



Raising New Generations of Leaders in Edo State (**SUCCESSES AND LEARNING**) **#YouthCanLead**

FUNDED BY



FORD
FOUNDATION



(Centre LSD)

Centre LSD Impact Stories
Series 2.0



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of Leaders in Edo State**
(SUCCESSSES AND LEARNING)
#YouthCanLead

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(Centre LSD)

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Raising New Generations of Leaders in Edo State

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AC -	Action Congress
ACPN -	Allied Congress Party of Nigeria
ADC -	African Democratic Congress
ANEEJ -	African Network for Environment and Economic Justice
APC -	All Progressives Congress
AWEG -	African Women Empowerment Guild
AYRH -	Adolescent Youth Reproductive Health
BEDC -	Benin Electricity Distribution Company
BOT -	Board of Trustee
C.E.O -	Chief Executive Officer
CCTV -	Closed-circuit television
Centre LSD -	African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development
CNDCY -	Coalition of Niger-Delta Concerned Youth
CPC -	Congress Planning Committee
CSO -	Civil Society Organization
CUNDF -	Confederated Union of Niger Delta Forum
CV -	Curriculum vitae
DA -	Democratic Alternative
DFO -	Development Finance office
EBS -	Edo Broadcasting Service
EDI -	Entrepreneur Development Institution
EFCC -	Economic and Financial Crime Communication
EIDP -	Edo Information for Development Project
ESHA -	Edo State House of Assembly
EXCO -	Executive Committee
EYC -	Edo Youth Congress
FM -	Frequency Modulation
GPN -	Green Party
HIV/AIDS -	Human Immunodeficiency Virus, acquired Immunodeficiency syndrome
ICT -	Information and Communications Technology
INEC -	Independent National Electoral Commission
LGA -	Local Government Area
MAJA -	Mass Action Joint Alliance
NANS -	National Association of Nigerian Students
NDLEA -	National Drug Law Enforcement Agency
NGO -	Non-Governmental Organisation
NYDA -	National Youth Democratic Alliance
NYSC -	National Youth Service Corps

ABBREVIATION

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ABBREVIATION

PAN -	Africa Health Initiative Nigeria
PDP -	Peoples Democratic Party
PMB -	President Muhammadu Buhari
PVC -	Permanent Voters Card
SDP -	Social Democratic Party
SDP -	Social Democratic Party
SSG -	Secretary to the State Government
SSS -	State Security Service
SUG -	Students Union Government
TV -	Television
UNODC -	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UP -	United Patriots
YIAGA -	Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth & Advancement
YPP -	Young Progressive Party

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A. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We thank the Almighty God for his grace that has made this Book Of Stories a reality. We thank Him for the journey mercies to Edo, Delta and Bayelsa States for the harvest of results, stories and their validation, and for the transformation that has happened in the lives of the project beneficiaries.

We are grateful to Ford Foundation for supporting the project. The support enabled Centre LSD to lay the foundation for youth participation in politics in the Niger Delta. We also thank our Founding Executive Director, Dr Otive Igbuzor, for his advice and regular backstopping during the implementation of the project, and particularly for creating the systems that enabled cohesion and seamless project implementation.

We thank the monitoring and evaluation team of the Centre who contributed immensely to the development of this book, the management and staff of the Centre and most especially the project team for their resilience, dedication to duty and hard work. We are grateful for all your efforts that culminated in the efficient and effective delivery of the project activities. Indeed, you guys are the best.

To the direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project, we thank you for taking forward the lessons and learning from the project that culminated in the results and successes that are documented in this book. We urge you to soldier on in your newfound area of exploits and continue to use the opportunities that you presently have to expand the space for youth participation in politics and by extension in the decision-making processes in your state, country and region..

Centre LSD

February, 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The future belongs to the youth. As leaders of tomorrow, the youths should begin to act today. Young people possess enormous power and responsibility to influence the political direction of their countries. The African Youth Charter, in recognition of this, stipulated that member states should build the capacity of their youths to enable them to participate in the governance process and decision making. On this premise, the capacity building for youths interested in politics in the Niger Delta was conceptualised by the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development (Centre LSD).

The project also known as Youth Can Lead, aimed to build the capacity of youths interested in political offices in the three states of Edo, Delta and Bayelsa, to equip and engage them to participate in elective and appointive positions.

The Edo Book Of Stories is the first in the series of storybooks for each of the states. The stories and results contained in this series are those of Edo State only. A total of 74 youths from the 3 Senatorial Districts of Edo State, made up of 51 males and 23 females were trained and their capacity built to actively participate in politics. The testimonies of several of the trainees' interviewed 2 years after the project intervention, showed a significant turning point in their political careers.

During the general elections of 2019 in Edo State, 74 youths were trained by Centre LSD, out of which 19 youths contested different elective positions. About 18 of them won various positions. From the data analysed, many of those who contested were first timers. For those that did not win, it was still a plus for them as the exposure, experience and post events were worth the struggles. 20 of these youths after the election, got different appointive positions.

The conscientization that a strong financial base is needful before venturing into contesting for election, was a major motivation for a strategic review for some, who hitherto had planned to contest in the 2019 general elections, to reconsider their plan for contesting to build their financial base(s). A total of 37 of them established different organisations, businesses and money-making ventures, including Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs); Agro Businesses; ICT Based/Online Businesses; Food & Eatery Businesses; Installations; Events and Entertainment; Entrepreneurship Training; White Collar Jobs. Others established Chemist and Supermarket stores; Cement Selling Shops; Laundry businesses; Cosmetology; etc

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This book is divided into two sections. Section A contains the stories while section B are the results. Overall, the intervention recorded minimal challenges that were not enough to negatively affect the implementation and the results.

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**SECTION A:
OUR
STORIES**



A. SUCCESS STORIES FROM EDO STATE ON THE FORD FOUNDATION PROJECT

This section contains stories of significant changes harvested, from the beneficiaries of the Centre LSD/Ford Foundation Youths Can Lead project in Edo state. A total of 51 amazing stories of change. An interesting read. Enjoy the voyage through the project results.

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PARTICIPANTS WHO CONTESTED FOR ELECTION

1. From passivity to becoming the Party Chairman of Etsako West L.G.A in Edo State

Centre LSD capacity building on Youth Can Lead reawakened my passion for active participation in politics and political party activities.

Politics was always my thing. I have always been very active in politics until 2014, when I indicated interest to contest for the position of the House of Representative from my constituency, Etsako West. I thought I had all it took to win the election. I prepared so hard to win but unfortunately, I was short-changed by my party. I was told I didn't have the well withal to match the opponent from the ruling party. My political party felt, I had no money to throw around to match the opponent from the ruling party. I was dismissed and a richer candidate was adopted by my party.

I was disappointed and felt cheated. I lost hope in politics and became uninterested in political parties. From 2014, I abandoned politics and party activities. I became less concerned about who becomes aspirant or occupies political seats. As 2019 elections approached, I was still indifference. All these changed when I encountered Centre LSD Youth Can Lead

me directly. From the teaching on campaign financing, savings and investment, leadership skills, active participation in politics as a youth, and the need for youths to take their place in leadership. This was a direct message to me. I picked it and ran with it. My perception changed. I again became interested in active participation in politics and not just an occasional visitor.



One of my key takeaways from the training, was the need to start from a lower level and climb up the political leader. So, 5 months (August 2017) after the Centre LSD training, I aligned with a political party and registered as a member. I became very active. I became a great mobiliser, mobilising supports for my party and the candidates. During that time,

the nomination form for the position of the ward chairman of the party was being sold. I indicated interest, bought the form, contested and won the position of the Chairman of Esatko West L.G.A, under the Alliance Congress Party of Nigeria.

I am taking it one step at a time as Centre LSD has taught us. From there I aspire to climb higher in the political ladder.

Johnson Ogbogho
Esatko West

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2. Centre LSD's Youth Can Lead Capacity Building, brought out the leader in me



For the first time in my life, I contested as an aspirant in a general election and for Edo State House of Assembly. The Centre LSD Youth Can Lead training brought out the undiscovered me and from then on, I have been soaring from coast to coast. After my contact with Centre LSD, I became a leader with the boldness and understanding of what I needed to know and do to be an effective and efficient leader. Within one year I contested for the Social Secretary of the Youth Council and the State House of Assembly.

Before the training with Centre LSD, I was never a card-carrying member of any political party. Although, I was aspiring to contest for the position of the Social Secretary for Edo State youth council, I never really took a step toward actualising that dream. The Centre LSD capacity building training inspired me and changed my orientation that youths can lead and that they need to take power and

opportunity. Immediately after the training, I purchased my form to contest for the Youth Council position. As we were taught at the training, I made my first move by paying a courtesy visit to the leaders of the National Youth Council in Edo Central and had the blessings of the leader. I got screened by the Congress Planning Committee (CPC) and the Electoral Committee and was successful. Thereafter, I began my campaign. The election for Edo State youth conference/election was first fixed for an earlier date and later postponed to Nov 20th, 2018. After the postponement, the election did not hold still.

Although I campaigned for the position of the Youth Council and got no results, because of the cancellation of the election, I decided to take a step higher. I identified with a smaller political party called Allied Congress Party of Nigeria (ACPN), my intension was to develop my political career from a smaller party. Fortunately, I was offered the ticket for the House of Assembly. I moved from just being in a party to becoming an active party card member and an aspirant for House of Assembly in Esan central local government area. From there, I kicked off my campaign. I visited the leaders of the party and got their blessings, campaigned from Door-to-Door in my constituency, did the mosquito campaign (Third party), social media engagement, etc.

Out of the candidates that contested for that position, I came out 4th. For me, this

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was a huge victory. That I could come out 4th against those money bags and the ruling party meant so much to me. I owe this victory to Centre LSD, who were the agent of this great change in my life and political career. With the knowledge impartation, I know I'm going somewhere.

Augustina Oyamendan
Edo State

3.How I emerged as the Unit Secretary of my political party

Imagine a country where things work, where you have 24 hours of uninterrupted electricity, a place where youths are gainfully employed and where there are no tribal disputes, I imagined all these after the Centre LSD training. The Centre LSD Youth Can Lead training changed my perception about politics and made me a voice in my community, using the knowledge I have gotten from it.

It is said that youths are the leaders of tomorrow, but this is not the case in Benin City. The reverse is the case, a 60years old man can be a youth leader. Before the Centre LSD's training, youths engagement in politics in my view and state was synonymous to thuggery, ballot box snatching, gun empowerment, etc. I used

to join people who often say things like 'Politics is a dirty game for dirty people.' I meant it, so I stayed aloof to politics. This for me painted a hopeless situation for youths engagements in politics in Edo state.

In 2018, a friend introduced me to Centre LSD Youth Can Lead training. This training and project gave birth to a fresh and new hope, which changed my perception of politics, that it is not dirty and it's not only for dirty people. From the training, I learnt that political power is the greatest power anyone can utilize to cause massive change of any place. I was inspired and motivated by many of the facilitators to take bold steps into politics. As a result of this motivation, I became more active in my political party. I began to actively participate in all the party activities, and this gave rise to my nomination as a Unit Executive and was later elected as the Unit Secretary. I got fully involved in politics after the Centre LSD's training as a secretary in my unit. I began to organise Door-to-Door campaign, talk shows to sensitise youths and party members to vote and organised a teenage programme for schools.

In May 2019, I organised a seminar for over 300 school students, it was tagged career day. Currently I run an NGO for teenagers. This is to equip and build their



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capacity to becoming future leaders. My introduction to Centre LSD has been awesome. The project Youth Can Lead has changed my perception and restored my hope for my country, Nigeria. Now I know I can make a change and that this change will count.

Thank you, Centre LSD, for this fresh hope.

Noble Isaka

Edo State

4. My election story: I conquered my fear of 12 years and contested for the State House of Assembly at the 2019 general election.

After twelve years, I finally contested in an election for the State House of Assembly for Etsako West Constituency II Edo State, and became the first female to have done so in my community. This was a dream come true. If not for Centre LSD's training, that changed my life, redirected my zeal and fired up my passion, this wouldn't have been a reality.

I have been working for politicians since 2007, when I became active in politics. In every election, I was at the fore front of mobilisation. I worked rigorously and tirelessly for every candidate of my party. I

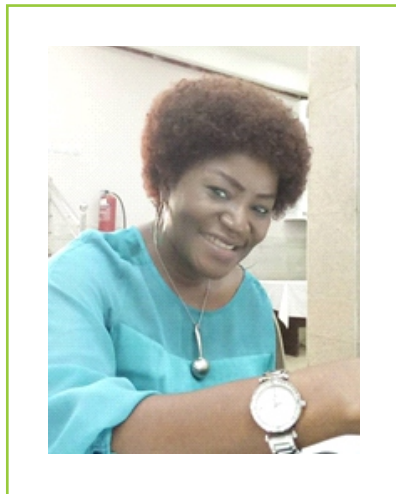
saw everyone good enough for elective position and never considered myself as deserving of any. Unfortunately, I had no courage to contest. I had several opportunities thrown at me to contest in my party, but I declined, because I thought I lacked what it took to lead. For twelve years, I dreamt and planned, but unfortunately I had no courage to actualise the dream.

In 2017, I heard about a proposed training by Centre LSD on Youth Can Lead. The training targeted youths who wanted to contest for political positions. I got interested and registered for it. That singular training was the turning point in my life. The training addressed my fear of going into politics. I became emboldened. I finally conquered my fears. Before my encounter with Centre LSD, I have never contested in my entire life.

2019 was my first time, although I have been working for politicians since 2007, yet never had the courage to contest, even when the party pushed for me to contest, I refused because "I never had the liver," and funding was one huge fear I had.

After the three days training by Centre LSD, I conquered

my fear and launched out into active politics. I made up my mind, to put into use what I had learnt from Centre LSD and demonstrated it. My zeal was fired up, everyone around me knew something had changed about me. Because of my great zeal and the advocacy visits made by



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Centre LSD to the various party leaders, the presidential aspirant of my party, Labour Party directed the state to give me a free nomination form. This was the first-time nomination form was given to anyone free in my party. Immediately after that, I mobilised CSOs, friends, family, allies, etc. I went to my constituency and indicated my interest to run for Edo State House of Assembly and got their blessings.

Immediately after the courtesy visits, I built my political structure and campaign team in my community. I carried out *community to community* campaign, produced 30 banners and 500 posters. I mobilised and campaigned like I had never done before. At the end of the election, I got votes from different communities (Iyuku, Ayua, Elele, Jattu etc). Although I narrowly lost out at the election, this first attempt gave me a leap. I learnt from Centre LSD, how to explore alternative sources for funding an election. I got contributions from friends and families.

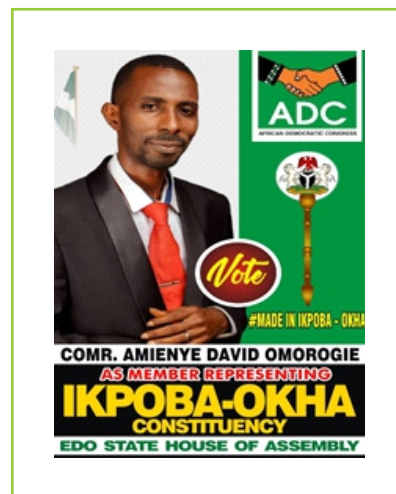
My three days encounter with Centre LSD led to a new me. Centre LSD changed me, built my courage and guided me to take a bold step to contest for the Edo State House of Assembly at the 2019 general election. Indeed “All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them”.

Comrade Rosemary Omokheowa
Labour Party

5. The Made in Ikpoba Okha Agenda 2019: I successfully contested for Edo State House of Assembly

In Benin, they say “ÄMENAGHAWON,” meaning “What you are destined for, does not pass you by.” This was my story and encounter with Centre LSD Youth Can Lead Capacity Building. I did not know about the training until when my principal sent me to represent him and read his speech at the opening ceremony. That singular obedience marked the turning point in my life.

I have been actively involved in politics since 2006. My political career started with being the Financial Secretary of National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) Zone B. I have been an integral part of major political parties in Edo State. I was a pioneer member of Action Congress (AC) now All Progressives Congress (APC) in Edo State. I championed the youth and student mobilisation for the candidacy of Adams Oshomole and Atiku Abubakar in 2006 and 2007. I became secretary of Zone 15 Ward 5 Ikpoba-Okha PDP from 2012-2017.



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In these twelve years before the Centre LSD training, I had supported every party candidate from my party. I mobilised massively for their emergence and served in various positions and capacity. The one thing that I never did was to contest for a state political position. I was laid back because I had no technical know-how, I was inexperienced in campaigning for myself and selling my vision to the electorates. I simply had no will to actualise the dream, even if I had one. Each time it crossed my mind, the fear of failure was bigger than my dream. This kept me in the same spot politically for twelve years.

Providence smiled on me in June 2018, when I was sent to the Centre LSD training in Edo State to represent my Party (African Democratic Congress) Chairman. I was allowed to stay back to attend the three days capacity building programme. The programme exposed me to a lot of things including election financing, mobilisation, etc. Most importantly, I learnt how to draft a breathtaking manifesto and maximise the power of social media in election campaign. The lecture from Dr Otiye particularly jolted me out of my sleep. There and then, I decided to contest for Edo State House of Assembly, representing Ikpoba-Okha. As at the time I made this decision, I did not have up to N100,000 in my account. But I had a dream worth millions of naira.

Immediately after the training, I purchased my nomination form, began

fundraising to finance my campaign, set up a robust social media campaign platform, used the various social media platforms to raise funds campaign for votes, and appeared on various conventional media (Tv, radio, newspaper, EBS radio Nigeria) to drive home my manifesto. "The made in Ikpoba-Okha Agenda", helped me to gain recognition from the two major parties (APC&PDP) in the state. Additionally, I established political structures within the 10 wards of my constituency in Ikpoba Okha. Today I'm a well sought after political figure in my constituency.

Fortunately, I won my primaries and was declared the candidate and flag bearer for the election. I came 4th out of over 91 political parties/candidates that contested for the position in 2019, without a single vote buying. I did community services during my campaign(free medical treatment for pregnant women and children, got support from the opposition party, free cosmetic products for women, wrappers and clothes.

Although I did not emerge the overall winner, I have identified some of the weak points in my campaign. I'm sure that in the next election I will do better. I have seen the lapses during the election in 2019. It is now time to go back to a bigger platform and I'm already planning for 2023 for Edo State House of Assembly.

Centre LSD gave me a leap, I'm grateful.

Comrade Amienye Omorogie
African Democratic Congress (ADC)

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6. Centre LSD brought me to Limelight: I contested as a candidate of Edo State House of Assembly (Part 1)

My encounter with Centre LSD was the beginning of my breakthrough in politics as a youth and this changed my orientation about politics, I realised that indeed youths can lead.

I have never been too keen about politics or contesting for election, talkless of contesting for the State House of Assembly. For a long-time, my understanding of youths participation was that, youths have always been used for political thuggery during electoral processes. Although more than 40% of the population constitute the youths, yet we are not included in elective positions and are excluded from participation in politics. Youths were seen as less important in the political system. Also, the 35% affirmative action for women and youths in politics was also not actively observed in many states, including Edo State. So, my fear of participating in politics was further deepened by the challenges youths face regarding funding, mobilisation and other campaign plans and strategies.

It is true when they say, "What will be, will be." This popular saying paints a perfect picture of my encounter with Centre LSD. I

was far away in Dubai when the Youth Capacity Building Training was organised in Edo State. I did not hear about it and never knew there was a Centre LSD until that day. Julius Robbison Idahosa, one of the participants at the training, identified me after the training. According to him, during the training, all the characteristics of a good candidate, as taught there fit my description and he thought I needed to hear some of the things, he had learnt from the training. He did a step-down training for me, and I must confess, I learnt a lot.

What I learnt from Centre LSD as regard fund raising, evaluation, mobilisation, canvassing, holding townhall meetings were all put into practice and they worked for me.

After gaining knowledge from the Centre LSD programme, I mustered the courage to contest as the candidate of Edo State House

of Assembly Oredo-West Constituency under the platform Mass Action Joint Alliance (MAJA). I picked a nomination form, did primaries and was given the mandate as a candidate in the Edo State House of Assembly Oredo-West Constituency 2019 general election. I flagged off my campaign, set-up a campaign budget/platform, organised a fund-raising party, printed publicity material – posters, banners, face caps, polythene bag (customized), handbills, did publications in the press-newspaper;



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punch, ThisDay vanguard, sun, expanded my Publicity via social media handles; Facebook, WhatsApp, text messages. I was also opportune to have a one on one interaction, meetings with traditional heads, religious leaders, etc. I also visited youths at football fields, Arewa community, marketplaces and schools.

Before the training I had no aspiration to run, but I caught the fire from Julius Robinson who was one of the participants, and the stepped down training he did for me and he also mentored me. Although I contested and lost, this opened a lot of opportunities for me. Centre LSD brought me to limelight.

Thank you, Centre LSD, for setting me up for greatness.

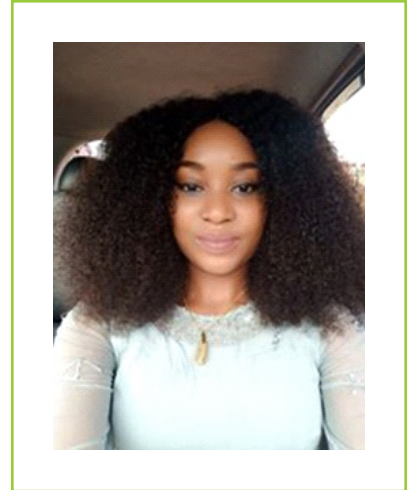
Charity Iziengbe Osifo
Edo State

7. Centre LSD brought me to Limelight: I contested as a candidate of Edo State House of Assembly (Part 2)

“An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.”—[Benjamin Franklin](#)

After my encounter with Centre LSD, I used all the knowledge acquired through all the mediums I learnt from the programme. I then contested for the Edo State House of Assembly. Although I didn't win, contesting was a progress for me. After contesting, I was made the

project manager of coalition of young female candidates. I organised women courtesy visit to the Minister of Women Affairs.



Because of this exposure, I began to frequent media interviews, expanded my sphere of influence/network. I'm now fully active in political programmes and projects both nationally and internationally. I now have several certificates of participation in some of these programmes and more to come.

One of such was the International Capacity Building for Women in Politics and Leaders Training Workshop organised by the office of the Wife of the Governor, African Women Empowerment Guild (AWEG) and Dedimus Protestatem-Amanda Sawyer. This meeting took place in New York USA and was held on 2-5 September 2019. I was nominated to participate because of the active role I now play in my ward, unit and in the party system of Edo State. Centre LSD launched me into greatness. Today, I have become a reference point to young female aspirants. The interesting part is that youths are willing to work with me, some have also joined me now in my ambition to contest

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in subsequent future elections. I have had a lot of opportunities after the Centre LSD training. Centre LSD handed over the batten to me and I intend to do same for others. Thank you, Centre LSD for this lifetime encounter.

Charity Iziengbe Osifo
Edo State

8. A giant awakened: I contested for Edo State House of Assembly for the first time and the first female in my party.

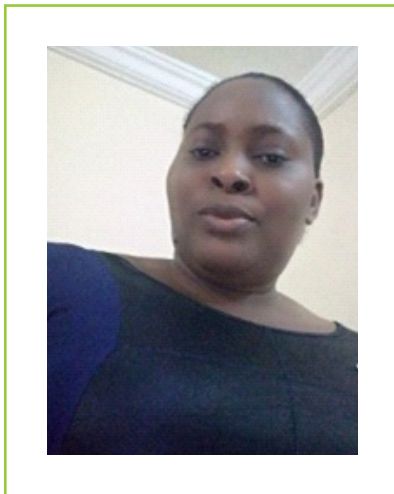
Centre LSD turned my dream of being a politician into a reality. I chose to bridge the gap of women and youth exclusion in my political party, by picking the form and contesting in the 2019 general elections. Tony Robbins once said that, "It is in your moments of decisions that your destiny is shaped." Centre LSD/ Ford Foundation capacity building was the platform that was instrumental to waking up the giant in me. Before the training, I was a miniature, naïve and had no real political ambition. The training made me feel like I had slept for too long and x-rayed the great part of me that I ever knew existed.

Before I attended the Centre LSD's training, women and youths inclusion was

almost 100% in my party. Political engagements of the youths were mainly for mobilisation and security (Thuggery). This was so bad that about 90% of the youths were unaware of the constitution and manifesto of the party. High money politics, discrimination, election violence, vote buying, rejection of the electorate after election and unimplemented policies by the elected was a common factor.

In April 2018, I was selected by Centre LSD as a participant for a three days capacity building workshop. Those three days were the most amazing days of my entire life. The teachings from the different lecturers helped drive home the point. Each lecture was like a blow from a hammer, that nailed the message in. The welcome address from Dr. Otive enumerating the key importance of youths in leadership, in order to address national challenges, was impressive. From the teaching, on the need to raise youths to participate in politics; development of the manifesto to economic/financial base for campaign, were all very impactful.

After the training, I picked a form, came to my constituency and organised a free health outreach, met and got the blessing of the elders in my constituency, began my campaign, produced poster flyers, banners; conducted social media campaigns; organised townhall meetings,



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selected and trained my agents, trained the youths in my constituency against election violence and vote buying, In February 2019, I contested for the Edo State House of Assembly, representing Oredo East, under Labour Party. Although I did not win the election, it didn't pull me down, but rather opened opportunities for recognition for me within and outside the state.

I suddenly became a celebrity of some sort. I began to get invitations from so many political youth groups/organisations like ActionAid, Enough is Enough, etc as a resource person and this is still on going. I became a household name amongst youth bodies in Benin environ and among the civil society.

Today I am standing tall as a giant. All thanks to Centre LSD

Mrs. Grace Ese Obakina

Caring Heart Initiative for Advocacy Development and Empowerment

9. For the first time, I participated in a general election as an aspirant

All thanks to Centre LSD for organising the 2017 capacity building, that built my skills and confidence and spurred me to take my first bold step in contesting in the 2019 general elections as an aspirant.

Although I have been in my political party for years now, I have never contested for such a high position. I often see that

position as sacred and for only selected privileged people. But after the impartation from Centre LSD Youth Can Lead training, I became emboldened and decided it was time to take the bull by the horn. My first step after the training was my declaration at my party to run for Edo State House of Assembly, in the 2019 general elections, to represent Egor LGA. After my declaration, I took another step and met with the leaders of the party at the L.G.A and ward levels. Thereafter I started organising ward campaign committee from ward 1 to ward 10 of Egor LGA. At that time, I also began meeting with ward member delegates that were going to vote at the primary.

Within months, I had gathered a very strong momentum that couldn't be ignored. I became a strong aspirant and opposition to other aspirants from my party for the same position. Being the only youth among others and with the rate at which I was climbing the ladder, it became impossible to be unnoticed. Suddenly, the leaders started having interest in me because they saw I was young, determined and focused. After my successful declaration, I formed a formidable campaign team and we successfully campaigned from ward 1 to ward 10 in Egor LGA. This robust campaign gave me great publicity within and outside my ward. Within my ward, I got the support of majority of the market women leaders, community leaders, church leaders and many others. Outside my ward, I was recognised by the "Not Too Young to Run"

Raising New Generations of Leaders in Edo State

movement as an aspirant in Edo State and was invited to Abuja.

Unfortunately, my aspiration ended when I was called by my party chieftains to step down because my party was a leaders party and also because they said that the man who actually became the candidate had been promised the position I was contesting for, after the last election. In that meeting I was nominated to work with him after the primaries in my ward and I became his ward coordinator and general organiser.

Although my aspiration was short-lived, I was proud that I made my first attempt. All thanks to Centre LSD and Ford Foundation.

Clement
Edo State



10. Transformation 2019; how I broke the jinx in my family and became the first aspirant in a general election

Centre LSD's training has improved my character as a person, my vision and view about election and election processes. It has also helped me deal with the fear of the unknown.

I first heard of Centre LSD training from my National Youth Leader Mr. Purpose. I have always had the ambition to contest for the Edo State House of Assembly. What I did not have, was adequate knowledge on how to actualise the dream. I have been in the political sphere since 2011, first as a secretary, vice chairman and chairman of the National Youth Council of Nigeria Egor Chapter. In 2017, I contested for the position of a councilor under the platform of Democratic Alternative (DA) in Ikpoba Okha L.G.A, Ward 08.

After the capacity building with Centre LSD, I decided to take a step further to contest in the 2019 general elections, because I wanted to be part of the decision makers. I saw the need to be more active in my party activities, so as to have a say in the affairs of my people. In 2019, I contested for Edo State House of Assembly Ikpoba-Okha L.G.A under Young Progressive Party (YPP). Since then, I have mobilised voters for registration; by the grace of God, I was able to take about 25-30 persons to the registration centre and they were registered and collected their permanent voters cards. I started paying

Raising New Generations of Leaders in Edo State

my dues in YPP. I contested as a councilor. Through the capacity building of Centre LSD, I became more exposed, compared to the way I was before I came for the training. This bold step I took, have me gain more respect and popularity.

The whole problem of family fear, intimidation and others, died after the capacity building and I became bolder and more courageous to take the bull by the horns. I became the person that I never thought I will be and a better politician, than I ever had in mind.

Osahon Jolly
Egor



11. Centre LSD woke my passion for politics and redirected my steps; I won as the secretary of Ward II Akoko, Edo State



I contested and won as the Secretary in my party All Progressive Congress (APC) After the Centre LSD/ Ford Foundation training on Youth Can Lead, my vision of contesting was awakened. Although I had the desire to contest, it was passive and the way to go about it had been vague until my encounter with the Centre LSD.

I have always taken the issues of politics very lightly. I was not really a “politics person”. My ideology about politics was go to polling unit, vote, discuss election outcomes with friends and canvass for support for my candidate. But after the Centre LSD training, my thought process was realigned. I learned so much about leadership, financing and planning for election campaign. This strengthened my resolve and I decided to actively participate in politics thereafter. From the Centre LSD training, I learnt the need to plan elections and start small and then grow-up. Instead of contesting for ESHA, I weighed my options and because of the zoning factor, I decided to go for the elective position in my ward. My first step was to meet with APC party members in

Raising New Generations of Leaders in Edo State

Ward II Akoko, Edo State and declare my interest to contest in the 2019 elections.

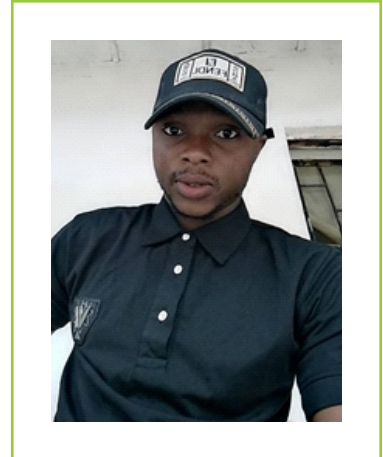
After my declaration to contest at my ward level, I began to campaign within my party. Youths and women were mobilised for the elective congress, where I contested and won the position of Secretary General of my ward. After my victory, I began to campaign for my party using door to door sensitisation on registration and collection of permanent voters card. Since I became the secretary, I have mentored youths to take leadership positions. In the 2019 elections, I mentored a Social Democratic Party (SDP) contestant and he emerged as a candidate in the 2019 elections. I have begun to strategize, by meeting with various youth groups in my ward and beyond to take-over come 2023.

Since my encounter with Centre LSD, I have made a lot of progress. Through my efforts in sensitisation and campaign in my party, there was a noticeable increase in youths participation in my ward in the 2019 general elections. Apart from the massive turnout of voters on election day, I also stood out in the monitoring of the election through voluntary youth organisation and NGOs. My confidence level and reorientation has enhanced my political ideology.

Thank you, Centre LSD and Ford Foundation. You have help chart my political course.

Okomayin Peter
Edo State

13. I emerged as the Mobilisation Officer of Edo Youth Congress (EYC)



The Centre LSD Youths Can Lead

capacity building programme has put skills in my hands and since then, I have soared like an eagle with an unstoppable speed.

I have always been a youth politician, right from my school days as one-time Secretary General of the Confederated Union of Niger Delta Forum (CUNDF) and many other positions. In 2018, I applied and was shortlisted to participate in the Centre LSD Youth Can lead capacity building/training. That singular three days brought out the hidden skills and talents in me. The teachings from the training built my problem analysis skill. I began to analyze the existing political system/structure in my ward and local government area and realised that it was bedeviled with a lot of challenges and that there were lot of lapses in Orhionmwon L.G. A. In the training, I was taught that youths can lead and I decided to begin the change from the grassroot like I was taught in the training. I bought a form for the mobilisation officer, Edo Youths Congress, I campaigned, built a closer relationship with my constituency and with my knowledge of effective campaign

Raising New Generations of Leaders in Edo State

principles from the Centre LSD's training, I emerged the winner "I dusted 3."

Since then, I have mobilised youths for several meetings within and outside the state. Centre LSD has made out of me a disciple of youth's engagement in politics.

Marvist Dickson
Edo State

13. I participated in the 2019 general elections as a candidate

Centre LSD fired me up and for the first time in my life, I contested at a general election. With the experience gathered, it was a great start in my political career.

I have always wanted to lead and thus in 2007, I had a strong desire to be in the leadership of my department, so I contested and became the Director of Socials in the department of Banking and Finance, in the University of Benin. After my graduation, I wanted to be one of the leaders in Edo State. I nursed my political ambition until 2013, when I decided to get involved in politics and contested for an elective position. I didn't want to start with the big parties. I wanted to contest in a smaller party, where I could be recognised. In 2018, before the Centre LSD Youths Can Lead training, I contested for Vice Chairman in Oredo but lost. Later that year, I was nominated to participate in the Centre LSD's training. After the training, I noticed there were things I did

not get right which could be why I lost in 2018.

The training exposed me to a lot of skills and idea I never knew. I had a clear view about leadership, public speaking and fund raising. After the training, I made up my mind to become an active member of my political party and be a card-carrying member (Green Party). I began to attend party meetings at different levels, paid my dues in my political party for 10 months. I fully participated in party rallies, sensitised and enlightened my ward on electoral processes, etc. At the appropriate time, I declared my intention to run for the position of House or Representative in National Assembly. In 2019 election, I made my first attempt and although I did not win, I learnt a lot.

This was a great first step in my political career and I'm grateful to Centre LSD and Ford Foundation for the knowledge that made this happen.

Isaac Esesoyakpo
Edo State



**PARTICIPANTS
WHO WERE
APPOINTED**

Raising New Generations of Leaders in Edo State

14. From a peasant to a political appointee

Centre LSD gave me a platform to shine, showed me my real worth, far more than I have ever seen or priced myself. Centre LSD became the channel through which my family broke out of poverty.

Growing up, I was told that politics was only for the money bags of the society and it was a dirty game that only dirty people play. From my little experience, I discovered that youths participation in politics were only limited to thuggery, ballot snatching, etc. The high cost of nomination form was also one disincentive for the youths. With these, I told myself, politics was not for me. The reason being that, coupled with reasons I have already listed, I'm from a very poor family and have no political godfather.

In 2017, I heard about a training for youths that was to take place in Edo State. Out of curiosity, I applied for it and was invited to participate in the training. That Youth- Can-Lead training changed my orientation completely. I came to realise that politics was not dirty and that youths can lead only if they position themselves and prepare for leadership.

My first move was immediately after one of the resource persons- Ihiwere stepped out of the hall after his lecture, I followed him out and humbly requested for his email address. Maybe you are wondering what a timid unemployed youth will be doing with an email address. Days after

the training, I sent him a mail and introduced myself, what I do and what I can do during his campaign for the 2019 election. Few days after, he responded and gave me time to meet with him. At the meeting, he advised that I use the next five years to build myself, financial base and political strength. Thereafter, I became an active member of his campaign team.

Being in his campaign team opened up opportunities for me to attend several government trainings and meetings. One of such meetings, was the start-up grant meeting organised by the Edo State

Government. From there, I again put my networking skill to use and was able to get 4-hectares of land, free of charge for Agric purposes. After some months, my farm was assessed, and I got high commendation, which led to the Commissioner for Wealth Creation, Employment and Co-operation to pick an interest in my work, and later appointed me as a Technical Aide. My duties as his aide

were to schedule his appointments, meetings, arrange his itinerary, book his flights, etc.

Before the Centre LSD capacity building, I was a timid, unemployed and unrepresentable youth. After the training, I became not only a political appointee, but also an employer and outspoken young woman.

Thanks to Centre LSD for this great opportunity and the transformation.



Oriakhi Dorcas
Edo State

Raising New Generations of Leaders in Edo State

15. I got appointed as one of the Board of Trustee of PAN Africa Health Initiative Nigeria.

My contact with Centre LSD's training on Youth can Lead positioned me for greatness and in less than a year after the training, I was appointed as one of the Board of Trustee of PAN Africa Health Initiative Nigeria. CLSD's knowledge was the scaffold to becoming this emerging great leader, I see in me.

I have often heard that "dreams come true" but never have I thought that it will come this early in my life. Before I encountered Centre LSD's training, I was neither a development worker nor a politician. But after the three days knowledge impartation by the Centre, I became both. I Contested for Edo state House of Assembly and became a BOT.

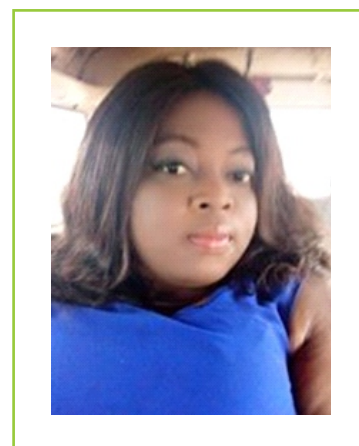
After the 2019 general elections where, I contest for the Edo State House of Assembly and came 4th position among the candidates that contested for the same position in my constituency. I got a high recommendation from one of the stakeholders in the state, who doubled as the Country Secretary and a former member of the PAN Africa Health Initiative Nigeria. According to him, my zeal and heart for service was mind-blowing and thus needed to be harnessed and maximised.

As a result of this recommendation, I was nominated as a Board of Trustee of PAN Africa Health Initiative Nigeria. Shortly after that nomination, driven by my

passion, I began to introduce innovations to the organisation. I advocated and attracted selfless members into the initiative. This again, made the organisation to choose me as the team lead that will organise the 2019 health conference in Nigeria, with over 50 countries planning to attend.

I have become a shining star; I have reached in less than a year places and positions several of my peers could not reach in 10 years. All thanks to Centre LSD for these.

Augustina Oyamendan
Edo State



Raising New Generations of Leaders in Edo State

16. 2018, an unforgettable year in my political career: I became a Project Monitoring Aide for the first time in my life

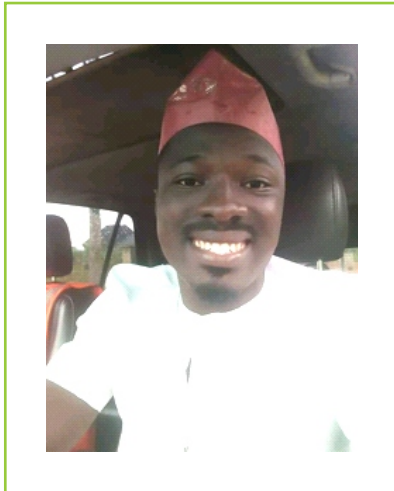
Centre LSD brought out the leadership capacity in me. The Youth Can Lead training made me discover that political power will not fall on my lap, but that I need to actively get into politics and seize every opportunity that comes my way.

Before the Centre LSD training, I was a member of the opposition party in Edo State. I was just a very passive member with no input nor contributions to any of the party's activities. I was not making any political progress in the party and yet was too afraid to join another party. But after the Centre LSD leadership training, the giant in me was awakened. After listening to Julius Ihonwere that "leaders need leaders to lead them", I joined Unit 9, Ward 4, Ovia North East. I got the boldness I needed to join the ruling party. Today I'm the party youth representative.

One of the key lessons for me at the training, was the need to start from a lower political level and climb upward. As a result of this, I dropped the idea to join in the race for Edo State House of Assembly for Ovia Constituency 1. This was one of the best decisions, I have made in my political career. All thanks to Centre LSD. In less than 6 months in the party, I got a federal appointment. My active

engagement in the party has availed me access to most party leaders and commissioners. Today, I am celebrated by everyone as if I'm among the party founders.

The beauty of this is that I'm among the board of trustees and I single handedly host party meetings now. I have become a decision maker in my party. In 2019, I was the face of my L.G.A youth in my party. with all these local moves, funding meetings, calling and sponsoring townhall meeting, I won my unit for my party. This



is the first of its kind (281 APC, 9 PDP). Today, you don't mention my ward youths without me. I have also been endorsed by the party leaders as the next councilor for my ward.

I am eagerly working and looking forward to winning the councillorship race in my ward, come 2021.

Thank you, Centre LSD, for redirecting me to the right path in my political career.

Osadiaye Eseosa
Edo State

Raising New Generations of Leaders in Edo State

17. Centre LSD training paved my way to be a political leader in my community

My dream of becoming a leader in my community became a reality. The training by Centre LSD on the Youth Can Lead project gave me the knowledge, skills and boldness and today, I have become one of the political leaders in my community "IKPESHI", Ward 8, Akoko Edo LGA I'm now a Ward Executive.

Like so many other youths, I have not been very active in grassroot politics. I can say I barely participated, because the youths have never been considered as leaders even at the community level. The elders see us as mere figure heads. Although I have always believed that grassroots participation is a catalyst to elective/appointive political positions, taking the step to participate was a herculean task for me.

But this changed when I encountered Centre LSD's training. At the training, I learnt that as a youth, the first place to begin my political career was at the grassroot and then climb upward in the political ladder. The training taught me that leadership is identifying a need/gap and filling this gap. These teachings challenged me into venturing into grassroot politics. After the training, I began a vigorous mobilisation in my community ahead of the 2019 general election. With my new popularity and

capitalising on the weak central leadership in the community, I started hosting general and leaders' meetings in my house with refreshment provided by me. My voluntary leadership was thereafter endorsed till date. My political ward has made me the welfare officer of the ward in APC, Akoko Edo. This achievement has set me a step higher politically in the ruling party APC in Edo State with the mind of vying for an office soonest.



With my success as the new leader of my community Ikpeshi in Ward 8, Akoko Edo LGA and also as a Ward Executive known to the party members and leaders from the LGA and state I'm now in a better platform to vie for political positions soonest.

Centre LSD through her Ford Foundation project made my dream a reality.

Yamah Omo
Edo State

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18. I became a State Coordinator for President Muhammadu Buhari (PMB) on his political structure in the 2019 election called Door to Door Campaign President.

Centre LSD's training built my charisma, enhanced my communication and problem solving skills, "If not for the lessons I learnt here, I would have experience challenges in delivering on my mandate in the position" of the coordinator of the PMB Door-to-Door campaign.

I have been an active actor/player in politics for many years. Although I have made visible contributions in my political party as a youth, I have never been saddled with political responsibilities like I was in the 2019 elections. Before now, I could say my ability to multi-task and handle complex task and assignment was at a very low ebb. But all these changed after my encounter with Centre LSD Youth Can Lead Capacity Building Training funded by Ford Foundation.

In 2018, I heard about Centre LSD Youth Can Lead training. I was fortunately opportune to participate in these three days of mind-blowing experience and transformation. Within these three days, I acquired knowledge with the speed of a lighting. Every session of that training was an eye opener. I suddenly identified some gaps that needed to be addressed in my life. I decided to sharpen my leadership

skills, so I can be able to compete favorably with other members of the party.

After the training, my party APC, had her primary elections and I was called by some leaders of the party to handle the position of the state coordinator for PMB. This I gladly accepted because of my preparedness by the Centre LSD's training. During the period of this assignment, I was able to mobilise 2000 active members and 18 LGA Coordinators and their Executives for the PMB Door to



Door Campaign across 198 Wards of Edo State. My excellent performance in this assignment birthed another one and I was nominated as a Grassroot Mobiliser for Tinubu 2023 in Edo State and in Jan 2019, I was elected as Secretary General of this group, a futurist nomination indeed.

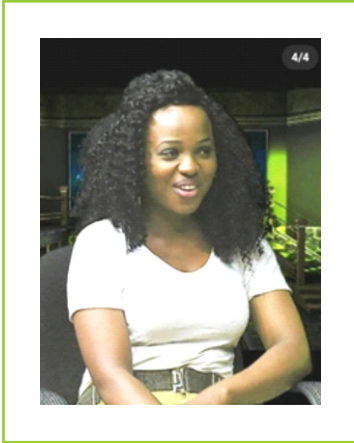
The training by Centre LSD has actually helped me to build my political life and also it has taught me how to build structures and participate in election. Through my position as the coordinator of the PMB Door to Door Campaign, I had opportunity to make decisions that will benefit the people during the 2019 elections.

Thanks to Centre LSD for giving me the platform to grow my political career.

Marvist Dickson
Edo State



Raising New Generations of Leaders in Edo State



19. From a bread seller to a millionaire. (Part 1): Centre LSD changed my life and gave it a new meaning. Growing up was tough.

Trying to make ends meet was a huge burden in my family of five girls and five boys. My mother was a bread seller and my father, a peasant farmer. As a daughter of a bread seller, I became a bread seller myself. Our case was a pathetic one. To sell my wares, I ran daily after buses travelling the Benin-Agbor road to hawk breads under the sun, or in the rain. Although I was not contented with this kind of life of suffering, I had no one to turn to. After my secondary education, I longed to go to the university, so I started volunteering for an NGO. I spent some of my leisure time with them. My story however changed in 2017, when I met Centre LSD, through one Mr Purpose, who sent me a link to apply for a training on Youth Can Lead. I said to myself, "There is no harm in trying".

The lectures at the training were like they were designed just for me. I learnt a lot including savings, investment, how to position myself for opportunities, how to market myself, etc. From then on, I started marketing myself more than my bread. Before then, I used to say, "when I start working or when I have big money, I will start saving". All that changed after I

listened to Dr Otive's teaching on savings. After the programme, I bought a book and a piggy bank and started saving N1500 every week and did that for 60 weeks. As a poor bread seller, that was a huge sum for me. It was my first time of having such savings. At the lecture, we were taught not just to save, but also how to invest it. So, again I took a bold step got one hectare of land and went into farming of tomatoes, maize, cucumber, etc. Within a year, my 1 hectare increased to 5 (I got a gift of 4 hectares from my mentor). I became financially independent. I no longer burdened my parents for anything. My story changed. All thanks to Centre LSD and Ford Foundation.

Dorcas Anointed
Edo State

20. Centre LSD taught me how to Fish

After the training by Centre LSD'S, I became financially independent. I realised I needed to build my financial base to be able to compete favorably with other contestants.

I have always been interested in politics and have been nursing the dream of contesting for a political office in the future. But finance was always been a big issue. Before 2017, I thought to contest in an election, one of the things you need is to get a sponsor and that guarantees sure supply of funds. But in 2018, at the Ford Foundation Youth Can Lead training, Centre LSD changed my orientation.

Raising New Generations of Leaders in Edo State

The highlights for me at the training was Dr Otiye's session on investment and entrepreneurship. The key learnings for me, was that every aspirant needs to build his/her financial base. He emphasised the need to be financially viable and stable before attempting to contest for political position. According to him, in that way, you can foot some of your campaign bills before soliciting for help.



the party meetings. I no longer struggle with others in the bid to collect transportation for meetings. I now have a voice in the party as a result of my financial contributions.

I know I'm on the right track and I will be financially strong enough for my 2021 ambition of contesting for the councillor of my ward.

Thank you, Centre LSD, for redirecting my steps

That teaching was apt. It looked like that was all I needed to turn my fortune around. Immediately after the teaching, I decided to postpone my plans to contest for the Edo State House of Assembly. The teachings were eye opening, I realised that I needed more than an ambition to run for office. I decided to build my economic stamina before building my political career.

Shortly after the training, I decided to harness the opportunity that has always been there, but I didn't see. After joining a political party, I realised that for every party meeting, there were refreshments and the like. I also noticed that people often look for places to cool off from time to time. So, I decided to cease this opportunity and so, in 2019, I opened a Bar/Restaurant. Still within 2019, I added more business ventures. These are Adorable Classic Saloon and Adorable Catering and Event World. Since then, I have become financially independent. I now can single handedly sponsor some of

Osadiaye Eseosa
Edo State

21. From a political parasite to an independent leader, Centre LSD prepared me for my new job as a Lecturer.

After the training by Centre LSD, I became bold and this spoke for me during my last interview. I got a job as an Assistant Lecturer (lecturer in histology and pathology) in Ambrose Alli University Ekpoma College of Medicine. Prior to now, I never really thought I could chiefly take responsibility of my needs and some of my followers. Before the Centre LSD training, I thought timidity was a sign of loyalty. This changed after my encounter with the Centre.

Early in 2018, a friend of mine told me about Centre LSD, I checked their website to know more about the organisation. I read their aims, objectives and mission.

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Although the programme was about youth participation in politics, I decided to participate all the same. And this programme completely

changed my philosophy and mindset about life in general.

The programme talked about financial stability and professional excellence. After my National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) all I knew as a young politician was to be a political slave, following leaders everywhere to make a living. I discovered that being a parasite automatically attract sycophancy and makes one's idea useless. The programme opened my eyes and made me an independent leader. I submitted my CV and I did very well during the orals. More of our youths are now very active in politics especially in wards. I can comfortably and convincingly call for a meeting and give directive. I'm no longer that timid youth I was before my encounter with the Centre. Now, I'm not just a leader, but an academic and political leader with a difference.

Youths involvement in politics will move our nation forward. Financial dependence to some extent is supreme. Now youths of 30-35 years can also sit at the podium to address the people and as youths, we have

the brain to lead in all spheres of life especially in politics. Thank you, Centre LSD. If I have this opportunity again, I will grab it with both hands.

Asibor Ernest
Edo State

**Participants who
Facilitated
Meetings, Trainings,
Workshops and
Other Programmes**

Raising New Generations of Leaders in Edo State

22. From a bread seller to a Millionaire. (Part 2)

I suddenly found my joy. I wanted to share what Centre LSD has taught me with other youths, so during my National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in Taraba State, I organised a capacity building for some young persons in Taraba State vying for public offices using the Youth Can Lead knowledge. This was aired by a TV station in Taraba State. I also extended this teaching to the church youths and the clips and pictures were posted on my social media handles. That singular post opened a vista of opportunities for me. On August 12, 2018, I was invited as one of the resource persons to the “African for Africa” programme at Sheraton in Abuja. This was in commemoration of the International Youths Day; I was invited to speak on “the importance of youths participation in the electoral process in Nigeria”. It was organised by BLW incorporated. Over 1500 youths were in attendance and they made a pledge to register, collect their PVCs and vote in the 2019 general election. That was my first time of entering Sheraton, speaking to such great audience, and on such a large platform.

In January 2019, we did an assessment of the youths that attended the International Youths Day, over 80% of them collected their PCV and over 50% of them voted in the 2019 general elections and some of

them for the first time ever (a copy, proof of the assessment).



Centre LSD beautified my life, made me a millionaire, financially independent, a resource person, an employer, and a presentable young lady. My life changed for the better. I owe the Centre a great deal.

Dorcas Anointed
Edo State

23. Akugbe 2018: The birth of the first Youth Submit organised by a youth in Edo state.

Centre LSD/ Ford Foundation project changed my mind set and jolted me from my comfort zone. The capacity building on the Youths Can Lead came at the right time.

In a small local government area in Edo State, a patriotic youth was born. One with passion for his people. From a tender age, I had a dream to change the narrative of youth's exclusion in my local government area and thought of doing so by organising a youth summit for my people, particularly the youths. Although I have nursed this dream for a long time, I had no drive nor adequate knowledge of how to go about it. As at that time, youth's exclusion from my local government area was at an all-time high, youths were excluded from political and appointive positions. Leadership we

Raising New Generations of Leaders in Edo State

were told was for the elders. Contesting for any elective position means you must have a godfather, be a member of a cult or be very rich. The appointive positions were equally out for only the highest bidder.

This was unfortunately the narrative for so many years and it kept Ovia South underdeveloped and backward. This was because the youths that are the bedrock of the society were not given a chance. Unfortunately, some of them have and were beginning to lose hope. I wanted to renew their hopes. I wanted to channel my passion to change the narrative and ignite the fire that will change Ovia South West and raise a new generation of leaders. In 2017, I got a call from the Executive Director of ANEEJ to attend a training organized by Centre LSD / Ford Foundation Youth Can Lead. This was to be organised by Centre LSD, with support from Ford Foundation. That training was the turning point.

The Youth Can Lead training was not only educative and enlightening, but also thought provoking. I was taught that I needed to build myself, be self-sufficient, etc, “after the training, I knew I was now fully prepared and equipped to take Ovia by storm”. There and then, I resolved to test-run all I have learnt, so I decided it was time to bring youths together and chat a new course. This birthed the First Edo State Youth Submit tagged “AKUGBE 2018”. The submit was organised two

weeks after the impartation from the Youth Can Lead capacity building. The submit was a congregation of youths from the 9 states of the Niger Delta-Namely Edo, Delta, Ondo, Bayelsa, Rivers, Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Abia and Imo States. To organise this submit, we partnered with Prince Harrison Ehimen Foundation and three participants got a grant for their business plan from him. Discussants on the programme were; Prof Eddy Eragbe Zonal Director of EFCC, Special Adviser of Economy and Strategy to the Governor, Attorney General of Edo State and the Governor, represented by the Commissioner for Youths.



. “In all my life, I have never seen or organised this kind of programme. A 200-capacity hall was filled and overflowing at 9:45am for a meeting of 10:00am. From the meeting, one of the resource persons gave three of the youths with the best business plans a grant of N100,000 each for business. One of them started a poultry with it.

Gbale Joseph
Edo State

Raising New Generations of Leaders in Edo State



24. The birth of the Edo State Progressive Movement

After the Centre LSD Youth Can Lead capacity building, my passion for good governance was awakened and since then, it has never remained the same. After the Akugbe 2018 Summit, organised two weeks after my passion was ignited by the Centre LSD training, the “Edo progressive movement” was established. This was birthed as a result of the need to go back to the grassroots to sensitise the electorate, particularly the youths on the need to shun election violence, vote buying and cast their votes in the 2019 general elections.

This movement visited churches and youths' gatherings, to sensitise them and canvass for their votes for youth aspirants in the 2019 elections. Having learnt from the Centre LSD training that politics is a collective effort, we adopted the youth candidates who were contesting from my local government area in the 2019 elections, irrespective of their party affiliation. I mobilised other youths and we moved from Door-to-Door to canvass for youths and women to support youths in the coming election. Some of our key messages were “your votes matters”; “every bag of rice you collect, is equal to a

portion of the road that will not be constructed,” etc.

We are glad that this movement contributed to the emergence of one of the youths from my local government area as a Federal House of Representative Member who is just 38 years old. We are getting there, and we are working towards a youth-led community, local government areas, states and even at the federal level. All these would not have been possible, but for the Centre LSD Youth Can Lead project.

Gbale Joseph
Edo state

25. How I became a phenomenon in Ovia South West and birthed the Ovia Arise Youth Movement

Centre LSD Youth Can Lead project brought out the activist in me. I have been a very active youth in my community, but never knew I had what it took to galvanise youths for good governance in my local government area;-Ovia South West. Shortly after the Edo Youth Summit, which I organised after the Centre LSD capacity building, I had the urge to do more. Seeing the positive responses of the youths during the summit and how they were rising as youth vanguards, I began to think of ways to sustain this momentum. This gave birth to the Ovia Arise Youth Movement, with endorsement of the current member of House of Representative, representing Ovia Federal

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Constituency.

The movement was to raise youths as vanguard of anticorruption in Ovia South local government area. It was to serve as a watch dog to checkmate the youths from the local government area who are now in both elective and appointive positions. This became necessary due to the popular belief that the youths of today are more corrupt than the old generation.

So far, this movement has:

- a. Led to the reinstatement of one female councillor who was unjustly suspended:
- b. Stalled the payment of party levy into the personal account of the party chairman of our party.
- c. Led to the suspension of the commissioner nominee from of the local government area, because it did not pass through the due process and favoured only one candidate. The activities of the movement led to the governor making the position open to all eligible candidates, instead of a stooge.

Since this movement started, the youths of my local government area are becoming more involved in governance and contributing to development.. All thanks to Centre LSD /Ford Foundation Project.

Gbale Joseph
Edo State

26. How I launched SMILE Africa International Youth Development Initiative

After the training by Centre LSD Youth Can Lead, my organisation received the momentum to launch out.

Youths capacity building and empowerment were two paramount assignments, I wanted to achieve as my life's goal. To achieve these, I started working on youths participation in politics since 2012, under the Social Democratic Party (SDP) as their Youth Leader. In 2015, I thought of doing something higher and I contested for State House of Assembly in SDP, but unfortunately, I did not win. This however, did not dampen my passion. My passion was so strong that I needed a channel to actualise my dreams of youth participation in politics, so in 2017, I floated an NGO.

Although I had a passion, I also thought the NGO was an avenue to make money like the popular belief. Although I registered the organisation in 2017, it was not until 2018, after my encounter with Centre LSD Youth Can lead project, that I started implementing programmes for results and not just to make money. The Centre LSD training was an eye opener, now I could implement projects without entirely depending on donor funding. My programming changed. I became more result focused. The training helped me position my organisation to achieve goals and help other youths discover themselves.

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Balancing politics and activism were a great issue for me. But after my encounter with Centre LSD, my roles and responsibilities became clearer. I refocused my agenda, to not contest in the 2019 election, because Centre LSD taught us the need to build our network first and have grassroots presence before vying for elections. Within the space of one year, I have implemented several activities with tangible results to show for them.

Today, my organisation is one of the leading youths focused NGO in Edo State, partnering with many global organisations like Drug Free Foundation, UMODC, Association for Better Living, etc.

My encounter with Centre LSD gave my organisation a sense of direction.

Purpose Iserhienhieh Edo State



27. The application of the knowledge from the Centre LSD Youth Can Lead training attracted a borehole to my community.



“Knowledge they say is power”. I didn't realise the enormity of the power I had until Centre LSD Youth Can Lead training jolted me, to the realisation that change is possible in my community and that change begins with me. Although, I was not a direct beneficiary of the Centre LSD training, I was impacted all the same. The ripple effect of that training changed my community. In 2017, one Mr purpose organised a step-down training for some youths, of which I was one of the participants. At this meeting, he taught us some of the lessons he learnt from the Youth Can Lead capacity building and it was an eye opener. One of my takeaways from that meeting was the need for youths interested in contesting for election to start from a lower level and climb to the top instead of competing for the National Assembly and the likes. This changed my orientation completely. There and then, I dropped my ambition to compete for State House of Assembly and chose to vie for councillorship in my ward.

Because he also taught us the need to build our networks and established our

Raising New Generations of Leaders in Edo State

presence in our communities, I decided “that charity must begin at home”. So, together with Mr Purpose, we organised a sensitisation meeting for the youths in my community, Uzea, Uromi Edo State. The meeting was primarily to mobilise and educate the youths in Uzea on the need to engage political party candidates with pressing issues in our community. In that meeting, we unanimously agreed to maximise every opportunity for the betterment of our community.

Collectively, we identified the needs of the communities and prioritized them. We developed a kind of community charter of demands, that will be shared with any politician who come to canvass for votes in our community. One of the agreements was that any candidate who wants our vote must do something for the community before the election. After that event, we had an envoy visiting the community to canvass for our votes. We introduced our demands to them, and they promised us a borehole.

I'm glad to say that the promise of a borehole was fulfilled. My community had a brand-new borehole from one of the candidates and this was commissioned before the 2019 elections.

This was my first time of influencing a project to my community; Uzea community in Uromi. I believe that come 2019, when I contest for councillorship in my ward, my people will vote for me.

Blessing Anetor
Edo State

28. The transformation in my political voyage.

Have you ever heard of the statement, “knowledge is power”? That is the best description of my experience from the Centre LSD/ Ford Foundation Youth Can Lead capacity building/training.

I have always been actively involved in politics at the grassroots, though on a low key; where I once contested for Egor local government area Chairman position and came out 3rd position. Prior to my contact with Centre LSD, I was a member of a smaller political party, where I was one of the key leaders. I was comfortable at that level until I attended a training by Centre LSD, where I got to know that the strength of one's party determines his/her journey in politics. With this, I decided to re-strategize. and joined one of the two major political parties in Nigeria.

I got to know of Centre LSD, through my former party, the Green Party of Nigeria. After my contact with Centre LSD, I became a leader in a very big party and I now could reach and address a larger population of youths in the state. Encouraging them on the need to avail themselves and actively participate in party meetings, join forces to move the party forward and to contest for elective positions when the opportunity presents itself. My presence in the party stimulated some youth who then became outspoken and committed. The locality was not left out, the youths showed readiness and willingness after my campaign for the house and senate candidate. As a result of the mobilisation skills I learnt from Centre

Raising New Generations of Leaders in Edo State

LSD's training, I won my unit and ward during the State House of Assembly.

I became a better politician after my contact with Centre LSD. I moved from a small party to a big party and became a party leader.

All thanks to Centre LSD/Ford Foundation Youth Can Lead training.

Etanoyomwando Osarobo Festus
Edo State



29. Centre LSD fueled my passion for human rights and humanity

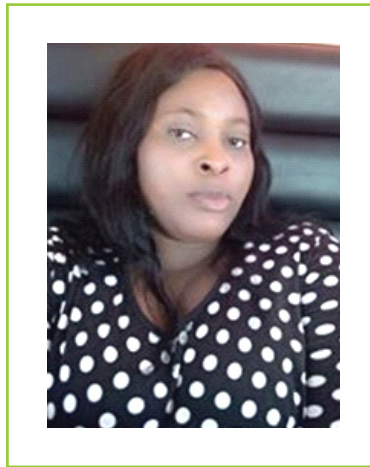
Youths Can Lead training brought out my passion for humanity and a strong desire to affect my world. This desire birthed the “Caring Heart Initiative for Advocacy Development and Empowerment” a grassroots NGO that aims at alleviating Nigerians particularly the youths and women from poverty and addictions, in order to have a healthy and mental livelihood.

All through my life, I have always been known to be a “no nonsense person.” I don't tolerate nonsense and I could get very confrontational anytime, anywhere. Although I was very interested in political issues, I never saw myself as someone who should lead, so I never attempted to contest for any elective position, but I was in a political party. In my little sphere of influence, I was affecting lives in my own little way. But in 2017, I saw a call for trainings for youths who were interested in politics. It sounds interesting, I thought, so I applied. The three days capacity building was a life changer for me. I felt like I was awakened from a deep slumber, like “I was on fire”. My passion became unabated, the desire to affect lives was insatiable. “It was like when a river overflows its banks”. My passion and drive were so visible, that after I contested for Edo State House of Assembly and lost in the election, I did not let my dream to die, I started volunteering in NGOs to share my knowledge and empower other youths. During this period, I partnered with other organisations for charity work.

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On the 7th of June 2019, someone who had watched the transformation in my life since the training by Centre LSD till my pre and post-election period, decided to help me sustain this passion and thus registered my NGO "Caring Heart Initiative for Advocacy Development and Empowerment" for me. Since then, I have built the capacity of youths on drugs abuse, carried out medical outreaches within Agbado wards, on free malaria and HIV/AIDs test; organised a seminar on stakeholders dialogue on the road map to 2019 elections to shun violence; organised a training for my political agents before the INEC training; partnered with Tu-Face Idibia to campaign to Shun Election-"Vote not fight", Election no be war Campaign; in commemoration of the International Women Day on the 8th of march, I organised a programme for women on the theme "Balancing the family Frontline with Politics" with the general theme as "Think Equal, Build Smart"; organised programmes in three schools, Itoham Grammar School; Imagwero Junior Secondary School and Ogunbor Secondary School (Bleed with pride: a menstrual hygiene management), this was to mark the World Hygiene Day and many more.

Since I met Centre LSD, my life has changed positively, I have become a celebrity of some sort. Within a year after this life changing training, I featured in May national and international meetings as a guest. Some of these were YIAGA



meeting on women. In March 2019, in a Partners for Peace in Nigeria meeting in Port Harcourt, Barr. Agatha was asked to bring/nominate women in politics and I was nominated; in April 2019 in Abuja, I was invited as the only female from Edo State to tell her story and experience during the election; Ngor-Okpala a community in an Owerri autonomous community. I was invited as a Guest Speaker to their August meeting, to speak on the power of unity for women taking space in leadership Also in that month, Hon Amaka from Irete community in Imo State invited me to speak in their August meeting, on the topic "lending voices in politics." I got invited twice to a live Broadcast on EBS on their programme Day Break. In fact, they are too numerous to count.

I have asked myself, where was this passion all these years. I'm so glad my path crossed with that of Centre LSD. I'm glad, I was at the capacity building training. It was indeed a life-changer. Two years after, I still clutch my notes from the training and often consult it. I cannot thank Centre LSD and Ford Foundation enough. I know I cannot pay them, so I promised to pay it forward and affect every life that crosses my path in my own little way.

Thank you, Centre LSD. Thank you Ford Foundation.

Grace Obakina
Edo State

Raising New Generations of Leaders in Edo State

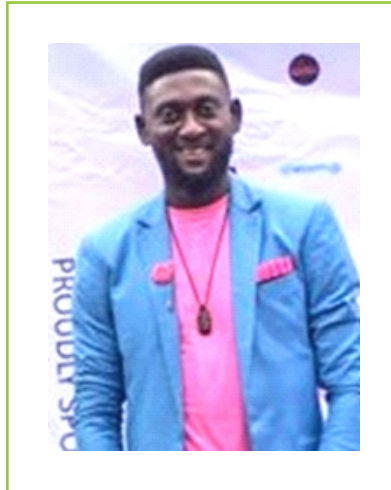
30. The training by CENTRE LSD led to the birth of Pad the Girl Child Initiative.

Centre LSD Midwifed the birth of the **Pad the Girl Child Initiative**. A dream that had hitherto been latent before the training by Centre LSD on Youth Can Lead.

Prior to the Centre LSD training, I have been very active in school politics right from when I can remember. After I graduated, I joined a political party. I became a member of PDP from 2014-2018. But after the training in 2018, I realised I needed to join a smaller party where my impact will be felt. This is because I realised that in PDP as a big party, it was difficult to have a voice and aspire for any position within and outside the party. I realised that youths involvement was lacking in PDP and the financial muscle to aspire for any position was out of reach. After the training, my mindset changed, and I saw another avenue to achieve my dream so I moved to a smaller party.

After my training with Centre LSD, I got involved in series of seminars on youth involvement in politics as a speaker. I became passionate about youths particularly the Girl-Child, who are often marginalized. In my passion, I felt a gap and decided to fill it. This led to my campaign for the girl child. It was called "Pad a girl child campaign". This was birthed out of the desire to help the girl child. Although I had the dream since

2015, it was dormant until 2017, after the Centre LSD leadership and capacity building training, where we were taught to get onboard with our dreams. This gave me a push to get started with this project and I actualised the dream in 2017. In July 16, 2018, I started with the distribution of about 1200 pads to Ithohan Girls Grammar School Sapele Road and Ugimon Secondary School (600 for each school). Since then, I have distributed between 2300-2500 pads to girls in both schools. So far, I have gotten calls from different persons to expand the project to different locations.



One of my hobby has always been reading. I thought I knew so much because of my vast reading, unfortunately, the training by Centre LSD proved me wrong. In all my years of reading, I never came across the knowledge I got from the Centre LSD training on youths in leadership. The training came at the right time.

After being dormant in a party for years, I became a critic of politicians and became inactive in politics generally. All these however, changed after the training. I decided to be a politician again, because I believed that's where my voice will be heard. My coming to the party was like "new blood, fresh ideas". I brought a new drive to the party in my ward "we set to change the narrative and make our campaign issue based". Which is a deviation from the old mindset of other bigger parties.

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The Youth Can Lead capacity building was very rich and impactful. One of the many lessons I learnt was the need to begin my aspiration from the grassroots and climb upward in the latter of political leadership. After the training, I decided to return to the grassroots, in my ward. I became involved in grassroots politics. To be able to participate actively in my community, I transferred my voters card from the polling unit in town where I reside to my community (Oredo to Ikpoba-Okha). With this, I got closer to my community and for the first time in my life, I voted in my community. After the training, I became a party member and card-carrying member of SDP. In this party, I got actively involved in mobilisation and sensitisation of the electorate and voters to participate and also come out for the voter's registration exercise. I became an executive member of my party at the ward level. In the process of actively participating in my new party, I began to nurse my dream of contesting for the Edo State House of Assembly (EDHA). Subsequently, I flagged off to run for office as a member representing Ikpoba-Okha in 2019, under my party SDP. Although I did not go beyond the primary, I made my first attempt to contest for Edo State House of Assembly.

Although I did not emerge as the flag bearer of my party SDP, I keyed into other aspirant's dream (sportsmanship) as taught by Centre LSD and collaborated with them. This made me the Zonal Coordinator for Atiku/Obi Presidency under Association of Beauty Queens and Kings in Nigeria, South-South Zone; Zonal Coordinator of Atiku/Obi Presidency

Campaign, where I brought all Pageant Queens and Kings from the South-South (132 Beauty Queens and Kings in South-South, while Edo 29 candidates) together to form an alliance for the Atiku presidential campaign. I also formed alliance with the national body under the office of women and youths, headed by the wife of Atiku. I also mobilised youths and fellows to actively participate in politics and single handedly registered 25 youths into the party.

All thanks to Centre LSD and Ford Foundation for this great change.

Iyabor Ikponmwosa
Edo State

31. 2019 election was the first time I did not buy or sell vote for any politician.

2017 marked a turning point in my life. This was the year I encountered Centre LSD at the Youth Can Lead capacity building training. It was a three day training that altered the course of my life and gave me a new meaning and a new direction. It was the year I stopped "selling my generation".

I used to be a political jobber who sees every election as an opportunity to make money. Being a typical Nigeria, I believed that was the only way to collect our share of the looted money from our politicians, who only remembered us whenever they need our votes. I guess you have not heard of the word political jobber before. It is called political entrepreneur. We bought

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and sold votes on behalf of politicians. I used to go to polling units every election year, together with my team who have become my friends, to collect money from different political parties and cast our votes for the highest bidder and we smiled home with swollen pockets. “After all, who go win go win,” was how we used to rationalise our actions. In a day, we could collect money from up to five parties, and we got paid. I could mobilise up to fifty people, so in some days, I could make up to N30,000 daily.

In 2017, I learnt of a training on Youth Can Lead by Centre LSD. I decided to participate because I thought “since it is about politics they will definitely pay.” That singular decision to participate in that training was my lifeline. I had never heard of Dr Otive before then, but that man's teaching/speech, alongside some other speakers, uttered my ideology completely. I learnt that I was actually trading the future of my generation for money. That if I keep collecting money from bad leaders, my unborn children will never experience good governance. Dr. Otive really made an impact on me, he made me understand that “if I can stand up for the right person, this might change the society”.

After the training, I made up my mind to quit being a political jobber and I quit. I called my team and informed them of my decision. Although some were reluctant a few joined me. 2019 election was the first time I did not buy or sell vote for any politician. After quitting, I decided it was time to find a legitimate source of income to cater for my upkeep as a student. I then learnt electrical wiring and installation of

security doors and CCTV and electric fencing.

Now, I have vowed never to allow myself nor anyone around me be influenced by money when it comes to election. I give kudos to Centre LSD for this opportunity to become an exceptional influence in the society. And to Dr Otive, you altered my course for good. Now I make money legitimately from installations and now I can take care of my academic needs from legitimate means.

Omobude Alex (proxy name)
Edo State

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32. A better me – my story Centre LSD changed my hatred for politics to passion.

Before the training from Centre LSD, my hatred for politics was on top gear and I always turned down offers to work as even INEC Adhoc Staff, but for the first time, I filled the form, attended the pre-election training, unfortunately, I was later not shortlisted.

Before the training, youths had little or no chance at contesting or winning any position in elections. Our voices were not heard because even we the youths, didn't think it was something we should attempt or participate in. Added to the fact that the older generation didn't want to permit the youth. They suppressed us with their financial power and preferred to use us as tools to carry out violence to their advantage. Whereas youths should be encouraged to participate in politics, as their strength and agility are viable tools that would promote development in the country.

In 2017, I was told about the training being organised for youths interested in politics by my sister and so I agreed to come. You know, learning never ends. The training ran through three days with several lectures by resource persons, several individuals and group work. I was re-oriented on the ideal of democracy and politics and that we can lead. The core values of life, that character was more



important than pursuing politicians or their money, were shared with participants. At the end of the training, my orientation changed. I began to see myself as a capable leader.

After the training, I took my campaign for youths participation in election to church. I emphasised that Christians could go into politics without getting dirty. In my drama ministry, my leadership skill improved greatly. My public relations improved to the extent that I visited sick members and gave people listening ears more. This has afforded us to produce more movies and now have more organisations and churches

inviting us to come minister in drama. My administrative and organisational skills have greatly improved. After the training by Centre LSD, I set up a four-man executive/committee to assist in the running of the drama ministry. Together we were able to save money for the organisation and this has led to me spending less from my private pocket. With this, we have been able to acquire equipment like camera stand, video light, projectors, etc. We have also been able to shoot new films. Additionally, in January 2020, I started my own business named "Global Digital." A literary photography graphics and films production company. I have become a better leader and I know I'm going places. All thanks to Centre LSD.

**Thanksgiving Uduagele
Drama Ministry
Edo State**

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33. Centre LSD changed my perspective about elections. I voted in my community for the first time, in the 2019 election.

Centre LSD changed my perspective and gave me the confidence that I can do better than just being a working tool for politicians. The training programme made me transfer my voting centre from Benin to my ward in my community. 2019, was the first time I voted in my community.

Lee Lacca once said, "You can have brilliant ideas, but if you can't get them across, your ideas won't get you anywhere."



Centre LSD Youth Can Lead Project has helped me develop my confidence in public speaking/skills. The training gave me the boldness to

speak out and to stand my ground against election malpractice and vote buying in my unit and ward in the 2019 elections.

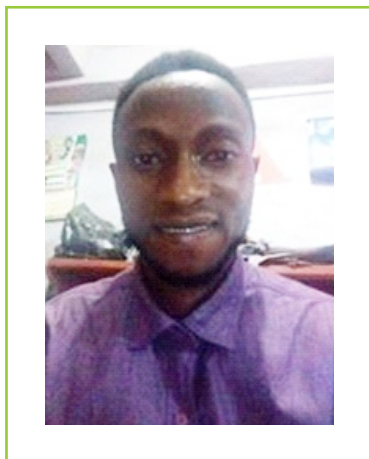
I was introduced to Centre LSD by a friend who works with ANEEJ in Benin City, basically because of my interest in politics. My friend and I came for the 3-day programme. The programme and activity that took place during the training inspired me and opened my eyes to the fact that, I can go into politics and generate the needed resources along the line which include human and capital resources. It

was new to learn that money is not the first step in politics and that I don't need money before going into politics, that I can generate funds from friends and family members during the race.

After the three days training in April 2018, I transferred my polling centre to my community from Benin to Ubiaja, where I casted my vote for the first time. My interest in politics grew due to the training because I was of the mind set of making money before going into politics. But the training gave me different options of raising funds, which includes through relations, friends, donors and so on. With the knowledge I got from the training. I decided to work towards the next election, so I can position myself and plan well. In the 2019 election, I was able to mobilise about 20 youths in my community to stand their ground and to vote for candidates of their choice and not to be used by politicians to constitute electoral violence. I have begun to build my political base against 2023 and I know success is sure for me. All thanks to Centre LSD for this great inspiration.

Otabor Emmanuel
Edo State

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34. I localised my political voyage

Centre LSD changed my mind set. I used to say, “when my community is tired of the suffering, they

will look for me as the solution to their problem.” For years and decades, I have waited for them to search for me and nothing happened. But at the training by Centre LSD, one thing that stood out for me was that, my community will not look for me. I'm the one to present myself to them for service. I got to find out that politics is not done from the centre but from the basics, upward. Equipped with this knowledge, I went back to my root. I joined grassroots politics and for the first time became actively involved in my immediate local unit, where I met with the leaders of my local political party members and joined the unit meeting.

From the training by Centre LSD, I got to see that I couldn't have gone through and succeeded at that time, had I not been trained by the Centre in the Youth Can Lead training. After the training, I saw that there was need to address what will be a potential obstacle in my participating in politics. A good example was to localise my political stance and start building my capacity.

Centre LSD trained me. I got more confidence to participate in political

discussions, going for political meetings at the unit level. I now attend seminars, to build up my confidence in preparation for the next election.

Thank you Centre LSD, for the tips on early preparation.

Lawson Ogieoa
Edo State

35. I became an advocate of youth participation in politics

Before the Youth Can Lead movement organised by Centre LSD, my zeal in regards to increased awareness, and sensitisation cum enlightenment campaign for enhanced youth participation in politics was at a low ebb, even as a journalist, and this has affected the socio-economic development of the country.

When I learnt about Centre LSD's proposed training for youths who were interested in politics, I decided it was time to take my journalism to a higher level. At the training, I learnt some of the skills I needed for leadership, characteristics of a good leader, rationale for young people to be involved in politics, impediments and challenges facing young people's participation in politics, ways to mobilise young people for politics, how to source for funds for politics, public speaking, leadership etiquette etc. All these knowledge gathered, are what I used via my platform as a journalist with Radio Nigeria, Benin.

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After the training, I became an advocate for youths participation in leadership, using my platform. I ensured that knowledge gathered in that training were shared among those that got their party nomination to contest for 2019 elections. I ensured there was massive enlightenment and sensitisation programmes on Radio Nigeria, Bronze FM, Benin for young people to engage in active politics. I also embarked on various sensitisation on the need for young people to get registered and collect their PVCs, ahead of the 2019 general elections. I was also involved in election observation and monitoring with relevant stakeholders.

Centre LSD has really impacted my life positively. The training has aided my increased capacity to enhance young people's awareness to get engaged in active participation of politics via my radio station.

Thank you Centre LSD, for taking my journalism to the next level.

Fortune Oyem
Edo State



36. Centre LSD helped me to conquer my political apathy

The training by Centre LSD established me in grassroots politics and changed my perception that

my community will look for me when they are ready for change. The training made me realise that I needed to show interest politically in my grassroots and be known there, in order to guarantee my victory in an election.

Not many believe the long-aged saying "youths are the leaders of tomorrow" anymore. Therefore, youths had almost given up on the system and consequently, apathy became the order of the day. Youths have been left out in the scheme of things like participation in the electoral process. Furthermore, the youths whose positions have been hijacked by leaders who tell them they are leaders of tomorrow, no longer think the process is worth their struggle.

This was precisely my case until I attended the Centre LSD Youths Can Lead training. My first outing with them positively changed my perception about the Nigerian political system. At the training organised in April 2018, the focus was on youths who were interested in politics in Edo State. The programme opened my eyes and I became very enlightened on how to make my interest known and



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follow up the processes to become a candidate in an election. After this programme, I moved to my LGA, transferred my voter's card to my village successfully, registered with a political party and actually attended their meeting. In 2019, I voted in my village for the first time.

My apathy towards the political process was conquered and I became eager to take part in the process.

Thank you Cente LSD

Ehiosun Luke

Edo State

17. From the gutters to the table: I used to mobilise thugs for elections and politicians

Centre LSD changed my life positively. I stopped my dirty job and embraced sanity. The training with Centre LSD geared me towards making positive decisions regarding my participation in politics.

Before I attended the training by Centre LSD, I use to mobilise vote buying and supply thugs for politicians. I realised that 60% of Nigerian youths are not included in political office holding, but thuggery and vote buying/selling for politicians. The teachings from the training drove home the point that I needed to stop these dangerous lifestyles of mine. After the training with Centre LSD, I made it a point of duty to not only take part in the 2019 elections but beyond and positively.

After the training, I stopped mobilising for vote buying and thuggery. I became an advocate of positive youths participation in politics. I even mobilised my friends and family to go get their permanent voters card (PVC) and joined a party, where I become active in 'politicking' towards the greater goal.

My life has changed for good. All thanks to Centre LSD.

Clement Ameya (Proxy name)

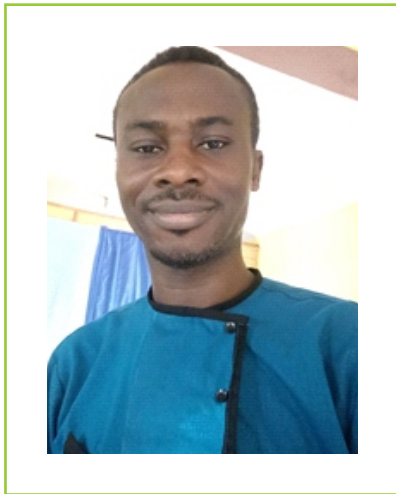
Edo State

38. Centre LSD inspired me to mobilise Christian youths to participate in the 2019 general election.

Centre LSD fuelled my passion for youths advocacy in political participation and engagement. From personal study, I have observed that youths especially the Christian folks abstain from anything that has to do with politics. This has brought reduction in the turnout of youths in the electoral process from the point of registering to vote and even coming out to vote during the elections. Staying away truly cannot correct the wrongs on politics as some youth claim. From my observation, I realised from my study that young people only register just to have their permanent voters card for the purpose of bank processes and their personal transactions, not necessarily for voting in an election. This has made many to even register in units not close to where they stay, but where they have the opportunity to register, provided they

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have PVC. And because of distance, they never go out to vote on the day of elections. With the knowledge I gathered from the Centre LSD training of Youth Can Lead and the need for active participation of youths, I made a commitment to do something about this problem in my own little way and opportunity available. I'm the Announcement Minister of my church.



This gave me opportunity to add the need for youths participation in the weekly announcement. So, every Sunday from the altar, I spare a few minutes to

talk on the need for believers, not just the youths alone, to register and vote in an election. This advocacy didn't stop in the church. I gave the address of the INEC office in the local government areas where they registered and took questions from those who came to me after the service. During this period, I got regular calls for further explanation/clarification from members. I became like INEC liaison officer in my church. Oh, this sounds funny! In most cases I personally took some people to the place of registration, all in the bid to ensure that those who just clocked eighteen years get involved. This I hinted on, during the announcement.

This advocacy yielded great fruits. People who never voted before in my church,

voted in the 2019 elections. Others collected the permanent voters card, having registered for many years without collecting it. I got more involved in electoral processes and got appointed as a Unit Secretary in my party.

Now, I canvass for youths participation everywhere I go. All thanks to Centre LSD Youth Can Lead project.

Omoruyi Iyamu
Edo State

39. The making of a Youth Leader in Esan Youth Movement at the 2019 general elections

I have never been to my village during any election, but because of the training I got from Centre LSD on the need to begin from the grassroots and establish presence and relevance, I went back to my village for grassroots engagement/politics and this gave me an edge and I was made a Youth Leader in my community-EWOSSA community Igueben, in Edo state.

Before the training, I discovered that in my community, nobody wanted to vote, including me; my family who were not very favorably disposed to issues of politics and political activities were largely discouraged. Therefore, participating in politics as a youths could attract my parent's wrath. But as a result of the training, I came to understand that as a leader, I need to work for the people. Before the training, I also used to say that I would never work for anyone. But this

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orientation changed after I encountered Centre LSD. As a result of the training, I got a job as a Branch Manager in a microfinance bank. It's interesting to know that the Centre LSD Youth Can Lead capacity building added more skills into my life as a person. I can now take action in so many areas of my life, I never thought I could.

In April 2018, it was a faithful day that God had blessed, and I met a good woman who told me about an upcoming Youth Can Lead training in Edo State. According to her, it was all about those who wanted to join politics and that she knew that I was interested in politics, so she would like me to register. I proceeded to inform my friends and we all registered and today we are all transformative leaders.

On the 16-18 April 2018, the first training took place. The training was a very interesting one from day one to the last day. Firstly, I was taught what it takes to contest and participate in politics and that I needed to begin at the grassroots politics in my community. One of my key takeaway, was the need to address issues/challenges in our society today, due to how people react to politics. The programme gave me a high sense of participation in politics. Lastly, it has added more passion into my spirit like never before. I can now stand strongly and walk up to whoever that want to run into politics anytime any day.

The training empowered me to be more courageous and take responsibility for my constituency, therefore, I started my grassroots engagement in my community.

I became involved in my community by mobilising people for the 2019 elections. I started my mobilisation from my family. I was able to change the status quo in my family and the outcome has been a significant result. Thereafter, I proceeded to my community and began to mobilise the youths and people to start campaigning and become more involved in politics. I also organised town hall meetings to hear the needs of my community and many more.

This capacity building programme has enabled me to add more sense of seriousness in whatever plans I do. I'm now outspoken (public speaking), I started going out and meeting people which led to me getting a job. Now I do things honestly and I'm becoming more righteous, doing my best and matching my words with action.

My life is now on a speed lane, all thanks to Centre LSD.

Steven Aimeide (Proxy name)
Edo State

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40. A Strengthened capacity to deliver on my mandate

Exclusion of youths in party politics and elected offices in Edo State is a major

challenge and this challenge needs to be addressed, because youths form the highest voting population.

I was nominated by the organisation I was volunteering for, Connected Advocacy, to attend the Centre LSD Youth Can Lead Capacity Building Programme. This singular training by Centre LSD has built my capacity as a youth interested in politics and has strengthened my belief that youths can lead and cause positive changes. The Centre LSD project was carried out in Edo State in 2018 and it helped to strengthen my campaign and awareness to be an ethical leader.

Centre LSD training afforded me the platform to meet with like minds and the opportunity to be taught by persons like Professor Eddy from University of Benin, Comrade Austine Osakue and others. After the training my zeal and passion to raise campaign for youths inclusion was re-fired. As the Director of mobilisation of the Not Too Young to Run in Edo State, I organised a rally/campaign, calling on political parties to give youths free tickets, free and fair primaries, and be youth

friendly. Peoples Democratic Party, All Peoples Congress, African Democratic Party, received us and promised to do as requested.

Today, I can say that I'm an ethical leader. That is, I have character, content and capacity, all thanks to Centre LSD.

Samuel Igue Idahosa
Edo State

41. Centre LSD changed my orientation about political parties

Centre LSD changed my thinking about political parties. Before the training by Centre LSD, I used to think that political parties are associations of looters. But after the Centre LSD training, I now know that political parties are associations of a group of people with the same political ideology, coming together to run for electoral offices, so as to form a government and so for the first time in a long while, I voted during the general elections in my community.

After the training I had with Centre LSD, I was able to talk to some persons in my community to go and collect their permanent voters card (PVC) in INEC offices and vote, which they did. I also educated people in my community that they can go to INEC offices to transfer their permanent voters card to the place they want to vote, in case they change their locations. These I was able to do because of the knowledge I had acquired from Centre LSD.

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Thank you, Centre LSD/Ford Foundation Project, for the great impact in my life.

Saibu Zekeri
Edo State

42. I'm now a voter

I have never voted in my life, though I have my voter's card, which was only for bank and identification use. Before the training by Centre LSD on capacity building, I used election days as my resting day and to watch movies. I will fuel my generator to watch films on election days. I do not go out to vote. I used to see and call politics as a dirty game, and politicians as bloody people.

In 2018, I was in a meeting in our office (an NGO) and our C.E.O. talked to us about Centre LSD's up-coming training and that it will enhance our capacities. That was how I showed interest to go for the capacity enhancement. At the three day training, my thoughts changed, I developed interest in being a better leader. After my training with Centre LSD, I indicated interest to lead and I stopped having stage fright.

After this training. I became an ambassador of youths participation in politics and election. In 2019, history was made, I casted my vote for the first time in

an election. I did not only vote, I was an election observer. Since my contact with Centre LSD, I have become a voice in my ward and have some good qualities of a leader. All thanks to Centre LSD.

Joy Okpara
Edo State

43. Ideological shift

For the first time in my life, after I encountered Centre LSD Youth Can Lead training, I participated actively, monitored and observed the electoral process of 2019 general elections, from the day of the election to the end of the election.

I have never picked interest in any form of politics, nor have I ever participated in a political process since I was born. I don't vote, I don't contest, and I don't campaign for



anyone. Election and politics for me was a dirty game and I thought it is for people who have money. I have this ideology that, our vote does not count, so no need wasting my time on election and politics. This ideology was shaped because of a horrible encounter I had in the polling unit many years ago. That was the first and last time I engaged in politics (I went to a polling unit at Oredo where there were gunshots and snatching of ballot boxes, I lost my voter's card. For ten years, after

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that I didn't have a PVC nor voted). I totally lost interest in politics. My hatred for politics was so much that several times, I was told to come observe elections, but I refused. However, Centre LSD motivated me and changed my ideology.

In 2018, I was shortlisted to participate in the Youth Can Lead training. This training revealed my shallow knowledge of politics. I mean, the training totally transformed my ideology. It made me understand that if I don't participate in politics, I do not have a say "I can't sit down in my house and know about happenings in the political arena." For the first time in my life, my ideology about politics was transformed. I was not only transformed; I became an advocate who went as far as encouraging people and telling them why they should vote. This training was an eye opener that politics is not only for the wealthy people and it's not a dirty game.

After the training I registered for my voter's card after ten years without one. 2019 election was the turning point. For the first time after my last experience ten years ago, I voted in an election. I took a step further and for the first time followed the process of the general election which was held on Saturday, February 23rd and March 9th, 2019. I observed and monitored the election process to the end.

With this new zeal, I'm planning to contest and lend my voice to the development and growth of my constituency. I intend to start from contesting for councillorship at the grassroots, all thanks to Centre LSD.

Ozougwu Maria
Edo State

44. From mainstream politics to nursing

Before now, nurses hardly get involved in politics within and outside the hospital. Nurses and midwives are always on duty, on election days including State and Federal public holidays. This has resulted to medical personnel's lack of interest in politics generally and also in leadership position. This is also affected by their tight schedules and their lives centered around clients, patients and hospital activities. I wanted to change this norm but didn't know how to go about it.

In 2018, I heard from a friend about Centre LSD and an intended training. I thought to myself, this might just be the platform to change the norms in the hospitals during elections. Because of my quest in this change, I travelled all the way from Abuja to Benin to attend the three day training. Behold, I was amazed at what was happening in the state to a few number of youths. The transformative teachings and knowledge from that training was out of this world. Immediately, I had an idea—"Developing transformational leaders in nursing association".

Immediately after the training, I went back to base and first created a WhatsApp group to disseminate information within nurses and midwives to embrace local politics within and outside the hospital. I involved the Head Nurses on how to schedule off-days in order for co-nurses to participate during election and for nurses to have equal representation when it comes to political divides. I began a campaign for the collection of permanent voters card (PVC) by health professionals, beginning from my hospital.

For the first time in the 2019 election,

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nurses and midwives were able to cast their votes for their constituents using their PVCs. The hospital management provided a bus that took staff on duty to their various voting units. A total of about fifty five staff on duty voted in the 2019 general elections. The problem was addressed and nurses were now able to brace up to participate in elections in and outside the hospital without fear or favour. Nurses became proactive in politics using Centre LSD training as a steppingstone. The hospital management saw their zeal and also made appropriate adjustment and provision.

After my contact with Centre LSD training, I became the coordinator for several youth/women organisations in the state. Where I go around giving talks and I have been the forefront of campaigns. I'm currently the Chairperson of United Patriots (UP) a political group gaining ground in Nigeria. I'm also the newly elected Director of Finance NYDA (National Youth Democratic Alliance).

All thanks to Centre LSD and Ford Foundation who transformed me from just a nurse to a **Nurse Politician**.

Brenda Isibor

Edo State



45. The Making of a transformer

Centre LSD Youth Can Lead training ignited in me the passion for youths and women engagement.



I have always wanted to have a say in the political arena in my constituency, but I was often laid back. Although I was a card-carrying member of a political party, I was not active. These changed after my encounter with Centre LSD youths training.

In the first quarter of 2018, I got the information of Centre LSD training from Smile Africa and I was shortlisted for the training. Before the training, I mobilised women for APC party, but after the training my orientation changed. My passion was fired up. My zeal for change became unquenchable and insatiable. Immediately after, I organised a programme to sensitise rural women on Rural Women Day on the 15th of October 2018. Before then, I had some youths volunteer on the 10th of October and we worked as a team to deliver the message to the rural women in politics, their role in the electoral process, how they can vote their preferred candidate without selling their vote as usual for N1000 and head tie and their children can be voted for. They can as well be party card carriers and hold position in their unit to enable them to have a voice of who make a change. After the rural women day sensitisation training, they all went back to their party

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to get their membership cards and indicated interest as EXCO members.

I discovered that I could not stop. I wanted to do more, I wanted to share with others what I have learnt from Centre LSD. In the space of a year, I have implemented interventions that many persons and organisations cannot implement in five years, some of which were: a step down training to my followers (Foare Helping Hands Foundation, six persons were trained, two staff and four volunteers on leadership, public speaking); conducted one on one interview with women and youths on voting/politics, especially for the women to participate and give their daughters the support to join politics; embarked on step-down training and prepared youths and young people on starting early in their political journey; empowered the women (Mothers) linking them up on how they can get funds (twenty have gotten funds so far from prosperity and sunshine microfinance bank.

I was selected to Handle Wake & See State Women Project effectively from the office of the SSG (Secretary to the State Government) where I was appointed to handle the project to empower women financially, through skills, training, create market for farmers (Networking); In collaboration with office of SSG and her foundation organised “ Edo got skills, my hand my health” to build the capacity of young artisans and empowerment in November 2019; empowered and trained 100 women on skills. They have been empowered and trained on skills and many more.

As a result of the knowledge and skills acquired from Centre LSD training, I have

repositioned myself and I'm now who I really want to be and I will continue to step down this training to other youths who will in turn be grateful to Centre LSD.

Ihimre Ota
Edo State

46. An ambassador of substance and drug abuse prevention programme

The involvement of youths in substance and drugs abuse in Benin City has become endemic in recent times that need holistic approach to tackle. Several reports from the media (print, electronic and social) revealed so many youths getting enmeshed in doing abuse, and some deaths were also reportedly traceable to this abuse including crime.

I met Centre LSD via a partner organisation (friend) in 2017 and was trained in political leadership problems tagged Youths Interested In Politics. The training I got was instrumental in the implementation of my organisation doing prevention programme. It is on this basis of concern that I carried out doing prevention programme, using some of the knowledge I gained from Centre LSD training to embark in substance and drug abuse prevention programme in Benin City. My target were young people (aged 6 – 45) and Community Dialogue for the community influencers from aged 20 – 45.

Most of the student participants became very much knowledgeable about illicit drugs and their harm to abusers. This was known by the post-test organised for them. This is the short-term outcome. Intermediate (long term outcome): The

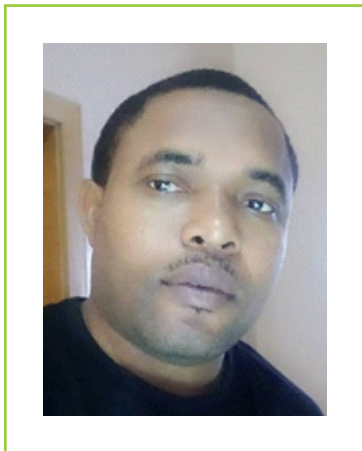
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students' participants became members of drug free club in their school as a sustainability plan to continue the capacity building and knowledge sharing about drug and substance abuse.

The programme activities were carried out in school communities, prisons and children correctional centres. Prison inmates were trained on substance and doing abuse, as well as the consequences, single knowledge precedes ignorance in drug abuse prevention.

I thank Centre LSD for this great knowledge.

Edwin Asibor
Edo State



47. The birth of the Africa Child Education Foundation

I have always had my voters' card but never felt the need to vote. After the Centre LSD Capacity Building Programme, with the different speakers who had told us that change starts with the youths, I felt the need to be part of the system by first voting. I felt better after I did.

Before the training, I was an anti-political youth. I criticized everything and always had negative things to say about politics and elections. I didn't post any positive article about politics.

In 2017, I was shortlisted to attend a training on Youth Can Lead by Centre LSD. This encounter was divine. It changed my mind set completely. Immediately after the training, I started looking for ways to affect the lives of people around me. I began a social media campaign where I used my social media platform now to enlighten people especially the young ones on the need to engage in politics; register and come out to vote on election day. I didn't stop there, I made sure I followed up on all those persons I talk to about coming out to vote, the result was good. At least I know five people who voted because of my social media campaign.

After Centre LSD'S training, I wanted to learn more, so I attended more capacity building workshop on politics. I must confess that I have never attended any as deep and rich in knowledge like that of Centre LSD. During Centre LSD's programme, we were taught community service and the need to take the campaign to the grassroots, so as to be recognised in the community. I started community services of giving notebooks to primary

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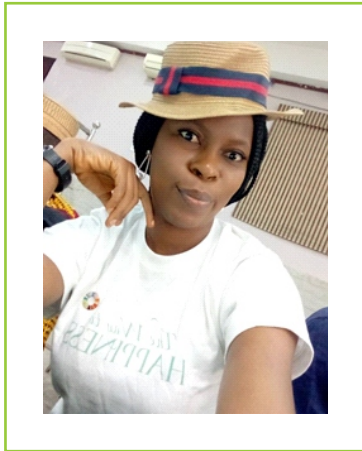
school children. This gave birth to my NGO, Africa Child Education Foundation, where I gave out notebooks to primary school students, particularly indigent ones.

I have now developed an interest in politics and so, I intend to run in the nearest future, so I have begun by engaging in the community services.

All thanks to Centre LSD, Ford Foundation programme.

Sandra Haruwa

Edo State



48. Changing the narratives: my dwindling future and how It was rescued

The training by Centre LSD on Youth Can Lead spurred me into a youth advocate. I studied Political Science at Federal University Lafia, where I was involved in politics during my undergraduate days. Within this period, I was into student activism, as one-time President, National Association of Edo State Students; a member of the Parliament of National Association of Political Science Students; the Chairman, Ethic Privilege and Public Petition of the association. In fact, I have always had a flair for politics. My level of activism transcended into a higher realm after I encountered Centre LSD.

I got to know Centre LSD through a friend who got to know about it through the internet in 2018 and I was opportune to be among the people that attended the second phase of the training for youth interested in politics. After that programme I became more interested in civic leadership that comprises qualitative and inclusive leadership. I applied from Nasarawa and was shortlisted to attend. This programme awakened my leadership sense and Influence. I got to know that poor leadership was the bane of several of our development problem as a country. Armed with the knowledge of civic leadership and the need to be a qualitative leader. I wanted to change the narrative and be a leader that will influence people positively.

At the training, I was taught that leadership is identifying problems and proffering solutions to them. Another resource person taught us that if we intend to go into politics, we need to start small and volunteer, this will help one get

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known and be informed about governance. This drive became a major push that I could not ignore. My first step was to scan my immediate environment to see what the gaps are, and I discovered the prevalence of drug misuse in youths especially in the Northern parts of Nigeria. I saw the vulnerability of young people indulging in illicit drugs and the effects of drug abuse and its consequences in contemporary society. By then, after the training, I got posted to Taraba State for my Youth Service.

Through my civic leadership, 31st March 2019, I established Drug Free Clubs in Jalingo Taraba State, in public secondary schools. Drug Free Clubs were an avenue to volunteer and get to be known in my community. Seeing the impact this programme made, I went ahead to help organise programmes on the consequences of drug abuse in contemporary society; this I did in collaboration with National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA). This activity was held in Government College Jalingo, and participants were drawn from 7-Senior Secondary Schools from the state. The event, being a maiden one was able to educate participants on the evil of drug use and abuse. The audiences were students and staff of government colleges. This volunteerism made me a known voice in my community. In some government colleges in Jalingo, we now have drug free clubs and the programme had also been able to change the public views on how they viewed people abusing drugs. The dwindling future of vulnerable youths in Jalingo was rescued through sensitisation



and symposium on the negative implications of illicit drug abuse, that is more prevalent in northern part of Nigeria.

I found out that I just couldn't stop. The urge to do more was strong. One of the trainers encouraged us to support people with like minds, this informed my starting a political movement in support of politicians and candidates for the 2019 general elections. It was a campaign movement to solicit support for Atiku. It was called "Atiku Assurance 2019". The

goal was to canvass and mobilise one million votes from all the states in Nigeria. Within this period, I coordinated Akwa Ibom, Edo, Delta, North, Abuja coordinators of this movement; I had three national meetings of this movement; I organised a voters right/civic education on "2019 I cannot be bought"; I created a group to create awareness and talk to people using the social media. It will run every election cycle; I organised a voter right/civic education. I created awareness, talked to people, did social media engagements. This is designed to be a big project which will run during every election period.

I'm evolving into a youth advocate and I'm loving it. All thanks to Centre LSD/Ford Foundation.

Dereck Asibor
Edo State



SECTION B:

**THE RESULTS OF THE
YOUTH CAN LEAD
CENTRE LSD/FORD
FOUNDATION PROJECT**

Raising New Generations of Leaders in Edo State

D.RESULTS OF THE YOUTH CAN LEAD CENTRE LSD/FORD FOUNDATION PROJECT

Saying that *“Youths are the leaders of tomorrow”* holds great promise of hope and assurance of a better tomorrow for the Nigerian youths. Unfortunately, this tomorrow has taken so long to arrive. The leaders of yesterday are still tenaciously clinging on to power, leaving us with the question of when exactly the future is going to arrive for the Nigerian youths.

In the past, maybe in the generation of my fathers, young men and women ruled the nation. For example, Gen. Yakubu Gowon was 32, when he ruled the country, General Murtala Muhammed was 37 years old when he became the fourth Nigerian Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo was 39 years old, when he became a Military Head of State, Prof. Pat. Utomi was Special Adviser to the President at the tender age of 22. However, today, the story has changed. The youths of yesterday have become men of today and have refused to groom and mentor young men who should take over the baton of leadership in Nigeria.

The need for a paradigm to correct the unfair side-lining of the youths, the perceived and identified leadership gaps, the lack of preparedness, of the Nigerian youths particularly in Edo, Delta and Bayelsa State was the main thrust of the Centre LSD Youth Can Lead project. This project was conceptualised to strengthen the capacity of young people to take leadership positions in politics, in these three states.

The Youth Can Lead capacity building training by Centre LSD with supports from Ford Foundation is one of Centre's flagship and celebrated project with a record of several major mind-blowing results and stories of impacts. These are answers to the objectives the project was set out to achieve, below are some of our results for this project in the 2 years of its implementation in Edo State:

1. Increased youths' registration in political parties in Edo State

One of the objectives of the Centre LSD's Youths Can Lead project was to increase the participation of young Nigerians in politics and particularly in Edo State. This participation began by first registering in a political party. As a result of the Centre LSD's training on Youth Can Lead, majority of the youths, took the giant strides and registered in a political party. For so many of them, this was their first time of joining a political party. Some of these were: **Augustina Oyamendan**, who after the training by Centre LSD, registered in ACPN and is now an active and card carrying member; **Hon. Etanoyomwando Osarobo Festus**, was a member of a smaller political party until he attended Centre LSD's training where he got to know that the strength of one's party determines his/her journey in politics. As a result of this, he joined one of the two major political parties in Nigeria; **Charity Iziengbe Osifo**, joined the Mass Action Joint Alliance (MAJA) party after receiving a step-down training from **Julius Robbison Idahosa** and she contested for the Edo State House of Assembly in the 2019 general elections; **Grace Ese Obakena**, registered in a political party

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for the first time and also contested for the State House of Assembly in the 2019 general elections, **Evangelist Ihimre Ota Joy** joined APC party and is now a card-carrying member of All Progressive Congress (APC); **Hon. Etanoyomwando Osarobo Festus** joined the People's Democratic Party (PDP); Ehiosun Jonah Luke registered with the Youth Party; Osahon Jolly Osaibgokan joined Young Progressive Party and Rosemary Omokheowa: joined Labour party.

2. Increased Participation of Edo Youths in Political Parties and Parties Activities

At the beginning of the project implementation, a baseline was commissioned to ascertain the status quo of youths participation in Edo State. According to the baseline report, youths' participation in politics in Edo State before the Centre LSD intervention was mainly for the purpose of campaigning for the main political actors, pasting the banners for their political leaders, acting as party agents, ballot box snatching, election rigging and several other odd jobs. But after the Centre LSD's intervention, several of the youths trained began to positively participate in political party activities. Apart from registering for the membership of political parties in the state. Several of them who have never voted before registered, collected their PVCs and voted for the first time in the 2019 general elections. Others after being taught of the need to have a grassroots presence politically, transferred their voter's cards and polling units and some even monitored/observed the 2019 election.

Some of these trainees became ambassadors of youths' participation in politics. One of such was Brenda Isibor, one of our trainees who was a nurse, and interested in politics. During the 2019 general elections, she mobilised nurses who registered and collected their PVCs. About 55 staff of the hospital where she worked who were on duty on the day of the general elections voted. This was as a result of her advocacy to the hospital management for the need to allow staff on duty to vote. The result of this advocacy was that the management provided a bus that took the staff in batches to and fro their polling units to exercise their franchise in the 2019 general elections. This was the first time that would happen in the history of the hospital. The project recorded several of such beautiful interventions by our project beneficiaries. Some of these are captured in the Section A (success stories) of this publication.

3. Increased Declaration of interest for elective position at the state level.

Some of the youths trained did not only pick forms and joined political parties, they also formally declared their interest to contest in the 2019 general elections. These declarations were publicly done in their various political parties. The youths were: Imasuen Clement, who declared his intention to run for Edo State House of Assembly Egor LGA in the 2019 election under PDP. This was his first attempt. He started by setting up a ward campaign committee from ward 1 to ward 10 of Egor LGA. Unfortunately, he was asked to step down. Iyabor Ikponmwosa Dominic also flagged off to run for Edo State House of Assembly

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representing Ikpoba-Okha LGA at the 2019 general elections, under SDP. He organised his official declaration beginning with the chairman of the party. Several other youths did the same. These are captured in the success stories.

4. Changed orientation of youths in Edo State

One of the many beautiful achievements of this project is the ideological shift and change in the orientation of the youths in Edo State. Before the training, many of the youths were apolitical and thus apathy was high among them. Some of them saw politics as a dirty game, others saw it as a game for the old and for some of them it was too violent for a youth to venture into. Some of these trainees confessed that they had never voted since they were born. For so many of them, election day was a day of rest. After the training, some of those youths who had never voted, registered for their PVCs and voted for the first time in the 2019 general election. Others ventured into contesting for various positions. Others became advocate of youth participation in politics and election.

5. Increased youths' candidacy and contestants in Edo State during the 2019 general election

For the first time in the history of the state, we saw many youths who were all products of the Youth Can Lead training of Centre LSD contesting for various elective position in the 2019 election. They did not just buy nomination form, they contested in the 2019 elections in various capacities. For so many years, one of the challenges and demotivating factor for youth's participation in election is the high nomination fee. Despite this, the beneficiaries of the Centre LSD/Ford Foundation project contended favorably with older members of the parties and paid same for nomination fee.

During the project implementation, advocacy/courtesy visits were paid to political parties and one of Centre LSD's request was that political parties should give a waiver or reduce the nominations fee for youth candidates. The good news is that Labor Party granted this request and is the only party known to us that gave free nomination forms to the youth candidate (who happened to be one of our participant) of the party. This was the first time the party was giving a free nomination form.

Below is a table showing some of our participants who contested in the 2019 general election and the positions they contested for, as well as the party they contested under. Some of these participants were contesting for the first time. About 40% of the youths who contested for these positions won. But for Centre LSD, we celebrate all those who took this first step and contested. We celebrate them for breaking the cycle and conquering their fears to contest.

Raising New Generations of Leaders in Edo State

Centre LSD Trainees who Contested in the 2019 General Election

S/N	NAME OF TRAINEES	ACTIVITY	POSITION	PARTY	STATUS
1	Johnson Mathev Ogbogho	Bought nomination form, contested	Ward Chairman of Etsako West LGA	Alliance Congress Party of Nigeria.	First time and won the position
2	Augustina Oyamendan	*Purchased form, campaigned and contested. * Was offered the ticket for the House of Assembly, in Esan Central LGA	Youth council position * House of Assembly, in Esan Central LGA	N/A * ACPN	First time but the election was cancelled * House of Assembly.
3	Comrade Rosemary Omokheowa	Got free nomination form, campaigned vigorously and contested in the 2019 election.	State House of Assembly for Etsako West Constituency II Edo	Labour Party	Was her first time. She contested but lost.
4	Noble Isaka	Was nominated as a unit executive	Later elected as the unit secretary	APC	First time. Contested and won.
5	Comrade Amienye Omorogie	Purchased nomination form, campaigned and contested	Edo State House of Assembly, representing Ikpoba-Okha	African Democratic Congress (ADC)	This was his first time. He won the primaries and was declared the candidate and flag bearer for the election. He came 4th out of over 91 political parties that contested for the position

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					in the 2019 general election
5	Charity Iziengbe Osifo	Purchased nomination form, campaigned and contested	Edo State House of Assembly Oredo-West Constituency 2019	MAJA party.	First time. Contested but did not win.
6	Mrs Grace Ese Obakuna	Picked nomination and Expression of interest form. Campaigned and contested	Edo State House of Assembly	Labour Party	First time. Contested but did not win.
7	Okomayin Osiewundo Pete	Picked up nomination and contested.	Secretary General of his ward, Ward II Akoko Edo	APC	Contested and won
8	Osaro Uwaifo	Picked up nomination and contested.	House of Representative of Oredo Federal Constituency Oredo Benin City, and State secretary of DA party	Democratic Alternative (DA)	Contested and won the State Secretary of the party. But lost for the ESHA
9	Comrade Osahon Jolly Osaigbokan	Picked up nomination and contested.	Contested for ESHA and National Youth Council of Nigeria Egor Chapter.	under YPP	First time Contested and Won the position of the Youth Council but lost that of ESHA.
10	Imi Isaac Esesoyakpo		Vice Chairmanship, Oredo Ward 1,	Green Party	First time. Did not win
11	Brenda Isibor		Elected Director of Finance NYDA	National Youth Democratic Alliance	Won

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6. **Marvist Dickson Aighobahi:** Was appointed Edo State Coordinator Door-to-Door campaign for PMB 2019 election.
7. **Stanley Aimufia Odigwe:** Was appointed Youth Leader of the Esan Youth Movement, in the 2019 election. He was also made a Community Youth Leader of EWOSSA community Igueben in Edo State.
8. **Mr. Omoruyi Iyamu:** Was appointed Unit Secretary in his party ward 3 unit 20 Egor LGA. He was also appointed Party Agent, due to his active participation in party activities.
9. **Igbinogun Dickson:** Was appointed Ward Youth Leader of Oredo Ward 3, under APC.
10. **Elvis Igbinoba:** Was appointed the Financial Secretary of his ward for APC Oredo Ward (08)
11. **Usifoh Andrew:** Was, as a result of his contribution to the party in the 2019 general election, was appointed as a staff of Edo Information for Development Project (EIDP), Governor's office Benin City.
12. **Isaac O. Eranga:** Was appointed a Programme Officer – Adolescent Youth Reproductive Health (AYRH) – Connected Advocacy and also became a Media Consultant to Benin Electricity Distribution Company BEDC and Centre for Bioethics & Research, Ibadan.
13. **Charity Iziengbe Osifo:** Was made the Project Manager of Coalition of Young Female Candidate. In the last months, she has frequented media interviews. She was also invited to an international capacity building for women in politics and leaders training workshop organised by the Office of the Wife of the Governor, African Women Empowerment Guild (AWEG) and Dedimus Protestatem-Amanda Sawyer. This meeting took place in New York USA and was held on 2-5 September 2019.
14. **Mrs. Grace Ese Obakhina:** Was invited as the only female from Edo State to tell her story and experience during the election on April 2019 in Abuja, at the YIAGA Africa Conference. She was also nominated and attended meetings on women in politics in Port Harcourt organised by Partners for Peace in Nigeria. She was also invited as a Guest Speaker to an August meeting to speak on the power of unity for women in leadership in Ngor-Okpala a community in Owerri Autonomous Community. Also, within one year after she was trained and contested, she was invited as a Guest Speaker to an August meeting in Irete to speak on the topic

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“Lending Voices in Politics”. After she contested for the Edo State House of Assembly, she became Guest Speaker at several meetings and programmes, twice she was invited to a live Broadcast on EBS on their programme Day Break. She partnered with TuFace Idibia to campaign for Shun Election-Vote no be Fight, Election no be War Campaign. Presently she works with various political youth groups as a resource person.

15. **Ihimre Ota Joy:** As a result of the capacity building, she was asked to Handle the “Wake & See” state women project from the office of the Secretary to the State Government (SSG). She was also appointed to handle the project on women financial empowerment, skills acquisition, market creation for farmers (Networking) in Edo State.
16. **Brenda Isubor:** Was appointed Chairman of United Patriots (UP), a political group gaining ground in Nigeria. She is also the coordinator of several youth/women organisations in the state, where she goes around giving talks and at being the forefront of campaigns.

7. Established Economic Channels by Youths in Edo State.

A look at the field data collected from the trainees and participants of the Youth Can Lead capacity building, showed that many of our trainee established businesses and economic channels in the state after the trainings. According to so many of those interviewed, the need to establish a business outfit was to increase their financial and economic base for future elections. It is therefore in order to say, Centre LSD has increased financially stable youths in Edo State. Below are some of the trainees who started a business venture after the training:

- **Oriakhi Dorcas:** After the programme, bought a book and a piggy bank and started saving 1500 every week and did that for 60 weeks. Within 6 months after the training, she rented one hectare of land and went into farming of tomatoes, maize, cucumber etc. Within that same year, 1 hectare increased to 5 hectares.
- **Osadiaye Eseosa:** In bid to to be financially viable and stable before attempting to contest for political position come 2023, opened a Bar/ Restaurant.
- **Asibor Ernest:** After the Centre LSD's training, due to his boldness which spoke

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volume of him during his last interview, got a job as an Assistant Lecturer in Histology and Pathology in the College of Medicine, Ambrose Alli University Ekpoma. Before the Centre LSD's training, he was a very shy person.

- **Rosemary Omokheowa:** Founded a non-governmental organisation, "Hope for All Global Initiative". This NGO was founded on the 26th of Oct. 2019 with the objective of "Building the next generation of leaders".
- **Grace Obakuna:** On June 7, 2019, also registered an NGO called "Caring Heart Initiative for Advocacy, Development and Empowerment".
- **Stanley Aimufia:** As a result of the training on public speaking during the Youth Can Lead training, got a job as a General Manager in a Micro Finance Bank.
- **Ozougwu Bright C:** Before the training he had no savings, after the training opened an account for Saving in Sterling Bank. And went to train on electrical wiring and installation of security doors and CCTV and electric fencing. Today, he is self employed and catering for his needs as an undergraduate.

Below are the various businesses, organisations and income generating channels established by our trainees in Edo State, in the last two years:

a. NGO

- NGO/Caring Heart Initiative for Advocacy Development and Empowerment
- NGO/Hope for Global initiative
- NGO/ African Child Education Foundation

b. Agro Business

- 4. Farming Businesses
- 1 Poultry Farm

c. ICT Based/Online Business

- Digital Works; Graphics, Video Coverage and Editing
- PAYE Master Resources Ltd
- 2 Online Businesses
- Online business, selling clothes
- POS Business, wholesale recharge

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d. Food Business

- Bar/Restaurant and Eatery

e. White Collar Jobs

- Got job as an Assistant Lecturer, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma
- Got a job as a Branch Manager in Aiyobo Micro Finance Bank
- Teaching job

f. Installations

- Electrical wiring and installation of security doors and CCTV and electric fencing.
- Sales and installation of CCTV Camera

g. Trainings outfit

- Entrepreneurship Training

h. Events and Entertainment

- DMG Entertainment
- 2 Event and catering services
- 2 Event planning and Decoration
- Cleaning business, Wieliz Global Resources, Contractor Okomu

i. Associations and Coalition

- Coalition of Niger Delta Concerned Youth

j. Others

- Recharge Card Sale
- Chemist and Supermarket store
- Cosmetology
- Security Job
- Shoe Cobbling
- Cement Selling Shop
- Laundry Business
- Multinational Speaker
- Forex Business

8. Modelled advocates for youths' engagements and participation in Edo State in specific and Nigeria in general.

Centre LSD in the past two years have raised advocates on youths engagement and participation in politics in Edo State. After the training on Youth Can Lead, many of the trainees “caught the fire” and began implementing projects, programmes, seminar, workshops, sensitisation, etc. Some of the trainees that have implemented intervention around youths participation in politics are as follows:

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1. **Oriakhi Anointed:** After the training, she organised a capacity building for some young persons vying for public offices in Taraba State, using the youth can lead knowledge. As a result of this, on August, 12 2018, she was invited as one of the resource persons to the “African for Africa” programme at Sheraton in Abuja. This was in commemoration of the International Youths Day; she was invited to speak on “the importance of youths participation in the electoral process in Nigeria”. Over 1500 youths were in attendance and they made a pledge to register, collect their PVCs and vote in the 2019 general elections.
2. **Gbale Joseph:** He birthed the First Edo State Youth Summit tagged “AKUGBE 2018”. The summit was a congregation of youths from the 9 states of the Niger Delta—namely, Edo, Delta, Ondo, Bayelsa, Rivers, Cross Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Abia and Imo States. Some of the resource persons and the topics treated were Prince Harison Ehimen, the principal private secretary to Ibe kachukwu, on business and investment; the Economic Team Special Adviser to Obaseki on Business and Entrepreneurship; Prof Eddy Eragbe, on leadership and participation in politics; Zonal Director of EFCC on Crime and Security: Why, youths should shun crime and criminality; Attorney General of Edo State and the Governor, represented by the Commissioner for Youths. During the meeting, one of the resource persons gave three of the youths with the best business plans a grant of 100,000 each for Poultry.

He also established **Ovia Arise Youth Movement**, with the endorsement of the current chairman of Ovia South LG, Comrade Dennis Idahosa. The movement was to raise youths as vanguard of anticorruption in Ovia South Local Government Area. It was to serve as a watch dog to checkmate the youths from the LG who are now in both elective and appointive positions. The movement has led to the reinstatement of one female councillor who was unjustly suspended, Stalled the payment of party levy into the personal account of the party chairman of the LGA and led to the suspension of the commissioner nominee from the LGA, because it did not pass through the due process and favoured only one candidate. Since this movement started, the youths of my LGA are becoming more involved in governance and contributing to the development of my LGA.

Also established “**Edo Progressive Movement**”. This was birthed as a result of the need to go back to the grassroot to sensitise the electorate, particularly the youths on the need to shun election violence, vote buying and cast their votes in the 2019 general election. This movement visited churches and youths gathering, to sensitise them and canvas for votes to youth aspirants in the 2019 election. The movement contributed to the emergence of one of the youths from my LGA as a state house of assembly member who is just 38 years old.

3. **Noble Isaka:** Organised a seminar for over 300 school students, it was tagged Career Day, this was to equip and build their capacity before they become matured youths.

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Currently he runs an NGO for teenagers “Next Generation Initiative” Edo State.

4. **Asibor Ernest:** Organised lectures/trainings for Ward 4 Esan North East, Edo State. The participants were youths within 20-25years.
5. **Osadiaye Eseosa:** Launched “Ovia Liberation forum” to liberate the youth from oppression, support capable youths into elective position.
6. **Iyabor Ikponmwosa Dominic:** Launched a campaign for the girl child. It is called “*Pad a girl child campaign*”. This was launched on July 16, 2018 and so far, the organisation has distributed between 2300-2500 pads to Ithohan Girl's Grammar School Sapele Road and Ugimon Secondary school and other schools.
7. **Grace Obakhina:** Organised a seminar on stakeholder dialogue on the road map to 2019 elections to shun violence. Registered Caring Heart Initiative for Advocacy Development and Empowerment on June 7 2019; built the capacity of youths on drug on World hygiene day; carried out the programme in 3 schools, Itoham grammar school, Imagwero Junior Secondary school and Ogunbor secondary school on Bleed with Pride: Menstrual Hygiene Management; etc.
8. **Ihimre Ota:** Did a stepdown training on leadership and public speaking to her mentees, comprising 6 persons, 2 staff and 4 volunteers. On 15th of October 2018, she carried out a sensitisation meeting on the need for women to engage in politics, had one on one interview with women and youth on voting/politics, especially for the women to participate and give their daughters the support to join politics. After the rural women day sensitisation training, they all went back to their party to get their membership card and indicated interest as EXCO members.

She also empowered the community women (mothers) linking them to how they can get funds (20 women have gotten finance from prosperity and sunshine microfinance bank).

In collaboration with the office of Secretary to the State Government (SSG) and her organisation, Foare Helping Hand Foundation organised Edo Got Skills, My Hand My Health to build the capacity of young artisans and empower them.

Now she coordinates the Entrepreneur Development Institution (EDI) to Development Finance office (DFO) of the CBN in Edo State, as one of the four coordinators of the institution in Edo State. The institution trains women on entrepreneurship, package their document and guide them to meet conditions to access Agriculture Business Small & Medium Scale Enterprise Investment Scheme. Dr. Otive entrepreneurship training led to the step down of her training to the women, over 223 have been introduced to CBN to get funds.

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9. **Noble Isaka:** Organised talk shows in his church to sensitise people to vote. He now runs an NGO for teenagers to equip and build their capacity. He organised a seminar in May 2019, for over 300 student and schools.
10. **Osahon Jolly:** Carried out mobilisation for voters' registration. They were sensitised on the need for voter registration. Also using his office as the Vice Chairman of the National Youth Council of Nigeria Egor Chapter, and organised a stepdown training on the need for youths to actively participate in politics and election processes.
11. **Stanley Aimufia:** Organised a town hall meeting to know the need of the communities and draw up citizens' charter of demand.
12. **Omoruyi Iyamu:** As an announcement minister of his church, used the opportunity to add the announcement on the need for people to register and get their PVC every Sunday. As a result of this, many of his church members voted during the 2019 general elections.
13. **Igbinogun Dickson:** Trained his party agents and units heads in APC, Uhumwonde LGA.
14. **Fortune Oyem:** Carried out massive enlightenment and sensitisation programmes on Radio Nigeria, Bronze FM, Benin for young people to engage in active politics. A step down knowledge among those that got their party nomination to contest for 2019 election was done.
15. **Elvis Igbinoba:** Trained unit heads, party agent and party canvassers in 2019 elections in Egos LGA on why they should be an integral part of party politics.
16. **Osahon Yaruegbe:** Sensitised a community in Esan South East LGA Illushi 2, on the need for to “say no to vote buying and allow their vote count” and not to be involved in electoral violence and that politics is not a do or die affair. As a result of this, for the first time in that community, there was no violence during the 2019 general elections.
17. **Saibu Zekeri:** Sensitised citizens in his community on the need to collect their P.V.C. and to transfer their permanent voters card to polling units close to their place of residency for easy voting.
18. **Onome Otueroro:** With support from INEC visited the community heads of Edo Central and embarked on voters education in parks and marketplaces.
19. **Nora Amalawa:** Sensitised youths and teens on the need to register and collect their PVC, lots of people sensitised, got registered, collected their PVC's and 90% of them voted.

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20. **Edwin Asibor:** Organised a programme on substance and drug Abuse Prevention among young people (aged 6 – 45) and Community Dialogue for the community influencers from aged 20 – 45. Using his NGO Securing the Creative Goldmine in Youths Initiative, these were carried out in school community, prison and children correctional centres, partner organisations (NGOs), Church, Landlord Association (community residents), School Management. The students' participants became members of Drug Free Clubs.
21. **Isaac Eranga:** Mobilised members of his team to organise a consultative summit on job creation where participants were drawn from the government, civil society organisations, NGOs, student groups, youth groups, secondary school students, and people living with disabilities. Youths were tutored on how to be gainfully employed through skill acquisitions and acquiring decent jobs in order to raise funds for their participation in politics. The youths were also taught on investment, savings, fundraising skills, networking skills, etc. Youths numbering 282 participated in the summit in collaboration with Connected Advocacy. This training was held on the 30th August, 2019. He also flagged up a group known as Coalition of Niger-Delta Concerned Youth (CNDCY) which started in April 2019. It is a socio-political organisation and participants were taught on group dynamics and group management, skill acquisitions for selected (52) girls and boys in June (between 1 and 2nd week), boys trained on welding and fashion designing, the girls trained on hair dressing and fashion design.
22. One of our participant also sensitised friends on the dangers of being an election jobber and conducted some leadership seminar/trainings for some contestants in his faculty for 12 people coming out for SUG. Organised leadership training for 400 level students and was one of the speakers, on the topic titled “Effective leadership”.
23. **Brenda Isibor:** Created WhatsApp groups to disseminate information among nurses and midwives to embrace local politics within and outside the hospital. She involved the head nurses on the need to schedule off days in order for co-nurses to participate during election and have equal representation. She successfully sensitised the management of the hospitals and influenced the provision of buses for nurses and staff that were on duties to take turns and go vote on election day. In the 2019 general elections, 55 health professionals on duties voted as a result of her mobilisation.
24. **Dereck Asibor:** Was able to establish Drug Free Clubs in secondary schools in Jalingo Taraba State, organised programmes on the consequences of drug abuse in contemporary society, where he collaborated with NDLEA (Participants were drawn from 7 secondary schools in the state.)

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He established the Atiku Assurance Platform (movement) and was the co-coordinator of the North, appointed co-coordinators in Akwa-Ibom, Edo, Delta, Abuja, who solicited, canvassed, mobilised 1 million votes for Atiku.

And organised a voter right/civic education, titled “2019 I cannot be bought” project which run during every election period. On 6th June 2019, he created a group to create awareness and talk to people using the social media. It ran from election to election.

E. Lessons Learnt from Edo State Youth Can Lead Project

1. **Youths can lead indeed:** Our experience from the implementation of this project shows clearly that indeed, youths can lead. This means that what is missing is not their willingness to lead, but the knowledge of how to get to the position of leadership. This was clearly seen in the bumper results harvested from the intervention and activities implemented by the trainees of the project. Of the 80 youths trained in Edo State, about 80% have utilized the knowledge from this project. Some of the trainees contested for elective positions, some established businesses, NGOs, etc.
2. **Charity begins at home:** This played out in the engagements of some of our trainees. After acquiring the knowledge from the project and training, many of our beneficiaries started the campaign for youths engagement from their homes. For example, some of our trainees started by mobilising their immediate families and the result was that the family members registered for their PVCs and some voted for the first time.
3. **Knowledge is power:** Given the right knowledge and mentoring, youths can lead. There are many ideas in the heart of every youth. A close mentoring, guidance and the right skill will lead to the attainment of youths' participation in political and appointive positions.

About Centre LSD

AFRICAN CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP, STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT (CENTRE LSD)

...Building Strategy Leadership for Sustainable Development in Africa.

The African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development (Centre LSD) is a non – profit, non – governmental organization established under Nigerian laws to build strategic leadership for sustainable development in Africa.

The African continent is very rich and diverse. There are abundant human and natural resources in the continent. But the continent has the worst development indices in the world: maternal mortality, infant mortality, literacy rate, HIV/ AIDS prevalence, poverty rate, life expectancy etc. More than half of the populations of African people are living in abject poverty. Most country in Sub-Sahara Africa are unlikely to achieve the modest Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by world leaders at the UN Millennium Declaration in 2000. Many African countries continue to suffer food shortages. Some countries are in conflict. We have experienced democratic reversals in some countries with the military coming into power in Guinea Bissau. All of these make the development of Africa a huge challenge. The continents to grapple with the developmental challenges have been complicated by its colonial history, globalization, leadership failures and adoption of development approaches that have been proved to be inadequate.

The importance of leadership for the success of organizations and nations cannot be overemphasized. Some scholars have pointed out that everything rises and falls on leadership. Despite this recognition, there is scarcity of leaders all over the world. There is a saying that the world is filled with followers, supervisors and managers but very few leaders. There are four kinds of people in the world: those who watch things happen; those who let things happen; those who ask what happen and those who make things happen. Leaders are those who make things happen. A visionless, insecure and incompetent leadership is a killer of organization and nations.

Similarly, strategy is very crucial to the development and performance of any organization or nation. Strategy occupies a central position in the focus and proper functioning of any organization or nation. This is because it is a plan that integrates an organization or nation's major goals, policies and actions into a cohesive whole. A well formulated strategy should therefore help to marshal and allocate an organization or nation's resources into a unique and viable posture based on its relative internal competencies and shortcomings, anticipated changes in the environment, and contingent moves by others. Strategies help to create a sense of politics, purpose and priorities.

A dynamic and visionary leadership combines with appropriate strategy process will produce a correct development approach that will lead to the prosperity and development of Africa. Centre LSD is poised to contributing to the transformation of Africa through building dynamic and visionary leadership and proposing appropriate strategies and development approaches.

About Centre LSD

The major focus of work will be in the giant of Africa Nigeria but the centre will work across Africa with a Pan-African perspective with partners in all the sub-regions in Africa. The Centre's strategy, programme and actions will focus on Africa with the operations being run from Nigeria partnering with organizations across Africa. Centre LSD is registered with Corporate Affairs Commission as an NGO in Nigeria.

CENTRE LSD'S VISION

The vision of Centre LSD is an African society with strategic leadership and sustainable development.

CENTRE'S LSD MISSION

The Centre's mission is to work with forces of positive change to empower citizens to transform society.

Centre LSD's Values

The Centre is guided by the following values:

- Diversity
- Integrity
- Feminism
- Dignity of the human person
- Pan-Africanism
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Transformative change

The objectives of the centre include:

1. To promote ideas, policies and actions that will lead to transformative change in Africa.
2. To promote leader development (expanding the capacity of individuals for effective leadership roles and processes) and leadership development (expansion of organizations' capacity to enact basic leadership tasks including setting direction, creating alignment and maintaining commitment).
3. To develop the capacity for strategic thinking, formulation, implantation and evaluation.
4. To promote human centre and sustainable development with special focus on Governance, Human Centre Development and Environment.
5. To collaborate with individuals, organizations, networks, coalitions and movements that will help in achieving the Centre's objectives

OPERATIONAL APPROACH

The centre carries out its programmes through the following methods:

- Research
- Think Thank

About Centre LSD

Capacity Building
Advocacy and Campaign

PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH

The Centre's programme is built on the principles of catalytic partnership and rights based approach.

The programme conception, design, implementation and evaluation are built around four principles:

1. Dynamic and visionary leadership
2. Appropriate strategy
3. Relevant development approaches including the promotion of women's right, citizen participation, ownership, pro-poor orientation and focus on the next generation of youth and children.
4. Building people and institutions.

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