

YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Empowering a new cadre of young leaders

THE CHALLENGE

Nigeria is currently embroiled in a crisis of leadership in all sectors of the society. Because of a long history of corruption, individuals in positions of authority are regarded with widespread distrust. While young people constitute a large and growing percentage of the population, they are often viewed as incompetent and inexperienced, serving more as contributors to Nigeria's social, political, and economic challenges, as opposed to being part of the solution. Youth who exhibit strong leadership in their communities are rarely recognized for their efforts and receive little encouragement to continue their development as leaders. As a result, many of these young people abandon their leadership pursuits. For youth to effectively take on leadership roles, they need to be equipped with life skills (e.g., responsibility, creative thinking, self confidence, decision making, and effective communication) that will enable them to actualize their vision.

THE PROGRAM

Through its Youth Leadership Program, LEAP identifies young people committed to affecting change in their communities, provides them with two one-week workshops to enhance life and leadership skills, and offers them technical and financial support to implement change projects in their communities over a 12-month period. After completing the first workshop, participants develop a proposal for their projects and qualify for grants of up to N15,000 (est. USD 115). In addition to funding, participants receive sample toolkits and attend two one-on-one coaching sessions. Six months after the initial training program, participants reconvene for a second one-week workshop to share experiences and acquire critical life skills for their emergent roles as change leaders. The program also supports the Annual Nigerian Youth Leadership Awards which celebrate the accomplishments of young people across Nigeria who are leading positive change in their communities. Ten young people are selected as winners annually. The program builds upon an 18-month Leadership for Health Program that trained 90 HIV/AIDS activists in three cities around Nigeria to be peer educators. These peer educators went on to train over 900 football captains in HIV/AIDS education and awareness.

OUTCOMES

In the long term, this program will foster the emergence of principled, innovative, and dynamic leaders affecting positive changes in Nigeria. Program outcomes include: increased life skills among participating youth (e.g., responsibility, decision-making/problem-solving, communications, creative thinking, self-confidence, and sense of contribution); increased leadership skills among participating youth; increased recognition of young people as change agents in their communities; and the design of sustainable change projects.

THE PARTNER

LEAP Africa is a nonprofit organization committed to inspiring, empowering, and equipping a new cadre of African leaders. It offers leadership training programs, skills workshops, and coaching sessions for youth, the business community, and social entrepreneurs. It also conducts leadership research and provides leadership awards for youth. Since its inception in May 2002, LEAP has focused on building its knowledge base, industry networks, and experience. Over 700 youth have benefited from LEAP's Youth Leadership Programs and Integrity Institutes in



six cities across Nigeria. LEAP has held two Annual Nigerian Leadership Awards and published a book.

PROGRAM: Youth Leadership Program
PARTNER: Leadership Accountability Effectiveness Professionalism (LEAP) Africa
PERIOD: 1 May 2006 – 30 April 2008
LOCATION: Abuja, Awka, Ibadan, Kano, Lagos, and Port Harcourt
REACH: 360 youth, ages 17-30
MODEL: Youth leadership

RESULTS TO DATE

As of December 31, 2006, the Youth Leadership Program had reached 183 direct youth beneficiaries.