

African Leadership Centre



King's College London through the Conflict Security and Development Group (CSDG) launched the African Leadership Centre (ALC) in July 2008 in Nairobi, Kenya. The ALC will mentor the next generation of African leaders and facilitate their participation in national, regional and international efforts to achieve transformative change in Africa. This is predicated on the need to contribute significantly to Africa's long-term development by engaging the time and talent of young Africans based on the continent. The Centre will be African-led, bringing together African leaders, experts and academics from all over the world to work with young, talented Africans at a dedicated centre located in Nairobi, Kenya. Tomorrow's generation of leaders will have access to knowledge and training on a range of issues at the intersection of security and development, crucial to prosperity of successful communities in Africa. The Centre will link academia and the real world of policy and practice and enable Fellows to gain practical experience as well as building a network of colleagues and contacts.

The idea of an African Leadership Centre was conceived to generate innovative ways to address some of the challenges faced on the African continent, by a new generation of "home-grown" talent. The United Nations (UN) has long recognized that young people can be a dynamic agent of social change. The UN has also stated that young people can play an active role in confronting many of the problems that affect them provided they have the tools. The current evidence and policy framework, for example the African Youth Charter; the Report of the Commission for Africa, Our Common Interest (March 2005); or the UN Millennium Project report, Investing in Development supports this.

Three of the greatest challenges confronting African countries and regional organisations in addressing the youth challenge are:

1. The perennial problem of brain drain with large numbers of talented young people exiting their states, given the limited opportunity for growth;
2. the absence of a sound knowledge base within the youth population on critical issues affecting African security and development;
3. and, limited channels and opportunities to develop untapped talent among emerging African youth leaders and to facilitate their participation in processes of national development and regional integration.

Crucially, if Africa is to address these challenges and convert its uncultivated talents into creative talents, it must create opportunities for innovative thinking and a sound knowledge base among Africa's youth population. King's College London, along with its African partners, will establish a leadership centre that will provide this enabling environment. It will facilitate the creation of a new cohort of young African leaders, who, in turn, will go on to contribute to economic, social and political development to deliver transformative change in Africa.

The African Leadership Centre will seek to address these challenges by implementing an African-led programme of mentoring and innovative leadership training. The programme will

also facilitate the active participation of talented and promising young Africans in economic, political and social change on the continent.

The guiding principles of the Knowledge Building and Mentoring Programme at CSDG, and the pressing need to develop the leadership potential of young Africans will underline the work of the Centre. At the heart of the Centre, is an overarching philosophy to:

- Seek African home-grown solutions to the issues faced by African leaders;
- Translate academic research into practical policy application;
- Forge mutually beneficial partnerships between academia, civil society, government and regional institutions;
- Contribute to change through entrepreneurship, innovation, creativity and leadership;
- Develop new approaches to leadership;
- Act as a regional knowledge bank and resource.

Key objectives

- Identify a cadre of young Africans with demonstrated leadership potential to participate in the training programme of the Centre, with a special focus on young women;
- Develop a training and mentoring programme for Africa's emerging young leaders, focusing on non-traditional subjects while emphasising critical issues of relevance to security, stability and development in Africa;
- Establish a network of accomplished Africans committed to developing the capacity of the next generation, and to contribute meaningfully to the mentoring of Fellows at the Leadership Centre;
- Coordinate a network of African and non-African institutions to support the work of the Centre;
- Facilitate active participation of a core group of renowned senior Africans to support to the work of the Centre in leadership development;
- Rally the support of African regional organisations, Centres of Excellence and build strategic partnerships with the private sector to expand the knowledge base of the Centre's Fellows through joint programmes and attachments.

Beneficiaries

The African Leadership Centre will mentor a cadre of young Africans with the potential to lead innovative change in their communities, countries and across the continent. This will be achieved through a programme of mentoring, innovation in thinking and approach and systematic collaboration with African civil, corporate and government institutions.

The Centre will operate a year long programme which includes a six-month placement at a regional or national organisation and will host 50 Africans annually. Entry on to the Centre's programme will be based on competitive selection according to a set of criteria decided by a panel constituted by King's College London alongside other partners.

Outcomes

The ALC will provide an enabling environment for:

- Ideas and research that are grounded in African realities;
- Inspiring transformational ideas that can be developed to create visions of change;
- Interaction with experts in the field and potential role models;
- Facilitating the participation of young women in peace and security issues;
- Building capacity for independent thinking;
- Expanding the knowledge base to develop a transformational agenda;
- Creating opportunities to transfer knowledge to achieve multiplier effects for communities,
- institutions and universities;
- Connecting with relevant processes nationally, regionally and globally; and,
- Building lasting partnerships that will maintain an African-led vision of change.

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