



Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa

Quarterly Newsletter

# CONNECT

Volume 3 • Issue 1 • March 2021



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# Introduction

By Chazha Ludo Macheng (Botswana)



**Young people should be at the forefront of global change and innovation. Empowered they can be key agents of development. Any society that does not succeed in tapping into the energy and creativity of its youth will be left behind.**

– Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Kofi Annan.

**W**ise words spoken from none other than Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Kofi Annan, a man who is still considered one of the most inspirational Pan-africanists, change agents of our time.

At YALDA we share the same sentiments and believe in a long-standing African proverb which asserts, “It is the young trees that make up the forest”, appreciating the simple fact that Africa’s youth will determine its future. Etched in these pages are the stories of Africa’s unsung heroes and heroines who courageously accepted and aggressively confronted the realities they were subjected to.

If ever you ever underestimated the power and bravery of African youth, the compelling Soweto uprising of 1976 would surely change your mind. The Soweto uprising was a series of demonstrations and protests that began on the morning of 16 June 1976 led by black school children in South Africa challenging the systems that prohibited their right to education. Many paid with their lives, yet their fight to overcome the inequality and oppression caused by

apartheid changed the course of history. The sheer audacity, courage and conviction these young children demonstrated in mere blazers and ties resonate all the more with the current unrest and struggles of this continent at a time when COVID-19 has severely contributed to the empty pockets and stomachs.

The “Africa rising” narrative has been facing headwinds that call its authenticity into question for some time now. According to This Is Africa website, approximately 240 million people go to bed hungry, while malnutrition kills more than 50% of Africa’s children, most of whom die before the age of five. Africa is a young continent with a rapidly growing population, yet the vast majority of young people are unemployed. Hence, it takes a strong-willed people, humbled and inspired by the challenges, to rise to the occasion and turn opportunities into tangible realities for the collective benefit of all.

The successful establishment and implantation of the AfCFTA in January 2021 has thankfully given us some much needed relief. With the full free movement of people in both the formal and informal sectors, business and personal investments, and the accelerated formation of a continental customs union, there is little left to do but remain hopeful and excited as we watch Africa take its next bold step.

Thus, as we end the first quarter of the year, we breathe a sigh of relief and appreciate the efforts that we have made this past year with a merry heart despite the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic across the world. Our message to the youth of Africa is that this is Africa’s time, truly like never before – and there are no excuses for missing this moment. Now more than ever African youth must rise and pull together as a people with a common vision in the spirit of Ubuntu and make their rightful contribution to a truly African 21st century. Africa’s rise is not a myth and the youth should be right there at the forefront!

# YALDA Team Visits the AfCFTA Secretariat

By Mosse Ade-ena, (Ghana)



AfCFTA Secretariat Entrance

Part of YALDA's agenda for 2020–2023 is to increase awareness among African youth about the opportunities made available with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The effort is in line with YALDA's vision to see an Africa where young people drive development through leadership, entrepreneurship and job creation to reduce unemployment, lower poverty levels to the barest minimum and facilitate rapid transformation of the continent.

It is against this backdrop that on 1st February 2021, a delegation from YALDA met with the Secretary General of the AfCFTA, H.E. Wamkele Mene at the Africa Trade House in Accra, Ghana. The delegation from YALDA consisted of the YALDA International Senior Advisor, Ms. Laone Bukamu Hulela; the President of YALDA South Africa, Mr. Nkateko Khoza; and the President of YALDA Ghana, Mr. Moses Akurugu Ade-ena. The following day, on 2nd February 2021 the YALDA delegation had a 3 hour workshop with the rest of the AfCFTA team. In attendance were AfCFTA Chief of Staff, Commissioner Silver, who represented H.E. Wamkele Mene; Ms. Jemila Abdelvetah, Mr. Prudence Sebahizi and Mr. Samuel Wood.

The delegation from YALDA presented its previous activities and engagement with UNECA, ITC and UNDP, including videos from past i-Boot Camp events, to illustrate what YALDA stands for and showcase the impact it has been making across the continent. During a 30-minute



AfCFTA Commissioner Silver, AfCFTA and YALDA team

proposal presentation the delegation highlighted strategies for how YALDA is championing young people and entrepreneurs across the continent to seize the opportunities created by the AfCFTA and expand their ventures across borders so as to maximise income, create more jobs and help transform the continent.

Pertinent questions were raised and addressed accordingly. For instance, how to monitor and report trading activities especially at customs and borders? How to engage stakeholders to enable them fully understand and follow guidelines?

Mr. Khoza submitted that plans are far advanced to pilot his network of entrepreneurs in order to gather first-hand information about challenges at customs and borders. Ms. Bukamu added that YALDA intends to equip its research team to conduct rigorous research and report on such challenges to help resolve such instances when they arise.

More importantly, the reason for this meeting was to forge a partnership with the AfCFTA Secretariat through a Memorandum of Understanding where both parties work collaboratively to the full realisation of the AfCFTA's mission and vision. Both sides reiterated their commitment to this relationship, and further discussions were slated to continue virtually on zoom once every month. The meeting was closed with a prayer, after which a group photograph was taken before they dispersed.



LR- YALDA team Laone Bukamu Hulela, AfCFTA SG HE Wamkele Mene, Nkateko Khoza

# YALDA-UNECA COM 2021

## Side Event Highlights

By Elisabeth Loua (Guinea-Conakry)

**Event Theme: "Driving Africa's Industrialisation Agenda by Investing in Youth's Digital Innovations Post Covid-19"**



### Speakers

- **Bethelhem Jambo Kassa** : Moderator, Ethiopia
- **Matthews Mmopi** : International Chairperson at YALDA, Botswana
- **Erickson Mvezi** : Founder & CEO at Tupuca, Angola
- **Nneile Nkholise** : Founder at iMed Tech Group, South Africa
- **Ahmed Bastawy** : Managing Director at IceAlex, Egypt
- **Jessica Colaco** : Co-founder & Vice-President at Brave, Kenya
- **Bashiru Mansaray** : Co-founder & CEO at Open Space, Sierra Leone
- **Mountaga Keita** : Founder & Managing Director at Tulip Industry, Guinea

### Summary

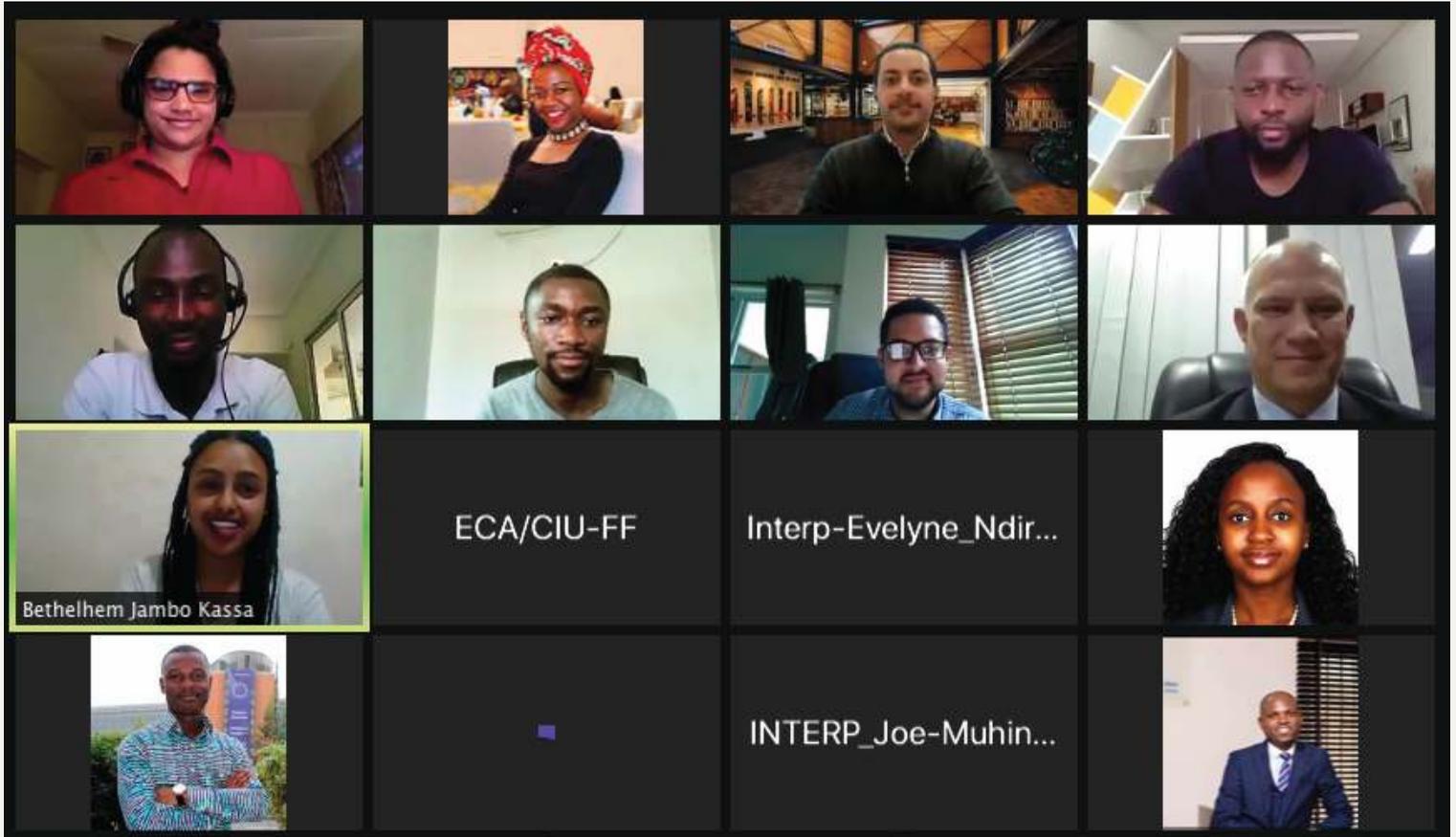
The main takeaways from this side event were the necessity to include youth in the AfCFTA implementation strategies, support youth innovators in digital space, create more jobs with long term impact, use green technologies, and empower small and medium enterprises for the economic and social development of the African continent.

Some of the main advocacy points included investing in the right infrastructure, such as electricity and renewable energy, to allow the successful implementation of digital strategies; making sure that the internet is affordable and accessible for Africans; investing heavily in the access of digital infrastructure; and facilitating the access to finance.

### Side Event Highlights

YALDA's Side Event for the 53<sup>rd</sup> Session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)'s Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development kicked off on time around 5 p.m. EAT with all the speakers on call.

Ms Bethelhem Kassa moderated and gave a warm welcome to the panellists and participants. She then introduced Mr Matthews Mmopi, Chairperson of YALDA International, who took the lead by giving the opening remarks about the side event. His speech centered around the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the African continent, the economy and our daily lives. He noted how youth can be an agent of change despite the hard times and challenges we are currently facing.



The AfCFTA was highlighted as one of the powerful ways for Africa to bounce back from such a challenging time. Mr Mmopi went on and introduced Mr Jean-Paul Adam, the representative of the Executive Secretary of UNECA. Mr Adam gave the keynote address about reimagining the development of Africa.

In agreement with the UNECA’s mission to promote the economic and social development of Africa, Mr Adam provided insightful data-driven information on efficient ways to foster this development, because there is a “need of new mechanisms to build forward better, and change the paradigm”, in his own words.

His speech focused on the green recovery of Africa, which he believes should be centered on access to energy. Only 30% of the African population has access to the internet, stressing the importance of digitalisation and connecting the continent to clean and renewable energy – the “cheapest and most sustainable way to generate electricity on the African continent.”

Digitalisation will lead to climate resilience, women empowerment, gender equality and opportunities for better and more inclusive employment. “Digitalisation is therefore a key part of a green industrialisation process within Africa, and it is a strategic investment for

governments in terms of empowering the workforce”, said Mr Adam.

Identifying hard and soft skills, looking at emerging areas, such as artificial intelligence, and upgrading the digital hardware and middleware are transformative changes with large positive effect in Africa.





Mr Adam emphasized UNECA intends to heavily contribute to the enhancement of digital ID services and to make sure that people have access to government services in a more inclusive manner, while linking the aforementioned digital infrastructure with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

He ended by noting that even though we are facing hard times due to COVID-19, especially in African countries due to weak infrastructure and economic growth, we should also look at these as an opportunity to open new doors, solve problems and create change.

Ms Kassa then proceeded to introduce the amazing and inspiring panellists, representing a perfect blend of young entrepreneurs from the different African regions.

Each member of the panel was asked this question: "How can African governments leverage these digital innovations to spur their economic growth by creating a viable digital economy?"

The panellists provided many great ideas. Security was the first suggestion, believed to ease the access to positive procurement space, and E-commerce was perceived as facilitating trade that will provide certainty for young entrepreneurs. Some of the other ideas included filling the gap between on-the-ground realities and the policies, understanding the nature of the digital innovation, taking

tax initiatives, creating space for the youth, decentralizing, building proper infrastructure, following trends, taking advantage of the AfCFTA, and building and maintaining trust for investment from governments and big institutions.

Afterwards, each panellist was asked a question specific to their area of expertise in relation to the digital innovation in Africa around the youth. Their responses covered processes that need to be implemented on both the governmental and personal levels. They described how there needs to be an incubation process for youth. Regarding the health sector, they said that it is necessary to have a digital technology that can not only detect early signs of disease, but also prevent it. The panellists spoke about how there needs to be an outreach to the rural parts of Africa. They also mentioned how youth should make their business plan scalable and sustainable to attract investment.

Before the end of the event, every speaker was asked to give a final remark. Mr. Grant Davis, Coordinator of the side event stepped in at the end to give closing remarks. Grant thanked everyone for their participation and for sharing practical experiences. He agreed with one of the panelists on this statement: "if governments on the continent are not dancing with us, we will find people to dance with." He highlighted the advantage of the digitalisation and the necessity to work collaboratively, then he concluded by stating that once we acknowledge some of the challenges we face on the continent, we can transform them into opportunities while taking advantage of the AfCFTA.

Ms Kassa again thanked all the speakers and participants for attending the side event. Panellists turned their camera on for a group picture.

*The event ended at 6:55 p.m. EAT.*



# YALDA Signs MOU with ACBF to Help Up-skill African Youth

*By Mose Ade-ena, Ghana*

On 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021, a delegation from YALDA met with Kone Bakary, the Director of the Africa Capacity Building Foundation, West Africa Office in Accra, Ghana, to discuss matters of common interests and possibly sign a Memorandum of Understanding, in order to work together to meet their shared goals for the advancement of the African continent. The Africa Capacity Building Foundation, which was established to empower Africans to be effective and participate in the development of their various communities and nations, shares similar aspirations with YALDA, which seeks to empower young Africans to participate in leadership and governance as well as help develop the continent.

The two organisations deemed it necessary to collaborate and work together to see Africa rise and take its rightful place at the global level. The delegation – consisting of YALDA International Advisor, Laone Bukamu Hulela, President of YALDA South Africa, Nkateko Khoza and President of YALDA Ghana, Moses Akurugu Ade-ena – met with Mr Bakary and his personal assistant to formalize and deepen the relationship between the two organisations.

They discussed questions concerning the implementation of the AfCFTA and received responses from Mr Kone. There were questions about the issue of payment across borders, standardization, intellectual property rights, regulations at local levels and many others.

Both sides pledged their commitments to the course of Africa transformation, and stressed that collaboration was necessary to achieving this goal. Though a Memorandum

of Understanding was not signed that same day, Mr Kone emphasised the fact that the legal team was almost done with the document and would be ready in a few days. He encouraged the delegation from YALDA to continue the good work and expressed the readiness of his outfit to work with YALDA to achieve and sustain their common goals. The meeting ended with a group photograph.



# The Most In-demand Skills

## in the Job Market during and post COVID-19

By Raghda Medhat (Egypt)

**W**hat happened in the last year during the COVID-19 pandemic changed the whole world and impacted everyone's life. The job market got a big hit from companies laying off their employees, closing locations and completely shifting online, naming it the new norm. Many researchers believe that these changes will remain for many years, affecting the way we all work. Here are abilities which are rising in demand due to these changes, the most needed skills post the pandemic for the jobs of tomorrow.

### Adaptability

Last year, people all over the world faced changes in their life they had not faced in the last 10 years. During the pandemic, governments imposed several limitations, like travel restrictions, social distancing rules and bans on big gatherings, which have impacted the working style of many.

Companies started using more digital tools for online meetings, etc. to facilitate working from home. Employees who could quickly adapt to the new norms without having their performance and productivity negatively affected, and those who were open to learning the skills needed to use these tools, were able to overcome the challenges and get a better appraisal.

### Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Yes, emotional intelligence is one of the most important skills needed nowadays. Managers who worked with their team members in high emotional intelligence had better results and more productivity. I've helped many leaders across the world to effectively communicate with their people and help them understand the big issues of the pandemic. New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern used the same strategy during the pandemic, which allowed New Zealand to be the 1st country to record zero cases of COVID.



### Crisis Management and Problem Solving

It is important to know what to do when a crisis happens. No one expected that there would be a pandemic last year, or that the whole world would be under lockdown. Many companies and businesses were affected badly, but others benefited from the situation. Job candidates need to know how to see the big picture, and to have the skills to plan while being able to adapt one's strategy to a changing situation.

### Critical Thinking

Jobs will also require the skill of collecting and analysing data, asking the right questions to get the right answers. Some employees use decision-making models, others use simple tools like drawing a table in front of them and listing all the pros and cons to make their decision. Decision makers value people who have a critical thinking approach, viewing them as their advisory board who will help make the right decisions.

In today's highly competitive job market, many recent graduates and professionals think that they need to have all the certificates and technical skills in the world, but most employers focus more on the soft skills and the potentiality of being an effective member for the organisation.

# 10Ps of 2021

By Eddy Mhigo (Botswana and DRC)



## 1. Possibilities:

The beginning of 2020 provided us with plenty of possibilities and opportunities. For me personally, I had just successfully hosted two guests from the US through the Airbnb Experiences program, one of whom provided a chance to set up a network from within Gaborone; a network which would effectively contribute to turning the city into a tourism hub.

**What opportunities did you have coming your way at the beginning of 2020?**

## 2. Pandemic:

The coronavirus outbreak put a dampener on a lot of possibilities. The idea was that everything had to stop in order for the outbreak to run its course. We were assured that within 6 months everything would be back to normal. But normal came to mean the “new normal” as months passed. For me, the Airbnb opportunities fizzled away, for they depended on international travellers and continued interaction, which had been halted by the pandemic.

**How did the coronavirus outbreak affect your opportunities?**

## 3. Perseverance:

Defined as “doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success.” For me, it requires a lot of **PATIENCE** and **PRACTICE**. During lockdown, I refused to let the things that didn’t come right weigh me down. I tried everything to keep busy: sending emails and LinkedIn messages, recording live COVID-19 updates about what I had learned about the virus, and reviewing hip hop albums live on social media.

**PRACTICE:** I had limited skills in what it took to make a live broadcast, and I had to learn on the fly. Mistakes were made, lots of them, but I didn’t let that put me down. Also, the analyses I made often clashed with

official channels. I therefore had to eventually put a stop to the live updates.

**PATIENCE:** Finding what works takes a lot of patience. In stopping the live updates, I was a little frustrated, but I had to find something that could give some form of **PRODUCTIVITY** and **POTENTIAL** without causing **PROBLEMS**.

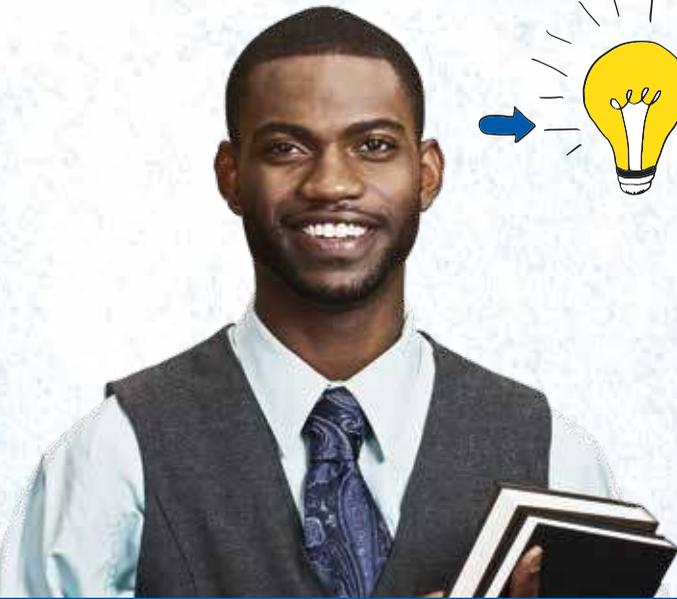
**THE LOCKDOWN CONVERSATIONS were born...**

## 4. Partnerships:

Sometimes we get scared to reach out to individuals that can help give relevance to ideas we are trying to bring to life. I often ask myself “is ‘No’ the worst thing that I could get?” The reality is that “No” is a positive response in that the recipient had to have read your request and thought about it before turning you down. The worst thing that could happen is a person not responding, and that couldn’t affect me in any way. So, I sent emails, Instagram DMs and LinkedIn in mails.

## 5. Plan:

A plan is key to anyone taking you seriously, especially when that person is someone important. I learned that even with a small idea, I had to ensure I knew what I was talking about. By planning at a micro level I got the attention of a local institution about a Laptop Computer Recycling Program, while slowly growing my audience with my Lockdown Conversations with hip-hop personalities from all over the world.



## 6. Possess:

You must take ownership of the idea you are bringing to life. In a tough period, you must do it quickly for a number of reasons. **One**, your movement is restricted, so you cannot spread your net wide enough. **Two**, you are dealing with information that fizzles out quickly. **Three**, the attention span of your audience is small. And of course, resources are limited, as they may be expensive or inaccessible.

So, you need to **INVEST** in small **PORTIONS**... For me that investment came in the form of buying software and equipment, and reading, lots and lots of reading.

Also, you have to be **PASSIONATE** about what you are bringing to life, to the point of **OBSESSION**. If it is a skill, learn it until you become a **MASTER** at it. If it is frequency, find a way to always deliver on time so that your audience knows what to expect before you give them anything. This will give you **CONSISTENCY**.

## 7. Progress:

You are your first and biggest supporter. The only way to really evaluate yourself is to track **PROGRESS**. Enjoy the little successes, and quickly correct small errors. For me this involved upgrading my equipment in order to give better sound and consistent connections.

## 8. (Growing) Pains:

There will be difficulty; remember, you are still in the middle of uncertain times. The question then becomes,

## 9. (Trust the) Process:

If you don't believe in it, nobody will. Note also that not everyone understands your idea the way you do. So be willing to do the work to explain it thoroughly to every person willing to listen, to get feedback, to tweak your story, and to retell it over and over again, even after it has come to life.

## 10. P.E.A.C.E:

**POSITIVITY:** Always have a good support structure. They will make the difference when something goes wrong, by the counsel they give you.

**ELEVATION:** Give no time to what does not elevate or build you. You do not have the luxury of entertaining those that remain pessimistic. All criticism has to be productive. If it is not, toss it out.

**ALWAYS:** Seek counsel at all times. Your support structure exists for that. Do not think once you have something good going on that it will stay that way eternally. Go back, run it by your support structure and value their opinions.

**CORRECT:** Honest criticism (when it is productive) will always lead to correction, which will move you towards a more positive outcome.

**ERRORS:** Own your mistakes.

Note that while there is no mental health aspect mentioned explicitly, these steps will keep your mentality and spirituality in tip-top shape. **PRAYER** should remain a constant, and your Mental Wellbeing will be maintained.

For example, you can walk with the goal of losing weight, or you can stay active, walk when you have to, run when you have to, help where you can with lifting, and lose weight as a by-product. Ask yourself who is more satisfied?

Remember your **ATTITUDE** and your **MALLEABILITY**  
**Proceed**

## YALDA Professional Affiliate – Mr Kojo Parris

*By Calin-Stefan Arama (Romania)*

Kojo Parris is a remarkably active person. He is an experienced social entrepreneur, manager, former investment banker and accountant. He presently channels his time and energy to drive sustainability projects in South Africa and across the continent.



**Kojo Parris (CEO)**  
**Afrika Tikkun Investments**

**Kojo Parris** is a remarkably active person. He is an experienced social entrepreneur, manager, former investment banker and accountant. He presently channels his time and energy to drive sustainability projects in South Africa and across the continent. All of these endeavours are connected by his belief in the vital role which African youth plays, will play and must play in shaping the future of the continent and the global stage.

Mr Parris is the CEO at Afrika Tikkun Investments, the financial branch of the Afrika Tikkun brand, where he manages and oversees a high ESG (Environmental, Social

and Governance) portfolio of impactful social enterprises. He directly enables the wide-ranging impact of Afrika Tikkun on marginalized and disadvantaged youth in South Africa: home-based support to young kids for leading an active school life; multilateral nurturing of pupils' development through schoolwork, sports, arts, and culture; and guidance for those looking to start their careers, through job-readiness trainings and bursaries for further studies.

In addition to his regular job, Mr Parris serves on the boards of numerous social enterprises and NGOs, including Community & Individual Development Association (CIDA), Homeless Talk Newspaper, Operation Hope South Africa, and, of course, the board of yours truly, YALDA. Mr Parris also serves as the chairman of the business incubator Knowledge Based Action Africa; as the chairman of Accounting For Entrepreneurship Africa (A4e), as the director of the charity Khulisa, as the chairman of the African Social Entrepreneurs Network, and as the founding CEO of Social Private Equity South Africa.

From early on in his varied and successful career, he merged his abilities in finance and entrepreneurship with his passion and duty to his community and to future generations. After earning his MA from Cambridge, where he was awarded the Cambridge Commonwealth Scholarship, he worked as an investment banker and oversaw investment portfolios, and worked as a management consultant. He draws from that experience in

his various social endeavours. In his own words, “my primary efforts are around the advocacy for, management of and investing in social enterprises. This allows me to align my daily efforts with my underlying philosophy of using my previously honed financial optimisation skills with the imperative to produce accessible social services and public goods.”

Mr Parris bases much of his social work on the principles that each person deserves a chance to succeed, and that only through investing in all our youth can we build prosperous and safe societies. Many of tomorrow’s change-makers could come from the very disadvantaged communities, where we are told there are none. It is our duty to empower them to beat the odds and become the leaders we need.

Even beyond the uplifting of African youth through Afrika Tikkun, he reinforces his principles within the many organizations in which he serves. CIDA successfully develops “disadvantaged learners and institutions in a measurably effective way”: it has co-founded four widely-accessible tertiary education campuses and has directly helped over 13,000 kids and unemployed youth. Operation Hope SA gives youths the financial literacy they need to take control of their economic situation and plan for their future. Khulisa teaches social skills and provides emotional support to marginalized young people, including young offenders. He is also deeply committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which can be seen in his coaching early-stage businesses across Africa through ProjectBounceBack(#PBB) and his involvement in the Tshikoni project.

Eventually, Mr Parris reached a point in his journey where it became important not only to fight for social causes himself but also to foster a legacy through shaping the fighters of the next generation with mentoring.

He is relentlessly dedicated to sharing his knowledge of social entrepreneurship, using his financial skills for social ends, and fostering human connections. This chapter

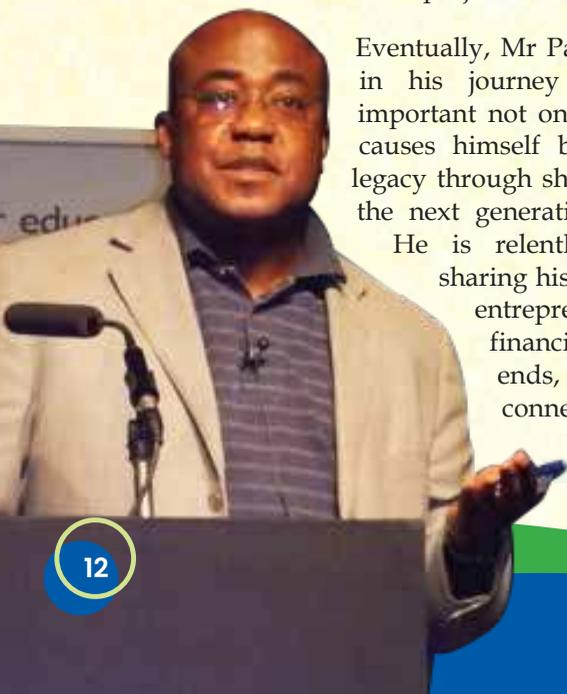
of mentoring youth began with his involvement in tertiary education – he was the Head of The Colloquium for Social Entrepreneurs at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, and he taught business entrepreneurship programmes at Wits Business School.

His immersion in education convinced him of the value in forming meaningful, close connections with people in whom he sees potential. He now mentors small groups and individuals within YALDA and beyond. Unlike the conventional view of mentorship being one-sided, or top-down, Mr Parris sees mentorship as providing mutual growth for two people at different stages in their lives.

 **My initial link with YALDA was around its activities in mentoring young adults. This (second aspect of my efforts) is perhaps the most legacy laden. Over 20 mentees across Africa, North & South America, Asia and Europe allow me to benefit from their layered views, even as they look to me for guidance and resistance. The third major aspect of my efforts also intersects with YALDA’s convening purpose. Almost on a weekly basis, I bring together diverse groups of 6–8 individuals in mostly unstructured formats to experience each other’s worlds.** 

Mr Parris realized one of the less obvious barriers faced by African youth is the relative absence of trail-blazing role models, people who have reached success on their own and are ready to share their experience with those who are only now beginning their journeys. Many ambitious and competent young Africans are slowed down by uncertainty, by their need for answers to questions they cannot ask. YALDA aims to fulfil this need for its members, and Mr Parris’s mentorships have played an indispensable part.

To end on a more personal note, Kojo is a realist in mind and an optimist at heart (as confirmed by a scroll through his social media, the right mix of eye-opening and laugh-inducing). Like all of us, he laments the tragedy of Covid-19 and, maybe even more, of its mismanagement. However, he celebrates that even in crisis, as a society we created a context that does not allow physical distance to impede human connection: *“Ironically, COVID has made this [the “diverse meetings”] easier since meeting online is logistically easier, and the perceived lack of personal contact promotes a willingness to share more expansively and intimately than in the prior in-person era.”*



## Members of the Quarter



**Mr Jonathan Baah**  
Ghana

YALDA Ghana is pleased to nominate **Mr Jonathan Baah** as its member for the first quarter of 2021 for his outstanding performance and invaluable contribution to the chapter. Mr Baah holds a Bachelor's degree in Human Development & Psychology. Multi-talented and eager to volunteer, he currently serves as the Deputy Director for Mentorship and Placement at YALDA Ghana, where he contributed chiefly to the establishment of YALDA Branches at University of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

He also serves as the Project Director for Young

Global Leaders Network's Mentorship Hub. Mr Baah is a member of the Learning Journey into Leadership for Future Change Makers by the Swiss Centre of Competence for International Cooperation. He also works as an agent for the Netherlands Education Group.

Mr Baah joined YALDA Ghana with a lot of energy and commitment to the mission of YALDA. His leadership style is worth emulating. We at YALDA Ghana are proud of Jonathan for his contribution to youth leadership in general and his enormous service to YALDA Ghana in particular. We say "ayekoo!"



**Ms Pretty Thogo**  
Botswana

**Pretty Thogo** is a human resources expert working as Head of HR for a major retail and restaurant chain in Gaborone, Botswana. Currently, Ms Thogo is the Operations Director for YALDA Botswana, where she is responsible for ensuring the daily functioning and operations of YALDA Botswana and ensuring all activities are executed and all reporting submitted in a timely manner. As part of YALDA, Ms Thogo has had opportunities to work with the World Bank Africa Region and YTA as part of the team that plans and executes roundtables where different professionals engage on topics affecting African youth.

She was part of the delegation that represented YALDA at WEDF 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Ms Thogo is passionate about Africa and strongly believes that the salvation of Africa will come through a completely different paradigm of self-led individuals working together in synergy for the greater good of all Africans - both on the continent and in the diaspora. Pretty believes organizations like YALDA play a key role in the efforts of Africans to transform Africa and thus strongly encourages youth to volunteer and be a part of the revolution.



**Ms Nyakato Patience**  
Uganda

**Nyakato Patience** is a recent graduate of Business Statistics from the Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. Since joining YALDA Makerere in 2019, Ms Patience has worked tirelessly to drive membership growth at the university, engraving Pan-African and self-resilient values in her peers. Her leadership prowess was vividly displayed when elected to be in charge of YALDA Communications on COVID-19. In this role she equipped youth with safe and correct information on the pandemic, something remains passionate about to date.

During the eight month lockdown due to the pandemic, Ms Patience recognised that a number of families were on a tight income and couldn't afford sanitary pads for their teenage daughters. With support from the YALDA Executive, She came up with a crowdfunding project that



collected funds, procured and donated sanitary pads to several teenage girls in rural areas.

Ms Patience is now a volunteer with the YALDA National Executive team, where she gives auxiliary support to the formation of new YALDA branches. She believes in service above self and a borderless Africa!

# Branch Activity Highlights

*By Katlego Nawa (Botswana) and Calin-Stefan Arama (Romania)*

## YALDA MOROCCO

During the first quarter of 2021, YALDA Morocco has continued engaging with regional and national stakeholders and fostered previously formed relationships. Members attended numerous online meetings - arranged by various national and international organizations and advertised and facilitated by the branch - and have maintained regular in-person and online contact with each other.

YALDA Morocco continues its crucial role in the mega project of building sanitary infrastructures in École El Mouahidine public school in the Hay Adil neighborhood of Casablanca.

In February 2021, the branch successfully secured extra funding to renovate a former prayer room into a performance space, complete with a mini-theatre stage, new doors, 30 VIP seats and additional large chairs for the kids. The renovation was planned and led by committees formed of YALDA members:

- **Legal committee:** notarising, cataloguing purchases, drafting contracts
- **Opening ceremony committee:** sending invitations to participants and guest speakers, arranging catering
- **Certificate committee:** maintaining compliance with YALDA international

All those involved developed knowledge of local and national regulations, and skills such as civil engineering, construction management, scheduling, budgeting and compliance.

In addition, the branch promoted active political participation through the AfCFTA YALDA Morocco Free trade program, an initiative providing young entrepreneurs with the necessary tools and knowledge for free trade advocacy, and better understanding of trade rules. As it evolved, the program also delivered activities on other relevant youth issues such as employment and entrepreneurship. In the future, the branch looks forward



to liaising with the multiple YALDA branches running AfCFTA advocacy initiatives, both increasing advocacy efficiency and extending the reach of YALDA's initial promise of creating relations.

Since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, we have not opened any new branches at the university level. However,

YALDA International is directly engaging with the Mohamed V University branch.

## YALDA LIBERIA

YALDA Liberia happily reports it has achieved its plans for 2020 and went beyond them. The branch is confident this upward trajectory will continue in 2021 and beyond, nationally and pan-continentially.

### National Youth Empowerment Summit - 2021

On 11-12 February 2021, YALDA Liberia collaborated with public administration, national and global youth politics organizations, and charitable foundations to host the National Youth Empowerment Summit, with sponsorship from the Foundation for Human Rights Defense Intl.



## NATIONAL YOUTH EMPOWERMENT SUMMIT 2021

**THEME:** "Building Youth Capacity to Enhance Active Community and National Service"

**Date:** Thursday & Friday  
11-12 February | 9:00 AM

**Venue:** Saclepea City Hall,  
Nimba County

**MEET OUR SPECIAL GUESTS AND SPEAKERS**

 <b>MR. TORROA TEE WONOKAY</b> Founder/CEO FOHRD Advocacy	 <b>HON. JEREMIAH B. YANGEAN</b> City Mayor Saclepea City, Nimba County	 <b>HON. ROGER SWY DOMAN</b> Representative District #7, Nimba County	 <b>HON. JOHNSON N. GWAIKOLO</b> Representative District #6, Nimba County
 <b>MRS. CAROLINE W. GEZAYE</b> Country Director IFS-Liberia	 <b>MR. PETER N. WONOKAY</b> Country Director FOHRD Advocacy	 <b>MR. MOHAMMED KERKULAH</b> President, YALDA Liberia Country Coordinator, GYP-Liberia	 <b>MR. PAUL Z. WEHYYE</b> Expert in Development and Governance Management
 <b>MR. ARMSTRONG HARTUAH</b> Founder/PRO Nimba Concern Youth for Change Gift Financial Institution	 <b>MR. JEFF D. JUAQUELLIE</b> Chief Executive Officer	 <b>MRS. CHRISTIANA T. BARLEAH</b> Country Director SONGA Liberia	 <b>MRS. WORKADIAH BOUCH</b> Chief Executive Director PETGIT-Africa



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**



Participation in National Development etc. The participants were inspired by their dedicated peers as well as the speakers and. They got the chance to exchange thoughts and debate national politics, especially regarding youth development and the importance of effective democratic representation. As a motivation to

Under the title 'Building Youth Capacity to Enhance Active Community and National Service', the National Youth Empowerment Summit brought together over 200 youths from all nine electoral districts in Nimba County, along with young leaders from Montserrado, Margibi and Bong counties. The esteemed guests spoke on a variety of themes: Youth & the SDGs 2030, Youth Entrepreneurship, Good Citizenship, Human Rights, Youth Opportunities, Women

### YALDA LIBERIA PLANNING WORKSHOP

**Date & Time:** 3rd Sunday, January 17, 2021, 2:00 PM

**Venue:** University of Liberia Main Campus,  
Capital Hill, Low School Daleya Hut



For more details, contact us on

WhatsApp: +231880006657  
Phone: +23177288998  
Call: +231880881540  
Email: yalda@liberia@gmail.com  
Web: www.yaldaliberia.org

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**YALDA TUBMAN UNIVERSITY**  
**ONLINE Leadership & Personal Development Training**  
 Virtual School of Leadership and Personal Development

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We present to you the following As Lecturers

- Amb. Otis Tarwoe (Personal Development)
- Mr. Mohammed Kerkulah (Leadership Skills)
- Madame Nuwo David (Ethics, Communication, Public Skills)
- Mr. Faseyi Raphael (Graphics Design Skills)

**TRAINING TOPICS:**

1. Personal Development
2. Leadership Skills
3. Graphics Design Skills
4. Effective Communication Skills

**YALDA! "By Africans, for Africa"**

Online Via WhatsApp  
 Join the training!

February 11-14  
 Time: 19:30 GMT+00:00

BREEDING LEADERS!

continue being responsible citizens, all participants were awarded a 'Certificate of Participation' and commissioned as 'Community Ambassadors of Sustainability' for 2021-2023.

### YALDA-TU Online Leadership Development School

In February, YALDA Tubman University (YALDA-TU) successfully launched the Online Leadership Development School, holding its first training 11-14 February. The training focused on three themes: Personal Development, Leadership and Communications and Graphics Designing Skills. Participants are currently undergoing mentorships relating to the topics to ensure long-term evolution. Their sustained engagement proves deep commitment to the future of Africa.

Watch the summit's video using the link below:  
<https://www.facebook.com/104551487821314/posts/239411991001929/>

Thankfully, the pandemic crisis has reduced its wind in Liberia, allowing the branch to run more and more in-person activities, if under some social distancing requirements.

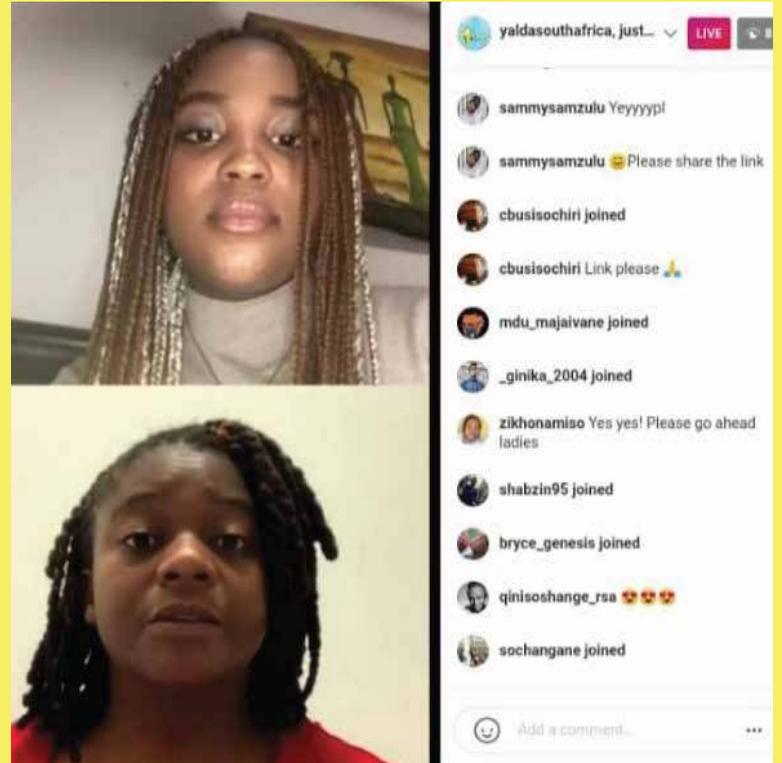


## YALDA SOUTH AFRICA

### Staying Connected

In adapting to the effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic and until social gathering restrictions are lifted, YALDA South Africa holds monthly meetings online, to minimise the risk of members contracting the virus. We continuously encourage members to remain positive and embrace “the new normal”, to recognise that while the medium of engagement has changed, its importance and reward have not.

YALDA South Africa continues fostering close relations with its key partners and relevant stakeholders. YALDA South Africa Leadership Team has arranged for laptops and data for team members upon their request to ensure that the members are able to connect to the online activities, stay fully engaged and actively contribute from the comfort of their homes.



## IN LIGHT OF TEEN SUICIDE PREVENTION WEEK JOIN



FOR AN INFO SESSION: We will unpack the contributing factors to high levels of suicide among youth in partnership with SADAG



### DETAILS

DATE: THURSDAY 25 FEB  
TIME: 18:30-19:00  
GUEST: PSYCHOLOGIST FROM SADAG  
PLATFORM: FACEBOOK LIVE  
(YALDASouthAfrica Group)  
HOST: NONHLANHLA SIWELA

### Communications Team

YALDA South Africa Communications Team organised a ‘Teen Suicide Prevention Week’ earlier this year. The guest was Registered Councillor Mbali Mashaba, based in Johannesburg. The session saw a lot of participation not only from YALDA members, but from other young people and significantly boosted the image of the branch.

YALDA South Africa Communications Team has also updated all social media accounts to enhance engagement. For example, it has been posting updates on a daily basis, celebrating every international day and keeping up-to-date with global events.

### ‘Straight Talk’ Events Series

YALDA South Africa Events Team adopted a forward-looking approach and planned a series of events themed as ‘Straight Talk – Critical Conversations with YALDA SA’ for the coming months: Event 1 will explore and evaluate the roles of various stakeholders in increasing internet access for young people; Event 2 will provide a platform for critical debate on the determinants for building a more resilient medical supply-chain in South Africa; Event 3 will present valuable lessons for how young people can identify opportunities and leverage off digitisation and the AfCFTA in growing their businesses.

# Making It against All Odds in 2021 - Mental Resilience of Young People

By Melatwork Tibebu (Ethiopia)

**Fear and isolation have tested the mental strength of most people, especially the youth and will most likely be with us for a while, so let's add them to the list of things to adapt to and overcome.**

**W**hat is your secret? How did you make it despite the odds? These are the questions we often ask or wonder about successful people. The truth is, there is no shortcut or one simple answer to making it. It is a combination of things over the course of time that will ensure your success. It is important we clearly define the purpose and goals we hope to achieve in our lifetime. Those things keep us going even when our faith is tested.

The greatest myth we buy into is that success is the endgame. Once we succeed, we quickly have to realize how to work even harder to sustain our success. Repeating and sustaining your success is as important as achieving it in the first place. Aiming for a long-lasting success is fundamental because succeeding once doesn't guarantee we won't fail. That is where resilience comes in.

Hard work, perseverance and staying true to your vision are crucial. Adversity is part of life. We all experience hardships in our daily lives. Believe me, there are and will be many occasions you will find yourself questioning your principles in life. It happens to everybody. As young people, we each habituated coping mechanisms to get through those challenges. Hope and patience are other ingredients which will contribute to constant mental resilience.

Resilience is built on self-belief, emotional awareness and willingness to adapt. Young people forget to pat themselves on the back for every job well done. We are busy moving on to the next task or busy being hard on ourselves, and we forget that every small victory matters.



We must also cultivate a sense of humour and optimism to get up every time the world knocks us down.

However, the most important ingredient to our success is us – solidarity amongst us is imperative to foster resilience. It starts within a family. Teach our children the right values and be an example for them. Having an abundance mentality, cooperating rather than competing and working in synergy with one another will help us make it against all odds.

It is no secret that we are living in unprecedented times due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Fear and isolation have tested the mental strength of most people, especially the youth and will most likely be with us for a while, so let's add them to the list of things to adapt to and overcome. Understand that you are not alone, every successful person you admire had to overcome obstacles to become who they are today. Recognise your own resilience despite the struggles. Realize that you are on your way, keep going no matter what.

# YALDA Roundtables with World Bank Group and YTA in 2021

By Chuks Okorieke (Nigeria) and Pretty Thogo (Botswana)

**A**t YALDA, we believe that partnerships are important in advancing our mission of transforming Africa through the youth. In early 2020, YALDA made the momentous decision to enter into a strategic partnership with the World Bank Africa Youth Transforming Africa (YTA) to host joint online roundtables as a 'voice aggregator' through which policy makers can hear youth voices whilst also tackling hot topics affecting African youth, both within the continent and in the diaspora.

The first order of business was to seek feedback from the youth on priority topics, the frequency of roundtables and the format thereof. More than 190 youth from 29 countries responded to the call and a plan was put in place for roundtables on topics like child marriage, gender-based violence and participation of women and children in economic empowerment.

Our first roundtable was held in April 2020 as the world was starting to witness the effects of COVID-19. Different professionals (medical, communications etc.) were called upon to give African youth pertinent information on the virus. This roundtable proved to be very timely and helpful to many who were confused and did not have the right information. Since then, there have been three other roundtables on various topics:

- The Economic Impacts of COVID-19 and World Bank Support to Africa – the purpose of this roundtable was to consider the effects of COVID-19 on the African economy and how the World Bank would be supporting countries through the presented challenges.
- How to moderate a webinar/roundtable – which had the aim of providing youth with new skills in this new world of work.
- Regional integration – this roundtable helped youth to gain knowledge on how they can use regional

integration to create more impact in their communities and in the continent as a whole.

Many more roundtables are planned for 2021 and beyond, with a view to provide African youth with the knowledge they need to navigate life for the benefit of themselves, the communities they live in and for the continent in general. As the partnership between YALDA and World Bank Africa/Youth Transforming Africa continues to gain momentum, the focus will also move to how the partnership can benefit youth beyond providing knowledge via roundtables. YALDA members are encouraged to take part in these roundtables as they are highly beneficial!



# Webinar Highlights

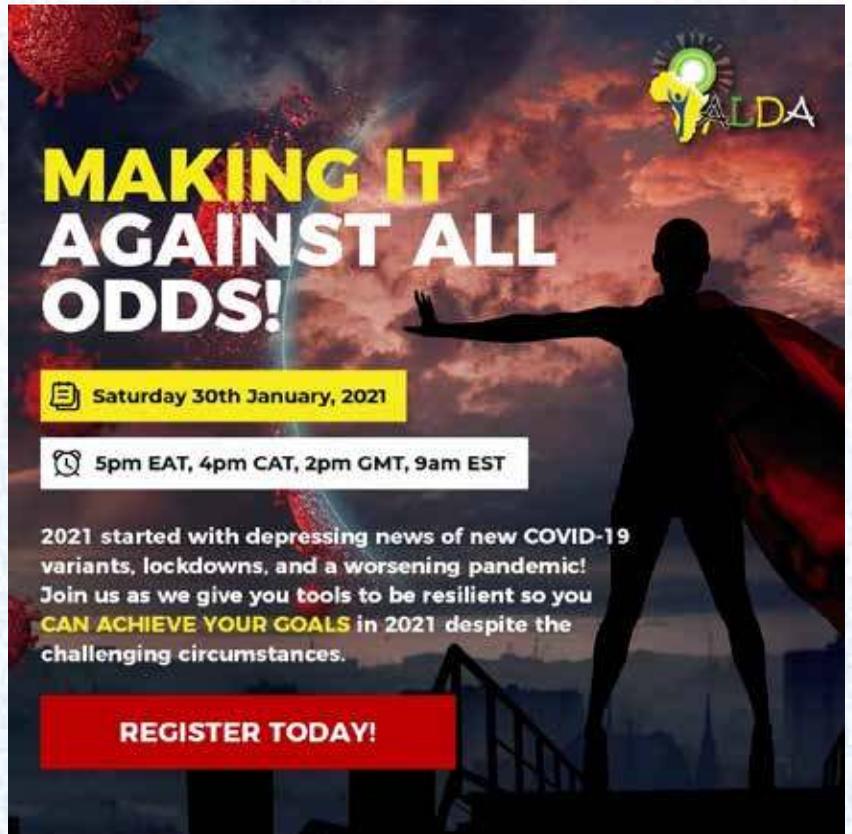
By Abinaidah Chaseba, (Zambia) and Bethelhem Jambo Kassa (Ethiopia)

## JANUARY Webinar Making it Against All Odds

Going into 2021, people around the world were so optimistic that solutions to ending the COVID-19 crisis would be found and that things would get back to normal with the dawn of the new year. However, this did not happen. Just when we thought things were slowly getting back to normal, the second wave of the COVID-19 virus spread across the globe, making the situation worse. Businesses continued to incur losses, and some unfortunately shutdown. Schools remained closed, hospitals were crowded and a lot of lives were lost. Some of the most affected groups were the youth.

It was therefore, important that we at YALDA help young Africans get through this hard time. We held a "Making it Against All Odds" webinar to educate young people on how they could develop tough skin to push themselves through the chaos created by the pandemic.

The panel of seasoned motivational speakers provided timely advice on what African youth need to do to stay afloat in all areas of their lives, amidst the various challenges they could be faced with. The young and curious participants made the discussion even more fruitful with a closing round of valuable questions and contributions.



## Speakers



▶ **Eddy Mihigo**  
Consultant and  
Radio Presenter,  
DRC/Botswana  
**Moderator**



▶ **Fatiha Felous**  
Health and  
Wellness Coach,  
Morocco  
**Speaker**



▶ **Bina Maseno**  
Founder and  
Executive Director,  
Badili Africa, Kenya  
**Speaker**



◀ **Sharai Erima**  
Professor, CUNY  
Bronx Community  
College, New York  
**Speaker**



◀ **Brian Kagoro**  
Founder and  
Director,  
Uhai Africa Private  
Limited, Kenya  
**Speaker**



## FEBRUARY Webinar

### Opportunities for Youth to Leapfrog Regional Integration in Africa

A lack of knowledge sharing about how regional integration operates through the RECs has resulted in information asymmetries among young people on how they may potentially benefit from regional economic integration in the long-term. The Youth Transforming Africa (YTA) and YALDA recognise the fact that an emergent and integrated Africa can only be fully realized if the continent takes advantage of its greatest human resource: a large population of the youth.

We therefore held a webinar themed ‘Opportunities for Youth to Leapfrog Regional Integration in Africa’ to help Africa’s youth understand the potential of regional integration in the development of the continent. The speakers discussed how we can provide a platform for young people to engage with Africa’s partners and shared strategies for how young people can participate and benefit from regional integration. The panel also discussed how to help young people leverage the changing ways of work in order to capitalise on opportunities that will arise from regional integration in Africa.

**Opportunities for Youth to Leapfrog Regional Integration in Africa!**

Regional integration is propelling Africa's growth forward, find out how YOU can also contribute!

Date: Saturday 27 February  
Time: 10am EST; 3pm GMT; 5pm CAT; 6pm EAT  
Place: Online, Zoom

**REGISTER TODAY!**

Logos: YALDA (Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa), YOUTH TRANSFORMING AFRICA, WORLD BANK GROUP

## Speakers



**Chuks Okoriekwe**  
President,  
YALDA, Nigeria  
**Co-host**



**Fauzia Abdi Idle**  
Blog4Dev Winner  
2020, Kenya  
**Co-host**



**Dassidi Nideou**  
Post-Doctoral  
Researcher in Poultry  
Science, Regional  
Center of Excellence  
in Poultry Science,  
University of Lomé,  
Togo  
**Speaker**



**Nicolatte Buliani Mutuku**  
Founder,  
Walking the  
African Journey  
**Speaker**



**Dr. Francis Mangeni**  
Head of Trade  
Promotion & Programs,  
African Continental  
Free Trade Area  
Secretariat  
**Speaker**



**Claire A. Kfour**  
Manager for Regional  
Integration for  
Africa, the Middle East  
& North Africa, World  
Bank Group  
**Speaker**



# MARCH Webinar

## Driving Africa's Industrialisation Agenda by Investing in Youth's Digital Innovations Post COVID-19



YALDA was once again privileged to host a Side Event at the 53<sup>rd</sup> Session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)'s Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, held virtually on 20 March. The side event was titled 'Driving Africa's Industrialisation Agenda by Investing in Youth's Digital Innovations Post COVID-19.'

In his opening keynote speech, UNECA's Jean-Paul Adam, provided insightful data-driven information on efficient ways to foster this development. He emphasised that digitalisation is a key part of a green industrialisation process within Africa and a strategic investment for governments in terms of empowering the workforce.

The speech was followed by a panel discussion on how African governments can leverage digital innovations to spur their economic growth by creating a viable digital economy. The panel highlighted the necessity to include youth in the AfCFTA implementation strategies, support youth innovators in digital space, create more jobs with long term impact, use green technologies and empower small and medium enterprises for the economic and social development of the African continent.

It was resolved that there is a need to take advantage of digitalisation and work collaboratively by first acknowledging some of the challenges we face on the continent, then transforming them into opportunities, while taking advantage of the AfCFTA.

## Speakers



**Matthews Mmopi**  
International  
Chairperson at  
YALDA, Botswana  
**Speaker**



**Nneile Nkholise**  
Founder at iMed  
Tech Group, South  
Africa  
**Speaker**



**Jean Paul Adam**  
Director, Technology,  
Climate Change and  
Natural Resources,  
UNECA  
**Speaker**



**Bethelhem  
Jambo Kassa**  
Moderator, Ethiopia  
**Moderator**



**Erickson Mvezi**  
Founder & CEO  
at Tupuca,  
Angola  
**Speaker**



**Bashiru  
Mansaray**  
Co-Founder & CEO  
Open Space Sierra  
Leone  
**Speaker**



**Moutaga Keita**  
Founder & Managing  
Director at Tulip  
Industry, Guinea  
**Speaker**



**Jessica Colaco**  
Co-Founder &  
Vice-President  
Brave, Kenya  
**Speaker**



**AHMED  
BASTAWY**  
Managing Director,  
IceAlex, Egypt  
**Speaker**



# Statement Highlights

By Imane Oumellouche (Morocco)



## New Year Statement (January 01)

### New Year Statement

**A new year heralds a new journey, as it unfolds new lessons and experiences.**

First and foremost, *ke a le leboga*. Thank you to all of our supporters, partners, advisors and the vibrant YALDAians working tirelessly to create the "Africa we want!"

I especially want to thank our branch leaders and members. You are YALDA's *raison d'être*. YALDA's vision and mission has been a reality through the branches - mainly in public universities - and our regional associates who are working closely with the country branches to empower the youth and drive the African development agenda.

The year 2020 came with a lot of challenges due to COVID-19 humanitarian crises. We mourn the many people around the world who have died during this pandemic. **We remember and celebrate the lives they lived and the impact they had on the families and friends they left behind.**

True to our purpose and mission, we at YALDA joined many individuals and organizations on the Continent and the Diaspora in the search for ways to combat the negative impact of this crisis.

For example, having witnessed the mental health consequences of the pandemic, YALDA launched *Youth Stress Management Cafes*. The Cafes provided a platform for youth to have open conversations on managing the impact of COVID-19, and how to manage stress and make productive use of time during lockdown periods and beyond.

To circumvent the physical and mobility limitations that came with the COVID-19 pandemic, YALDA launched *Branches Go Digital* to enable branches to continue with activities through digital platforms.

Moreover, YALDA partnered with the International Trade Centre to encourage youth innovativeness during the crisis. We empowered young business owners and provided a variety



**Kgosietsile Matthews T. Mmopi II**  
YALDA International Chairperson

resources and support to help them build business models needed to navigate COVID-19 related challenges.

Finally, we closed the year with a virtual edition of our biennial i-Boot Camp jointly organized with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the International Trade Center under the theme, "*Beyond COVID19: Leveraging the Benefits of the AfCFTA to Spur Africa's Growth*". Participants shared strategies around how young people can overcome the impact of COVID-19 and revitalise Africa's growth using the AfCFTA in the 'new normal'.

Now, we hail 2021 with a resolve to keep pushing boundaries to make a difference in Africa.

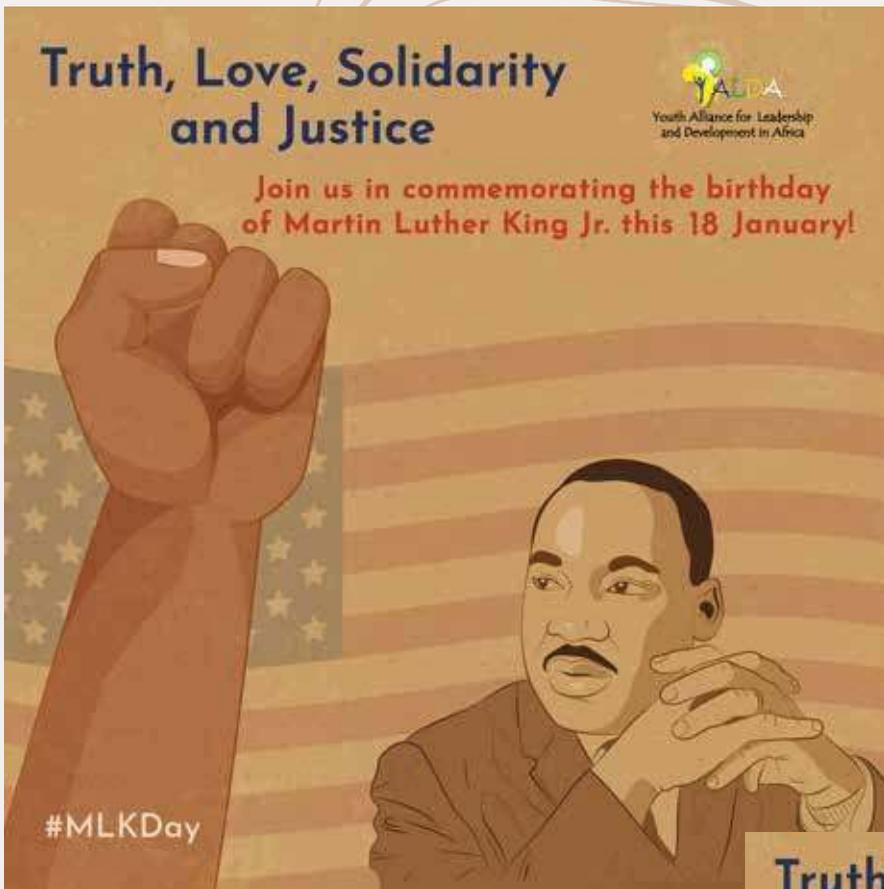
YALDA will continue to promote innovation and be resilient in our quest to achieve sustainable development on the Continent. Our branches will scale our "digital incubator" to carry our work forward amidst the restrictions created by the pandemic. We will also expand our mental health advocacy activities given the positive outcomes of the Stress Management Cafes.

The AfCFTA became operational as of 1 January 2021. It is therefore important for us to continue with the activities of our "*Umoja Africa Campaign – Youth Contributing to the implementation of the AfCFTA*". We will host another virtual summit centred around fast-tracking the realisation of the AfCFTA protocols and policies. Our aim is to ensure that youth are not only beneficiaries of intra-Africa trade but also shapers and executors.

**As we enter 2021, I encourage you all to hold on to love, hope and courage.** Let us put our health and our compassion at the heart of everything we say and do this year. More than ever, in this unpredictable moment in time, I believe we, as young Africans, need to remind the world about the power of love and forgiveness.

**May God bless you all this year.**

# JANUARY



## Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday (January 18)

Martin Luther King Jr Day is commemorated every third Monday of January in the United States of America (USA) and around the world to honour and celebrate the birth, life and death of the Reverend Dr Martin Luther King Jr.

This year's Martin Luther King Jr Day took place virtually under the theme, 'Truth, Love, Solidarity and Justice'. It emphasises the need to end social injustice and promote equal treatment and solidarity among all human beings. This could all be achieved when people around the world live in truth, loving and respecting other people despite our different races and unique differences, standing together as one world and committing to a safe and joyful world for all.



**Truth, Love, Solidarity and Justice**

Join us in commemorating the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. this 18 January!

Every year on the third Monday of January, the United States of America and the rest of the world come together to honor and celebrate the birth, life and dream of Dr Martin Luther King Jr. This day is recognized as a day of service meant to encourage and inspire people to volunteer to improve their respective communities. On this day, people are encouraged to educate generations on these injustices that Dr King fought, his fight for freedom, equality and dignity of all races and people through nonviolence.

As coronavirus cases around the world continue to surge and new virus variants are discovered, it is clear there is still a long way to go in winning the war against the pandemic. In 2020, world leaders came together to find solutions to the pandemic and curb its spread and harm on humanity. Given the lingering effect of COVID-19 pandemic, the celebrations commemorating the life of Dr Martin Luther King Jr. will take place virtually under the theme, "Truth, Love, Solidarity and Justice".

Dr Martin Luther King Jr. will forever be remembered for his "I have a dream" speech. The speech, delivered on August 28, 1963 before a crowd of some 250,000 people of civil rights marchers at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. in what was then the largest gathering for an event in the history of the nation's capital. He also pleaded for an end to racism and injustice in all its forms accompanied by liberty for all persons. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech influenced the Federal government to take more direct actions included demands for desegregated public accommodations and public schools, redress of violations of constitutional rights and an expansive federal work program to train employees to realize racial equality in the United States of America.

This year's theme for the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day emphasize the need to end social injustice and promote equal treatment and solidarity among all human beings. This could all be achieved when people around the world live in the truth, loving and respecting other people despite our different races and unique differences, standing together as one world and committing to collaborate to promote a safe and joyful world for all.

Even though much progress has been made globally in the fight for equality, social and racial justice more still needs to be done. In recent years, the world has seen the growth in protests of the "Black Lives Matter" movement that started in the United States of America. This is a movement advocates for non-violent civil disobedience in protest against police brutality and all racially motivated violence and discrimination against black people. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic surge, the protests went global. The recent growth of the "Black Lives Matter" movement is an indication that the world is a long way to go in realizing Dr Martin Luther King's dream of equality and ending social injustice for all.

We at the Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa (YALDA) carry the moral burden to bind young people to their alienable rights through means of digital advocacy as well as empowering and building the capacity of a people advocates. YALDA believes in education as the weapon that enables youth to denounce all forms of segregation and the adequate tool that enables them to stand up for their rights as well as voicing the voices of the voiceless by bringing the rights to issues that touches upon the very fundamental of the African society as well as humanity at large. We the youth of Africa have a dream and an injustice casts its shadows, the struggle for equality will continue until justice become a reality basing in mind that "Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that."

**May this be an inspiring Martin Luther King Jr. Day to all!**

#MLKDay

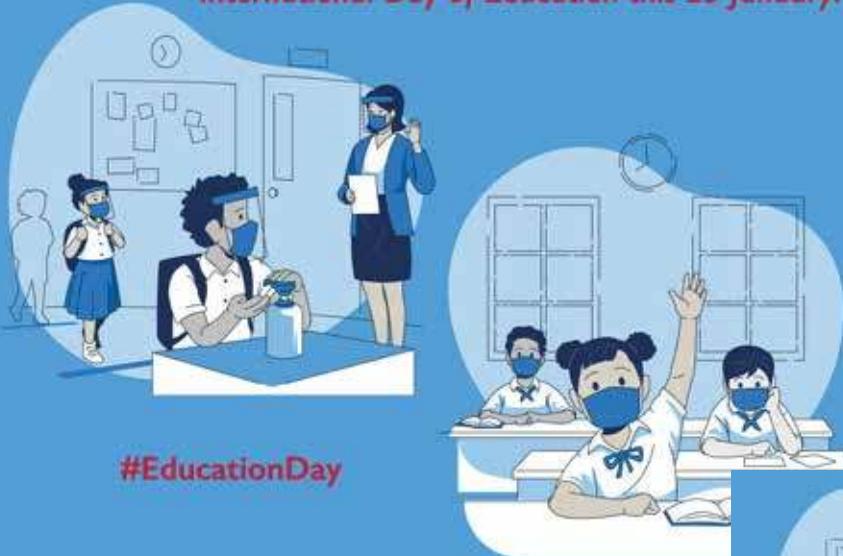
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

# JANUARY



## Recover and Revitalize Education for the COVID-19 Generation

Join us in commemorating the International Day of Education this 25 January!



## International Day of Education (25 January)

Education plays an important role not only in improving knowledge but also in enhancing the way of living and the social and economic status throughout one's life.

The theme for this year's celebrations, slated to be celebrated on 25 January, is 'Recover and Revitalize Education for the COVID-19 Generation'. The theme calls for everyone to place education and lifelong learning at the centre of recovery and transformation towards more inclusive, safe and sustainable societies.

We pledge to support initiatives and innovations aimed at improving the quality of education in Africa and, most importantly, those aimed at making education accessible for all during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Recover and Revitalize Education for the COVID-19 Generation

Join us in commemorating the International Day of Education this 25 January!

Education plays an important role not only in improving knowledge but also in enhancing the way of living and the social and economic status throughout one's life. It is defined as the process of achieving knowledge, values, skills, beliefs and moral habits. January 24 marks the celebration of the International Day of Education, proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on 3rd December, 2018. The theme for this year's celebrations, slated to be celebrated on 25 January is "Recover and Revitalize Education for the COVID-19 Generation". The theme calls for everyone to place education and lifelong learning at the centre of recovery and transformation towards more inclusive, safe and sustainable societies. Education systems must be better geared to foster social justice, peace, respect for diversity, human rights and democratic values.

Education is a human right as enshrined in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which calls for free and compulsory elementary education. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reports that despite the falling number of out of school children, a lot are still excluded especially rural populations, street children, the disabled, linguistic and cultural minorities – with girls being the most marginalised. Those in conflict countries suffer the most educational disadvantages. West and Central Africa are the most affected regions of Africa, where the right to education is constantly violated in communities under conflict. For example, the resurgent Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon has seen over 80% of schools closing - denying over 400,000 children access to education.

There is also a need to ensure quality education – what is learned and how it is learned – as this is what helps learners acquire the right knowledge, skills and attitudes to fully engage in communities and contribute to society's wellbeing and the achievement of sustainable development. In the last decades, Africa has recorded the highest increase in elementary school enrollments in the world, 80% on average. Despite this increase, efficiencies are still high. Africa has the lowest level of quality education globally characterised by low quality teaching and learning, untrained teachers, poor school management, outdated curriculum, inadequate materials etc. According to the Learning Barometer of the Brookings Institute, up to 50% of the students in some countries are not learning effectively. For example, only about half of students in the end of primary education have attained minimum

proficiency levels in reading or mathematics. Niger is the least literate country in Africa and the world, with only 19% of individuals over the age of 15 being able to read and write.

The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated pre-existing problems in Africa's education sector. School closures have further reduced chances of vulnerable populations to continue learning as most of them lack the resources or an enabling environment to access new modes of learning. According to UNESCO, 89% of learners do not have access to household computers and 82% lack internet access. Teachers also require training to deliver distance and online education effectively, but such support is particularly scarce in low-income countries. Across Africa, just 64% of primary and 52% of secondary teachers have received minimum training, and this frequently does not include ICT skills.

On a brighter note, however, the crisis has also encouraged innovation in the sector as evidenced from different approaches taken by governments and educators to enable home learning through TV, radio, recorded packages and online platforms. For example, Uganda's National Information Technology Authority partnered with UNICEF to introduce Kolibri countrywide, a free e-Learning platform to assist children during the school shutdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The platform is available online and offline, with education content approved by the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC).

If we are to revive and revitalize education, more investment in education and an increase in employment and post education opportunities for youth and vulnerable groups will be key. YALDA will continue to work with governments, international and regional organisations and other stakeholders to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels towards the realisation of Sustainable Development Goal 4. We urge Africans to promote the building of resilient education systems that can withstand any challenging circumstances such as pandemics. We pledge to support initiatives and innovations aimed at improving the quality of education in Africa and most importantly, those that aim to make education accessible for all during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Happy International Day of Education!

By Anasoch Chereho, Zambia

#EducationDay

# MARCH



**International Women's Day**  
March 8th, 2021

**THEME:**  
Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world.

#GenerationEquality  
#IWD2021  
#InternationalWomensDay  
#yalda4IWD



## International Women's Day (08 March)

International Women's Day (IWD) is a time to reflect on progress made, call for change, advocate for gender equality in leadership and celebrate the acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played extraordinary roles in the history of their countries and communities.

The theme for this year's IWD is 'Women in Leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world'. The theme celebrates the tremendous efforts by women and girls around the world in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

YALDA urges young people in Africa to challenge gender biases that limit the participation of women in leadership and to vigorously denounce all discriminatory practices against women and girls on the continent.



## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

March 8th, 2021

Theme: Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world.



#GenerationEquality  
#IWD2021  
#InternationalWomensDay  
#yalda4IWD

International Women's Day (IWD) is a time to reflect on progress made, call for change, advocate for gender equality in leadership and celebrate the acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played extraordinary roles in the history of their countries and communities. The day, officially observed by the United Nations since 1975, is celebrated annually on the 8th of March. The theme for this year's IWD is 'Women in Leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world'. The theme celebrates the tremendous efforts by women and girls around the world in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, the "COVID-19 pandemic could reverse the limited progress that has been made on gender equality and women's rights". A 2020 report by the UN, states that globally women earn 23 percent less than men for the same amount of work done. Additionally, women continue to be under-represented in leadership and top managerial positions. For example, women occupy 24 percent of parliamentary seats worldwide. Furthermore, 1 in 3 women have experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner and about 200 million girls have suffered from Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Consequently, women have been most affected by the negative impacts of the pandemic. Globally, women own close to 10 million of the world's Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and these SMEs account for almost 80 percent of jobs worldwide. Lockdown restrictions, meant to curb the spread of COVID-19 by various governments, resulted in significant job losses at SMEs closed down and 2.7 billion women were unable to access income-generating activities.

These worrisome statistics clearly confirm a lot of work is required to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 that aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030. Research has shown that women's leadership within households, which includes decision-making over income, improves access to education and healthcare for their families. In the current COVID-19 crisis, women are at the front lines, as health-care workers, caregivers, innovators, community organizers. Today, there is more acceptance than ever before that women bring different experiences, perspectives and skills to the table, and make irreplaceable contributions to decisions, policies and laws that work better for all.

Across the world, women's higher levels of poverty, limited access to finance, greater share of unpaid care duties, susceptibility to sexual and domestic violence combined with exclusionary institutional rules and procedures among others, limit their full participation in

leadership roles. Negative societal stereotypes threaten women's contributions in decision-making, thereby threatening sustainable development. This narrative is particularly strong in Africa, as African women are still under-represented in top decision-making roles on the continent. For example, in Cameroon, a survey of 33,959 enterprises indicated that while 27 percent of their employees were women only 10 percent had a female manager and it was rare to find a female CEO of a large company. Another example is a census conducted by South African Business Women's Association, which found out that women's share of CEOs in 2012 was 3.6 percent.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown women as the most exemplary and effective national leaders in combating the pandemic. Majority of the countries that have been more successful in stemming the tide of the COVID-19 pandemic and responding to its health and broader socio-economic impacts, are headed by women. For instance, Iceland, New Zealand and Slovakia have been widely recognized for the rapidly, decisiveness and effectiveness of their national response to COVID-19, as well as the compassionate communication of fact-based public health information.

McKinsey & Company estimated that advancing women's equality could add \$28 trillion to the global economy by 2025. As the Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa (YALDA), we are resolute in our commitment in advocating for women in leadership and girls' and women empowerment in Africa. YALDA shall continuously celebrate the contributions that our mothers, sisters and daughters in Africa make towards the betterment of the continent.

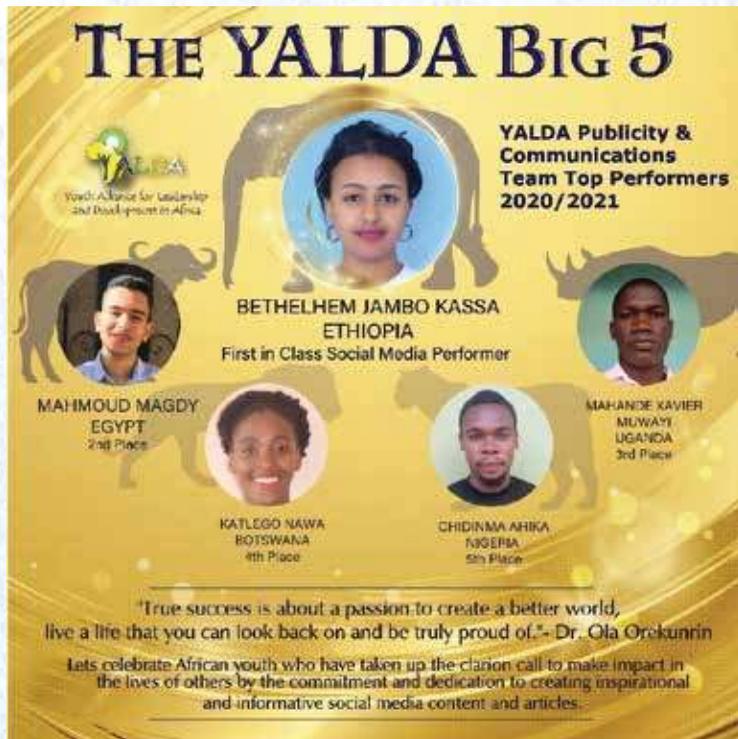
YALDA will work tirelessly to raise awareness about gender parity and contribute to changing the narrative on women leadership as well as confront socio-cultural drivers hindering gender equality in Africa. YALDA urges young people in Africa to challenge gender biases that limit the participation of women in leadership and to vigorously denounce all discriminatory practices against women and girls on the continent. YALDA will not rest until the right policies and practices that encourage women's leadership and promote gender parity in Africa are implemented.

Let's make 2021 count for women and girls everywhere.  
**Have an impactful International Women's Day!**

By: Chapele Ludo Macheog (Botswana) and Faithful Wangui Kingira (Kenya)

# Social Media Top Performers

By Bethelhem Kassa Jambo (Ethiopia)



Vince Lombardi once said, “individual commitment to a group effort is exactly what makes a team work, a company work, a society work and a civilisation”. We would like to say thank you and recognise all the Publicity and Communications team members for bringing a positive attitude to YALDA day after day. As YALDA we strive to always inspire and instil a spirit of Excellence and continue to embody it.

We also celebrate African youth who have taken up the clarion call to impact the lives of others in their commitment to creating inspirational and informative social media content. Volunteering is no easy feat, yet with the right amount of zeal, passion and enthusiasm, we can keep the fire burning. Always remember how you work in your daily life, how you volunteer. So, give it your very best!

And we would like to take a moment to recognise all the top performers: THANK YOU! For your continued outstanding professionalism, great work ethic and positive attitude in everything you do for showing all your colleagues that pursuing excellence is the best way to climb the success

ladder and for being a part of YALDA! Your passion is a quality that cannot be learnt and an ability which cannot be taught.

Amazing YALDAians on the Publicity & Communications Team, all your hard work and efforts have paid off! You all have proven yourself to be dedicated, ambitious and upstanding members of the team. Your commitment to excellence is awe-inspiring. Your strength of character has made working with you an enjoyable experience. We look forward to building more enjoyable moments with you. Thank you for bringing your best to YALDA day after day.

YALDA's Fantastic Top 5 Social Media Boosters/Digital Activists, your efforts and remarkable works have not gone unnoticed! Thank you all for the incredible work you are doing for YALDA. Within this year you have shown incredible effort and potential, and it is our honour to present you with this recognition. The road to greatness is not over, so within this year go big or go bigger. Congratulations again, change makers.

# Relationship Building: Everyone is a Resource

By Joshua Mawerere (Uganda)



**T**oday, all of us depend on one another in all aspects of life - social activities, building our career path, or socializing. We build relationships with each other on a daily basis. As the world leads us through different walks of life, we realize that every person we come across is a potential resource, and their connection could be remarkable.

Quality relationships are built on mutual respect and an awareness of what the people around us can offer or how resourceful they are. Most of the answers to our challenges lay in experiences and diversity of the people we come across and those around us; we must therefore treat everyone with courtesy.

People say the most valuable thing is time, but I have realized that relationships are the most valuable - it only takes time to build. Below are the essentials for building quality relations:

**Cultivate trust:** Trust develops over time, requires a level of reliability in knowing you will always be there, and

understanding. Trust also requires sacrifice, time, resources and emotions.

**Value people in their regard:** Don't approach people with self-serving bias. Everyone is deserving in their own right.

**Find common interests:** Relationships must be built on underlying common interests. These enhance the bond and frequency of sharing.

**Communicate clearly and honestly:** Quality relations are sustained on trusted and effective communication between people.

**Ask the right questions:** Asking good, insightful questions shows the other person that you are sincerely interested in them and puts them at ease to open up to you.

**Pay attention to the whole person:** Learning to give authentic attention to other people is one of the best skills to develop in life and shows marks of maturity.

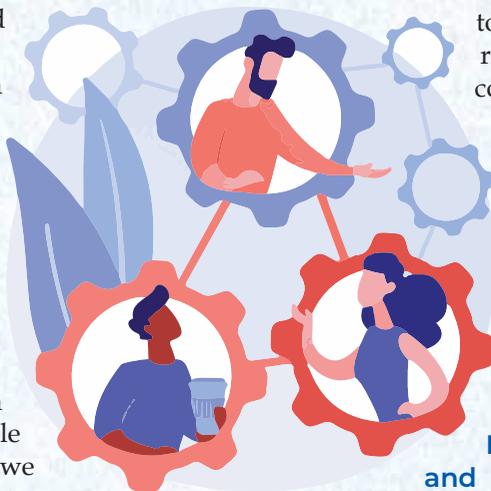
**Remember things that are important to others:** It is important to remember things that are important to people around you, things like social memories, professional interests or special moments. It means you care about someone.

**Be consistent and manage emotions:** Emotional intelligence, knowing when to start and when to end on something, is important in relationship building. You need to be conscious of the feelings in the relationship.

**Be open and share when the time is right:** It may initially make some people a little nervous or defensive, but those situations often lead them to respect you. Challenging someone's point of view forces their perspective to expand.

**Be genuine, confident but humble, and positive and fun:** This is self-explanatory; everyone likes and easily bonds with these character traits.

When the people you meet or work with characterise you using the traits above, you will be able to optimise the resourcefulness that comes with these connections. For a relationship to grow and become unrelenting, however, it has to be nourished and maintained, developed and sustained, then the outcome can be remarkable - can impact your life, career, social life in an amazing way forever.



# Opportunities Corner

By Gretchen Brooker (USA)

## Exciting New Opportunities

### CONTESTS, CHALLENGES & AWARDS

- Africa's Got Style – Fashion Design Competition 2021  
Deadline May 17, 2021
- Global Development Awards Competition 2021 for NGOs and CSOs  
Deadline June 9, 2021
- UNESCO Clubs Worldwide Youth Multimedia Competition 2021  
Deadline May 31, 2021
- Wiki Loves Africa Competition 2021  
Deadline April 15, 2021

### CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

- WARIF x Going EU-UN Spotlight Initiative: Prevention of Campus Sexual Violence Program 2021 for Nigerian Students  
Deadline April 25, 2021
- Paris Peace Forum 2021: Call for Projects  
Deadline May 9, 2021

### FUNDING

#### SCHOLARSHIPS

- Mandela Rhodes Scholarship 2022 for Young Africans (Fully-funded)  
Deadline April 20 2021
- AAAS Science & SciLifeLab Prize for Young Scientists 2021  
Deadline July 21, 2021

#### GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS

- Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting – Persephone Miel Fellowship 2021 for Journalists  
Deadline April 23, 2021
- Call for Applications: UNESCO International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD) 2021 (Up to \$100,000)  
Deadline June 16, 2021
- ECA Fellowship Program  
Deadline April 14, 2021

### EMPLOYMENT - INTERNSHIPS - VOLUNTEER - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### INTERNSHIPS

- Microsoft Interns4Afrika Program 2021 for Young African Professionals  
Deadline ongoing
- Africa Start Up Initiative Program (ASIP) for Africa Tech Start Up  
Deadline May 14, 2021
- IBM Quantum Community Advocate Internship Program 2021  
Deadline ongoing

#### Contact Us

For more information,  
please contact us on [yaldafrika@gmail.com](mailto:yaldafrika@gmail.com) today!