



## **The Teens and Youth in Leadership (TYIL) Fellowship Program**

A Comprehensive Evaluation Report of the TYIL Fellowship Program

2019-2023

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## INTRODUCTION

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In 2023, the Teens and Youth in Leadership (TYIL) made a strategic decision to embark on an evaluation of the TYIL fellowship's 5 years of operation with the goal of developing the program, understanding gaps that may exist in the achievement of program objectives, and to discover if there is any standout/unique value the program is offering participants. This report highlights findings from focus group interviews carried out with previous participants of the TYIL fellowship and the evaluation duration is from 2019 to 2023. Findings from the evaluation was divided into 4 sections:

- Program Impact
- Learning Platform and Ease of Engagement
- Relevance of Course Content
- Other Findings.

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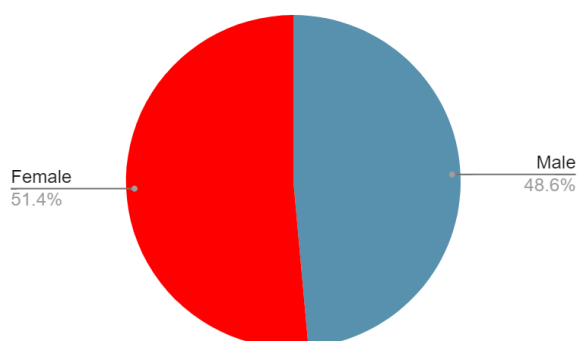
## INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY OF TYIL FELLOWSHIP

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The Teens and Youth in Leadership (TYIL) fellowship program, an initiative of Teens and Youth in Leadership (TYIL), was birthed to bridge the gap in leadership education across Africa, particularly among youth and young adults. The program was specifically created for youth who have little or no experience in leading, and to give them the opportunity to garner skills needed to create positive changes in their communities and respective fields of interest.

The maiden edition of the fellowship program was held in 2019 and has since then trained and graduated 68 fellows who are now members of the TYIL community. The fellows, between the ages of 18 and 29 are now making strategic impacts through engagement in campus politics, founding start-ups, and non-profit organization.

### TYIL FELLOWS (2019-2023)



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## TRAINING MODEL OF THE TYIL FELLOWSHIP

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The Training model for the TYIL Fellowship is the E<sup>2</sup>C<sup>2</sup> model - Educate, Empower, Collaborate, Community. This model was self-generated by the organization and came about as a result of years of training and previous feedback from participants of the training program. However, many scholars and researchers at many times have agreed that these four approaches are required for the complete leadership development of youth in this present world (Conner & Strobel, 2007; Ricketts and Rudd, 2002; Van Linden & Fertman, 1998). Participants at the fellowship program are **educated** on core leadership topics such as Elements of Leadership, Leadership and Politics, Action-Based Leadership, Building Multicultural Relationships, Citizenship and Followership, among others. Furthermore, the program **empowers** participants by providing resources and tools they need to advance in their leadership journey and make meaningful changes in their communities. During the fellowship program, the participants are encouraged and exposed to activities that require them to **collaborate** with other participants. As a way of ensuring continued development, participants are brought into the TYIL **community** and exposed to opportunities such as weekly leadership resources/materials, grant opportunities, and leadership focused webinars.

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## THE FUTURE OF THE TYIL FELLOWSHIP

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By 2050, our goal is that the TYIL fellowship program will have metamorphosed into a group of leadership schools across Africa that incubates and graduates competent and highly qualified young African leaders. Strategically, from 2024, TYIL fellowship will be taken to secondary school students by establishing leadership clubs across secondary schools in Africa.

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## DATA SOURCES AND METHOD

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A virtual focus group interview was conducted by an external researcher on 7 past participants who attended the fellowship program between 2019 and 2023. The purpose of the focus group was to capture each participant's personal experience and assessment of the program, and to uncover new strategies for developing the fellowship program. For confidentiality and openness purposes, the external researcher anonymized the transcript before sharing with TYIL staff. A detailed transcript of the interview was coded and thematically analyzed.

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## FINDINGS

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Following the analysis of the focus group transcript, the findings were subdivided into four sections: program impact, learning platform and ease of engagement, relevance of course content, and other findings. The remainder of this section of the report presents these findings in more detail.

**Program Impact:** Overall, participants felt that the program provided them with valuable information and skill development that helped them with their own personal growth and leadership. Key components such as benefits of the TYIL fellowship, Impact of the TYIL fellowship, and Change in behavior were revealed during analysis.

**Benefits of the TYIL fellowship:** Participants believed that the fellowship program was of immense benefit to them in the following ways:

- Participants were given opportunities to lead at various capacities during the fellowship program. These opportunities included volunteering to lead project groups, serving as lead presenters, and captaining a cohort. The goal of this is to engage them in the leadership process and to expose certain leadership skills such as collaboration, communication, and decision-making skills.

***“Being in the TYIL fellowship is like you are already in a place of responsibility. Even if it’s being a class captain, you are already taking leadership responsibility”***

- Personal development was a key benefit participants derived from the TYIL fellowship program. The focus on the full potential and personal development of participants is an integral part of the TYIL fellowship program. Participants are exposed to course contents such as vision and Leadership and character development, with the aim of helping them lead themselves first, before leading others.

***“So as at the points where I got to know about TYIL, I think I was in a phase where I wanted to develop myself in terms of career. I was just about entering my second year in university, so I was aggressive with my personal growth, and I must be preparing for some responsibility. So it appealed I mean. The content appealed to me.”***

**Impact of the TYIL Fellowship:** Participants expressed that the fellowship program impacted their leadership performance in the following ways:

- Participants felt that the fellowship program laid the foundation for continued leadership learning. Considering that the fellowship program is limited in time, participants communicated that the TYIL fellowship program gives enough resources to usher them into a long term journey of leadership development. One way the organization ensures this is through the TYIL community that gives opportunities for past participants to partake in webinars, seminars, grant opportunities and weekly leadership teachings. As

one participant expressed, “The fellowship program has set us up for us to build on what we have learned.” Additionally, the participants shared that the fellowship program exposed them to a high caliber of speakers and professionals. TYIL attracts facilitators with experience in leadership studies and practices who are able to connect with participants and share from their experiences. Similarly, the fellowship gives the participants opportunities to connect with these facilitators afterward.

***“So for me, what really gets me is the caliber of speakers, around in terms of pedigree and how experienced they are and TYIL provided that opportunity to have like a robust insight into really great speakers, and which have challenged some of my long held standing beliefs. You know, in terms of pursuing the course of leadership.”***

- Participants communicated that the fellowship program assisted them in their campus leadership and to solve their leadership problems with those they were leading in their school. Participants enjoy mentorship and guidance in their leadership journey, whether in their communities, schools or family.

***“So I said like I am a course rep, so you know, course rep is like a leadership post whereby you get to lead others to achieve some things, and you know, also, things like that. So there was a time I had problems with my followers, like my course mate now. So they are this kind of person, that they are not appreciative, and all of those things. So I took the issue to the mentor Mr. Israel, I explained things to him and everything. So he just took me on a leadership journey, he shared so many things with me, he explained a lot of things that I need to know about leadership with me.”***

- The participants found bringing together other young people passionate about making positive changes in the continent impactful. Participants found it inspiring that other young people with the same passion, zeal and focus could be found in the fellowship program.

***“I think it's really beautiful to see youths come together to want to do leadership right. They're interested in the country, in the Continent. I think that is from a perspective of deep passion and desire that you find most people committed to a course like this, and I'm not taking this for granted.”***

- The participants believed that taking leadership development to secondary school students helps the organization penetrate into the fabrics of the society. TYIL organizes programs specialized in teaching leadership to secondary school students and engaging them in the same process.

***“I like what we are doing with the secondary school outreaches. It's something unique, we are now penetrating into the fabric of society. Because these people are definitely going to get into universities and also become leaders in society.”***

Furthermore, participants communicated that the fellowship program exposed them to societal impact and responsibility, as developing and implementing a societal project idea is a vital aspect of the training curriculum.

- Participants feel they now have a leadership edge over their peers, as they have been exposed to a broader aspect of leadership previously unknown to them. This changed their perspectives about leadership and team management and challenged them to develop the competencies and skills to lead diverse teams. As a result of these impacts, participants now recommend the TYIL fellowship to other people, including their team members.

*“So coming for a training like this, it actually enlarged my scope and understanding that okay, after the training, I actually saw how I previously made a lot of mistakes. It changed my perspective about how to run a team because all of the content of the training was team management. Yeah, I remember. Because I still have my notes. So I had to go back after the training to put into practice how to manage the team. So I had to even read and ask questions, okay, this is how I will manage a team. And, by the privilege of that, the organization I lead has actually moved.”*

**Change In Behavior:** Participants communicated that delegation and exposure to more responsibility during the fellowship program inspired a positive change in behavior.

*“This side of me was not always visible. I mean, I’m completely introverted until I think I started taking more responsibility with the community and Mr. Isreal started giving me more room to want to, you know, show me some things that I think I can offer.”*

**Learning Platform and Ease of Engagement:** Overall, participants felt that they have enough resources to attend the training program virtually. They also highlighted what stood out for them in terms of the learning platform and ease of engagement. Key components such as Learning platform, Additional support to attend the meeting, access to and structure of the training were revealed during analysis.

**Learning Platform:** The participants believed that the virtual learning platform accommodates more people to join the training from anywhere across the world. They shared that the platform and timing of the training was convenient, accessible to all participants and structured to meet those of the participants.

**Additional Support for Students to Attend Training:** Participants expressed that the following supports were provided to help them attend the training.

- The participants communicated that resources such as airtime and reading materials were provided to help participants attend the virtual classes. Considering that most of the

participants were not working or could not afford to regularly purchase airtime, these resources were critical for supporting students' engagement with the program..

- Participants found regular meeting reminders and prompts very inspiring for them to attend classes.

***“The timing for the meetings usually have a prior and a lot of reminders for the meeting. There were always reminders which helped in responding to the meetings”.***

- Furthermore, participants communicated that the convener's involvement in the training program and activities helped participants in understanding and succeeding in the fellowship program.

***“What I really like about TYIL is the involvement of the convener in the participant. I'll say that Mr. Israel was really kind like, If I think about Mr. Israel, my first response is, the thing that comes to mind is kindness. He's really always interested in knowing. Oh, are you guys fine? Or what do you need? Do you need data for this, if you, if you have difficulty, joining the program, you can reach out to me. He made himself really approachable. I will say that.”***

***Access to and Structure of the training:*** Participants communicated the following about access to and the structure of the fellowship program:

- The participants shared that attaching payment to the training may demotivate participants from registering, particularly those who cannot afford it. Free access to the training makes it possible for participants to attend, and it does not make the training less effective, quality or authentic.
- The participants mentioned that TYIL as an organization is proactive in ensuring constant improvements and regular feedback.

***“Even having a review feedback like this is what makes TYIL as an organization standard. So I feel like even before the fellows or any other people can say do this, they are already plotting a better way of doing things.”***

Furthermore, the participants communicated that the seriousness of the organization influences the kinds of participants attracted, and the training functions on a highly serious and effective structure.

***“However, for me, I just feel like there's this sense of seriousness because of the way TYIL presented itself to us. There is this seriousness that you know we are not here to play or waste away time. You will actually tell yourself that this is quality, you know, don't sleep on it, that kind of thing.”***



**Relevance of Course Content:** Overall, participants felt that the course content was relevant to their personal goals and skills needed in the 21st century. Key components such as relevance of the course contents to personal goals, relevance of the course contents to the 21st century attributes needed for youth, lessons learned, and sustainability of learning were revealed during analysis.

**Relevance of the course contents to personal goals:** Participants shared that the course contents helped them in the following ways:

- The participants communicated that the course contents of the fellowship program aligns with their personal and career goals. They further shared that the vision of TYIL aligns with the vision of many of the participants who register for the training.

*“The content appealed to me. It appealed to what I wanted to do going down in terms of my own personal choices or career goals as well as related to social impact. Yeah. So I think maybe there was that connection between me and TYIL. So, personally for myself, it made a whole lot of sense.”*

- The participants mentioned that TYIL takes leadership, that has been taken as a normal word, and explains it to them. They believed that TYIL teaches the practical as well as theoretical aspects of leadership, and this has enhanced their understanding of what leadership really is about.

**Relevance of the course content to the 21st century attributes needed for youth:** The participants shared that the course content of the fellowship program is relevant to the 21st century attributes needed for youth in the following ways:

- The participants communicated that the training content is relevant to the evolving global leadership demands. They believed that the program provides dynamic course contents across different fields and sectors, and highlights their key leadership challenges and opportunities.
- The participants felt the training contents created awareness for youth leadership and how to start leading as youth. They believed that the facilitators and lecture materials further enhanced this by engaging the participants in mentally stimulating discussions. These prepared the participants for present and future leadership and personal responsibilities and challenges.

**Lessons Learned:** The participants communicated that they learned the following during the fellowship program:

- The participants shared that the training helped in developing their leadership definitions, and exposed them to how leadership cuts across various aspects such as character, personal development, servant leadership, and political leadership.

*“Even at first, after sharing so many leadership theories with us, we were asked to write up our own personal leadership definition. Like, I being myself now, what*

*definition would I give to leadership, tapping from what I have learned so far about leadership.”*

- The participants communicated that they learned that leadership is about working with a diverse group of people, inspiring and motivating them, and being able to achieve results through them.
- Participants felt that leadership is about considering how to make long-term impacts, build legacies and being able to commit and bear the burden of leadership.

**Sustainability of the Learning:** The participants believed that as a result of the TYIL fellowship program, they gained access to continuous leadership learning and development, and got connected to previous TYIL fellows. They believed this is what makes the organization stand out.

*“I will say that there has been a structure to make the program really sustainable. For example, I remember I was in the fellows group right so after the conference, after the program, we were moved to the community Whatsapp group. We get integrated into the community and then we get to really be involved in the subsequent conferences that they have, subsequent meetings, , all the programs that they hold with speakers and all of that. And also I will say that’s really helpful. Because for you teaching leadership in a short like short period of time and you now making it a regular thing.”*

**Other Findings:** Participants shared insights on how the TYIL fellowship program can improve, what makes the program stand out from other programs, and what got them attracted to the fellowship program.

- The participants mentioned that they got attracted to the fellowship program because of the line-up of facilitators the program brings. They further shared that they got to know about the program through referrals from TYIL staff, and word of mouth referral from previous participants whom the training had impacted.

*“In fact when I saw the list of the speakers that will be coming for this year's training, I wanted to join and like, can I come back again? I just feel like there's so much to gain and for me to learn.”*

- In comparison with other training programs, the participants felt that other training programs play complementary roles in their leadership development. Considering that leadership development is a life-long and continuous learning process, the participants appreciated that TYIL functions as a foundation for their leadership development.

**Opportunity to Improve:** The participants suggested some ways the TYIL fellowship program can improve in its programming and participants engagements:

- The participants encouraged that the training program should develop activities that would foster interactions, engagements and exchange of ideas among cohort members.

They believed that one of the ways to achieve this is by consistently providing leadership responsibilities and opportunities both during and after the training program.

Furthermore, they suggested that more physical meetings and hang outs should be organized to increase the connection and sense of community among training participants.

- The participants shared that time allotted for each course should be expanded and course manuals should be shared with the participants before the training commences. They thought that the training time should be spread across more days and months. They added that participants will be able to retain more information after the training, if they have access to the course manual. They further communicated that the training materials should accommodate individuals from other countries in Africa, not just Nigeria.
- The participants suggested that the organization should create engagement opportunities between past and present training participants. One of the ways this can be achieved is by inviting previous participants to facilitate sessions during the training program and to mentor present participants.
- In terms of resources provided, the participants shared that considering the inadequate awareness about the concept of leadership education in Africa, a specialized budget for data and airtime should be done to provide support for cohort members to attend classes.
- The participants shared that the training curriculum should focus on other fields related to leadership, such as art, music, tech, agriculture, health, and education. They believed this will help and mentor youth to express their leadership niche.

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### **PROPOSED NEXT STEPS**

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Following the insightful responses gathered from the focus group interview, the organization intends to take the following steps:

- Review the existing course contents and develop an inclusive and comprehensive course curriculum and manual. This manual will include the courses available at the TYIL fellowship, list of facilitators, case study scenarios, other resources and materials for the participants' leadership development. This will be shared to participants prior to the commencement of the training program.
- Develop more engagement and leadership related activities during the training program for the participants to collaborate, learn and be mentored in carrying out leadership responsibilities.
- Consider developing a fixed budget for sponsoring airtime and data for participants to attend classes virtually.

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## **APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS**

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### **General Information**

1. I would like to know a little about your background, the year you participated in the TYIL training, and which training/cohort.

### **Relevance**

1. Regarding relevance, would you consider the training relevant to building the 21st-century leadership attributes needed for youths? (Other prompts for this could be; what are the examples of the training contents you found relevant).
2. Are the methods used for recruitment and selection relevant to meet today's youth leadership training needs? Do you consider the training methods, trainers, time, and location appropriate for the target audience?

### **EFFECTIVENESS**

1. To what extent did the training meet your personal goals, and how?
2. Describe some of these learning objectives and how the training met them?
3. Did the training produce any expected outcome, and how?
4. Do you think those who participate in TYIL training are the intended beneficiaries or are those that need to be reached yet to be reached?
5. What internal and external factors contributed to the achievement/failure of the training outcomes or goals?

### **EFFICIENCY**

1. Were there provisions of resources for attendance of the training? If yes, what were they? Were they helpful in contributing to your successful attendance of the training?
2. What challenges do you have that prevented successful attendance or maximum learning?
3. Was the training free for you? If yes, if it was monetized, would it be more efficient? If no, do you think it contributed to the success or failure of the training/learning outcomes?
4. Do you think the training time and sessions were sufficient to achieve the objectives?

### **SUSTAINABILITY**

1. How has the training contributed to youth leadership capacity in society?
2. Do you think that the impact of the training has been sustainable, even after the training ends? If yes, how?
3. Did the TYIL organization provide any structure or program, or activities to ensure the sustainability of the impact of the training? What are they?
4. How did you ensure the lessons learned during the training were used and remembered?
5. Have you attended similar programs or training, such as TYIL? If yes, what are the similarities or differences?

**IMPACT**

1. What are the unintended consequences (positive and negative) resulting from participating in the training?
2. Has participation in the training improved your leadership qualities? How?
3. How has the knowledge gained from the training been used?

**KNOWLEDGE GENERATION-LESSON LEARNT**

1. What are your likes and dislikes about implementing TYIL training?
2. Can you recommend any suggestions for improvement?
3. Is there anything else you think I should have asked you that I didn't?