



Youth Alliance for Leadership
and Development in Africa

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

CONNECT

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Page
15



Page
12



Page
08



Introduction	2	YALDA Professional Affiliate – Honorable Beauty Manake, Botswana's Assistant Minister of Agriculture	12
The Conference on the Status of Women 2021	3	Members of the Quarter	14
Your Excuses are Limiting Your Success	4	Branch Activity Highlights	15
YALDA Members Shine Globally	5	Top funds available to African youth startups	19
YALDA and ITC issue joint research paper on the benefits of the AfCFTA	7	Creating effective African-branded online learning platforms that meet first world standards	20
Identifying impacts of COVID-19 on human development, peace and state-building efforts in Africa	8	Webinar Highlights	21
How can youth-run SMMEs take advantage of the AfCFTA	9	Statements Highlights	24
Feature: Lessons from my entrepreneurial journey	11	Q&A – How to excel at your job during the pandemic	28
		Opportunities Corner	29

Introduction

By Chazha Ludo Macheng (Botswana)



Chazha Ludo Macheng:
Head of Publicity & Communications

Our second quarterly newsletter has come at a surprisingly auspicious time. Although the world is still wrestling and grappling with the global pandemic, we can breathe a sigh of relief through the “road to vaccinate Africa” campaign, which brings a glimmer of hope.

It is no secret that vaccinating Africa against the COVID-19 virus has been far from a simple task, and that Africa is far behind, relative to developed nations. With the right implementation strategy and the global goal of fully vaccinating 10% of every country’s population by 30 September in mind, almost 90% of high-income-countries will meet this target due to rising vaccine deliveries. To further ensure widespread access to COVID-19 vaccines across Africa, the African Union launched the African Vaccine Acquisition Trust (AVAT). The trust aims to secure vaccine doses to complement initiatives, such as COVAX, and attain a target immunization of 60% of Africa’s population.

As an organization whose mandate is to foster capacity development of African youth, we continued to make an impact by collaborating with the International Trade Centre (ITC) on the research and writing of a research paper on the various opportunities provided by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The paper, titled ‘Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship – Understanding the African Continental Free Trade Area’, provides critical insights for young African entrepreneurs to become pioneers in their respective fields.

This edition of our quarterly newsletter exhibits not only the resilience of our YALDIANS but also the fearlessness our fellow African youth. Flying the YALDA flag high are our very own Bitania Lulu Berhanu and Chelvin Ramsamy. Bitania Lulu Berhanu (YALDA’s

International Branches Coordinator) was appointed Special Adviser on Youth to EU commissioner. The commissioner declared that “These appointments send a strong signal of the Commission’s and my personal determination that youth and education must be at the heart of our International Partnerships.” Truer words have never been spoken, as this is a sure endorsement of youth inclusivity at the right tables. Chelvin Ramsamy (YALDA’s Southern Africa Regional Associate) went on to win first prize of the Youth Forum Pitch Sessions at the African World Heritage Fund. The competition was dedicated to entrepreneurial ideals that uplift Africans in sustainable methods.

YALDA is wholeheartedly invested in ensuring that all the young people in Africa receive the support they need to achieve their dreams. We look forward to building even greater partnerships and forging alliances that will benefit Africa’s youth, accomplish sustainable development and secure economic freedom for all. “If young Africans should have one duty, it should be to irritate those in power in such an organized manner that they have no choice but to do what is right.” – Professor PLO Lumumba.



Newsletter Chief Editor:
Ryan (USA)

The Conference on the Status of Women 2021

By *Indeje Andrew Innocent (Kenya)*

Global studies indicate that most men acknowledge that the achievement of gender equality is directly proportional to men's involvement in women's empowerment. On the flip side of the coin, opinion is split on whether too much is being expected of men when it comes to standing up for gender equality.

Sadly, statistics show that the current level of female leadership in both civil and political spaces leaves a lot to be desired. Making matters worse, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted women disproportionately, from loss of jobs or unpaid care work to the rise in violence against women. Although women were at the front line of COVID-19 response as healthcare workers, innovators and leaders, their contributions remained less visible and less valued.

Offering a close reflection on these issues, the United Nations 65th Commission on the Status of Women, the UN's largest annual gathering on gender equality and women's empowerment, took place this year from 15 to 26 March, under the theme 'Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. The session premiered virtually, and all the talks were about nothing else but highlighting the position of women in the community.

The March session was also a bridge to the Generation Equality Forum, organized by UN Women and co-hosted by the Governments of France and Mexico in conjunction with youth and civil society. Expected to kick off in Mexico City from 29 to 31 March, and culminate in Paris 30 June to 2 July 2021, the forum is solely inspired by the need to change the current gender narrative by reimagining

the prospective strategies aimed at empowering women to rise and take their places at the decision-making table.

Many of the success stories during the pandemic came from female-led nations and institutions. Angela Merkel led Germany to a far lower death rate than neighbouring, male-led Britain, France, Italy, and Spain. The director general of the World Trade Organization, Nigeria's Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, successfully managed international trade through the intricate web of border lockdowns and trade restrictions. Further, in May, she pledged the WTO's co-operation in an IMF-led, 50-billion-dollar vaccine equity project. Finally, the pandemic-era superstar Prime Minister Jacinda Arden effectively eradicated the virus in New Zealand. These examples inspire hope and excitement for a more equal future.

As we strive for a sustainable future – free from inequities and encompassing green economies amidst the COVID-19 pandemic – it is critical that women are empowered to take up central roles. Change will come when we achieve systems and structures with the capacity to promote women's participation in leadership, with zero tolerance for violence.

When a woman stands, her whole society stands. Therefore, as we look forward to the upcoming CSW65 forum, may our discourse, attitudes and actions focus on actualizing gender equality in leadership and decision-making spaces.

For more information, see;

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw65-2021>

<https://www.ipsos.com/en-th/women-society-today>





You've just had an epiphany – your life isn't going the way you thought it would by now, and you're going to change that. This time, you'll stick to your goals and reach your targets in time. This time, things are different. But, just like all the other years, your plans fall through. You've failed again. Why do you think that is?

Excuses. Each year, you have new goals that excite you. But each year, you make excuses for yourself when it starts getting hard. You can't go to the gym this morning because it's too cold and you didn't get enough sleep last night. Learning the guitar takes too much time and costs a lot of money. You want to move out of your parents' home in July, but you're scared and not ready to be on your own.

These 3 examples are some of the most common excuses used by people who underperform:

1. Not able to do it
2. Not enough time
3. Too afraid to try

If this sounds like you, know that it's possible to overcome this cycle with a few simple affirmations and a changed mindset. Before you don't do something for any reason, talk yourself through it and evaluate how much your excuse is holding you back.



Your Excuses are Limiting Your Success

By Gape Nxumalo (South Africa)

Change 'I can't do it' to 'I will try'

Is there really a valid reason you won't commit? There are a lot of obstacles you will encounter in your life; sometimes it makes sense to take a break and recover. However, having a few stumbles in your life is a constant. So, rather than dismissing your goals at each incident, tell yourself you will still try regardless of the circumstances. But it doesn't end at telling yourself that, you have to follow through and DO it.

Change 'I don't have the time' to 'I will make the time'

You're a full-time student and currently drowning in assignments and studying. You feel like you already do too much and have no room for anything else. But if volunteering makes the difference between you getting that overseas scholarship or not, isn't it worth making the time for it? You can always skip one afternoon of binging Game of Thrones to volunteer. In the long run, it helps both you and your community.

Change 'I'm afraid' to 'I'm prepared'

Change is a scary process for anyone. The fear usually stems from a lack of preparation or a fear that you may not be ready or prepared. When these thoughts creep in, ask yourself, 'what's the worst that could happen?' Once you've found that out, you've already solved half the problem. Now that you know what could go wrong, you'll know exactly what to do if it does. Or better yet, you could prevent it altogether!

It's not too late to change your mindset for the better. Start TODAY!

YALDA Members Shine Globally

By Calin-Stefan Arama (Romania)

Bitania Lulu Berhanu: Appointed Special Adviser on Youth to EU commissioner and Chelvin Ramsamy: 1st Prize Winner at African Heritage Fund Competition



Bitania Lulu Berhanu

**Head of Branches,
YALDA International**

Bitania Lulu Berhanu -
appointed Special Adviser on Youth to EU
Commissioner on International Partnerships,
Jutta Urpilainen

Bitania Lulu Berhanu, YALDA's International Branches Coordinator, is a young woman with an already accomplished and inspiring career, having worked as a researcher, served on the boards of major NGO's, and acted as an honorary ambassador of an African Union organization. On 3 of June 2021, she took her next major step, being appointed Special Adviser on Youth to EU Commissioner on International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen.

The position entails Ms Berhanu providing her perspective, insight and recommendations regarding youth issues to European Commissioner Urpilainen. The commissioner declared that "These appointments send a

strong signal of this Commission's and my personal determination that youth and education must be at the heart of our International Partnerships. I strongly believe that young people have the potential to transform their societies, and education and skills will empower them to do that. We must listen to young people but also invest with impact in education." This position demonstrates the gradual positive change in paradigm around youth involvement in global issues, and the opening of more and more opportunities for us as youths to shape and impact society. Crucially, Commissioner Urpilainen pledged she will consult Ms Berhanu on youth issues, "with a particular focus on youth in Africa".

Ms Berhanu's career has been marked by her commitment to be the voice of young people in dialogues with decision-makers. As the founding Executive Director of YALDA Addis Ababa University, she has partnered with the African Union Commission to organize the first AGENDA 2063 Youth Summit, providing a structured and direct nexus of communication between Africa's youths and its Heads of States and policymakers.



Chelvin Ramsamy

**YALDA Regional Associate
for Southern Africa**

Chelvin Ramsamy – First Prize
Winner of the Youth Forum Pitch Sessions,
at the African World Heritage Fund

Chelvin Ramsamy, YALDA's own Southern Africa Regional Associate, won the first prize out of 700-applicants in the continent-wide "Youth Forum Pitch Sessions" competition. The competition was dedicated to entrepreneurial ideals that uplift Africans in sustainable methods. The African World Heritage Day was proclaimed by the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO in 2015, and is celebrated on 5 May every year. The day is dedicated to the unique, varied, and beautiful cultural and natural heritage of the African continent. The African World Heritage Youth Forum is organized yearly around this celebration. The fifth edition of the forum was themed 'Youth, Entrepreneurship & Heritage Sustainability in Africa' and organized an entrepreneurial-pitch competition closely tied to the theme.

Mr Ramsamy's pitch was extremely well researched and planned, yet wonderfully simple, nicely covering multiple problems in Mauritius. First, the use of plastic bags was banned by the government of Mauritius since 2021 to fight environmental pollution and climate change. While this is very good, the alternatives, paper or cloth bags, are costly. The second problem was the high poverty and unemployment rates of women in Le Morne village, location of the Le Morne UNESCO World Heritage Site. Further, the Le Morne community has a significant population of runaway slaves. Third, there is a need to promote sustainable cultural tourism in Mauritius as an economic recovery driver post-COVID-19, given that tourism is the third pillar of economy. Therefore, Mr Ramsamy proposed the creation

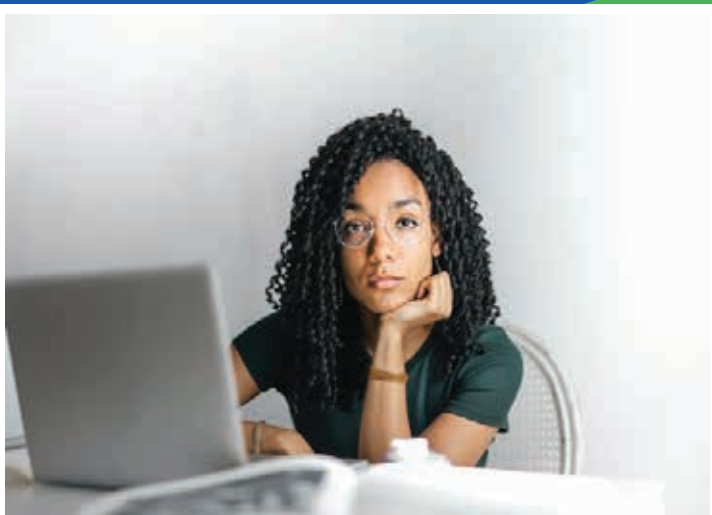


of a new product: bags created from Pandanus Icery leaves, ornate with landmarks and symbols of the Le Morne region, manually produced by unemployed women in the region. The product is eco-friendly, re-usable and cheaper.

Mr. Ramsamy's pitch was judged by representatives of UNESCO, African World Heritage Fund (a Category II Centre under the auspices of UNESCO), African Union, Africa Business Group and ICCROM. Placing above the other 700 submissions, he won the opportunity to join the sixth edition of the Forum next year in Morocco as an organizer, all expenses paid by AWHF, to present his pitch. Further, he won the opportunity to apply to one of AWHF's financial assistance initiatives: Professional Immersion Fellowship 2022/2023; Conservation Grant 2021/2022; Moses Mapesa Research Grant 2021/2022.

YALDA and ITC issue joint research paper on the benefits of the AfCFTA

By Chuks Okoriekwe (Nigeria) and Abinaidah Chaseba (Zambia)



In recent times, Africa has witnessed a spike in youth-led businesses. As an organisation whose mandate is to foster capacity development of African youth, YALDA is excited to announce a collaboration with the International Trade Centre (ITC) on the research and writing of a white paper on the various opportunities provided by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The paper, launched in May 2021 and titled 'Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship – Understanding the African Continental Free Trade Area', provides critical insights for young African entrepreneurs. It highlights the AfCFTA resources to empower local youth driven businesses and encourages their participation in intra-African trade. You can read more on the paper [here](#).

It identifies challenges faced by young entrepreneurs, including unemployment, lack of access to finances and financial aid, barriers to scale for small businesses, and tension arising from intra-regional and international migration. It then gives recommendations on how policy makers and various stakeholders can ensure trade facilitation and promote the involvement of youth-led businesses in intra-African trade.

Given the demographic dividend of Africa's population, the youth can transform the continent by addressing the challenges faced in intra-African trade. To resolve those challenges, however, it is important that African youth understand the AfCFTA and the various opportunities it presents. For example, the elimination of many non-tariff barriers opens new benefits in various economic sectors. The paper is therefore timely, as young entrepreneurs will undoubtedly play a central role in shaping the future of intra-African trade.

The strength of the African continent lies in the gifts, talents and capacity of its youth. Any progress towards the ideal cooperation and trade between African nation-states hinges on the diverse and inclusive participation of youth in all spheres of Africa's development.



YALDA ITC Paper



Identifying impacts of COVID-19 on human development, peace and state-building efforts in Africa

By Omowunmi Amodu (Nigeria)

COVID-19 has continued to be an international crisis, with the wave of new variants. While many have focused on the public health issues, COVID-19 continues to transform our approaches to every sector in development, policies and engagements, with the impacts still ongoing since 2019 across every nation.

In Africa, a youth-dominated continent with considerable illiteracy, many private and public institutions have been forced to go digital. This online presence has pushed technological advancements and reformed education and employment. In other words, the COVID-19 era is creating remote jobs that build the human capacities of the African Youths. The crisis has necessitated a lot of innovation to curtail some of the challenges posed by it.



COVID-19 has also revealed many weak institutions in African nations, the divisions and inequalities that exist in the national systems. For instance, the health care system is too incapacitated even for local research on the pandemic depending on international communities for help. The World Bank Group has already committed about \$24.7 billion out of its \$50 billion budget for Africa response to COVID-19 since 2020. Although doses of the vaccines are still being administered, it is few compared to the African population, and it is easier for a percentage of the elites to be vaccinated. As of 17 June 2021, around 68 vaccines were administered for every 100 people in Europe and North America compared with fewer than 2 in sub-Saharan Africa.

In the face of the global outbreak, there has been severe economic downturn; policy responses from African leaders need to be sustainable, as there are many future uncertainties. According to the Sustainable Development Goals Report launched on 6 July 2021 by the UN, the speculations for the 2030 agenda are already shaky due to the many adjustments required for living in the pandemic.

State and peace building is guaranteed only when the citizens are secured with food and basic social amenities. For many refugees and IDPs that have hitherto been neglected, obeying COVID-19 guide-



lines will not be their priority. Since the economic downturn will further inhibit their distributed materials, minor agitations can be expected to spring forth conflicts and communal clashes, risking further spread of the pandemic.

YALDA, as a youth organisation, has continued to put in extra effort to advocate and liaise with relevant bodies to bring in sustainable solutions for the unique COVID-19 challenges of Africans.

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How can youth-run SMMEs take advantage of the AfCFTA

By Katlego Nawa (Botswana)



"Young people are capable of doing much more today than ever in the history of mankind" ~

Muhammad Yunus. The promotion of youth enterprise is a core strategy in fostering economic participation amongst young women and men in Africa. Many youth are finding business opportunities in the Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise (SMME) sector. These businesses contribute to the growth and transformation of the economy, as well as to youth development.

By virtue of the jobs they create and their impact on society, SMMEs in Africa play a central role in economic development. Statistics suggest that SMMEs represent roughly 90% of businesses in Africa (International Trade Centre, 2018), and some data indicates they contribute to more than 50% of Africa's GDP and an average of 60% of employment (Muriithi, 2017). They are at the heart of the Africa's development as engines of job creation and economic development.

Youth-led SMMEs, however, face many challenges from social prejudice and limited access to internet, financing, business networks and infrastructure. The recently launched African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) offers broader market access by removing non-tariff barriers. Taking advantage of these new networks, young entrepreneurs can find contracts, business partners and suppliers within their regions. To do so, youth-owned businesses should adopt professional management processes, which can ensure that production, finances,

and marketing operate smoothly and efficiently in support of company competitiveness. In other words, to tap into the AfCFTA market, youth-led SMMEs need strategise on improving their services to meet the fast and dynamic African markets.

Increasing the competitiveness of each youth-run enterprise through quality production can, on the macro level, increase economic diversification and growth. When SMMEs become more competitive, they generate jobs and growth needed by African nations. Competition between youth SMMEs is also a catalyst for innovation that leads to intra-Africa trade, further stimulating the sustainable economic development envisaged in Africa's Vision 2063. In short, through their deep links to local, sub-regional and continental markets, SMMEs will help reap the full advantages arising from the AfCFTA.





With the potential that youth-led SMMEs have in the regional export market, their goods and services can attract investment, so national governments should draw policies in line with youth enterprise development (International Trade Centre, 2019). Facilitating access to business loans, training and advisory services can help youth create and succeed in their own enterprises. Additionally, government policies that support small companies can improve SMME competitiveness, helping the continent to achieve its development objectives of job creation and strengthening and new economic sectors.

YALDA calls on the business community to engage its young members in opportunities and become their mentors. Further, educating and training agencies are called upon to introduce entrepreneurship development programmes that help young men and women to consider and explore the option of entrepreneurship. Promoting youth-owned enterprises should be a key policy work area for national governments. Young people's participation in cross-border trade, and its adjacent discourse and policy is crucial in Africa; its youthful population can and must be harnessed to achieve sustainable development.

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Feature: Lessons from my entrepreneurial journey –Emmanuel Addae

By Kingsley Matshaba (Botswana)

Curiosity is an impulse from the soul, alluring us to what initially may be perceived as trouble and rebellion, but suddenly brings us into alignment with our purpose. Curiosity has been the North Star for Emmanuel Addae, trailblazing serial entrepreneur and founder of Africa Skills Hub, across his entrepreneurial journey. Relying on his curiosities for direction, on his family for motivation and on his personal values for grounded navigation, Emmanuel set sail in pursuit of purpose and has been riding the waves of innovative and sustainable entrepreneurship like a pro mariner since.



Born and raised in a small village in Ghana, Emmanuel first visited the capital city Accra when he pursued his undergraduate degree, to graduate as a Chartered Accountant in 2009. Heeding his intuition and much to the dismay of his family, Emmanuel redirected his career to entrepreneurship, realizing he thrived less in the technical roles of business, like accounting, but rather preferred the whole experience of entrepreneurship and growing businesses from scratch. He also sobered to the fact that pursuing an accounting career was more about pleasing his family than about following his passions. Confronting his strengths and weaknesses, his truth, Emmanuel went to work on improving himself in every aspect required to achieve his goal of becoming an impactful entrepreneur. In addition to his Chartered Accounting training, Emmanuel became a self-taught programmer, skills he'd later leverage to develop tech solutions that drive business growth.

Prior to founding the Africa Skills Hub, Emmanuel ventured into hosting Ted X seminars in 2014, hosting a series of successful Ted X lectures in his community of Labone. Emmanuel then leveraged the experience and relationships cultivated from the Ted X tenure to launch Africa Skills Hub (ASH), a youth business and employment incubator, in 2016. ASH offers youth resources and training for practical skills in personal development, digital proficiency, problem solving and communications – skill-sets key to excel. ASH trains about 100 youth – free of charge – in their annual initiatives, from which they enjoy an 80% market absorption facilitated by Talents-in-Africa, their online platform devel-

oped to provide training, assess skills and match recruiters to job seekers across the region. ASH also identifies 20 startups for development and provides \$1000 for seed funds annually, coupled by support in market access and compliance.

Emmanuel envisions Africa Skills Hub to resolve pressing socio-economic challenges such as youth unemployment, inadequate training and SMME development across the region. He emphasizes the key role of technology in facilitating inclusion and sustainable development by enabling initiatives such as cohesive regional integration. With Ghana serving as the Secretariat of the AfCFTA, Emmanuel anticipates ASH to contribute considerably to developing startups to capitalize on opportunities arising from the \$50 billion single African market.

A tree can rise only as high as the depth of its roots. The values and support derived from his Christian faith and family provide the foundation for Emmanuel's pursuit of lofty and impactful goals. Fortunate to have married his varsity sweetheart, Emmanuel expresses profound gratitude for the motivation and support his wife and kids provide. Fueled further by an unwavering Christian faith, he highlights these qualities as the anchors in his life which propel him to always strive to be and do his best in all that he pursues. The spirit of excellence, unwavering faith and family values is what Emmanuel relies on as he strives to grow his impact and contribution to development of skilled young professionals and sustainable youth-owned businesses within his community and the African region.

YALDA Professional Affiliate – Honourable Beauty Manake, Botswana's Assistant Minister of Agriculture

By Zengani Mbambara, Zambia



Interviewer:

Budani Bulayani (Yalda Botswana secretary)

Interviewee:

Hon. Beauty Manake (Assistant Minister of Agriculture, Botswana)

Questions and answers

- 1 We are here, Honourable Minister, to find out more about you as a politician and as a YALDA founding member. Can you tell us more?**

I grew up in Selebi Phikwe, where I was born and raised till secondary school. I was raised by two strong parents; my father was a miner, my mother was a hawker selling food and vegetables. My older brothers and I would go and help out our mother in selling. During our school holidays we would go with her to South Africa to buy fruits and vegetables and import them into Botswana. While travelling with her, I got exposed to a new world. In South Africa everything seemed green and nice.

I went on to study Business Information Systems at the University of Botswana in Gaborone around 400km from my home town. I remember, when I came to apply for it, my cousin, a YALDA founding member, was on my side. Her mother, my father's little sister, initially wanted me to be doctor, but after I challenged her that business was my programme of choice she agreed, saying, "Okay, you will go and manage your mum's oranges and tomatoes." She wanted all of us to be educated. A couple of years down the line during the recession of 2008, I was working for the Botswana Diamond Trading Company (DTC) as a systems technologist. The company was entirely doing diamond trading. When the recession hit, the diamond industry suffered severely. We had to go on extended leaves from work. That's the time I decided that I want to do something that will allow me to have food no matter the global economical challeng-

es. I thought of my mother, who was still driving to South Africa with her friends to buy vegetables, and I thought, if I were to start a farm here, they would be my customers. So that's how I started out. I went to the Citizen's Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) and obtained funding from the Young Farmer's Fund initiative, around P100,000 (US\$10,000). I started out easily because my father had already made sure we all had land. I then realized that the knowledge I have on farming is important, and there is need for me to share it with others. That's when I started engaging more with the community so as to share my knowledge and skills, and now am here today.

- 2 What do you think inspired your cousin to see the goodness of YALDA and bring it to Botswana?**

She was so exposed; she was miles ahead of us in terms of understanding leadership and development in Africa, because she was studying at Harvard University at the time. So, when she came to the University of Botswana, where I was studying, with this plan and initiative, we supported her. We always wondered how such a young person could be so brainy and determined to be a strong leader in Africa. So that intrigued me to join as a young woman to make a positive change and impact the lives of others here at home and in Africa at large. Right now, I think we can use YALDA to train and develop more youth leaders to take up leadership positions in Botswana and Africa.

- 3 Coming to your political side, how does it feel to hold a position that is mostly male dominated?**

It is a lot of pressure, as I came here as a farmer, and a lot of farmers are depending on me to represent them and make sound decisions that can help grow the sector. They want me to approach issues holistically and solve challenges with pragmatic solutions. It's always nice to interact with our different technocrats and farmers; you get to learn a lot. At times it's hard, especially if you're an appointed member of parliament, as you often get reminded that you were not elected but appointed. But as a person who loves challenges, I would like to live above all that and prove myself and be a better person.





4 What is your inspiration?

My inspiration is to see a female politician who is holding a position not because of a favour, but holding the position based on merit. I would like to cultivate a culture of women sitting at the table in a decision-making environment because that's their rightful place. If we had more female leaders in Botswana in a lot of areas, we would be miles ahead in terms of development. Women are naturally good leaders.

5 What are the opportunities that your Ministry is doing to support youth employment and leadership?

We are doing a lot to empower and enable the youth, with our focus on enabling first, so that when we empower it'll be easier for the youths to continue on a positive trajectory. We're creating an enabling environment across the entire agricultural value chain to bring everyone on board. Our projects include processing, packaging or digitising agriculture information, and creating platforms to help them think outside the box.

6 We would like to know more about your pan-African spirit since you helped form YALDA Botswana. And what do you think African youths need to do to achieve vision 2063?

I think the question is not what needs to be done by the African youths, but by the African governments to enable the youths to reach the requirements of this agenda. There are different agreements that were signed already, such as the Maputo declaration, a CADEP framework which tells governments to set aside at least 10% of their budget for agricultural development. And the Malabo declaration, where we talk about wealth creation. We need to partner and support the African development Bank to help us create resiliency in the agricultural industry. In terms of technology in agriculture, we're still behind, and I feel we need to grow this sector if we are to grow at all.

7 Recently on 21 January the AfCTA trade agreement came into effect. What are the advantages to Africa and your ministry?

In the past few months I led a delegation in helping to realign our diplomatic relations. We went around the country and identified the low-hanging fruits where there is potential to start exporting to other countries. There are a lot of oppor-

tunities in the agricultural space to help us export to other countries, and I believe the country and Africa will benefit from this agreement.

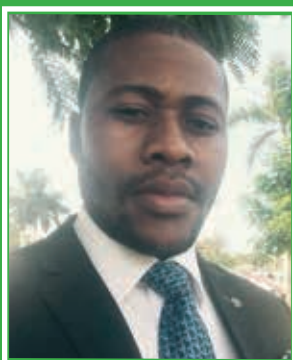
8 How has YALDA impacted your life professionally?

As I said before, I think there is lot YALDA can do to one's life. When I started travelling a lot, I appreciated the importance of the leadership training YALDA exposed me to, especially when thinking about the African socio-political environment. My experience with YALDA has helped me think about Africa at large, not just a single country Botswana. You start to think and act like a pan- Africanist.

You can watch the interview on our YouTube channel here:



Members of the Quarter



**Amandio Tulumba
Nangaiafina**

Amandio Tulumba Nangaiafina is a Junior Oil and Gas Professional working for Bureau Veritas Angola as a Business Developer. He obtained his MBA in Oil and Gas Management from UCSI University in Malaysia. As a passionate young leader and active member of YALDA since joining in 2020, he is driven by leadership and inspires his peers to take up leadership roles in youth entrepreneurship and university student communities. Amandio follows the adage of Dr. Wangari: "It's the little things citizens do. That's what will make the difference". In 2018, Amandio was invited as a speaker for the International Oil and Gas Conference in Germany. He is the YALDA Angola Executive

Director, determined to become an impactful young leader and support YALDA's mission. Amandio Tulumba Nangaiafina is a key figure in opening more YALDA Angola branches by working tirelessly with fellow young leaders. He is a believer that with great youth leadership development programs such as the one YALDA has, Africa will be at best as a continent.

Favorite quote: I am an African. I owe my being to the hills and the valleys, the mountains and the glades, the rivers, the deserts, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons that define the face of our native land. – **Thabo Mbeki**.



Elisabeth Loua

Elisabeth Loua holds a master's degree in International Affairs with a concentration in Media and Culture from The New School, in New York.

She currently serves as an Administrative Assistant for YALDA US, where she coordinates events with various YALDA partners, from the United Nations Economic Committee for Africa, to young entrepreneurs making waves on the African continent.

The experience Elisabeth has gained from YALDA helped her take leadership roles in the organization less than six months after joining.

She very much values communications, holding a master's degree in Corporate Communications and Translation from Morocco, and continues to sharpen her skills in Digital Marketing.

She also partakes in the initiatives of various non-profit organizations and international institutions in implementing some of their advocacy programs.

Her passions lie at the intersection of gender equality, humanitarianism, the Sustainable Development Goals, social and economic development, and social justice for marginalized communities and developing countries.



Jawad Chafil

Jawad Chafil is a Moroccan activist affiliated with the Union Constitutionnelle and president of YALDA Morocco. He has worked closely with youth groups in Morocco and throughout Africa to promote values of social inclusion, multiculturalism and the acceptance of the Other. He believes in the brain gain in the continent, free market economy, climate change and the promotion of entrepreneurship spirit at early levels of education.

Jawad has represented YALDA and the Union Constitutionnelle in different events, participating in sessions related to different themes on strategies, policies and solutions for youth, migration

and unemployment under the direction of international experts.

Additionally, he represents the liberal African youth in the North Africa region. He has played an important role in the build-up to the network's first Advisory Youth Council ALY. Jawad is an optimistic Pan-Africanist, with a good understanding of fundamental human rights, the rule of law, and a free-market economy – and all related public policy areas.

Jawad Chafil took part of the North Africa Regional Youth Consultation organized by the African Governance Architecture (AGA). He is an anti-corruption ambassador.

Branch Activity Highlights

YALDA CAMEROON

1. Organization of Annual General Meeting and Installation of New Executive Board.



YALDA Cameroon held its annual general meeting on 29 May 2021, during which the new executive board was appointed and installed. All members and university branch representatives and members were present during the event. It was also an opportunity to popularize the organization and invite other universities to join the train. The following members are now officially the executive board for YALDA Cameroon:

- ▶ **TCHAKOUNTE Ines**, serving as the **first female Executive Director**
- ▶ **CHAFAH Prince Sani**, serving as **Assistant Executive Director**
- ▶ **DJIKENG Djifack Leaticia**, serving as **Secretary General**
- ▶ **TENKEU Marie-Sabine**, serving as **Project Director/Research Director**
- ▶ **BASSONG Vanessa Ashley**, serving as **Financial Director**
- ▶ **ETOE Ruddy Carine**, serving as **Public Relations Officer/Social Media Specialist**



2. Community Service

During the month of May, the organization embarked on community service in the health sector, aimed at sensitizing young girls and boys of secondary schools on Menstrual Health. As well, the project aimed at teaching the girls how to produce menstrual bracelets to help them count their menstrual cycle. The project was carried out in a secondary school in Douala, Cameroon and had a target population of 150 students (boys and girls) between the ages of 10 and 16.



3. Capacity Building

The month of July was marked by a “Meet and Network” Session, organized by the national office and YALDA University of Buea in a bid to popularize the organization and get more members involved in the University of Buea branch. The session was composed of trainings on various networking models and CV writing, as well as artistic presentations from some local artists and a public speaking show. The event took place on 31 July 2021 in Buea, Cameroon and had a target population of 60 students (boys and girls) between the ages of 18 and 26.

MEET & NETWORK SESSION



MEET & NETWORK SESSION



YALDA GHANA

YALDA Ghana Chapter had a very exciting quarter, one that was met with organizational restructuring, as well as meeting national guidelines for organizations such as ours.

Indeed, this quarter was one of the most defining moments of the chapter. The chapter, although not left out of the challenges posed by COVID-19, managed to strive for successes that would set the foundation for growth of the organization as well as national recognition.

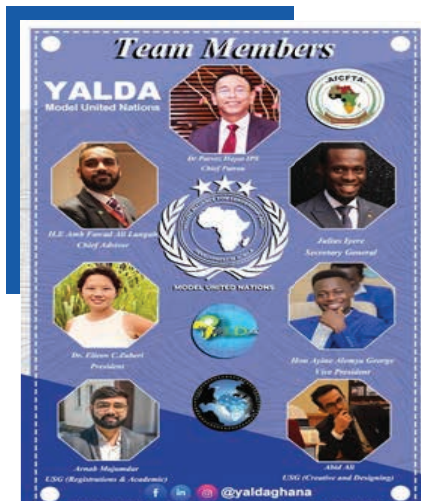
One of our key successes was membership recruitment and review of our current membership. We believe that, as important as greater numbers of members is, committed membership is far more important, and hence our focus was on the latter.

Our team championed the establishment of two university branches – namely, the university of Ghana branch and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) branch. Although these branches are functioning, accreditations to the university hasn't been fully finalized, and steps are being taken to finalize them.

This quarter started off with one of our biggest programme of the year, our maiden model United Nations program. With strategic partnership with African Diaspora Organization, AYDO and the AfCFTA, we were able to organise a world-class MUN with the best experts in the area of MUN as our advisors. The theme for this two-day programme was 'Implementation of the AfCFTA and the role of the youth'. In attendance of this event were high profile persons and diplomats, including Dr. Angela Lusigi, Resident Representative, Ghana, UNDP, as well as youths in Ghana and across the African continent and the diaspora. This event gave us the opportunity to make YALDA known to the youth in Africa and the diaspora. A resolution was made from this event to help in the implementation of the AfCFTA, which is to be presented to the AfCFTA Secretariat.

Additionally, in order that the branch becomes fully recognized in Ghana, steps are being taken in order to get national youth authority accreditation and NGO status certification to enable the branch to function fully as a legal entity. Fundraising models are being proposed, with some already implemented, while others are under consideration. YALDA Ghana Chapter is on its way to achieving its full mandate, and continued efforts are being made to ensure this comes to fruition.

Finally, as part of our core mandate, YALDA Ghana organized a weekly program that that was geared towards equipping the Ghanaian youth in entrepreneurial skills and was always organized on Instagram, with a lot resourceful persons including Tosin Kaito from Nigeria.



YALDA ETHIOPIA

In this quarter the YALDA Ethiopia took part in different events including:

1. Centre for International Private Enterprise – two trainings on 17 and 18 June 2021 at Best Western Plus hotel, on monitoring, evaluation, learning and accountability, and on registration of CSOs in Ethiopia.

International Private Enterprise (CIPE) East Africa Regional Office – through the CIPE Civic Engagement Hub – hosted a two-day, in-person training session on monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL), and the process of registering civil society organisations (CSOs), business membership organisations (BMOs), and businesses in Ethiopia. The training sessions were attended by around 20 representatives of Ethiopian CSOs, businesses and social enterprises each (participation was capped due to COVID-19 restrictions). CIPE was joined by two Ethiopian experts, CIPE Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist Ahmed Mohamed Awel for a training on MEAL, and the Managing Director of Kumlachew Dagne and Associates Law Office, Kumlachew Dagne, to facilitate a training on the process of registering CSOs, BMOs and businesses in Ethiopia.

2. Meeting on inclusion of Men in Women's rights movements in Ethiopia, organized by Siiqqee leaders on 31 July 2021.

Hewan Areaya, a Feminist activist from Ethiopia and the co-founder of Siiqqee Scholars, held a virtual meeting on 31 July 2021 on the topic 'inclusion of men in women's right movement' to hear and discuss with all stakeholders in the field. Siiqqee Scholars is an initiative that aims at empowering young girls through education, with several projects including mentorship for female high school and university students, sanitary pad donation campaign, safe space platforms, and discussion forums. At the discussion the youth also suggested that government should strengthen the legal framework for the protection of women; make the justice system more accessible for women, including women and girls with disabilities; integrate gender-based violence services in all health care facilities; and tackle poverty, which is one of the main risk factors associated with gender-based violence.

3. Training on leadership and conflict management skills for delegates from youth-led civil society organizations, organized by European Centre for Electoral Support.

The European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES) conducted a training titled 'Leadership and Conflict Management Skills for Electoral Stakeholders' for members of Youth Civil Society Organizations at the Hub hotel in Addis Ababa on 25-26 November 2021. The workshop was highly interactive and provided participants the opportunity to voice their opinions and contribute to the lessons learned documentation.



Top funds available to African youth startups

By Omowunmi Amodu (Nigeria)

Even the most brilliant and lucrative ideas can materialize only when there are sufficient financial resources to sustain them. Startups are especially challenging in this regard because their founders are faced with many simultaneous uncertainties, including access to finance. Investors consider the startup stage a risky one. Nonetheless, many investors are open to fund ideas that solve unique problems, especially when concerning Africa. This article compiles some of the top funds that an African youth can apply for. Many of the grants have annual deadlines, while others are year-round.



SHARED INTEREST



Advertised under the motto "investing in a fairer world", Shared Interest is a UK-based social lender that manages investments as high as £47 million, primarily from individual investors. This fund caters to small farmers and handicraft groups across 51 countries. Find out more here: <https://www.shared-interest.com/gb>

TONY ELUMELU FOUNDATION



THE TONY ELUMELU
FOUNDATION

The Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurship Grant Programme was founded by a Nigerian billionaire to invest, train, mentor, connect and empower young African entrepreneurs. Their target is to reach approximately 10,000 individuals across the continent and, as a result, generate \$10 billion within African economies. See more here: <https://www.tonyelumelufoundation.org/>

ROOT CAPITAL



Root Capital invests in agricultural businesses. It was founded by Willy Foote in 1990 and has invested approximately \$4.6 billion in agricultural ventures and small-scale farmers in vulnerable communities. Their loans span from \$200,000 to \$2 million. Find out more here: <https://rootcapital.org/about-us/>

THE ANZISHA PRIZE



The ANZISHA Prize is an initiative between Mastercard Foundation and African Leadership Academy. Entrepreneurs between the ages of 15 and 25 can apply for this grant of up to \$100,000. It seeks to train, empower and provide leadership for young Africans, through job creation and entrepreneurship. See their story here: <https://anzishapize.org/>

MEST AFRICA



If you are a tech startup, you must be aware of MEST. Funded by the Meltwater Foundation, this programme provides up to \$50,000 in seed funds, training and networking hubs across the continent. They seek to improve technological, business, and communications development across Africa. See more here: <https://meltwater.org/about/>

SAVANNAH FUNDS



Savannah invests up to \$1 million seed capital in tech startups. They are chiefly active in the East Africa region and seek to establish a link between startup/angel and venture capital investments. They also provide technical mentorship both locally and internationally. Find more about them here: <http://savannah.vc/accelerator/accelerator-faq/>

ASHDEN AWARDS



As a climate change innovator and clean environment advocate, you can be awarded up to \$20,000, alongside significant international exposure. The Ashden Award seeks to empower low-carbon, environmentally conscious startups. Organizations can also apply for mentorship and workshops. Get more details here: <https://ashden.org/about-us/>

The enormous grants available for African startups are not limited to the above. Other startup funds include USADF, <https://www.usadf.gov/>; GroFin, <https://grofin.com/>; VC4Africa, <https://vc4a.com/benefits-entrepreneurs/>; Acumen, <https://acumen.org/about/>, etc.

Entrepreneurship is considered an economic fuel for prosperity and innovation, especially in our case, in Africa. Getting funds for your startup will be competitive as well as demanding. You need write a realistic, confident, well-outlined proposal adapted it for the requirements of each grant you apply for, and you must have demonstrable proof of your venture's market valuation and sustainability.

We wish you the best of luck!

Creating effective African-branded online learning platforms that meet first world standards

By Chidinma Ahika (Nigeria)



As the use and proliferation of technology advance in the 21st century, the educational sector vitally requires reformation. The deeper we penetrate the information age, the more pertinent it becomes to incorporate online learning platforms into teaching.

All around the globe, digital learning platforms are becoming mainstream. They make processing, distributing and accessing educational resources more efficient and less costly. This is part of the reason for the growing investment in and success of online learning platforms such as Udemy, Coursera, Udacity, Skillshare, Future Learn, and many others.

What's more acute is the obvious need for African-branded online learning platforms which are up to First World standards. According to World Education News Reviews (WENR, 2018), "Africa's youth population is expected to double to 830 million people by 2050, but few resources are dedicated to educating these young people. Against this backdrop, online education is getting increased attention as a possible solution to widen access to education at an affordable cost." The key advantage, obviously, is that online platforms remove the physical barriers associated with offline or non-virtual learning.

In fact, there is an applaudable rise in the number and quality of African online learning platforms, such as Tuteria, Ulesson, WoloAf-

ric, Ubongo, Tutor.ng, M-Shule, to name a few. These online learning platforms are already impacting the lives of African learners. WoloAfric, for instance, offers education and skills training to Africans. On Ulesson.com, students can study a variety of subjects to prepare for exams and the future.

African online learning platforms integrate African socio-cultural dynamics into their content, greatly improving their effectiveness. This edtech development in the African continent is commendable because it reflects the Agenda 2063 of African Union and Goal 4 of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. African children and youth can freely access educational content which improves their cognitive, practical, digital, and academic skills. The African youth can have access to digital libraries and contemporary information for socio-personal development.

As with all other nascent developments, online learning in Africa is bedevilled with limitations like poor network and power supply, high cost of mobile data, need for broad content and uninterested learners. Fortunately, these limitations are stepping-stones for every visionary African youth who wishes to innovate in the educational sector. Through passion, in-depth research and sourcing for funds, the youth can bridge every gap limiting establishment of high-quality online learning platforms in Africa. Then we can be sure of meeting first world standards in the near future.

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Webinar Highlights

By Abinaidah Chaseba (Zambia) and Betty Kassa (Ethiopia)

APRIL

YALDA Branch Activities are Digital

The Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa (YALDA) branch activities went DIGITAL in 2020! The initiative rose from the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted in-person events. YALDA, therefore, resorted to organising online events to push the organisation's work forward amidst the restrictions.

To follow up on how branches were performing with the digital initiative, YALDA organised a webinar for branches to showcase what they had been able to do. To date, various YALDA branches have successfully organised a number of activities digitally and shared their amazing experiences through their YALDA Regional Associates (YRAs). The YRAs presented highlights of branch activities in their respective regions and expressed how they felt about the performances of individual branches. A number of branches partnered with other organisations and stakeholders to hold online events, including a young leader's summit and an online leadership school.

For new branches, the training was an opportunity to learn how they can successfully take their activities online while supporting their local communities during this COVID-19 crisis. For old branches, it was also an opportunity to share lessons learned, which could help YALDA branches reach even greater heights in 2021! Members were encouraged to remain positive and embrace the new normal as they continue to engage in YALDA activities, use convenient platforms such as Zoom to hold meetings and always report their branch activities to their YRAs.



Natalie Sonia Mukundane
Regional Associate for East Africa
Moderator



Mohammed Kerkulah
Deputy Regional Associate for West Africa
Speaker



Chelvin Ramsamy
Regional Associate for Southern Africa
Speaker



Notilija Arcenia Vilanculo
Regional Associate for Lusophone Africa
Speaker



Christopher Mokaya
Deputy Regional Associate for East Africa
Speaker



John Obuaba
Regional Associate for West Africa
Speaker

MAY

Africa Day Celebration Webinar

May 25 marks Africa Day, commemorating the establishment of African Union in 1953. In celebration of this prominent day, the YALDA East African region hosted a virtual webinar led by YALDA Ethiopia with youth speakers from Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda to reflect on the significance of Africa Day to young Africans. The discussion opened with the background of the commemoration of Africa Day, then covered Ethiopia's Historical Events and their contribution to the Foundation of the Organisation of the African Union (OAU). The young speakers looked at African Union's Agenda 2063 with a focus on Aspiration 5, an Africa with a strong cultural identity and common heritage, values and ethics; and Aspiration 6, an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children. Also, part of the conversation was Africa Union's Silencing the Guns, which focuses on addressing the underlying causes of conflict and facilitating socio-economic development in Africa. The panel finally looked at the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement, which establishes a single African market for goods and services. The webinar closed with a round of amazing questions and answers.



Bitania Lulu
YALDA International Branches
Coordinator
Speaker



Likke Serawitu
President of YALDA Ambo
University, Ethiopia
Speaker



Joshua Mawerere
President of YALDA Uganda
Speaker



Christopher Mokaya
Deputy Regional Associate
for East Africa
Speaker



Natalie Sonia Mukundane
Regional Associate for
East Africa
Moderator

JUNE

COVID-19 Management: Engaging Africa's Youth on Good Governance Practices and Transparency

In our continued partnership of organizing monthly roundtables on development topics, YALDA, the World Bank and the Youth Transforming Africa Network held a panel discussion as part of the regional events leading up to the World Bank Youth Summit 2021, held 9–10 June 2021, under the theme 'Resilient Recovery for People and Planet.'

The panel discussion, themed 'COVID-19 Management: Engaging Africa's Youths on Good Governance Practices and Transparency', drove a conversation about ways Africa's young people can demand good governance practices and transparency in the fight against COVID-19. Youth delegates had an opportunity to engage in a conversation on challenges affecting youth. The panel also called on Africa's youth to engage as citizens in the COVID-19 response management. A medical doctor was also present to



deliver key messages around vaccines and conspiracy theories.

The youth heard from experts and youth leaders, had a chance to ask questions, and were inspired by the stories shared by the panellists. To empower others, some youth leaders shared successful experiences of youth-driven organizations in the establishment of transparency and accountability mechanisms.



Dimpho Lekgeu
Blog4Dev winner Community manager at Youth Lab, South Africa
Moderator



Mountaga Keita
Founder & CEO of Tulip Industries, République de Guinée
Moderator



Elisabeth Huybens
Director of Strategy and Operations for the Western and Central Africa Region, the World Bank
Speaker



Humberto López
Director of Strategy and Operations for Eastern and Southern Africa, the World Bank
Speaker



Kilian Kofi
2021 Youth Summit Manager
Speaker



Dr. Adidja Amani
Deputy Director for Vaccination at the Ministry of Public Health
Speaker



Dr. Ketakandriana Rafitoson
Executive Director of Transparency International Initiative Madagascar
Speaker



Odeh Friday
Country Director for Accountability Lab Nigeria
Speaker



Luchembe Chilufya
Founder and Executive Director, Alliance for Accountability Advocates Zambia
Speaker



Aliou Sane
Coordinator, Y En A Marre (Senegal)
Speaker

Statements Highlights

By Nadine Monachelli (USA)

April

World Creativity and Innovation Day

Today we honour creative and innovative people around the world and raise awareness on the importance of using creativity and innovation to solve old or existing problems in new ways that are effective for the accomplishment of the global goals.

This year's theme is 'Celebrate your Creativity Every Day' – a call for people around the world to do something every day that showcases their creative and innovative thinking in advancing the global goals.

YALDA believes that creativity and innovation will be key in solving the puzzle of Africa's burgeoning unemployed youth population and the coinciding skills shortage. We encourage young Africans to use their natural abilities to generate new ideas, make new decisions, take new actions and achieve new outcomes, to make Africa the best continent to live on.



World Creativity & Innovation Day 2021

April 21, 2021

Theme: Celebrate Your Creativity Everyday

World creativity and innovation celebrations date back to as far as 2002, however, the day was officially adopted in 2017 when the United Nations (UN) resolved that 21 April become a UN International Day of Observance. 2018 marked the first year when the UN observed World Creativity and Innovation Day (WCID). The WCID is therefore a global United Nations day which honours creative and innovative people around the world. It raises awareness on the importance of using creativity and innovation to solve old or existing problems in new ways that are effective for the accomplishment of the global goals. This year's theme is Celebrate your Creativity Every Day – a call for people around the world to do something every day that showcases their creative and innovative thinking in advancing the global goals.

This last year has been a devastating one for the world – school closures, business shutdowns, travel bans and other disruptions caused by COVID-19 pandemic-induced lockdowns. It is during this time that it has become more important to appreciate and make effective use of the creative economy. To this end, the United Nations marked 2021 as the International Year of the Creative Economy for Sustainable Development. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Acting Secretary-General Isabelle Durant, welcomed the resolution with a strong belief that "the creative industries are critical to the sustainable development agenda" as they "stimulate innovation and diversification, are an important factor in the burgeoning services sector, support entrepreneurship, and contribute to cultural diversity".

Over the last decade, African governments have made a number of reforms that have seen the continent out of a number of problems. Although there are still a number of challenges that need to be resolved, one thing is for sure, the seeds of creativity and innovation have been planted in Africa. The continent has seen a spark of innovative advancements being driven by indigenous innovators. A good example is Mobile Money, which allows people without bank accounts to deposit, transfer and withdraw funds using mobile phones. According to the World Bank, more than 222 million mobile money accounts are registered across Africa, and African countries account for more than 50% of all mobile money services worldwide. The bank further reported that the innovation has had a positive economic impact on Africa. In Kenya for example, access to mobile money has lifted nearly 200,000 households – about 2 percent of the population – out of poverty. It has also helped users – especially women – to move out of agriculture and into business.

The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly proven to be a serious challenge to the African economy. However, it has also spurred a pool of innovations on the continent. An analysis conducted by the World Health Organization

[WHO] found that the COVID-19 pandemic has seen more than 120 health technology innovations being piloted or adopted in Africa. In terms of COVID-19 response Africa accounts for 12.8 percent of the world's health innovations including surveillance, contact tracing, community engagement, treatment, laboratory systems and infection, prevention and control. Of these innovations, 57.8% of the technologies were ICT-driven, 25% were based on 3D printing and 10.9% were robotics. The ICT-based innovations include WhatsApp Chatbots in South Africa, self-diagnostic tools in Angola, contact tracing apps in Ghana and mobile health information tools in Nigeria. A Creative Economy report co-authored by UNESCO, UNDP and UNOSSC reveals that creativity and innovation have become the "true wealth of nations" in the 21st century. Therefore, a number of organizations have continued to design programmes and initiatives that drive innovation. For example, the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Lab (The Lab) is a flagship initiative of the African Development Bank's long-term strategy to improve inclusive economic development and to accelerate investment in Africa's key resource: its youth. Its vision is to nurture a new generation of African innovators who launch the continent into an era of accelerated prosperity. In 2015, the bank also launched Fashionomics Africa, an initiative to foster the fashion industry in Africa as a lever to create jobs. The initiative is hosted on a website and mobile app which helps Africa's fashion designers, textile and accessories entrepreneurs grow their businesses, with a focus on women and young people.

Creativity and innovation are critical for economic development on the continent. It must therefore be supplemented by adequate investment in ICT infrastructure, robotics, artificial intelligence, drones and mechatronics, relevant skill as well as putting enabling policies in place. We at the 'Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa (YALDA) believe that creativity and innovation will be key in solving the puzzle of Africa's burgeoning unemployed youth population and the coinciding skills shortage. We encourage young Africans to use their natural abilities to generate new ideas, make new decisions, take new actions and achieve new outcomes, to make Africa the best continent to live on. We will continue to collaborate with other organisations and individuals to ensure that substantive discussions and programmes on innovation and creativity on the continent momentarily involve the youth.

**Let your creative juices flow today
and every other day!**

By Abinaidah Chaseba, Zambia



#YALDA4Creativity #YALDA4Innovation
#IamCreative #WCIW #WCID #WorldCreativity2021

May

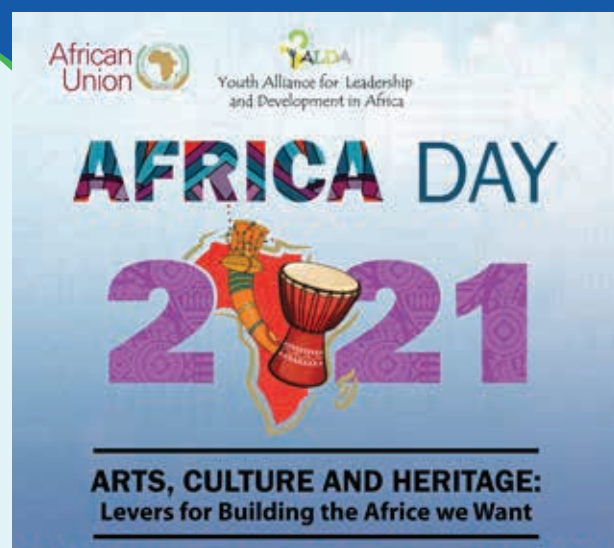
Africa Day

By Nadine Monachelli (USA)

Africa Day provides an opportunity to acknowledge the achievements of the peoples and governments of Africa, such as the African Union's Agenda 2063 – a Pan African Vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena.

The theme for this year's Africa Day celebrations is 'Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want' – a sure nod to Aspiration 5 of African Union's Agenda 2063, which envisions "An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics."

YALDA believes that arts, culture and heritage are Africa's greatest treasures, and therefore urges young Africans to commit to exploring, promoting and preserving African arts, culture and heritage wherever they go.



ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE: Levers for Building the Africa we Want.

African Unity Day, also known as Africa Day is celebrated annually on 25th of May. It commemorates the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) on this day in 1963. Africa Day provides an opportunity to acknowledge the achievements of the peoples and governments of Africa. One such achievement is the AU's Agenda 2063 which was declared at the 50th anniversary of the OAU/AU in May 2013. It marked the re-dedication of Africa towards the attainment of the Pan African Vision of An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena.

This year's celebrations will happen virtually due to the massive impact of COVID-19 on the continent and the world under the theme: 'Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We want'. The theme comes as a sure nod to Aspiration 5 of AU's Agenda 2063 which envisions 'An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics'. The venture set out by the AU includes events to promote African music, fashion design and visual arts.

The creative sector is said to be one of the fastest growing sectors in the global economy and has the potential to increase employment and GDP. In 2013, cultural and creative industries worldwide generated revenues of USD \$2.2 trillion and employed nearly 30 million people. Universally, the African continent is recognised for its cultural diversity and for the richness of its arts. Expressed through its arts, crafts, clothing, cuisine, music, and languages, the wealth of African culture serves as a catalyst for the socio-economic development of the African continent. Our Heritage is reflected in valued property such as historic buildings, artwork, books and manuscripts and other artefacts that have been passed down from previous generations. The renovation of museums across Africa, are an exceptional way to carry on this tradition. The Great Museum of Africa in Algeria for instance, is a flagship project of Agenda 2063 and could contribute to preserving and showcasing the continent's history and artefacts.

African arts and culture could indeed be used as a vehicle for economic development in several ways. Firstly, by tapping into "unofficial/unregulated markets". Although the African market is poorly structured and cultural goods are largely provided through the informal economy, the informal market, which is believed to employ 547,500 people and generate USD \$4.2 billion in revenues, is a good place to start. Secondly, the promotion of the restoration of tourism in a post-COVID-19 era could be another avenue. Africa boasts of quite a number of UNESCO recognised cultural and heritage sites such as Timbuktu, a historical city in Mali, Pyramids of Giza in Egypt. Additionally, there are several UNESCO environmental heritage sites such as Kilimanjaro National Park in Tanzania and the Victoria Falls between Zambia and Zimbabwe. During the current pandemic that has limited international travel, in-country tourism has become a lifesaver for the tourism industry, making citizens more aware of their own heritage. Finally, promotion of African music could also offer a big boost. A report by PwC suggested that the industry expected an annual growth rate of 13.4 percent in 2021 to reach USD \$73m from USD \$39m in 2016. African music is now officially considered 'cross over' in international markets and appreciated even in the most remote of areas as evidence by singers/song writers such as Davido (Nigerian), Wizkid (Nigerian), Busiswa (South Africa) just to name a few, collaborating with an African American superstar such as Beyoncé 2020 'Black is King' film and album.

YALDA continues to engage in efforts to preserve and promote African arts, culture and heritage through various initiatives such as Motivational Mondays and Country of the Month. Every Monday, we at YALDA use our social media platforms to educate Africans on how to live as Africans or get through various life challenges by use of motivational African proverbs. African proverbs are a huge part of our African culture as they are used to help us live meaningful lives and contribute positively to society. Also, every month, throughout Country of the Month series, we select a different African country to appreciate, celebrate and promote its diverse and rich arts, culture and heritage.

We consider arts, culture and heritage to be Africa's greatest treasures and therefore urge young Africans to commit to exploring, promoting and preserving African arts, culture and heritage wherever they go. It should be as renowned President Nkame once said, "I am African not because I was born in Africa, but because Africa was born in me." Let's use this year's Africa Day as an opportunity to return to our roots - reaffirming the need for pan-Africanism and standing proudly in our Africaness and create the Africa we want!

We Love To See It! Happy Africa Day! Umoja Africal
By Chafwa Luthi Mthembu (@chafwa)

#AfricaDay
#AfricanUnion
#AfricanHeritage
#yalda4AfricaDay
#yalda4culture



June

World Environment Day

World Environment Day shines a spotlight on the need to restore, protect and save the blue planet's fauna and flora.

The theme for World Environment Day 2021 is 'Ecosystem Restoration' – a call to assist in recovering ecosystems that have been degraded or destroyed, as well as conserving the ecosystems that are still intact.

YALDA promotes an environmentalist mindset among the younger generation with a commitment to healthy ecosystems in order to reimagine, recreate and restore through meaningful engagement with nature.



WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2021

5 June 2021

Theme: Ecosystem Restoration

#GenerationRestoration #WorldEnvironmentDay
#biodiversity #yalda4nature

The annual celebration of World Environment Day (WED) shines a spotlight on the need to restore, protect, and save the blue planet's fauna and flora. Since its designation by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1972, June 5th officially signals the urgent need to prevent the degradation of the ecosystem worldwide through adherence and commitment to transformative pathways. The theme for World Environment Day 2021 is "Ecosystem Restoration". The Global Commission on the Economy and Climate shared that, for every dollar spent on nature restoration, at least USD 59 of economic benefit can be expected. Ecosystem restoration means assisting in the recovery of ecosystems that have been degraded or destroyed, as well as conserving the ecosystems that are still intact. According to the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres: 2021 is a "make or break year and the moment of truth for climate action".

Last year witnessed unprecedented wildfires, heat waves, and hurricanes that broke all kinds of records in 2020. Undoubtedly, the ramifications of global warming are felt in all parts of the world. Ironically, since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdown measures have paved the way towards environmental restoration. The State of the Climate in Africa 2019 report stresses the fact that "Climate change is having a growing impact on the African continent, hitting the most vulnerable hardest, and contributing to food insecurity, population displacement and stress on water resources". According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), every hour an estimated 115 people die in Africa from diseases linked to improper hygiene, poor sanitation, and contaminated water. This shows the degree of impact pollution of water bodies has in Africa, hence disrupting the ecosystem. Forests and grasslands depend on nutrients from animals to produce food needed for their growth.

However, poaching of animals reduces the amount of nutrients available to plants – a situation that threatens the existence of plant life and the entire environment. Furthermore, the lack of adequate power supply means that a striking 90 percent of African population resorts to firewood as a source of fuel for household and sometimes commercial purposes resulting in the deforestation and endangering of species that rely on the ecosystem to survive. It is feared that African youth will suffer the effects of the disturbances of the ecosystem in Africa as in future they may lack some of the essential natural resources, which are mismanaged today. This deliberates that today's youth and generations to come have more to lose as they will be the ones to suffer the consequences if the issues surrounding

the ecosystem are not resolved today. Africa, therefore, needs to harness the power of its emerging youth demographic to spearhead efforts to tackle climate change. African leaders and youth should leverage the circular economy by tapping into the ecosystem's potential to create green jobs for the large number of unemployed African youth, thereby solving two pressing problems at once – ecosystem restoration and youth unemployment.

Africa's climate action is reflected on the African Union's Agenda 2063, which recognizes climate change as the major challenge for the continent's development. The first of its seven aspirations are dedicated to the implications climate change will have on the social fabric of Africa. Significant progress has been made by African nations and great efforts are seen to drive the global climate agenda which is mirrored by the steady involvement of African countries as well as the high levels of ratification of the Paris Agreement estimated to be over 90%. Moreover, 52 African countries have submitted their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement which requests each country to outline and communicate their post-2020 climate actions. These strategies guide policy response set to limit warming to 1.5 to 2 degrees C above pre-industrial levels. Furthermore, many African nations' willingness to transition to green energy and shift to a circular economy as the most sustainable Business Model has started gaining momentum. According to the U.N Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): "Clean energy and agriculture are prioritized in 70% of African NDCs".

We at the Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa (YALDA), promote an environmentalist mindset among the younger generation. We are conscious that our ecosystem reflects our behavior in relation to nature and goes beyond the feeling of belonging to what is labeled as "nature connectedness". YALDA is committed to meaningful engagement with nature through a proactive approach which aims to reimagine, recreate, and restore.

We pledge to be action-oriented towards ecosystem restoration; whether at home through recycling or by engaging our branches in outdoor activities such as cleaning coasts or rivers, active planting, and other community events. As we celebrate World Environment Day, we urge African youth to commit to the creation of healthy ecosystems, for "there's no wellbeing without nature's wellbeing." Take a moment to help restore the ecosystem today!

By Wail Madmouni (Morocco) and Takudzwa Chitupa (Zimbabwe)



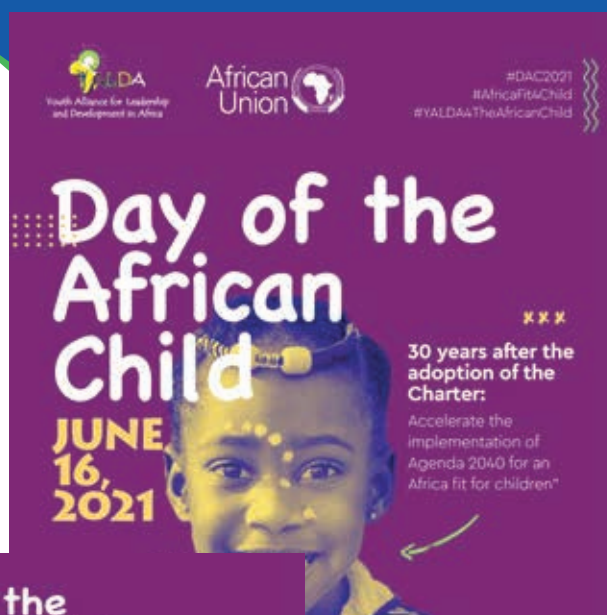
June

Day of the African Child

The Day of the African Child celebrates the children of Africa and calls for serious introspection and commitment towards addressing the numerous challenges children face across the continent.

This year's theme is '30 years after the adoption of the Charter: accelerate implementation of Agenda 2040 for an Africa fit for children' – a call to expedite and ensure successful implementation of Agenda 2040: Fostering an Africa fit for children.

YALDA calls on young people to celebrate the day by familiarizing themselves with Agenda 2040 and to collectively work hard to create a better environment for the children of Africa.



The Day of the African Child (DAC) is celebrated on the 16th of June, since 1991. DAC was established in memory of the 1976 student uprising in Soweto, South Africa. Students bravely marched in protest of the poor quality of education they received and demanded to be taught in their native languages. The Day of the African Child serves to commemorate these children and the heroic action they took to defend their rights. It celebrates the children of Africa and calls for serious introspection and commitment towards addressing the numerous challenges children face across the continent. The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child selected this year's theme, "30 years after the adoption of the Charter: accelerate implementation of Agenda 2040 for an Africa fit for children". 2021 marks 30 years since the establishment of DAC, however, several challenges still hinder the full realisation of the rights and welfare of the African child.

In 2016, the African Committee adopted "Agenda 2040: Fostering an Africa fit for children" - a 25-year agenda for the long-term and strategic progress in implementing children's rights in Africa. Agenda 2040 provides a child-centred focus based on the African Union's Agenda 2063, which highlights children's rights and welfare concerns in Paragraph 53. This year's Day of the African Child commemorations will, therefore, focus on providing solutions to expedite and ensure successful implementation of Agenda 2040.

Since its adoption, considerable strides have been made towards achieving Agenda 2040. Policies, campaigns and commemorations have been made across African countries to serve the ten aspirations made in Agenda 2040. The number of State Parties that have ratified the African Children's Charter has increased from 47 in 2016 to 50 in January 2021. There has been a decrease of death of children below the age of five by 100,540 from 2016 to 2018. A slight decrease has also been recorded in deaths from Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) by 1,303 deaths from 2015 to 2017. Increased immunisation coverage across Africa has resulted in a reduction in disease mortality and morbidity. Additionally, most states have aligned their domestic laws to the African Children's Charter by regarding the age of 18 years or above as the minimum age of recruitment into armed forces. Some States like South Africa and Tanzania have involved child participation in local, municipal, provincial and parliamentary processes.

However, challenges have been faced in the implementation of the agenda – some states have failed to ratify the charter while others have not adopted a policy to involve children in the decision-making process. According to UNICEF, today, close to 50% of Africa's inhabitants are children. The steady growth in births and declining mortality rates, have fuelled the continent's population aged under 18 and a 50 per cent rise is expected by mid-century, topping 1 billion.

There will be more children in Africa than anywhere else in the world. This creates a great need to ensure each, and every child is supported to achieve their full potential. New challenges and opportunities will arise for families and communities, and for African governments and their health, education and legal systems. African states must prepare to meet the needs of their growing young population, and commit to urgent, concrete actions to protect and promote the rights of all children – now and in future generations.

The ACERWC continues to solicit and recognise the views of children and young people in the monitoring and accountability of the Charter mainly through the commemoration of the Day of the African Child. The implementation of Agenda 2040 is crucial to the implementation of the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 and 2030 Agenda. This is critical as the AU recognises that the Committee has a role to play in the realisation of the 6th key priority area of Agenda 2063; an 'Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential offered by the African people, especially its women, youth, and caring for children'.

Holistic approaches to Agenda 2040 should start from the engagement of all aspects that had not been accomplished by the close of 2020. This should involve all stakeholders including the AU, the ACERWC, Regional Economic Communities, states, Civil Society Organisations and children. YALDA recognises its crucial role in this agenda as a youth organisation dedicated to Africa's development through youth leadership. YALDA celebrates this day and what it stands for by continued and increased awareness and efforts to contribute to the enforcement of policies and the realisation of aspirations made in Agenda 2040 as well as Agenda 2063.

We pledge to work tirelessly on youth empowerment through capacity building and advocacy programs which aim to encourage the protection of the rights of the African child. YALDA calls on young people to celebrate the day by familiarising themselves with Agenda 2040 and to collectively work hard to create a better environment for the children of Africa.

By Melatwork Tibebe(Ethiopia)



Make it your responsibility to protect the rights of the African child!

#DAC2021
#AfricaFit4Child
#YALDA4TheAfricanChild

Q&A - How to excel at your job during the pandemic

By Raghda Medhat (Egypt)

It has been more than a year now since the start of the pandemic. Last year, many companies shifted their work to the online space, laid off employees, or even altered their fundamental business model. It was a tough year for students, mothers and professionals alike. But, in every hard situation, there is opportunity. Here are some ways to way to seize it yourself:

1 Discover the most demanded skills in your field

Check the most demanded skills through ads from the companies, search for your title in different markets, and see the most repetitive words. Then, update your resume based on your findings. Ideally, you should not only state that you possess those skills, but also provide evidence. There are lots of online platforms like Coursera, Udacity and Google that offer wide ranges of certificates and courses.

2 Network, Connect, Engage

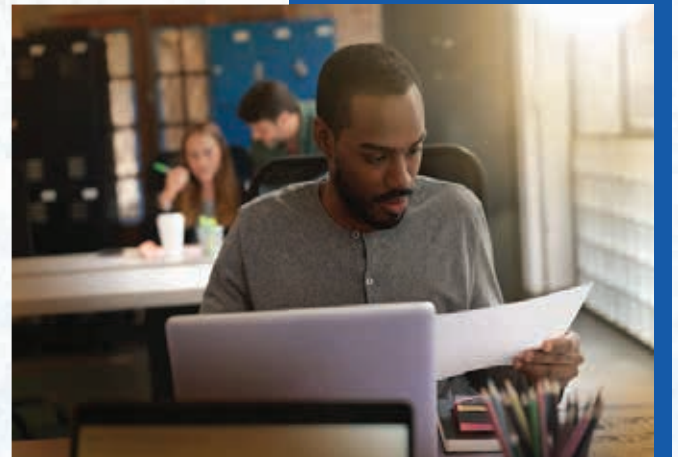
Working from home doesn't mean disconnecting from the world. Online platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn helped us to stay connected and aware of everything happening around us, to connect with professional from fields of interest, to ask them for help, to listen to experts. We managed to create meaningful relations with new people by researching them online and sending them personalized messages or simply engaging with their posts. This can often start a conversation, and you can finally ask them to meet in person for a coffee. Dining tables and enclosed spaces are far from crucial for networking!

3 Search for a mentor

Having a mentor will help you identify your strengths and weaknesses. They will guide you and give you the tools and perspectives necessary to take the right decisions. They will never tell you what to do, instead you will gain from their experience and their knowledge through what they have been through. The mentor could be anyone: your manager, old professor, teacher or any experienced person you trust.

4 Be a wildcard sometimes

I think this was some of the best advice I got in my professional life. Being a wildcard means that you can do things outside your specialization. For example, knowing how to use Google analytics despite not working in marketing, or working with excel even if you are not in the accounting or research. Try to begin with



the most important and generally applicable skills, like building a nice presentation, writing reports in English, using programs like Power BI and Tableau. However, do make sure you are not neglecting those skills that are crucial for your job.

5 Take care of yourself

Finally, this is the golden tip among what we have mentioned. Eat healthy food, exercise, practise a hobby like swimming, reading, hiking or travelling. Prioritize yourself and your mental health, go to a therapist if you feel you are not okay. You will never be able to perform, or even function normally if you are not doing well physically and mentally. Don't work for 18 hours. Always spend time with your loved ones. As research has shown, people who can follow all these principles tend to have the highest productivity.

At the end there are no one path to get better at your career. However, the most important thing is to have confidence in yourself, ask for help when needed, have a plan, and do it.



Opportunities Corner

By *Gretchen Brooker (USA)*



EXCITING NEW OPPORTUNITIES



Contests, Challenges & Awards

Social Shifters Global Innovation Challenge 2021

Deadline July 16, 2021

Call for Code Global Challenge 2021 (\$200,000 USD Grand prize)

Deadline July 31, 2021

Conferences & Workshops

World Bank Young Professionals Program

Deadline July 15, 2021

Future Leaders Connect Program

Deadline July 18, 2021

Funding

Scholarships

AfDB Japan Africa Dream Scholarship (JADS) Program 2021 for young Africans to stay in Japan

Deadline August 31, 2021

AAAS Science & SciLifeLab Prize for Young Scientists 2021

Deadline July 21, 2021

Grants & Fellowships

Chatham House Richard and Susan Hayden Academy Fellowship 2021/2022 for mid-career professionals

Deadline July 12, 2021

UNDP/Government of Nigeria Jubilee Fellowship Program 2021 for young Nigerian graduates

Deadline ongoing

African Academy of Sciences (AAS) Affiliates Program 2021

Deadline July 23, 2021

Employment - Internships - Volunteer - Professional Development

Microsoft Interns4Afrika Program 2021 for Young African Professionals

Deadline ongoing

Climate Tracker is hiring Programs Coordinator for Middle East and North Africa

Deadline ongoing

IBM Quantum Community Advocate Internship Program 2021

Deadline ongoing