathways.
Sustainability	MIXED	Projects embedded in institutions (PHCs, Motor Parks) show high resilience. Individual youth-led initiatives face the 'funding cliff' - attrition when grants are exhausted.
Coherence	STRONG	Aligns with UN SDGs and AU Agenda 2063. Near 50/50 gender parity achieved. Disability inclusion requires further strengthening beyond boot camp accommodations.




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Clean Up
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7. Sustainability Analysis

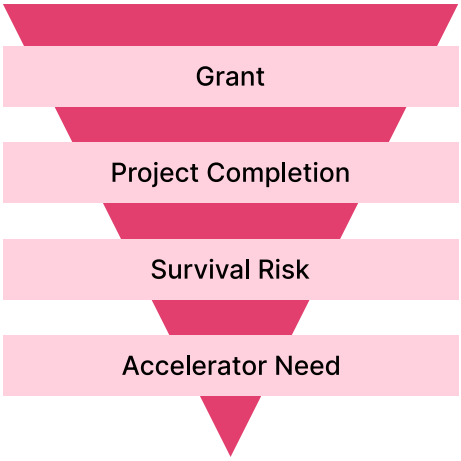
7.1 Enabling Factors

- **Local Ownership:** Projects that engaged community heads (Baales, Iyalojas, Park Managers) from the outset and framed the intervention as a community asset - not an individual entrepreneur's project - showed significantly higher sustainability.
- **Institutional Integration:** Projects embedded in existing government or civil society structures (PHCs, Motor Park Unions, Ministries) demonstrated high resilience. These structures maintained project outcomes without requiring the continued presence of volunteers.
- **Partnership Continuity:** Long-standing partners such as ChildFund and Dream Defenders Tanzania have integrated YDoS objectives into their annual operations, effectively converting a one-off campaign into a year-round discipline in their respective regions.

7.2 The Funding Cliff

The most significant and consistently cited threat to sustainability is what stakeholders uniformly described as the 'funding cliff' - the absence of structured, post-project seed capital to sustain viable social ventures beyond the YDoS grant cycle.

> "Many young people drop their ideas and look for a 9-to-5 job because there is no structured and predictable seed funding. The ideas don't die because they are bad - they die because there is no bridge." **- 8th Gear Partners, Implementing Partner**



This dynamic is compounded by the reduction in funded cohorts from 100 Project Leads in 2024 to 41 in 2025 due to funding constraints, limiting the programme's potential at a moment of rising demand.

Sustainability Risk

Without a post-grant funding mechanism, YDoS functions as an incubator that selects for promising ventures and is unable to fund some of them at the point of greatest vulnerability. This risk is significant because of the overall economic vulnerability within the African region and the fact that unfunded initiatives may eventually lead to a loss in the drive and passion.

7.3 Partnership Model

YDoS operates through a deliberately constructed tri-sector network that maximises limited resources through complementary contributions from three sectors:

- **Private Sector:** Dow Chemical (headline funder, global credibility); MTN (corporate CSR day); LSETF (co-working vouchers and livelihoods support)
- **Public Sector:** Federal Ministry of Youth (press engagement, Year 1); Ministry of Health (Moon Innovations PHC project); NigComSat (rural broadband collaboration)
- **Social Sector:** ChildFund International (technical co-design, Regreening Africa); World Connect (sustainability-focused co-creation); Dream Defenders Tanzania (East Africa anchor); Nigerian Youth SDGs (implementation and facilitation since 2021); Susty Vibes (street conference model, Lagos and Abuja)

7.4 Continental Alignment

- YDoS addresses Africa's 'youth bulge' by converting demographic pressure into civic productivity.
- It fills gaps in government service delivery - particularly in waste management, health infrastructure, education access, and conflict resolution.
- Aligned with AU Agenda 2063's aspirations for an inclusive, people-driven Africa and the SDG Global Goals framework.

7.5 Partnership Philosophy

Partner Type	Examples	Value Contribution
Implementation Partners	Nigerian Youth SDGs; Susty Vibes; 8thGear; ChildFund	Volunteer mobilisation; community access; facilitation
Funding Partners	Dow Chemical; WorldConnect	Financial resources; credibility; CSR legitimacy
Government Anchors	Ministry of Health; NigComSat	Institutional embedding; policy reach; infrastructure access

7.6 Government Collaboration

- **Ministry of Health:** Provided institutional alignment for Moon Innovations PHC solar project
- **NigComSat:** Partnership for rural broadband deployment alongside solar infrastructure
- **LSETF (Lagos State Employment Trust Fund):** Co-working vouchers for youth entrepreneurs
- **Federal Minister of Youth (2020):** Opened YDoS press launch - signalling national government endorsement

7.7 Corporate Sponsorship

- **Dow Chemical:** Headline corporate sponsor since Year 2 - provided funding and global credibility
- **MTN:** CSR day integration for volunteer mobilisation
- **Challenge:** Over-reliance on a limited number of corporate partners creates financial fragility
- **Strategy:** LEAP Africa pursuing diversification to reduce single-source dependency

7.7.1 Corporate Partnership Opportunity - Recommendation

The evaluation recommends actively pursuing mid-size Nigerian and Pan-African companies for CSR day participation - broadening the corporate base beyond headline multinationals. This also serves inclusion goals by funding accessibility requirements that the micro-grant model cannot cover.

2020 Partners

Amstel Malta
Arise News
BellaNaija
Ford Foundation
Dotts Media House
Global Citizen
Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development
NTA (Nigerian Television Authority)
World Connect
Pop Central TV
Build A Conscious Career
Junior Achievement Nigeria
Mind the Gap
Nourishing Africa
Opportunity Desk
Philanthropy Circuit
Service Call
Soulcomms
Teach For Nigeria
WAVE Academy
YEDI (Youth Empowerment and Development Initiative)
YouthHub Africa
Live Your Dreams Initiative

2021 Partners

African Union
Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE)
BellaNaija
BRAC Uganda
CAMFED
Donors for Africa
Emerging Leaders Foundation
Enactus Nigeria
Ford Foundation
Give Back Nigeria
Giving
Global Citizen
Global Shapers Community
JA Nigeria
Lagos Food Bank Initiative
MANI , Mentally Aware Initiative
Nigeria Network of NGOs (NNNGO)
Nigerian Economic Summit Group
ONE Foundation
Paradigm Initiative
Peace First
Pistis Foundation
SustyVibes
The FAME Foundation.
The Youth Café
TheCable
UN SDGs / Global Goals
Ventures Africa
Volunteers Hub Africa
YALDA
YEDI (Youth Enterprise Development Initiative)
YOTA (Youth Opportunities & Transformation in Africa)
YouthHub Africa

2022 Partners

Ford Foundation
Beer Sectoral Group (BSG)
World Learning
LEAP Leadership Inistitute
BellaNaija
Sahel Consulting
Acakoro
Opportunity Desk
ARISE News
Emerging Leaders Network
LAWSANAID
WFM
Triller
Lagos Food Bank Initiative
I'm Human Org
Kids Beach Garden
Meta
TVC News
Legit.ng
TheCable
movemeback
Project Enable Africa
The Rainmaker Enterprise
RecyclePoints
Zambezi Girl Child

2023 Partners

YALI Regional Leadership Center Africa, East Africa Nairobi
Sustyvibes
World Learning
ChildFund International
African Climate Reality Project (ACRP)
Strategic Youth Network for Development (SYND)
EcoWillow Ghana
Emerging Leaders Foundation Africa (ELF-Africa)
Darlton Consult
SOY Africa (Solution Oriented Youth Africa)
Dreams Defender Organization
QRATE, Equipment for Kids
SESA
Dotts Media House
BellaNaija
8th Gear Hub
Legit.ng
Global Shapers Community, Abuja
The Forgetten Bottom Millions
Environment Savers of Zambia
Youth For Climate Morroco
Youth Development Organization, YDO
Kids Beach Garden
Ank'izy Association
APSSDF (Avec la Parole aux Sisters, le Sénégal se Développe au Féminin!)

2024 Partners

8th Gear Hub
Acakoro
African Climate Reality Project (ACRP)
African Union
Amstel Malta
Ank'izy Association
APSSDF (Avec la Parole aux Sisters, le Sénégal se Développe au Féminin!)
Arise News
Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE)
Beer Sectoral Group (BSG)
BellaNaija
BRAC Uganda
Build A Conscious Career
CAMFED
ChildFund International
Clean City SA
CorpsAfrica
Darlton Consult
Donors for Africa
Dotts Media House
Dreams Defender Organization
Eco Willow
EcoWillow Ghana
Emerging Leaders Foundation
Enactus Nigeria
Environment Savers of Zambia
Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development
Ford Foundation
Give Back Nigeria
Giving
Global Citizen
Global Shapers Community
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I'm Human Org
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Juhudi Mashinani
Junior Achievement Nigeria
Kids Beach Garden
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Live Your Dreams Initiative
MANI , Mentally Aware Initiative
Meta
Mind the Gap
Moon Innovations Limited
movemeback
Nigeria Network of NGOs (NNNGO)
Nigerian Economic Summit Group
Nourishing Africa
NTA (Nigerian Television Authority)
ONE Foundation
Opportunity Desk
Paradigm Initiative
Peace First
Philanthropy Circuit
Pistis Foundation
Pop Central TV
Project Enable Africa
QRATE, Equipment for Kids
RecyclePoints
Sahel Consulting
Service Call
SESA
SIMA Studios
Soulcomms
SOY Africa (Solution Oriented Youth Africa)
Strategic Youth Network for

2024 Partners

Development (SYND)
Sustyvibes
Teach For Nigeria
The FAME Foundation
The Forgetten Bottom Millions
The Rainmaker Enterprise
The Youth Café
TheCable
Triller
TVC News
UN SDGs / Global Goals
Ventures Africa
Volunteers Hub Africa
WAVE Academy
WFM
World Connect
World Learning
YALDA
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Youth Development Organization, YDO
Youth For Climate Morroco
YouthHub Africa
Zambezi Girl Child




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8. Recommendations and Conclusions

8.1 Lessons Learned - Three Foundational Lessons

Lesson 1 - Volunteerism is Fragile Without Economic Pathways

The energy of civic commitment cannot indefinitely resist the economic pressure of unemployment and poverty. YDoS activates agency - but without a structured post-grant pathway (seed funding, livelihood linkages, enterprise support), that activation is temporary. The most effective long-term intervention combines civic purpose with economic viability.

Lesson 2 - Community-Led is More Sustainable than Leader-Led

Projects that embedded themselves in communities - engaging institutions, community leaders, and local authorities from the outset - consistently outlasted projects that were conceived as individual social enterprises. The World Connect finding is definitive: 'Collective action is the key to sustainability

Lesson 3 - Digital Tools Exclude as They Include

Every digital-first solution (online registration, virtual boot camps, app-based reporting) is simultaneously an inclusion mechanism and an exclusion mechanism. Rural youth without smartphones, data access, or consistent connectivity are systematically disadvantaged. The solution is not to abandon digital tools - but to build analogue alternatives that are equally functional.

8.1.1 Alumni Engagement Gap

Despite high willingness to continue, the current alumni engagement structure is inadequate for the programme's scale. Muhammed Husseni noted that the only formal connection to the alumni community is a Telegram group - which has become large, disorganised, and lacks cohort-specific interaction.

> "It's not really an alumni platform. It's more of a general youth engagement group. I don't have any connection to the people from my specific year." - **(Project Lead, March 2026)**

8.1.1.1 What to do

- Establish cohort-specific alumni networks (by year and region)
- Use alumni as mentors, facilitators, and community of practice leaders in future boot camps
- Develop a structured 1-year post-YDoS tracking mechanism (recommended by the evaluation team)

8.2 Strategic Recommendations

The following recommendations are derived directly from evaluation evidence and are prioritised for feasibility and potential impact. They are addressed to LEAP Africa and its implementing partners.

#	Area	Recommendation	Key Evidence
1	Strategy	Year-Round Discipline	Move beyond the August peak with quarterly themed engagements (Q1: Climate, Q2: Health, Q3: Livelihoods, Q4: Governance). Prevents momentum loss and attrition between cycles.
2	Resources	Joint Fundraising Model	Co-design grant proposals with ChildFund, World Connect, and other technical partners. Combined institutional credibility unlocks larger multilateral and bilateral funding pools.
3	Programme	YDoS Accelerator Track	Provide post-grant seed capital to the top 5–10% of high-performing projects. Partner with incubators (8thGear, Antler) to funnel YDoS graduates into investment-readiness pipelines.
4	Inclusion	Bridge the Digital Divide	Deploy USSD/SMS tools for rural youth without smartphones or data. Empower regional partners to run offline boot camps that mirror virtual sessions.
5	Scale	Regional Anchor Partners	Appoint empowered anchors with sub-grants for East, South, and North Africa. Use local champions to address persistent gaps, particularly the North Africa representation deficit.

6	Governance	Deepen Government Integration	Mandate early engagement with Local Government Chairmen and relevant Ministries for infrastructure-heavy projects. Replicate the institutional model of Moon Innovations.
7	MEL	Periodic Reporting Clinics	Replace single onboarding sessions with mid-cycle and end-of-cycle reporting clinics. Emphasis outcome tracking over activity counting to satisfy donor evidence requirements.
6	MEL	One-Year Post-YDoS Survey	Implement longitudinal alumni tracking to determine whether civic engagement persists beyond the project cycle. Measure leadership and volunteerism, not just project continuity.

8.3 Conclusions

8.3.1 Summary of Evidence Across Objectives

This evaluation was commissioned to provide an evidence-based assessment of the Youth Day of Service (YDoS) programme across its five-year implementation period, from 2020 to 2024. Conducted by Innovision Global Consulting and anchored on the internationally recognised OECD-DAC evaluation criteria — Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability, and Coherence — the study drew on a mixed-methods "Layered Approach" that integrated quantitative surveys administered to project leads and volunteers, qualitative Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with implementing partners and LEAP Africa staff, a systematic desk review of five years of programme reports and grant records, and deep-dive case studies of high-performing projects. The evaluation was further enriched by the Impact Management and Measurement (IMM) framework, which enabled a rigorous mapping of stakeholder value and risk, and by an intentional Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) lens that ensured marginalised voices, including women and persons with disabilities, were represented throughout the data collection process. Together, these methodological layers produced a body of evidence that is triangulated, stakeholder-validated, and grounded in the operational realities of a pan-African youth-led development programme.

The conclusions of this evaluation are clear and convergent across all six assessment criteria. From its inception during the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, YDoS was designed not as a one-off volunteer event, but as a structured platform to convert Africa's most urgent demographic challenge into its most powerful development opportunity. The continent's youth bulge, where over 400 million young people aged 15 to 35 coexist alongside alarmingly high rates of unemployment, underemployment, and civic exclusion, represented both the problem and the solution that YDoS was built to address. Five years on, the evidence confirms that this vision was not merely aspirational. It was achievable, and it has been achieved.

The programme's relevance to the African development context is assessed as High. Its bottom-up design, which empowers young people to conduct their own situational scans and determine the most pressing needs within their communities, has consistently produced interventions that are hyper-local, culturally grounded, and genuinely needs-driven rather than donor-imposed. The annual identification of SDG gaps — including targeted pivots towards Clean Energy and Sustainable Cities in response to emerging continental data — demonstrates an adaptive intelligence that has kept the programme's

mandate aligned with the most critical development priorities on the continent. YDoS does not impose a development agenda; it amplifies one that already exists within communities, expressed through the voices and actions of young people themselves.

On the question of effectiveness, the evidence is compelling and consistently positive across thematic areas and geographies. The programme has translated high-level SDG aspirations into measurable grassroots reality across health, education, gender equity, environmental conservation, and peacebuilding. Youth-led projects have restored healthcare infrastructure to full operational capacity, equipped hundreds of young people with peace advocacy and conflict resolution skills, empowered women to assert bodily autonomy and community safety, and built environmental consciousness that outlasted the initial project cycle. The exponential year-on-year growth in youth mobilisation across implementing partners further validates the programme's expanding reach. Crucially, effectiveness is not confined to what happened during the annual August peak — it is evidenced in the behavioural and institutional changes that persisted long after volunteers had left. Effectiveness is rated High.

The efficiency with which YDoS generates development value is perhaps the evaluation's most striking finding. Operating on micro-grants of between $100 and $500 per project lead, the programme has catalysed community assets — physical infrastructure, institutional norm change, social cohesion, and individual leadership trajectories — that would cost multiples of that investment through conventional development channels. This is achieved through a deliberate tri-sector partnership model that pools resources across the private sector, civil society, and government, and a co-creation approach with technical partners that maximises every stakeholder's comparative advantage. The programme's grant-to-output ratio is exceptional across all documented cycles, and its efficiency is assessed as Very High.

The impact of YDoS is both deep and multi-layered. At the individual level, the programme has demonstrably transformed how young people understand their own capacity and responsibility — the shift from civic passivity to active agency is the programme's most consequential individual-level outcome. At the community level, impact manifests in the permanent adoption of new norms: institutions that have redesigned their operational protocols, communities that have internalised new standards of safety and hygiene, and cross-regional social dynamics reconfigured around cooperation rather than tension. At the systemic level, YDoS has demonstrated that even the most modest micro-grant, when deployed through a structured and credible platform, can produce systemic change in healthcare delivery, community safety, and social entrepreneurship. The programme's impact extends well beyond its project lifecycles, and is assessed as Significant.

The evaluation's findings on Social and Behavioural Change constitute one of its most valuable contributions to the evidence base on youth-led development. The study confirms, across multiple data points and diverse contexts, that YDoS acts as a catalyst for what this report terms "Agency Activation" — the process by which young people transition from passive observers of their communities' challenges to active, self-initiated leaders of their solutions. This shift is not merely attitudinal; it is behavioural and longitudinal. Alumni of the programme have gone on to secure major external funding independently, launch social enterprises, enter formal accelerator pipelines, and assume civic and political leadership roles. At the community level, behaviours introduced by youth-led interventions have been institutionalised by community gatekeepers and

enforcement structures without external prompting — the gold standard of sustained behavioural change in development practice.

Sustainability is where the evaluation's findings are most nuanced, and where the programme's strategic priorities must be most urgently focused. The assessment is Mixed — not because the programme has failed in this area, but because success is unevenly distributed in a structurally predictable pattern. Projects embedded within existing institutional frameworks from the outset have demonstrated strong and durable continuity, transferring ownership in ways that did not depend on the ongoing presence of any individual volunteer or continuation of grant support. By contrast, individually-led initiatives that lacked institutional anchoring consistently encountered the "funding cliff" — the abrupt cessation of financial support after the initial project cycle, which in low-income contexts forces many capable young social entrepreneurs to abandon viable ventures and seek formal employment simply to survive. This structural vulnerability will not resolve without deliberate intervention in the form of post-project seed capital, accelerator partnerships, and formalised continuity mechanisms.

The programme's coherence with broader development frameworks is assessed as Strong. YDoS operates in deliberate alignment with the UN 2030 Agenda, the African Union's Agenda 2063, and national youth development policies across participating countries. Its Gender and Social Inclusion strategy is not merely aspirational; it is operationalised through specific accommodations in training design, multilingual programme materials in English, French, Arabic, and Swahili, and targeted partner mandates that have produced near-parity in gender participation across multiple implementing contexts. The primary coherence gap identified relates to the digital divide: the programme's growing reliance on digital tools for training and reporting inadvertently excludes the most marginalised youth, those in rural and low-connectivity areas, who have the most to gain from YDoS participation. Bridging this gap is a prerequisite for the programme's claim to true pan-African reach.

Taken in totality, this evaluation arrives at a definitive conclusion: the Youth Day of Service has earned the evidence base, the credibility, and the partnership architecture necessary to scale from a high-impact campaign into a permanent continental institution. The core model is validated. African youth, when provided with a structured platform, meaningful financial support, and a credible organisational framework, consistently deliver development solutions that are locally relevant, institutionally durable, and genuinely transformative. The question before LEAP Africa and its partners is no longer whether this model works; five years of evidence have resolved that question unambiguously. The question is whether the systemic reinforcements, post-project capital, year-round engagement structures, decentralised regional mobilisation, and digital inclusion, will be built quickly enough to convert what is currently a successful campaign into what it has the potential to become: the defining platform for African youth-led development in the decade ahead.