



**Young  
Political  
Leadership  
School Africa**



**Young Political Leadership School Africa**

# **REPORT** 2022







# The Young Political Leadership School Africa,

a flagship initiative of NAYMOTE, organizes a week-long program each and every year to emphasize the importance and fundamental nature of democracy in Africa and its surroundings.

Cohort 9 of the YPLS Africa annual conference this year was organized under the theme: "Galvanizing Young Leaders with Integrity and Character to Defend Democracy and Inclusive Governance in Africa."

A total of 100 Outstanding Young Africans from six (6) different nations were brought together for one week as part of the YPLSA Cohort 9 this year with the goal of learning, networking, and discussing topics related to leadership, elections, administration, and governance.





# The Official Opening Ceremony | Day-1



**Damtien L. Tchintchibidja**, the Vice President of ECOWAS Commission in her speech mentioned that the objectives of the YPLSA towards youth empowerment are in sync with the ECOWAS HackerLab 2022 Competition launched with the theme "ECOWAS Youth engaged against cyber threats" which main objective was to identify talent and support young people in the field of technology and YPLSA is an exceptional and outstanding platform which provides opportunities to teach leadership skills that empower young women and youths who she believes are vital for the viable socio-economic and political future of the region.



**Mr. Jim Wight** ( Mission Director, USAID Liberia) who was the Keynote Speaker began his speech, by appreciating the tireless efforts of the Organizers of the Young Political Leadership School — Africa, to motivate and support young people as they participate in the democratic process and he encouraged the Cohort 9 participants to see politics as service. In furtherance, Mr. Wight also extended appreciations to the NAYMOTE for their work with youths in promoting free, fair and transparent elections in Liberia. He termed the initiative as an enormous stance for distinguished and young leader representing Africa—present and future. He claimed that as a leader, it is one's responsible to guide, mentor and support the ones around, and to be a great leader one must be a great servant for the people s/he leads. In closing, the Former USAID's Mission Director to Dominican Republic, challenged participants of YPLSA's Cohort 9--to always integrity to leadership.





**Ms. Alpha Faith Kemokai**, Manager of YPLS Africa, established the mood in a room full of aspirations, inspiration, and goals by making an uplifting opening statement and introducing the program.

"This is such an exciting time for us. A time full of hope, full of dreams, full of life, and full of love. A great chance to learn, lead, explore, and be a changemaker. A time to gain new skills and grow up on the inside. The YPLS Africa will be recorded in history for providing a platform that changed and transformed Africa for the best."

She added that over the five (5) days, participants will learn about leadership quality, electoral administration, and good governance. In closure,

the Program Manager lauded NAYMOTE Partners, the Swedish Embassy, OSIWA, and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) for their support towards the initiative of the Young Political Leadership School - Africa.

## Motivational Statements



Speaking on behalf of UNDP, **Mr. Louise Kuukpen**, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, and one of the occasion's motivational speakers described the moment as a wonderful joy to engage young people and to form part of the YPLSAs Cohort 9. The speaker seemed further impressed by the country's youthful population, indicating that 65% of Liberia's population is under 35 years, similar to most African countries. He reminded participants that in 2023 alone, seven (7) presidential and legislative elections will be held across Africa, the challenges for Africa's democracy will therefore be obvious. He also urged young leaders to remember that "the democracy that

Africans so dearly seek will not come about overnight. Because of this, we must improve both our technical and soft abilities in order to fulfill market demand".



### **Mr. Charles Lawrence**

Program Officer–Democracy & Human Rights (Sweden Embassy, Liberia), defined hope as "*a stubborn thing inside us that insists on a continuous fight for something*".

Mr. Lawrence encouraged Young Africans to be clear about what they want.



In the words of **Ms. Alicia Kamara**, Technical Advisor to the Vice President of Sierra Leone and Board Member of NAYMOTE "We are to see how best we can harness our potentials because young politicians' role is to use the ballot box."



## Introduction to the iParticipate concept

The iParticipate initiative was first introduced by UNDP Liberia, a program intended to help facilitate election matters. It is a groundbreaking program that was started in Liberia to profile potential candidates and provide a platform for young people to run in both the general and presidential elections.

In response to inquiries from Cohort 9 participants about the purpose of iParticipate, Mr. Gabriel Van Project personnel for the UNDP (Brussels) stated that the platform goes beyond the responses of political parties because it is specifically designed to assist voters in making decisions prior to or during elections in Liberia. He added that there are practical ways to gauge the performance of iParticipate, including download, e-reach, radio, and monitoring. With the inclusion of civic and voter education, he admonished that the categories of participation in iParticipate should be decentralized in Liberia.

## Inside Cohort 9's Instruction manual

### 1. Emotional Intelligence & Effective Leadership (Dr. Tanya Ansahta Garnett)



**25 | Nov. 2022** Undisputedly, regardless of age, status, or ethnicity, emotional intelligence is one of the most critical qualities a leader should possess. To succeed in a setting where young people from many backgrounds and political parties are gathered in one location for a week, one must be emotionally sophisticated.

All professions can benefit from having high levels of emotional Leadership intelligence, which is essential for developing a new generation of Africa change-makers.

Dr. Tanya defined emotional intelligence during her lecture as the capacity to comprehend, express, and use emotions in oneself and others. She further divided emotional intelligence into five (5) components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

Following Dr. Tanya's talk, there was a fit of hysteria in the audience as individuals lamented their failure to practice emotional intelligence and the problems it had brought them.

They continued by saying that the presentation had significantly changed their perspectives.



## 2. Elements of Good Governance (Ms. Alicia Kamara)

In her opening statement, Ms. Kamara indicated the relevance of government actors (Citizens) and framers (Government) of good governance programs including the rule of law, transparency, participation, accountability, and sustainability; also managing diversity and inclusion, socioeconomic disparities, insecurities, a stable polity, and corruption, among other things. Ms. Kamara indicated that whenever there are problems with effective governance, the country will always experience extreme poverty, problems with human rights, and the threat to peace and security.

Ms. Alicia, in closure--encouraged Cohort 9 delegates with this quote **"We cannot be mere consumers of good governance, we must be participants; we must be Co-creators."**



## 3. Understanding the Electoral Period, Key steps and Activities to enhance Electoral Integrity (Francis Gabriel Oke – Head, Elections Division ECOWAS)



The presenter admonished young people to make strive to understand the various electoral phases and be aware of the roles they should play at each stage in order to actively participate in their countries' elections. With this background in mind, Mr. Oke began his presentation by defining elections. He then added that in order to be a good leader, one must foster ambition.

There are three (3) circles that make up the election period, according to Mr. Oke. They are the pre-election era, the election era, and the post-election era. The presenter noted that election observation revolves around three (3) key components: watch, record, and report.

The fact that young leaders from three (3) nations (Liberia, Nigeria & Sierra Leone) that are holding elections soon participated in this cohort made this presentation by far the most participatory of all. The majority of participants claimed that they were unaware of this and that they appreciated the disclosure. They added that they would utilize their knowledge of these stages to support their political parties and fellow citizens during these times.

## 4. Campaign Management (Lisa Kindervater Sieh–Senior Expert, UN Women Liberia)

The presenter identified the three elements of Campaign Management; research & preparation (needs scientific analysis), message (different messages for various voters), voter contact, (constituency mapping & goals), and fundraising (donor-based target).



"The greatest political capital is money. But what matters is trust. Money will flow to you once people have faith in you." - **Lisa Kindervater Sieh**

The campaign's four (4) phases, including research and preparation (Phase One), fundraising and voter engagement (Phase Two), media and mobilization (Phase Three), and lessons learned and which then prepare you for the next contest (Phase Four), were also laid out by the UN Women Senior Expert.





## 5. Ms. Omolara T. Balogun – Head, Policy Influencing & Advocacy Unit (WASCI)

As a civil society specialist, with over 14 years of progressive experience in development programming, management, monitoring, and evaluation, Ms. Balogun, one of the facilitators-- shared her experience in Civic Engagement and Advocacy.

To begin her presentation, she underscored that Leadership "is not an isolated craft". In context, the presenter classified leadership, networking, civic engagement, team-building, and advocacy strategy, as tools that are necessary for advocacy and leadership development. Contrary to the above-mentioned contexts, the presenter claimed that different leaderships in Africa have observed massive corruption, leadership failure, exclusion, among others. She referenced a few African leaders - Paul Biya (Cameroon), Mohammadu Buhari (Nigeria), Kaguta Yoweri Musuveni (Uganda), and Lassane Ouattara (Cote D'Ivoire) as leaders that have failed in one or many areas in Africa.

Ms. Balogun further harnessed the thought of leadership to young Africans--that it involves **influence**, it occurs amongst **people**, those people desire significant **changes**, inspired by a **shared vision**, and the changes must reflect **aspirations** of both leaders and the **followers**. Thus, she categorized leadership myths into five (5) distinct beliefs--position myth, manager myth, personality myth, speaker myth, and knowledge myth.

**"Every field of endeavor requires training. For leadership, it requires constant challenging of the status quo, increasing confidence and commitment, leading more-managing less, coaching and mentoring others."** --Ms. Omolara T. Balogun

Ms. Omolara T. Balogun emphasized that **"We must be conscious of cultural values amid our advocacy and demand for change because our drive for change is not to exterminate our culture.**

Since advocacy is termed as a process through which citizens make demands for a change in status-quo, the right and possibility of advocacy can only be actualized in a democratic space."

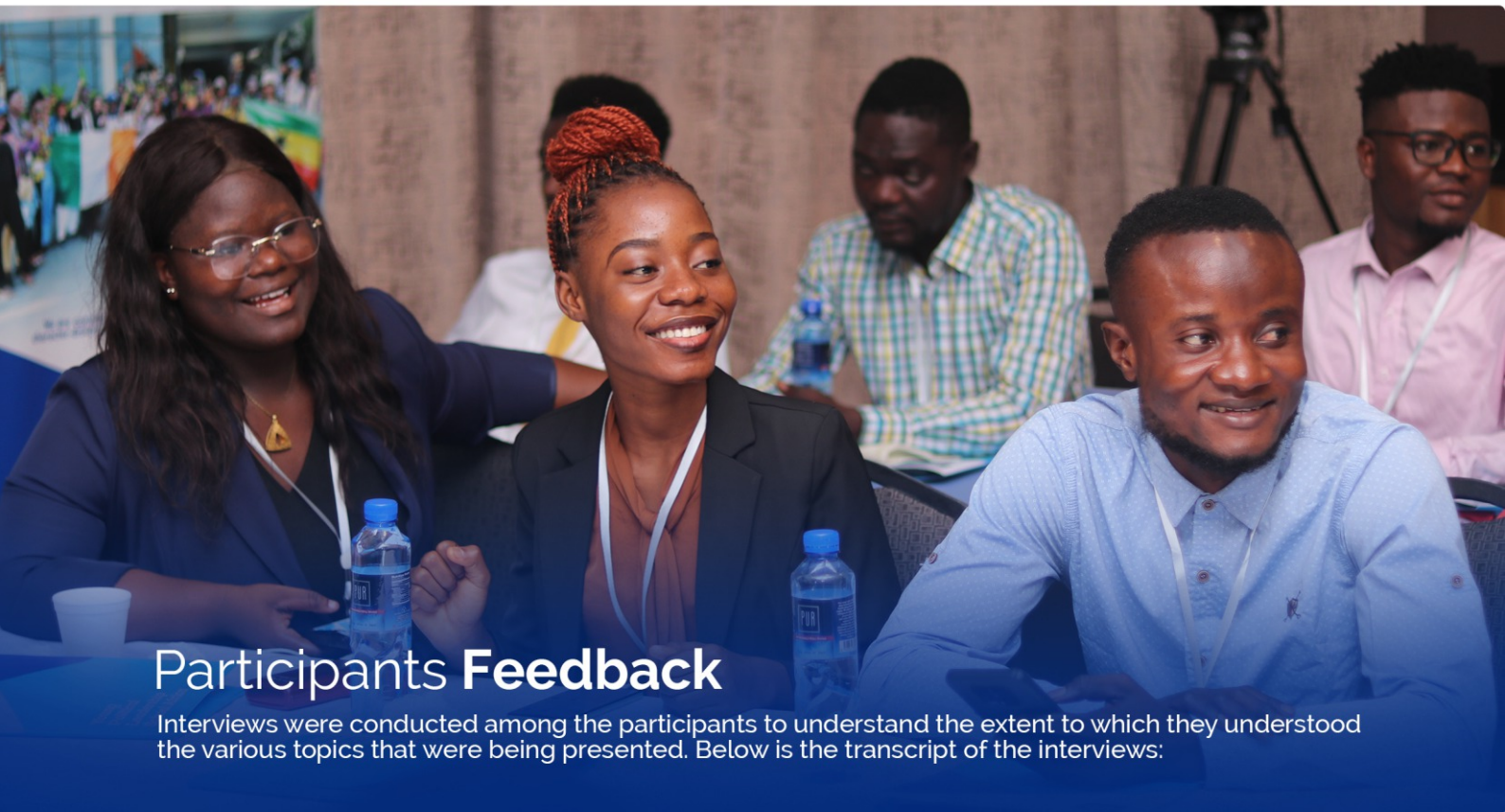
**"Democracy is an expressed will of the people, at a particular aof time".**

- Abu B.W. Kamara





Ms. Omolara also emphasized the types of policy and political contexts of complex environments—closed (autocratic), Repressed (Semi-autocratic), obstructed (Manifestation of autocracy), narrowed (Partially democratic), and open (totally democratic).



## Participants Feedback

Interviews were conducted among the participants to understand the extent to which they understood the various topics that were being presented. Below is the transcript of the interviews:



### **Mary Venn** (Sierra Leone)

"I have learned about emotional intelligence. It guides you as a leader and helps you build your organization. I am a researcher and I tend to use the lesson of emotional intelligence to shape teammates, allowing them to know what the boss expects from you and what you expect from the boss. Therefore, learning these lessons about Emotional Intelligence and Effective Leadership, I will use such skills to lend advice to leaders in and around my circle."

### **Printiss T. K. Domah** (Liberia):

"I have re-learned the principle of effective leadership and emotional intelligence and through these topics, I have been able to value the perspective of people I lead even if I do not agree with them. After this program, it is my wish to initiate civic and voter education through the Youth Elections Dialogue Platform among stakeholders in Nimba and Montserrado Counties, respectively."







### Edleen Tasha Clark (Liberia)

"One new thing I have learned is that while managers care about achieving outcomes, leaders care about how they can work together with their teams to achieve positive, impacted outcomes and results. Additionally, as a Leader, you should exercise emotional tolerance and be an example to others. As a project manager, I can use what I have learned to better connect, motivate and work with my team to achieve our project goals."

## 6. Learn to Discern Methodology & Data Skills for Leaders ( S. Aaron Weah-Weah, III Country Technical Lead/Civil Society Engagement Specialist (IREX), Liberia)



The lessons' objective was positioned for YPLSA participants from Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, and other nations to acquire skills and enable them to combat disinformation prior to elections. Also, as young leaders, they will be able to verify the information before sharing.

Manipulative information and Half Truths.

- Misinformation (False circulation to mislead)
- Disinformation (Deliberatively misleading)
- Mal-information (Fake information)
- Recognizing and fighting hate speech
- Support digital wellness and mental health

By the end of the training, participants understood their roles as responsible digital citizens in our information environment. They were able to identify ways to safeguard against misinformation in their professional lives amongst their communities.



"My time on the internet affects me positively and negatively; it hurts my eyes as well as enables me to read a lot."

Frances Pinky Toe (Liberia)



Information manipulation in elections highlights the true outcomes but expresses them in a wrong manner or with a selfish motive. To check our biases, we are to pause and apply cognitive biases as shortcuts used when judging the credibility of online information. The overall essence of Learn to Discern methodology is based on **"Care before you share"**.



1. Through Jay Townsends campaign film, the president and founder of YPLS Africa reiterated the significance of campaign messages. He characterized politics as "warfare in the marketplace of ideas" in this video. Townsend asserted that in terms of campaign management, there are three principles that have endured throughout political history and are unlikely to be altered any time soon

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"Due to the high unemployment rate within the country or a constituent, as a politician, your campaign message should be consistent and resonate with the needs of the people."

—Eddie D. Jarwolo



Mr. Eddie D. Jarwolo who led the training, highlighted the 13 democratic tenets on day five. Participants had a solid knowledge of the essential message by the end of Mr. Jarwolo's facilitation on the fundamentals of democracy and were able to name several democratic principles as a components of democratic government.

With sampling views from participants, a few candidates acknowledged that these principles are not only our rights but our duties.



## A Deciding Moment YPLS Cohort 9 Elections

A debate was held between Team Africa, led by Ephraim T. Nyumah, and Team Renaissance, led by Musu W. Davis, as part of the extra-planned events of the YPLSA Cohort 9 in observance of a special leadership election of the cohort.





"I encourage you not just to do politics, but to do politics with value."

Titilope Anifowoshe,  
Amb. YPLS Africa Nigeria



While moderating the debate, Mr. Alex F. Devine--President and Founder at the Devine's Event and Consultancy and Executive Director at Youth for Change Inc. said these words "**You do not show to be called a leader, because leadership is not in words but in actions.**"



**Musu W. Davis**, introducing herself as a candidate for Cohort 9's Presidency: "I am an educator with a Bachelor's Degree in Education from the United Methodist University. My team's platform is built on Transparency, Accountability, Inclusiveness, People with Disabilities, Youth, and Women's Empowerment."





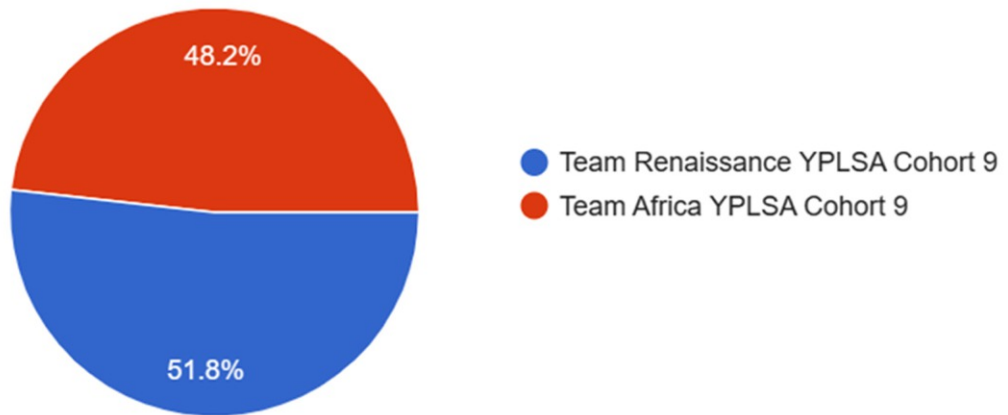
"I have a history of leadership from elementary level to college. As such, My Team captured our platform on four (4) pillars--Networking, Engagement, Expansion, and Deliveries (YPLSA). We will also write a project proposal, to launch the School Election Education (SEE) Program for High School Students within Liberia: to groom new leaders through students' leadership." - **Ephraim T. Nyumah**



Under the Leadership of Ms. Walley T Barr, President emeritus - YPLS Africa Cohort 7, given the practical implementations of elections and campaign management, participants of Cohort 9 went through the first electronic voting exercise between Team Renaissance and Team Africa.

### YPLSA COHORT NINE CANDIDATES

85 responses



The result reflected came in favor of Musu W. Davis (Team Renaissance) with 51.8% which constitutes 44 votes while Ephraim T. Nyumah with 48.2% (41 votes).





Delivering a special remark, **Ms. Davis** acknowledged the working of God for a free, fair, transparent, and peaceful election. She also appreciated everyone for their support and cooperation toward a peaceful election and with immediate effect, she appointed Ms. Beatrice Snyder, the only participant who is physically challenged, as an Advisor for Women's Affairs of Cohort nine (9) Leadership.



In closing, **Mr. Jarwolo** acknowledged the support of everyone and further intimated to the graduating class of Cohort 9 that during his youthful age, his life was destroyed by wars. "Whenever I interact with you guys (young people), it gives me hope", he concluded as the program came to an official end.



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