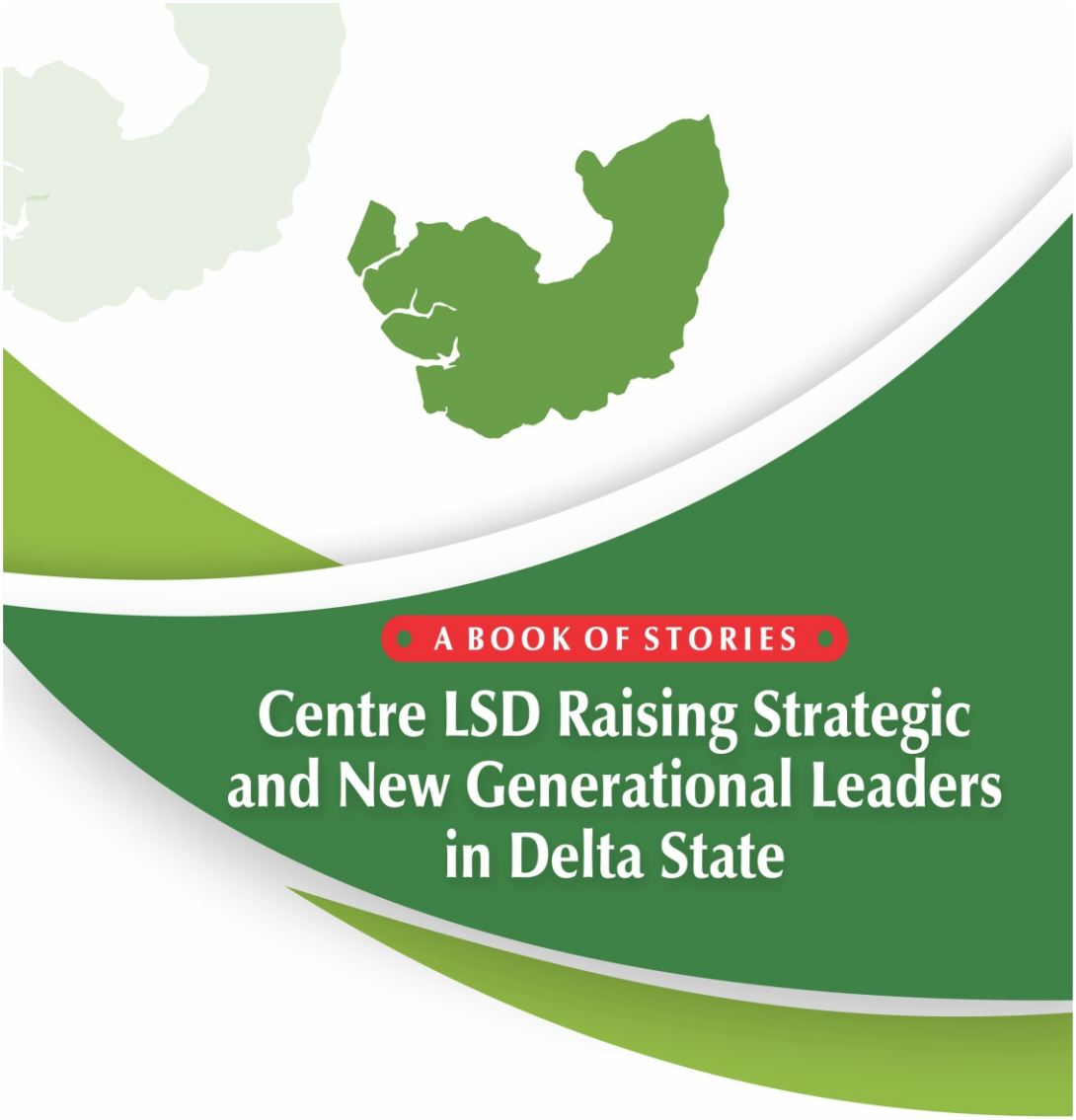
A BOOK OF STORIES

Centre LSD Raising Strategic and New Generational Leaders in Delta State

OSIWA
OPEN SOCIETY INITIATIVE FOR WEST AFRICA

AFRICAN CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP, STRATEGY & DEVELOPMENT
(Centre LSD)

Centre LSD Impact Stories
Series 2.0



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ABBREVIATIONS

A. Acknowledgment

The African Centre for Leadership Strategy and Development wish to give all the glory to God Almighty for seeing us through the process of producing the *Delta State Book of Impact Stories* for his protection and wisdom, we are indeed grateful.

We also thank the Ford Foundation for funding this project, from start to the end.

To our amiable Executive Director of Centre LSD, Mr Monday Osasah, your leadership, supervision and guidance throughout the implementation of this project, gave us huge results, leading to the development of this final work. We humbly thank you for being there for us all through.

Our immense appreciation also goes to Mrs Victoria Ikearu-Udoh, whose creativity showed us the way to develop the stories in this book. Mrs Ikearu-Udoh is the Programme Coordinator and oversees the M & E Department at the Centre. She was assisted by Emmanuella Nwahiri.

To Lawal Amodu and other staff of the Centre, we owe you a million thanks from the depth of our hearts for the immeasurable roles you collectively and individually played during the period of producing this piece of work. Thank you for all your support; we appreciate you all.

Mention also must be made of the parts played all the trainees and beneficiaries in the centre, they have demonstrated capacity and capability which were pivotal in completing this book.

Centre LSD

February 2020

B. Executive Summary

The youth constitute the backbone and future of any nation. In recognition of this fact, the African Union developed the African Youth Charter, where it prescribed responsibilities of Member States for the development of youths. The prescription is borne out of the belief that Africa's renaissance cannot be realised if adequate investment is not made in the youth who constitute about 40 per cent of the African population.

To, therefore support the goal of building the capacity of the youths in Nigeria, especifically Delta State, the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development (Centre LSD) from 2017-2019, implemented the project tagged Youths Can Lead. The aim was to build the capacity of youths interested in political offices in three of the Niger Delta states. The capacity building/training were carried out in two batches. Ninety youths were trained in Delta State. But during the interview for this book, 60 (50 males and 10 females) of the trainees were interviewed and their results/stories documented.

Overall, the project delivered tangible and outstanding results in Delta State. The outcome of the training manifested in more youths in the state taking membership of political parties, increased participation in elections, increase in seeking elective positions, increase in appointive positions, improved capacity, sources of income, deepened advocacy and ownership of advocacy as well as changed in orientation and ideology by the youths.

At the end, 40 stories of significant change were harvested from Delta State. Of the 90 youths who were trained in Delta State, 19 of those who contested for various elective positions in the 2019 general elections won, 25 got political appointments. Some, however, postponed their ambition to the next election. This, according to them, was to enable them to have adequate financial base. Of these youths, 22 of them established various businesses, which has contributed significantly to their income.

Overall, the **Youths Can Lead** project in Delta State was a huge success and worth celebrating.

C. Results From Delta Youths Can Lead Capacity Building Project

1. Increased youth membership of political parties

The goal of Centre LSD's Youths Can Lead project in Delta State, was to increase the capacity of the youths to occupy political positions. This, however, may be unattainable if they are not members of political parties as the 1999 Constitution is emphatic on this. This is because only as members of the political party can they be candidates for elective positions. A political party, therefore, is like a scaffold needed to climb unto any elective position.

Before the Centre LSD's capacity building in Delta state, several of the youths at the training said they had been apolitical and never saw the need to join any political party. But after the training, this has changed now as 19 of the trainees had joined different political parties in the state. From this 19, 12 registered and became members of political parties for the first time, as five each joined the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), while the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Progressives Peoples Alliance (APP) got one each, the remaining seven decamped to other parties they think they have a comparative advantage in. Of these number, three registered with the APC, two PDP, and one each in UPC and AAC. This is indeed a remarkable shift from the once docile and apolitical youth to ones that are now politically proactive

2. Increased participation of youths in elections

After the Youths Can Lead training, one of the resolves of these youths was to become actively involved in the political sphere in the state. With this resolve, 13 trainees registered to vote in the 2019 general elections. Four registered and voted for the first time in their life. Others who had registered in the past, but didn't vote because of proximity to their polling units, transferred their polling units to the ones closer to their residences. A typical example is that of Billy Arogboritse who transferred his voters' card to his polling unit in Orugbo Community in Warri South LGA.

Others who before the training, saw election day as a holiday and a time to

hang out with friends, changed their orientation and participated fully in the 2019 general elections in Delta State. Some of them did not just vote but were made presiding officers, monitors, observers and party agents during the elections. For instance, Joseph Ijeoma and Asiwe Isioma served as PDP agents in Ward 1, Unit 1, and Ika-South Agbor respectively in the State. Nkwor Collins served as Presiding Officer for Ward 10, Unit 6 Alagja community in Udu LGA.

One of the lessons learnt by the trainees according to data collected during this evaluation was the need to have a political presence in their community. This is because charity, they say, begins at home". Therefore, one needs to first win at the ward as a starter. As a result of this, some of the youths transferred their polling units to their communities/villages. A typical example was that of Frank Waive, who moved his voters' card to his village.

A very unusual zeal was displayed by one of our trainees who is an Adventist, and according to him, they do not vote on a Saturday. But for the reorientation and the zeal, he voted and fully participated during the past 2019 general elections.

3. Increased number of youths in elective positions

The Youths Can Lead training is one of the few youth projects across Nigeria that has recorded so many successes and created impact within a short span of its implementation. One of the expected results of the project was to get more youths to occupy elective positions in Delta State. This was achieved to a large extent. We saw 19 of the trainees who contested won their various elections. Below are some of the positions the trainees won:

1. State House of Assembly, Uwie Constituency
2. State House of Assembly, Ughelli South
3. State House of Assembly, Ika North East
4. Ward Chairman, Ward 6 Udu LGA
5. Councillor, Warri South
6. Party congress, Ward Chairman, Aviara Ward 3, Isoko South LGA

Delta State under the APC

7. National Coordinator APC Volunteer
8. Youth Leader of the APC, Ward 02 Isoko South Oleh
9. Assistant Secretary, Ward 02, 3 Isoko South Oleh
10. Party Chairman
11. State House of Assembly, Oshimiri South
12. Financial Secretary, Ward 02 Isoko South Oleh LGA of Delta State under the APC
13. Chairman CDC/Councillorship
14. Ward Youth Leader of Ward 2 Isoko South Oleh constituency 1, unit 9
15. Councillor

It is worthy of note that just as 19 trainees contested and won elections, there are also gallant losers among the trainees who made impact but not enough to win their elections. Some were second runners up and others lost by a few votes, while some were asked to step down. However, for Centre LSD, it is a win-win for us as our trainees made giant leap in the contests for the various positions. Whether they win or not, we count it as great achievement for attempting.

4. Increased number of youths in appointive positions

The Youths Can Lead project was a capacity building for youths interested in politics. The desire to build their capacity steamed from the need to position them for either elective or appointive positions or both. The attempts made by the trainees to contest for various positions at the units, ward and state levels in the 2019 general elections did not go unrecognised. Although not all our trainees who contested won their elections, the capacity they displayed during their campaigns, mobilisation and contests did not go unnoticed by political stalwarts. Of the total 88 trainees in Delta State, 23 of them got appointive positions and some of these are:

1. Senior Legislative Aide to the Deputy Senate President
2. S.A to the Deputy Senate President
3. S.A New Media to DG, Delta State Orientation Bureau
4. S.A to Local Government Chairman
5. Media Assistant, Office of the EA, Project Monitoring, Delta State
6. Administrative Assistant, Office of the Executive Assistant to Governor Okowa on Project Monitoring.
7. Information Adviser, Nigeria Red Cross, Ughelli South Division
8. Publicity Secretary, Ward 9, Ike North East
9. Assistant National Publicity Secretary
10. Secretary, Ward 6 Udu LGA
11. Member of Delta State Land and Waterways Security Committee
12. Information Adviser, Nigeria Red Cross, Ughelli South Division
13. Aide to Prophet Jones
14. Unit Secretary 11, Jeremy Ward 4, PDP,
15. Vice Youth President of Esaba community
16. Delta North Publicity Secretary
17. Financial Secretary, Ward 8 Ika South LGA
18. Assistant Secretary, Ward 8, Ethiope West LGA
19. Ward Secretary of Udu 10, constituency and later appointed the Ward Chairman.
20. Party Coordinator APC Ward 2, Urhuovie Abrakaka
21. Chairman, United People's Congress (UPC) in Akugbene Ward 9, Bomadi LGA
22. Assistant PRO of ward 8 in Ethiope West
23. National Assistant PRO of APC Volunteer International Group

5. Improved capacity of youths

The Youths Can Lead project successfully built the capacity of youths politically. As a result, trainees have become ambassadors as they display capacity in their various assignments. After the training, some trainees got various recognitions in the state because of their outstanding performance in the discharge of their duties. Some of these youths were:

a. **Billy Arogboritse:** Was made a member of the community youth election body in November 2018. This body conducted the exco election in December 2018 into the youth organisation leadership.

b. **Usumerai Solomon:** As a result of his contributions during the 2019 general elections, he was taken on a familiarization/courtesy visit to the Governor of Delta State.

c. **Excellent Oziboro:** Met with President Muhammadu Buhari, under the platform of Patriotic Youth Forum of Nigeria. The visit was to advocate for youth inclusion in governance. The team was received by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) Boss Mustapha. After the visits, he was made a member of the Presidential Campaign Committee and the Presidential Support Committee.

d. **Idounagbe Frederick Oritseneye:** As a result of the training, he was invited as a guest speaker by the National Association of Itshekiri Students. He spoke on The Role of Students in the Development of Itshekiri Nation in Warri.

e. **John Ebikeme Odubolu:** He met the Coventry Manager for International Potato Exporting Centre, where he went through a programme on Youth Enable. This was a skill acquisition on agriculture, especially potato, where youths were trained on the planting of potato and at the end of the training, they were given seedlings.

f. **Enawore Erumura David** was recognised as one of the leaders of Ekpan community. No political gathering is called within Uvwie kingdom without him being invited.

g. **Inetianbor Hero:** He is now recognised as a leader in Oshimili South APC and a potential appointee at the federal level.

h. **Penaowei Moses:** Was recommended as the only person from his local government area Bomadi LGA for a TOT. He was trained on how to transmit results and incidents at the polling units (only PDP) using poll watch to the situation room with a mobile app at the Government House, Asaba. He in turn, trained the party agents at the unit level and all the local government leaders of the party (ward leaders, LGA party leaders) on the use of the app.

I. **Godstime Oyibu:** He is now recognised in his community as a major political stakeholder.

j. **Asiwe Isioma Joy:** She was saddled by her party with the responsibility to address the citizens during the 2019 campaign. According to her, she would not have been able to do it effectively if not for the Centre LSD training she had.

k. **Okekeporo Victor:** Was part of a consultancy team that attracted an international non-governmental organisation to Warri. He was later elected as the head of the organisation. Using his networking skill, he got a managerial role in Zeniko Engineer Limited.

Increased sources of income of youths

Centre LSD's training, according to many of the youths who were interviewed, was a life-saver and life-changing experience for them. They said they changed, after they encountered Centre LSD, from being seekers to owners of businesses, employers of labour and are now planning and saving for their next election contests.

According to some of them, the Centre LSD's training has changed their perception of politics. Before now, they thought public offices and politics were just means to amass wealth as much as possible. But that has all changed as they realised that position or leadership was for service. With this new position now they have already begun to plan ahead for the next election. To contest favourably, they have established streams of incomes to enable them to save enough for their families and future political ambitions. At least, not less than 26 business ventures were established by Centre LSD's trainees. Below are some of the business outlets established by our trainees:

S/n	Trainees	Business Type	Comment
1	**Akpobasah Ejiroghene E**	Agro Business	Established a cassava, groundnut, corn and vegetable farm in Warri and Ethiope West. In less than four months he has harvested the vegetable which boosted his savings.
2	**Awolowo Perry**	Agro Business	Re-established his fish farm.
3	**Awolowo Perry**	GSM Business	Opened a GSM repairing, v ideo editing and photo editing (Adobe) shop in September 2019, at Ubogo town in Udu LGA
4	**Bartholomew Idhike**	Agro Business	Established a Banga business with N5,800 and this has expanded so much that he now supplies oil to buyers in northern Nigeria.
5	**Ekerehavwe Ogaga Amos**	Shoe Business	He established two shoe shops on Digbori Street and Gbudu market.
6	**Ekerehavwe Ogaga Amos**	Agro Business	Established a poultry farm and is making so much profits from it.
7	**Faith Ayomanor**	Fashion Business	Established a clothing, jewelry and cosmetics business. She is now a network marketer.
8	**Onome Charles**	Phone Business	He established a phone access ories business, where he sells chargers, phone screens, phone torch, casings, batteries etc. Few months after, he has made over 120 per cent of his capital.

9	**Austin Idimi**	Agro Business	He is now an Academic Consultant cum farmer. He produces pumpkin vegetable (ugu) on very large scale
10	**Augustine Peters**	Agro Business	Established **a** poultry farm with a N500,000 capital. One year after, his net worth is, N3,000,000 with three staff on his payroll
11	**Oghorobada Stanley Efe**	NGO	Registered an NGO called **Rave International Charity Foundation** that now provides writing and other learning aids to indigent pupils.
12	**Oseji Francis Nnamdi**	Agro Business	Expanded his palm oil business and
13	**Otiara Omamuzo Dennis**	Airport Car Hire	started an Airport Taxi business with just a car. He now has three cars in the fleet, with three drivers working for him.
14	**Usumerai Solomon Ogheneovo**	Food business	He deals in foodstuff.
15	**Bernard E. Ogheneseroho**	Agro Business	Established a fish farm in November 2018
16	**Umukoro Perseverance**:	Multi-business	Established a fashion home and a laundry service. He has presently branched into entertainment as MC and public speaking.
17	**Nkwor Collins**	Agro and Fashion Business	Established a fish farm and a fashion Boutique for women's wears
18	**Penaowei Moses**	Agro Business	Established a fish farm. This farm has expanded from just a pond tothree, from 2000 fingerlings to 6000.
19	**Ighosuehe Abiloye**	Food business	Established a foodstuff business
20	**Akunne Judith**	School	Established a new school named Winners Academy
21	**Wisdom Umukoro Onodomerezi**	Fashion Home	Established a fashion shop for men
22	**Joseph Ijeoma Deborah**	Cosmetologist and a Fashion Home	Became a Cosmetologist and Fashion Designer

Deepened advocacy and ownership of advocacy for youth inclusion in politics

Shortly after the training, the trainees of the Centre LSD's Youths Can Lead project, implemented several activities either individually or in partnerships. The aim was to share with other youths and stakeholders what they had learnt from the Centre LSD. Not less than 20 of such interventions were organised and championed by the trainees. These activities were workshop, seminar, sensitisation, town hall meetings, advocacy, etc. Some of these are listed below:

1. **Youths sensitisation** on PVC collection.

2. **Formation of a campaign group:** got a bus, fueled the bus, gave lunch and daily stipends to INEC to go to community for voter registration (Alaye, Delta State Company Township, Opete Okpaka Ojevwu, Ewu, Jeremy)

3. **A community sensitisation on PVC collection.** A town hall

meeting for youths and women was organised to encourage participants to get their PVCs and actively participate in the 2019 general elections.

4. **Mobilisation for Christian youth participation in electoral**

process. Christian youths were mobilised to participate in the political process. The group visited different churches to speak with youths to get on board the political train, it also mobilised people on collection of their voter card. Some bus drivers in support of the group's efforts, conveyed some citizens to and from their wards to collect their voter card. From these efforts, about 200 citizens registered for the 2019 general elections.

5. **Identification of community challenges and proffering**

solutions. A trainee carried out the sensitisation of communities on development issues. Presently, he is sensitising them on impending flooding and advising people living in flood-prone areas to relocate, take out their valuables and for citizens to monitor their wards in case of flooding.

6. **Formation of a political pressure group.** One of the CLSD's

trainees established a political pressure group known as Emerging Dream of a Positive Delta that now stirs up leadership qualities among youths and

encourage them to vie for elective positions come 2023. He is also carrying out skills acquisition programmes in partnership with an NGO.

7. **Community needs assessment conducted:** Another set of trainees, under the auspices of Onuesoke Foundation Undertook a community Needs Assessment (August 2019) in over 100 communities to help the community develop their community demands.

8. **Sensitisation of party members:** One of ours sensitised citizens in his wards and party members (PESSU ward 07) on the importance of the electoral process, what election phases are and what each phase entails. This was to prepare them for the 2019 general elections.

9. **Establishment of a youth movement in Abraka:** One of the trainees formed the Abraka Youth Movement, whose goal is to campaign for youth inclusion in politics. He got funds and sensitised youths on the need to participate in election. He started with a door-to-door campaign for youths' participation in politics.

10. **Establishment of United Ika Youth.** This political association was formed to mobilise youths on the need to participate in the electoral process in Ika.

11. **Advocacy:** Some of the trainees met with the Board of Trustees (BOT) Chairman, APC Volunteer International Group to make a case for more positions for the youth in the new administration come 2019.

12. **Establishment Akashiede Women in Politics:** This association is made up of young women who are being groomed for political positions and built to lend their voices to the affairs of the community. It was also an opportunity for an inter face between the founder and women in her community. This is because of her future ambition to contest for councillorship in her ward.

13. **Organised an open forum town hall meeting:** This meeting was for youths, women and men to share their challenges and the change they want to see in the community

14. **Skills acquisition:** One of the trainees also trained youths on skill acquisition, diesel plant fitting and maintenance at the multi-purpose youth training Centre Egbokodo Itsekiri and Warri.

15. **Formation of a youth peer group:** This was to motivate and groom the youths to join politics and to empower them to engage the government. About 65 male and female youths made up this group, but yet to be registered. The group, through donations from members and politicians paid for accommodation for the corps members in their alma mater and gave succor to domestic violence victims.

8. Change in orientation and ideology

One of the first noticeable changes in the trainees was in their orientation. Before the project, many of the youths had different perceptions and views of what election and politics were. To some, it was a dirty and dangerous game meant only for power mongers. Others see it as means to take their bite of the national cake. Other said politics was not for Christians. Another set believed that election is just a charade and that the outcomes of elections were always premeditated.

But after the project, there was a complete change of these mindsets. One of the trainees said, “Generally, my perception towards politics has changed. I was very religious and had no time for politics. Now it has changed”. He has decided to create time for politics. According to Joseph, “I had a change in orientation. I used to have a wrong orientation about leadership. I thought it was to acquire power and authority over my followers, and I also use to think that politics is all about making money. These were my view of people going into politics. But at the Centre LSD's training, I learnt that leadership is all about service and living an exemplary life”.

Many of those who have been sitting on the fence politically for years, changed their minds and are now very active in political activities. Some of them registered to vote, voted in the 2019 general elections, joined political parties, campaigned and contested, some won while others did not. For some of the youths, the change was in their efficiency in their places of work. Some others were a change in their work ethics. For example, one of our trainees who is also journalist, said “I am now unbiased in my reportage and mode of writing. I will no longer be antagonistic”.

From our trainees, we deduced that for them the major way to finance their candidacies or election was to get a godfather to be their financier. But after the training, they understood that it is for them to personally source for fund to finance their ambitions. To achieve this, so many of them established their private businesses, some got recognised and appointed. While a few secured white-collar jobs.

D. Success Stories From the Centre Lsd #YouthsCanLead Project in Delta State

Centre LSD jolted me from slumber and gave my life a new meaning – Graduate Trainee

Samuel Augustine Akpokinovo has attended the training at our centre. Akpokinovo shares his story from his days as a job seeker through when he was at the centre to train to life after the training. As a tip-off, the Sociology graduate is managing a poultry farm named OZ poultry Farm worth 3 million Naira, and not done yet, he has other plans. In this interview, our trainee graduate speaks on his perception before coming to our centre, and the opinion he now holds on politics after leaving our centre, among others. It is more like testimonies if you like.

As young graduate applicant, I searched for a white-collar job for years on end. I even wanted to enrol into the Nigerian Police Force, thinking it would be easier, but alas! I wrong. I discovered it was also very difficult to get a police job. My life was at a standstill. Here was I a young graduate of Sociology, yet no job after several years of search. I could not even approach a lady for friendship not to talk of as a wife. That was how low it got for me.

Politics and business were the last things on my scale of preferences. I didn't want to do any of them. At least not now. To me, politics was a dirty game. Since my days in school, I have always thought that politics is not for youths but meant for cabals and those in cults. My view then was that one must belong to “the group” before you can get elected. And judging from my poor background, with no godfather or cabal backing me, I thought I stood no chance in politics. But when I met Centre LSD, my story changed, my thinking changed. I began to think of what to do since no white-collar job was forthcoming. As poor as I was, even if I wanted to venture into politics, I didn't have the money to contest and compete with any opponent.

I got to know about Centre LSD **Youth Can Lead** training through an online media advert. The training was designed to build quality leadership skills in youths in the Niger Delta region, and I got an invitation to participate in the one organised in Delta State. This training was one of the best programmes I have ever attended. After the last day of the training, I

went to my hotel room, that night, I could not sleep. It was one of the longest nights of my life. The training hit me hard. I picked up my jotter and went through the entire three-day tutorials. I read through every lesson notes again. Then I asked myself: "Where do I start from?"

As the dawn set in, I packed my bag, got on my bike and rode all the way to meet a friend at Abraka, with the aim of searching for a piece of land. I didn't return to my village, Orogun, until I got the land. Fate smiled on me, and I got the land that same day. The following week, I started working on the land. I prepared the farm, fixed the cages. In another two weeks I stocked about 150 birds at 500,000 Naira. Three months later, I expanded the farm to accommodate another 100 birds, making it 250. In one year, I had 650 birds, with a net worth of 3,000,000 naira. Just in one year, I became an employer of labour. I employed two women to feed the birds and a security man.

My life made a 360 degrees turn. My family life changed. I who could not even think of a girlfriend then because "I no fit find girl, when I no fit support her for anything", I got engaged and married. (This interview held in December 2019) My son is a week old. Now my story has changed. I have attended another training on farming and ventured into full-time farming business. Together with my wife, I am planning to expand and branch into pig and goat business. The Centre LSD has changed my mindset of believing that politics is a dirty game. This organisation made me to join a political party, made me self-employed, made me popular in politics. Now, am looking forward to contesting for councillorship in the next LG election come 2020.

I really want to appreciate Centre LSD for changing my life and my story.

Akpokinovo

Delta state

2. The Elevation

I was rescued from drowning – Disabled Female Graduate

Ms Akunne Judith holds the National Certificate of Education (NCE), making her a professional teacher. She has ambition, but according to her, the

challenge she faces was that her of physical disability. But she was undaunted. She participated in our three-day training. Judith tells her story by herself. First, it was pathetic. Find out how she is now in her story below.

Getting a job in Nigeria is a huge challenge and even more challenging if you are like me, a young lady with disability. This automatically knocks you off in any interview, because they see those of us living with disability as physically and intellectually challenged. I obtained my National Certificate on Education (NCE) in 2015. Since then, I have been teaching in a private school, where my monthly salary was just N5000. For years, I have been earning little close to nothing working in a private school.

I wasn't actively involved in politics; hence I wasn't known in my constituency, as I always thought politics was too rough for me because of my challenge physically. I came to know about Centre LSD through a politician friend who already registered and informed me about the training. I was shortlisted, and I wholeheartedly embraced the opportunity. These three days were for me like a potter working on a lump of clay. It was a time for remoulding, reshaping, pruning and polishing. All the lecturers where on top of their games. Of all the lectures, Dr. Otive's talk on investment and savings was the lifeline. It was just the teaching I needed at that time of my life. I was like a person that was just rescued from drowning. My orientation changed as I understood I needed to save more and have my own business. I was motivated and challenged to change my status, and instantly, I made up my mind not to remain poor.

My last salary in the place where I teach was in July, just two months after the training. That last salary in July was the pain point. I was no longer comfortable with where I was. I needed a change. The change came in September 2018 when I started my own school, **Winners Academy**, in one of the uncompleted buildings in our compound. I started with three children (my daughter, my aunt's daughter and a neighbour's). At that time, everything was free. This was to encourage other children to enrol. But as the number increased, I employed two additional teachers and started paying them from my pocket. I am now a boss of myself. I am now an employer. If I had not come for the training, I for never get the mind to start my own". In less than one year after I started the school, I started my new school with my savings, I have close to 50 pupils now, and I am also

now an employer of labour, thereby reducing unemployment in my society.

You see, they say human needs are insatiable. I wanted to affect the lives of young women, especially the physically challenged ones. At the Centre LSD training, I realised women and girls do not like to participate either as voters or contestants. This is especially true about the physically challenged like me. They don't vote and are not voted for. Although I have nursed this dream since 2015, I didn't know how to go about it. But at the Centre LSD's training, I got the answers. I gather young woman in my constituency who were not involved in politics and educated them on the need to exercise their franchise and also be voted for as it is their right. I also shared with them the savings and investment tips from the **Youths Can Lead** training, as I have been taught. This led to the birth of **Akashede Women in Politics**, a quarterly meeting where we discuss savings, investment, etc. and monitor members' investment as well as share investment opportunities with members. I started with five women (my mum, three friends, and myself). It is like an association of women and youths. It is one way of making myself known to the women towards my future ambition to contest for councillorship in my ward.

Today, my income has increased significantly. My plan is to grow the school to an extent and return to complete my university education. I have given free education to 28 people, five children, I have bought shares. For women who could not raise capital for their investment, we started an esusu (thrift collection) and so far, two women have gotten N30,000 each and have begun paying back every market day at N1,000 every five days. I have registered as a member of a political party and am now active in my constituency, paying my dues and attending party meetings.

I am emerging and becoming a voice in my community, all thanks to Centre LSD/Ford Foundation.

Judithakunne

Delta State

3. Wind of Change

'Centre LSD has changed my life'

Miss Faith Ayomanor was also a participant at our three-day training. Hers is the story of determination, perseverance and desire to succeed. She tells how the centre encouraged her to prepare for life.

Growing up wasn't easy. Mum died of kidney failure when I was just eight years old. I am the eighth of 10 children of my parents. After the death of my mum, everything changed. I started staying with my elder sister. Shortly after mum's death, in 2010, dad also died of a robbery attack. Life became tougher. Going to the university was rough, but I graduated. Friends and families helped me, but sometimes I get disappointed. I wanted to succeed despite my struggles. I wanted to be someone to be reckoned with, someone that will put a smile on the faces of other vulnerable children like me. I started combining menial work with my university studies at the University of Benin. I was working as an office assistant and paid monthly. I combined it with hair making in the school.

The realisation from Centre LSD training that the “Wealthiest persons do not work for people” rekindled my desire for financial stability. One year after this life-changing training, I now have a strong financial base. I have always had the notion that politics is for the old and that for you to get involved in politics, you need a political godfather. Since I don't have a godfather, I don't have money and I think I am not old enough for politics, I never felt the need to participate in politics. For me, politics is a no-go area, unless I am old enough, and as a fresh graduate, I felt the only way I can make money is by getting a job which doesn't come easy considering the society we live in.

I got to know about Centre LSD through my friend, Oyiborume Paul, who encouraged me to attend the programme. The programme took place in 2018 at Primus Hotel, Warri, Delta State. The training addressed a lot of issues, but there are some that brought a lot of change to my life. First, I got to know at the training that politics is not only meant for the old but in fact, for the youths and that the best time to take charge is now. Another thing I learnt was that to get involved in politics, I need money. While addressing the importance of money in politics, I leant that I cannot get rich by

working for someone and that the richest man in the world does not work under someone. And that the only sustainable source of wealth is business.

After the programme, I realised that I don't need to wait anymore and the best time to get involved in politics was now. I also realised that I needed a sustainable source of income if I must get involved in politics. Knowing that no one gets rich by working for someone, I decided to start a business, since getting a job is not even easy as well. So, I started my clothing and cosmetics business. Right now, I have a fast growing online and offline fashion business; I supply clothing and jewelries to various people in different parts of the country. I also became a network marketer. To participate actively in politics, I registered with the All Progressives Congress (APC).

My involvement in the Centre LSD programme has brought a lot of changes to my life. To some extent, am financially stable and do not depend on anybody anymore.

Thank you, Centre LSD, for giving my life a meaning.

Faith Ayomanor

Delta State

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3. My hidden self revealed.'

Mr Akpobasah Ejiroghen E E. is a Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) stalwart who got to our training made possible by his wife. How has life been before and after encountering the LSD training. He gives the answer himself in his story below.

I have always wanted more in terms of income. I work with a security company as the supervisor. And my role is to oversee other security personnel in the company. The pay was good but could not meet all the needs of my young family. As a result, I constantly thought of doing a side business, something like going into small and medium scale business to generate multiple streams of income, but each time, the fear of failure held me back. Things became a bit tough. You know naturally when there is no

money in the house, the meal ration will reduce. Having three square meal in my house was hard and the fear of what the future holds was a major concern. My life was in a cycle, I spent all my salary before it comes.

On April 26th, 2018, I received a call from my wife that there was a training programme on **Capacity Building on youth interested in politics in Niger Delta** coming up. She sent me the link and asked me to register. And I did. Fortunately, my name was shortlisted to participate in the **Youth Can Lead** training. Though I had no drive for politics, I still attended. The training took place from June 18th to 20th , 2018. I was moved by the lecturers and their lectures. The teachings rekindled my resolved to be a better father and husband.

After the lecture, I went back to my hotel room. That night, I could not sleep. I was bothered. I took time to reflect on his life, my children, family etc. and my meagre income. Because of the conflicting issues bordering me on which venture to undertake or not to invest in, I summoned the courage to go into entrepreneurship. Specifically, I decided to do farming business. I searched for a place, started groundnut, corn and vegetable and cassava farming. In less than four months, I started harvesting vegetable, which boosted my savings. I have cassava and vegetable farms in Warri and one in Jesse Ethiope West.

My general perception of politics changed. My financial stability, in terms of running my family and helping my extended family, has greatly improved. The Centre LSD has exposed me to huge business opportunities and had made me financially stable. The Centre LSD has really done something great in my life and for this, am sincerely grateful.

Akpobasah Ejiroghen

Delta State

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5. I've stopped sitting on the fence.'

This story is that of a young man Frank Waive who was once politically frustrated. Having been inspired by the Centre LSD, he is now trying to change the world, starting from Delta State. One who once feared participation in politics now actively participating and influencing others

who are still sitting on the fence to do likewise. It is a story of a political revolution gathering momentum.

My dad once ran for a political office and firsthand I saw some of the challenges in politics. I felt young people were the problem because they don't have leadership skills. Before the training, I was not into politics, because I thought politics was too violent, dishonest and dirty. I was a government critic on social media. Early 2018, I heard about the **Youths Can Lead** training on WhatsApp, and after that, I applied online. The training involved youths cut across various political parties in all the local government areas of Delta State. I was fortunately shortlisted and came to the training with an open mind to learn.

Speakers like Dr Otive Igbuzor, Barr. Omason and others inspired me to run for elective office. They showed us the procedures, legal requirements and made me understand I have the potentials. Monday Osasah's lecture on **Non-Violence Election** influenced my idea of politics. I left the training inspired and with a resolve to do something about bad governance, by ensuring good people who run for office, get the support they deserve. To achieve this, I reached out to all my politically indifferent friends and associates, convinced them to get involved in the process by registering to vote and join political parties.

Barr. Omasan shared her experience of how she campaigned, and this resulted in my establishing my campaign group. I got a bus, fueled it, provided lunch and daily stipends to INEC officials to go into the community for voter registration. Alaye, Delta State Company Township, Opete Okpaka Ojevwu, Ewu and Jeremy were the ones I personally attended. There was this feeling that I could do something to contribute to youth participation in politics, and that does not necessarily need to be something very big, just do something in which place you are. As a result, I joined the All Progressives Congress (APC), moved my voter card to my village. I started to contribute financially to my party, I became the Ughelli South LGA coordinator of my party.

I was in a difficult position. Since my dad was running, I decided to join his campaign team and shelved my ambition to the future, with the hope that one day I will contest. With the knowledge acquired from Centre LSD's

training, I began to mobilise, organised voters to register, together with my friend mobilised young Christian youths to be part of the political process. From my personal efforts, about 150 to 200 citizens registered. I also did a drive towards the collection of the voter card. Some bus drivers favoured our course and conveyed some citizens to and from their wards to collect their voter cards. I no longer sit on the fence, no indifference, I am now more interested in government politics. And here is the good news, my dad won!

Thank you to Centre LSD for that timely capacity building for youths. Although I did not contest, I was able to mobilise support for my dad.

Frank Wavie

Delta State

6. Centre LSD positioned me for leadership roles – *Graduate Trainee*

Mr. Awolowo Perry hit the ground running after attending the Centre LSD training. The result is the establishment of Triple Gee Technology. He tells us how

Before Centre LSD **Youth Can Lead** training I was doing follow follow in terms of participating in election. I was just an onlooker, minding my business like though "nothing concerns me and politics". This was also because in 2011 my father was sick, and I had to close my business in Port Harcourt and came back home to take care of him. In Jan 30th, 2013, we lost him, and life became tough. Although I wanted to contest, there was no money. So, I lost interest in politics. But all these changed after I attended Centre LSD's training. At the training, we were taught that as youths, we need to actively participate in politics.

I got to know the Centre LSD's training through the Action Aid and Envirumedic in my community. I was the only participant from my community and ward that was shortlisted for this training. The capacity building for youth interested in political office that took place last year at Pemos Hotel Warri on 18th to 20th 2018, was a major milestone for me. It helped me identify so many gaps in my life, and I came to understand party

structures. After the training, I decided to get my voters registration done. I did not stop there, I registered as a member of a political party, and I became very active. In less than a year, I was identified as an active member of the party and appointed as the unit secretary of my unit. I also became the Youth Vice Chairman of my community as well as Information Adviser of Nigeria Red Cross, Ughelli South Division, Delta State.

With the knowledge I got and my new position as unit secretary, I began a voter's education for youth members of the party and the need for them to get their PVCs. My political activities in this period renewed my zeal for contesting for councillorship. One of the training sessions that stood out for me was the need for youths to have a stable financial base before contesting for elective position. According to the facilitator, in that way, we can finance part of our campaign before soliciting for funds.

So, on June 2nd, 2019, I re-established my fish farm with just 500 stock at N25,000 post juvenile (IMT INK). I first started this farm in 2012 with 5000 fish stock, and in the fourth month, a flood swept all the farm. After then I decided not to do farming again. But I wanted more income so I can contest for the next councillorship election in my ward. I needed to make more money. I remember I knew how to repair phones before. So, in September 2018, after CLSD training in June, I opened a GSM business at Ubogo in Udu LGA. In 2019 August, I opened a GSM store, thus combining repairing, video and photo editing (Adobe).

I have established a multi-layer income generating venture. “Life is a little bit better, because that is where I get money from to feed my fish”. I have also added 4 acres of land for bush mango in addition to my fish farm.

All thanks to the Centre LSD for this life changing move.

Perry Awolowo

Delta State

7. Revamped

Mr Ogbemure Solomon works with the Heritage Bank Plc. As a banker, he was not contented, so he participated in our training for a reason. He tells us the reason in his story.

During my time at Delta State University, Abraka. I was very active in politics and even served as the President of Religious Studies Department 2016/2017, Faculty of Art, in my final year. This was largely due to the encouragement I received from my lecturers not to quit my political career. Unfortunately, after school, I lost interest in politics. I had no fund to finance my political ambition. I was afraid to venture into politics after school. The worse of it, was my thought of "how will a young man like me win in a contest with older ones that have money and influence. My dream of aspiring for a position in the state house got shattered due to lack of finance and the fear that it is impossible for youth to hold certain positions with the older leaders refusing to step down.

In 2018, I was invited by my supervisor in my place of work to attend a youth programme at Pemos Hotel, Warri and there I was trained. One thing about that day was that my perception about school politics and politics in general changed. Martin Luther Jr once said that "I have a dream …". I was motivated and suddenly remembered what my lecturer once told me in school and even signed on my shirt which I kept till this very day "see you in state house". His advice to me not to quit politics became more vivid.

The training changed my orientation and addressed my fears of not being able to measure up to the older men. Immediately after the training the next day I went straight to my ward Okumagba Ward II and had an informal meeting with my friends and shared with them what I have learnt from the training. I proceeded to register in a political party. Today, I am now a card-carrying member of the All Progressives Congress (APC), where I served as the coordinator for Mike Okugmagba who contested for House of Assembly. 2019 was my first time of voting. I am a Seventh Day Adventist, and we do not vote on Saturday, but due to my zeal to be involved in politics, I voted and participated fully in the 2019 general elections. This past election was the first time I participated fully in the election process.

Immediately I left the programme, I started building my financial base in preparation for the 2023 election, where I intend to participate as one of the candidates. The Centre LSD taught me to fish and create financé for myself and so, I partnered with someone to start a farm in DBS Warri where we farm and share the income with my partner. My orientation changed completely at the Youth Can Lead training. I got motivated and awakened. My dream came alive. My political ambition of contesting for a position in the State House might not be a reality now. But I believe that the knowledge and experience I have gotten from Centre LSD in the past year, have prepared and motivated me towards my 2023 election. It is a dream that will never die. The Centre LSD **Youth Can Lead** programme revived my political career, and my political ambition was re-awakened. Thank you, Centre LSD and Ford Foundation, for this great impact.

Solomon Ogbemure

Delta State

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8. How Centre LSD made me SA to Gov Okowa's aide.'

Mr Obiemeke Moses U. is now a top government appointee made possible from the mentoring he received from the Centre LSD. Could he have done better, he gives insight in what he now engages himself in.

I was just a graduate applicant who was into transport business and loves writing articles, social media write-ups/engagement etc. My mode of writing was mostly antagonistic, but with CLSDs knowledge/training, my mental thinking changed. The Centre LSD's training caused a paradigm shift, re-orientation and positive mindset in my life. Before the training, I had this mindset “that intellectual methodology cannot be internalized in leadership”. This poor mindset (wrong mindset) kept me in a situation I felt was a comfort zone. I had no passion for patriotism, I had no self-sufficiency and personal knowledge, exposition, orientation was not enough for a youth who want to lead.

I heard of the Centre LSD training from a friend, and I applied. I was shortlisted, and for three days, I was exposed to series of teachings both on

leadership, campaign message development, election monitoring, stakeholders mapping in the election, campaign strategies to mention but a few. The facilitators who were well equipped mentored me accurately and appropriately towards becoming the leader the society desires. The gut of this imbued message rekindled me to be a better person with most valuable, yet underused assets of self-sufficiency, patriotism and proficiency in human and material infrastructural development which has now repositioned me for a greater task ahead.

During one of the sessions, we were taught to pass the same message in a different manner, without antagonising. This statement turned my writing and reportage around. My reportage changed completely. I now report how it is. This began to greatly reflect in my social media posts. Little did I know that among my social media followers was one special media influencer, E. A. Uzumnism (Barr. Eugene Azuka Uzum). One day, one of my posts on *Thinking positive* caught his attention, and he called me to work with and for him. After seeing my work, he offered me an appointment as SA on New Media to the Executive Assistant to the Governor on Orientation and Strategy, Delta State. I didn't see this coming. I have made posts, written articles and reports for years, and none attracted such positive attention. Just an encounter with Centre LSD, my story changed. I am now the Director-General, Bureau of Orientation, Delta state.

Since this appointment, I have been actively involved in the sensitisation of Delta on development issues. Presently (2019), I am sensitising Deltans on impending flood. Asking people in flood-prone areas to relocate, take out their valuables, monitor their wards, etc. A typical example are the people in Ogara. As a result, I was also recognised in my community and was made the organising secretary of the community- Otolokpo community, Ika North East LGA and as an ambassador of peace in the youth forum of Delta state.

Learnings from the Centre LSD's training has propelled a paradigm shift in my person. Thanks to Centre LSD and Ford Foundation. The Centre LSD built my capacity and brought me to the limelight.

Moses Obiemeke

Delta State

9. My sudden rise to managerial position.'

MR. OKEKPORO VICTOR currently heads Zenikon Engineering Limited Warri. His ascension of the leadership of the company came only after attending the Centre LSD training. He tells how.

You know, like every other youth, I have always seen politics as a dirty game. My view about politics generally was all negative. For years, I thought politics was not a game of number but rather a dirty act that involves killings and all sorts of evil deeds. My fear and worries about politics got hold of me so hard that, whenever aspirants contesting for various elective positions come up to share their various manifesto, I often rate them to be self-centred and meaningless leaders, who have no action plan for the masses. Even before they open their mouth to share their intentions, I already would have condemned them as selfish people. It was that bad.

In 2018, I heard about Centre LSD's training on **Youths Can Lead**. I first came across the Centre LSD six years ago, when I was doing my internship with the Environmental and Rural Mediation Centre (ENVIROMEDIC) Warri. I applied and was shortlisted. The **Youth Can Lead** training, I must say, was a laudable and commendable one. Learnings from the training became instrumental in changing some of my old ideologies about youth inclusion in politics. The training spurred me into brainstorming of what next? Fortunately, after the training, I was chosen as part of a consultancy team that established an international non-governmental organisation named Search for Common Ground here in Warri. I integrated the lessons learnt from the training into the new job I got in Zenikon Engineering Limited Warri, after the training. This resulted in my appointment as the head of the organisation.

The Centre LSD played a key role in transforming my life and career. The training I must say, achieved its aim and objectives owing to the facts that some of the trainees, including me, have been given some elective appointments thereby bridging the gap between youth and older ones in politics. My success story today will not be complete without acknowledging the impacts of the Centre LSD/Ford Foundation s in my life.

Centre LSD Youths Can Lead training spurred me into a new realm of people-oriented leadership style. My mindset about politics has changed, my involvement in political talks have changed.

Thank you, Centre LSD and Ford Foundation

OKEKPORO VICTOR

Delta state

10. The Eldorado revealed

Mr Austin Idimi is one of the graduate trainees who had established private business concerns after attending our training. He now manages Self Employed Strategies. According to him, the Centre LSD brought out his great potentials and polished them through their training on ***Youth Can Lead.***

Every cloud has its own silver lining. Rome was not built in a day, I was told. Every successful man or woman must face series of challenges. But what counts is not the number of falls but the number of encouragements that I must make it. From experience, I learnt that failure is not a test of one's true ability, but encouragement to move on and keep moving. This was my story.

Before the Centre LSD's training, I wasn't involved in politics at all. I saw politics as a game of godfatherism, “game of you must belong, before you are made to lead”. Ironically, I wanted to lead someday, I wanted to venture into politics, but didn't know how to. This was the beginning of my search for platforms to get more information to embark on my dream to contest for elective position in Delta State. I wanted to grow politically, but the how was a huge question. In my search for answers, I met the Centre LSD through a friend, and I got interested in the training. I was invited to participate and later realised that the training was not only about politics but a wholistic one about leadership.

This training rekindled my potentials and self-awareness, both in politics and other fields of endeavours. The programme spurred me to identify my potentials and make good use of and harness it. The three days of training was knowledge packed. I learnt so much in such a short period. First was that I learnt that politics is all about how you convince and meet up with

people's pressing needs. I suddenly got the answers to my questions. I told myself, “light has come”. After the training, I developed a strong interest in leading/contesting. My first step was to join a political party. So, I joined the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and became a card-carrying member. I then proceeded to declare to my family and party, my intention to run for councillorship in Ituru Ilemu LGA, and I was given a positive nod to go ahead. So, my campaign voyage began. I went on one-to-one campaign in the communities, providing grinding machines (cassava) to the communities, high-quality seedling yam set and implement to farmers. I embarked on grassroots mobilisation. I wanted to get to the heart of the people and close to them. But in spite of these efforts, I did not win the councillorship position.

Centre LSD taught me to start from the point I am, no matter how little. According to them, “Little by little, drops of water will turn to a pool of water”. Centre taught me that there is no one that is really wasted. Today, I am an academic consultant and agriculturist. I now produce pumpkin vegetable (ugu) on large scale. At last, I made it in my own way by unleashing the potential discovered through the Centre LSD workshop.

Thank you, Centre LSD, for being the answer to my age long question.

Austin Idimi

Delta state

11. An Attitudinal Change

'I got leadership skills from the training'

Mr Oseji Francis Nnamdi was nominated by his employers the African Community Development Initiatives to attend this training. Nnamdi said he is well off after the training serving his community effectively.

The knowledge I acquired from the Centre LSD's training has helped me effectively to discharge my duties as the project committee chairman, in managing the project of drilling boreholes in my community. This responsibility came after I learnt that I need to build a relationship with my people at the grassroots. I became involved in issues of the community and with it came responsibility, and I must say, I did outstandingly well.

The first time I contested for councillorship in my ward was 2004. I was totally disappointed and discouraged. The local government chairman was from my ward, and he categorically told me to step down for his person. I went ahead and still contested despite that, and unfortunately, I lost the election. After that attempt, I was discouraged by the politics of godfatherism played by my political party. The political leaders sit down and decide who goes into elective offices, without considering the masses choice. Since that first attempt in 2004, I restrategized and was waiting for the right time to contest for any elective position. Although I still nursed my ambition of contesting for councillorship, 14 years later, I did nothing to actualize the dream.

In 2018, I was nominated by an NGO where I work, African Community Development Initiative (ACDI), to participate in the Centre LSD Youths Can Lead training. I did participate, and I must say that the training was an eye-opener for me. The training really led to positive changes in my life. I became an advocate. I decided to step-down the training to other youths. As a result of this, more than 200 youths in my political ward have been affected by the knowledge I got from Ford Foundation programme. I also taught them that to be a successful politician, you must be self-reliant financially. This has made many of them to go into one business or the other.

After the training, I decided to revisit my dreams of contesting again for councillorship in Ward 9b Ute Okpu Ika North East LGA, under the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Unfortunately, I lost at the primaries (battlefield). I am not relenting anymore. I will try again. I have also been able to contribute to the development of my community with the knowledge I got from the Centre LSD/Ford Foundation training. I was made the Secretary-General of the national youth association in my hometown. With this position, I was able to manage the affairs of the youths in my community in resolving political and community issues. In my community, a borehole project was donated to the community and the community set up a project committee of which I was the chairman of the committee. It was donated by the European Union. One-man donated a piece of land to site the borehole project. Halfway through the project, the man retrieved his land and that he didn't want to donate it again. As the

Chairman of the project committee, I was able to resolve this, and the challenge was addressed. The man re-donated the land, and the project was successfully completed. All thanks to the leadership skills I learnt from Centre LSD.

Francis Nnamdi

Delta state

12. I'm getting set financially for 2023

I have always wanted to participate actively in politics. Although I have contested once in 2004 and lost, I didn't give up trying. But unfortunately, finance has always been one of my major challenges. To raise fund for my political ambition, I started palm oil business in 2014. I was buying in bulk and selling in bulk to trader in Delta. I was really doing well. I make a 1,000 naira from every six liters sold. In a month, I made approximately N40,000. I learnt this business from my father who had a Palm plantation. He has been advising me to venture fully into the palm oil processing business. I didn't heed his advice until this Centre came and opened my eyes. I suddenly realised that instead of waiting for a white-collar job, I can start with this.

In 2018, I encountered the Centre LSD when I was shortlisted as one of the participants of the **Youths Can Lead** Capacity Building. One of the many explosive teachings that "hit" me was building and expanding my financial base, to be able to compete favourably in any elections. We were taught that we need to be financially independent to an extent before soliciting supports from others. This we were told will help one escape from a political entrepreneur who would hijack your office and frustrate your leadership. After the training, I decided to expand my palm oil business. Instead of buying harvested palm fruits like I used to do, I went into renting palm tree plantations. This means I am the only one permitted to harvest the fruit for at least one year. So, I bought two plantations. To be able to cope with the demands, I employed four workers who assist in harvesting.

In two months, I harvested 260 bunches, equivalent to 48 litres per plantation totalling 96 litres.

The Centre LSD stimulated my thought process like I have never experienced before. I leant that I could dream big and it's possible to achieve it if I work on it. Before my encounter with the training, I was producing the oil manually. Months after the training, I decided to mechanise my production. In addition to what I have saved, I took a loan to buy an oil extracting machine for N245,000 out of which I have paid N145,000 and am left with 100,000 debt. Now I produce more oil, make more profits and am putting food on the table of four families. I have begun to transport my oil to the north for sales. Centre LSD taught me how to fish. I am now an employer of labour.

I am happy that I am making impacts in my little way. I am better off irrespective of the problems of a start-up. I am an employer of four youths from my ward unit, thus making them self-reliant. I was recently elected as the Publicity Secretary (PDP) at my ward level, Ward 9 in Ika North East LGA. What more can I say, than to say "thank you to Centre LSD and Ford Foundation". You have strengthened my resolve to be a better leader. I will keep striving for my dream of aspiring for an elective position.

Francis Nnamdi

Delta state

13. How I broke into my community politics'- Arogboritse

Mr. Billy Arogboritse is a Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) member who is getting set for 2023 election. Before now, he never dared such ambition. In fact, he said nobody knows him, so it put a wedge on his political ambition. The question now is, where did he get his new motivation from?. He gives answers to this below:

For so many years, majority of the people who were not born in my community (Orugbo Community in Warri South LGA) or youths who reside in my community are usually not favored in the political arena. Elective positions within the community or at the grassroots was out of their reach. Youths were hardly given recognition when it comes to elective and

appointive positions. Getting any position in my community was like the hitting rock of Gibraltar with stick with the intent to break it. That can never be done.

In 2018, gracefully, I encountered the Centre LSD leadership school. This was organised by Value Rebirth and Empowerment Initiative (VREI), where I was trained and empowered with leadership and success tools. The school nominated me for participation in the **Youths Can Lead** training. Immediately after the training I was introduced by the (ED of VRIE) because of my performance and active participation in the leadership school. The Centre LSD/Ford Foundation training was a laudable programme, At this training, I got re-fired and began to put all I learnt into practice. The training taught me that to contest in any elective position I needed to align myself rightly to the community. First, I transferred my polling unit to my community and then followed it with engaging in political activities in my community.

Because of my participation in meetings and community activities, I was made a member of the community youth election body in November 2018. This body conducted the youth exco election in December 2018. Now I go to my community at least once a month to keep abreast with community developments if any. The Youth Can Lead training bridged my knowledge gap and emboldened me to go back to my community. Before now, I hardly visit there. I was not even known by my uncles, not to talk of my community. The first time I declared my intention to run for political position, it took one of my uncles the stress of introducing me to my extended family members, telling them whose son I am. From this training, I learnt that I needed to become actively involved in my community activities. This bold step has earned me recognition in different capacities. The leadership and success tool learnt from the Centre LSD/Ford Foundation training positioned me and gave me recognition in my community.

Getting to this point was daunting for me, but it was worth the struggle. I am positioning myself strategically for the next youth leadership in my community. This will be a springboard for my local government chairmanship ambition or any other political position in near future. 2023 is loading.

Arogboritse Billy

Delta State

14. A shift in my financial status *– Another trainee graduate testifies*

Otiara Omamuzo Dennis is another Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) stalwart who attended the training, saying the Centre LSD has transformed me from being an employee to an employer, adding that he achieved what I could not achieve in years in a short while after the programme.

For years, I have dreamt of running for an elective position. But my major problem was money. I didn't have money to run an election. Apart from the financial issues, I was naïve and not knowledgeable about election processes and how to successfully contest for elective position. The truth was that I didn't even know where to start from. But Centre LSD gave me a different mindset and a push.

I got to this Centre LSD through a call by Mr Modesty. The programme took place in Primus Hotel Warri. A lot of issues about youth's participation were addressed, and my orientation changed. I was taught that to contest for any elective position, I needed a financial base; I realised that I was even a problem to myself. Before the programme, I use to have one car I normally use for private runnings, but not for business. After the training, I realised I needed to build a financially stable life. Thought of the how! And suddenly I thought to myself, I could turn my private car to a money-making tool". Few months after the training, I started a Car drop business with one car. Within that same year, I expanded the business and bought two additional cars. Today, I have three cars for my car drop business and 3 employees as driver in my payroll. All these were achieved through the training by Centre LSDs

Centre LSD's training changed my life and I became financially stable in a short while. Now, I have a different orientation about politics.

All thanks to Centre LSD/Ford Foundation Project.

Otiara Denni

Delta State

15. How I got to where I am now – *By another successful trainee*

The Centre LSD ***Youths Can Lead*** *project has changed the narrative of youth inclusiveness in my ward. Armed with the old adage that youths are the leaders of tomorrow and that the future is now we took our destinies by force, says a graduate trainee. Another successful trainee Usuemerai Solomon Ogheneovo tells his story below:*

I have always been involved in politics. But my kind of politics has always been in the opposition. I thought that for the youth to make changes, one must be in the corridor of power, at all cost. Before the training, I have contested and won twice at the unit level, as the Vice Chairman and a Ward Chairman all in 2014. After these attempts, I began to nurse the intention to run for the position of a Ward Chairman. As a person, I always liked playing and winning freely and fairly. Seeing the irregularities, impunity and lack of internal democracy in my party, I decided to decamp to another bigger party. And then my quest for knowledge began.

As fate would have it, I met the Centre LSD, on the Youth Can Lead project. So, I decided to pitch my tent with them for three days. I said to myself "there is no knowledge lost". My aim of coming for the training was to broaden my knowledge in politics, acquire enough knowledge that can help me in the pursuit of my political career. Luckily, I saw what I was looking for. In the second quarter of 2018, I encountered Centre LSD through Hon. Benjamin Ogbolor. After attending the three-day leadership and capacity building for youth interested in elective and political positions organised by Centre LSD in Warri, I was inspired. This training broadened my sense of reasoning and after the training, I started seeing traits I didn't know I had before. In the course of the training I learnt that as a contestant, I needed to have a budget and that I needed to monitor my spendings. Before now, all I do in my past elections was just spending, there was no such thing as budget in my previous elections.

After the training, I decided to contest for the position of the chairman in my ward. So, I formed a committee and charged them with the responsibility of raising funds from our supporters and this helped me to control my spending during the 2018 congress. Few days to the party primaries, I was changed for another candidate so, I decamped to another

party that approached me. I became very active and in a short while. I was made a member of the contact and mobilisation committee in my ward. Also, some of the candidates brought me into their campaign teams. With the knowledge gathered from the training, I reorganised and regrouped the youths in my ward to make sure that the youth leadership position is not only the position that youths will occupy. Fortunately, I attended the training together with some youths in my LGA. Together we led the campaign on youth's inclusion in the 2019 elections.

In 2019 general election, I made history. For the first time in 20 years since 1999, the Peopls Democratic Party (PDP) won 100 per cent in Oleh community. This was as a result of my work. In recognition of this, the party as a form of motivation and commendation took me on a familiarization visit to the Governor of Delta State. As I was taught at the training, I started building my social life. I have ventured into foodstuff business and began to involve more youths in my ward activities. The most joyful part of this is that there is a change in my ward now. I led an executive that 96 per cent of its members are youths. Presently, I have been appointed member of the Delta State Land and Water Ways Security Committee by Governor Ifeanyi Okowa. I am making giant strides and I know that the sky is my limit come 2023.

Thank you, Centre LSD/Ford Foundation for the training.

Usuemerai Solomon

Delta State

16. Centre LSD stirred up my passion for youth's participation in politics'

At the Centre SLD training, Senior D. Demokiniovo, who is with the Onosueke Foundation on Need Assessment Programme, said he learnt that the youths are the mirror of the nation. The training stirred up his morale immediately to act. He outlines his action plan in the story below:

I have never wanted to go into politics. In fact, I have never been a member of any party or politics. In 2016, I obtained my voter card and since then I have never used it until after my encounter with the Centre LSD. My hatred for politics steamed from time immemorial, as our politicians have continuously failed us. They make fake campaign promises. Every election cycle, they promise us good schools, access roads to our communities and loans to our poultry farmers, etc. and none of their promise were ever fulfilled. To add salt to injury, the elders are unwilling to give the youths opportunity. They often want settlement before allowing a youth to contest.

In 2018, I attended the Youths Can Lead training. At the seminar, I learnt that the youths are the mirror of our nation. I took it as a challenge to go to my ward in Ethiope East LGA to identify with my party the Social Democratic Party (SDP). I started attending party meetings regularly. Members of the party saw my seriousness and decided to give me an expression of interest form to contest in the 2019 general elections. Now, I have begun to change the orientation of our youths. I have become an ambassador of youths' participation in politics. Now I preach against money politics and the need for youths to face the reality and chart a course for a total change in the system.

After the training, I wanted to tell everyone what I have learnt in the three-day training. I called some youths in my wards and I shared with them my knowledge at the Centre LSD's training and that it was high time the youths stood their ground. In addition, I also told them that finance should not be a barrier to our dreams. In the 2019 election, I voted for the first time and of the 10 young men I shared my Centre LSD's knowledge with, five stopped vote buying and did not participate in political racketeering. I pray that the Centre LSD will continue with this training. They have really helped the youth to stand our ground and know our importance in our nation.

God will bless the Centre LSD for this youth initiative. Indeed, Centre LSD has done a great work in impacting on the youth in the Niger Delta. Please keep it up!

Senior Demokiniovo

Delta state

17. The enemy called fear was conquered - *Female participant*

Centre LSD changed my attitude towards politics, and for the first time, I registered with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and participated as a presiding officer during the 2019 general elections. Today, I am a better public speaker, says a participant at the project Ogbu Bethel A.

Political involvement has never been an option for me because of the enemy called fear and because I saw politics as a game for the most influential and rich people of the society. Bloodshed, kidnapping and the lack of recognition for female candidates with great potentials were some of the things that hindered me from participating in anything politics. I found out that no matter how knowledgeable and equipped the female candidate is, she stands little or no chance of winning. Due to lack of finance and coupled with the fact that I am self-sponsored with the little I have saved and help from other kind-hearted family members. I channel my energy to work and raise funds for my education instead of disturbing myself with politics. Not until my encounter with Centre LSD that a change in my orientation occurred. This has helped me to come out of the shell of fear and take a bold step to venture into politics in the 2019 elections.

I learnt of the **Youths Can Lead training** through a friend who saw the advert online. I registered and weeks later, I received invitation for the training. The mind-blowing three-day training changed my impression from "Politics is a no-go area" to Youths Can Lead. After the Centre LSD/Ford Foundation training, I got a new idea and orientation of why youths need to be involved in politics. I took a step further and registered for the first time with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as an adhoc staff and participated in all the trainings. Having been taught by the Centre of the dos and don'ts of election, I was able to organise and coordinate my voting unit.

After the training, I concluded that I am a leader not an onlooker. This training rebuilt and reawakened me to responsibility in ensuring that youths have a voice in governance and politics. The orientation that politics is a dirty game has really limited so many of our youth's abilities. After the Centre LSD training, this orientation changed. The spell of fears was broken and that gave birth to a new me. It has promoted my self

interest in entrepreneur (Hair Salon) to help me become self-dependent. Now, I am taking a bold step to accept the role of a leader and now I can stand before any crowd and address them. Something I couldn't do before. All thanks to the Centre LSD and Ford Foundation.

Ogbu Bethel

Delta state

18. The step that broke forth – *Comrade Oritseneye*

Comrade Idounagbe Fredrick Oritseneye, is a business man cum contractor who also took part in the three-day training narrates his experience before and after the encounter in the story below.

Politics has always been my thing right from my university days. In fact, it is in my DNA. For many years, I have held many positions as the National President of Itshekiri Students Worldwide in 2016, NYSC President of CDS group on "Education Development Group" (EDG) in 2017 and in 2018 I joined the mainstream politics. Although I was fully active politically, I had no depth of the requirements and processes. I got to know this after my encounter with the Centre LSD **Youth Can Lead** project. For many years I carried out electoral activities as it comes, without proper understanding of the processes. But after theis training, I understood that it is not just the election, but the processes that makes the election a success, which either ways it goes.

The African Centre for Leadership Strategy and Development was introduced to me by a senior friend who called me and sent my details across and I was invited. The activities in those three days of training were mind-blowing. The courses were very wide in scope, on leadership skills, party leadership, political parties, election phases, among others. The Centre LSD equipped me with skills or ability to know the steps on how to be an effective party member, leader, how to write campaign speech, steps on how to go about contesting for an elective position, raising money for election, how much is involved in each spend in each position you want to contest for e.t.c. I must say that the training answered many of my questions and lots of my problems were addressed. But the one that

encouraged me the most was that it made me a better person in terms of leading people and teaching them better than the information I had before the project.

I came to realise that information on the electoral process were not known by lots of individuals who participated in politics, including some of our leaders, members and candidates of political parties. So, the first thing I did after the training was to always take the opportunity to step-down the training any time an occasion presents itself. I tried to explain some of the importance of the process to the people or my party members. In 2018, after the training, I took the mandate to contest for Councillorship in Warri South, Passu Ward 07, under the Progressive Peoples Alliance (PPA). This broke the fear in several of the youths who were before now afraid to venture into politics. Unfortunately, I came second.

Because of the knowledge acquired from the Centre LSD, I was able to train some persons about the electoral process in my ward before the election, some detailed information, what election phase are and what each phase entails. Also, not just to support a party but to be very active in it and the steps that make anyone a party member. I also encouraged them to know about their political parties and aims and objectives, so we can all understand the vision of the party. The training gave me a balance on leadership style, I have begun to generate funds for myself with the knowledge acquired from the training. The LSD's training brought out my hidden traits and skills.

People began to see in me what they have not seen before the training. I was invited as a guest to speak on **"The Role of Students in the Development of Itsekiri Nation** in Warri by the National Association of Itsekiri Students first time before a larger audience. I was a weekly guest on five occasions on the show *Good Morning Delta, Not Too Young To Run Campaign* and at a church programme where I talked about leadership in their youth programme at the Word of Life Bible Church, Ubeji branch. Four of these times, I was paid. This was the first time I will be getting frequent invitation and getting paid.

I can boldly say that with this knowledge, youths in my ward are gearing for the next election. Indeed, a journey of a thousand miles begins with a step. Thank you, Centre LSD and Ford Foundation.

Oritseneye fredrick

Delta state

19. Centre LSD Taught Me How to Fish

After the Centre LSD's training, I ventured into entrepreneur and I made in four months what my salary could not give me in two years, declares Bernard E. Ogheneseroho who now owns and runs Pleasant Group of Schools, Abraka. He tells the story of his transformation just like any other participant at the training.

Before the training, I had the mind to contest for councillorship position in my ward, but the politics of favoritism and God fatherism were the orders of the day in my party. Men and elders were side tracking party members and outsiders from their families. Opportunities, money and slots given to the villages were often traded and sold to the highest bidder and not to the qualified. And one day, I got tired of these and I decided to quit politics. Before the training, I had lost hope of getting involved in any election, simply because of the God fatherism system and election fraud. This has made most youth to lose hope in our political leaders and has also hindered their opportunity to be in elective positions. However, this changed after I attended the Centre LSD's training. As at the time of this training, I was teaching in a private school for three years (2015-2018). As a graduate of Political Science (2013) my salary was just N6000 monthly. It was not encouraging at all. It could hardly take me for a week. Constantly I searched and thought of what else to do and how else to make money but was indecisive, until the Centre LSD came my way.

I got introduced to CLSD's **Youth Can Lead** training by a friend. I registered online and was shortlisted for the training on **Capacity Building for Youths Interested in Politics in Niger Delta**, Peemos Hotel Warri, from June 18th - 20th, 2018. The aim was to make youth participate in politics. My thought was that the training was a platform to give youths funds and share election money. Fortunately, that was not the case. Rather, it taught me how to make money. April 2018 came, and I participated fully in the three-day training. The training inspired me in no small measure. Dr. Otive taught us that “you do not wait for opportunity to

come; you go for it". That singular statement turned my thinking around and there and then, I decided to contest for councillorship. I realised that to do this, I needed to build my financial base.

After the training, I got very involved in politics. I wanted to share with as many people that come my way, the knowledge I gained from the Centre LSD's training. I thought of a platform and formed Abraka Youth Movement. I began to work for the party's candidates. I started a door-to-door campaign for youths' participation in politics and the need for the electorate to give youths a chance to lead them. This yielded fruits and youths became interested and nominated me to lead them. This led to a youth becoming the ward chairman in my party. Shortly after then, I took a major step in building my financial base. I ventured into business. First, in November 2018, I started a fish farm with 200 fingerlings, with just N15,000. By January 2019, my estimated business worth became N150,000 in four months. I made in four months what my teaching salary will pay for almost two years. In September 2019, I added another business to the fish farm to augment my income and compensate me for the loss in my fish farm due to harsh weather.

It was a great financial freedom. I am on my way to the top politically and financially, all thanks to the Centre LSD/Ford Foundation training.

Ogeneseroho Bernard

Delta State

20. I am the Moses to deliver the people of Bomadi - *Com. Odubolu*

My name is Comrade John Ebikane Odubolu from Akugbene Ward 9 Bomadi Local Government Area of Delta State, Bomadi LGA has 11 communities and 10 wards. For the time past, Bomadi LGA was predominantly a Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) local government and the youths were not actively in politics. They were basically used for rigging elections and thuggery. They normally do not give the youths the avenue to contest election as a result of the corrupt and the money bag politics introduced by the leaders.

I have always had the mindset that politics was a do-or-die affair or a

means to get rich quicker. I saw it as a lucrative business. For 13 years, I nursed the intention to contest for an elective position in Delta State. I joined a political party (Social Democratic SDP) and was involved in politics as a card carrier for the party. I have been it youth leader since 2015. Contesting for the position of Edo State House of Assembly was the biggest of my dream, so in 2019, I decided to do my IT in Delta State House of Assembly. I wanted to be close to the seat of power. I began to nurse an ambition to change the narrative on youth participation in politics by contesting in 2015, but unfortunately, I couldn't meet up. In 2019 I became more determined to contest. while warming up for the 2019, I saw the Centre LSD's call for a training for youths interested in politics and I applied and was given the opportunity to participate in 2018.

My expectation from the training was that this might be an avenue for me to get a sponsor for my 2019 political ambition. I was reformed and my perspective/mindset of politics changed. I was taught that politics is a call to service and not a do-or-die affair. I was also exposed to how to budget for campaign, write a manifesto, monitor my votes from the beginning of the election till the end, speech writing, how to plan for a campaign, communication skills, the need to be sociable and also became technologically inclined. In 2019, I became an aspirant to the House of Assembly but had to step down for a candidate due to financial issues and again, the candidate was from the same ward with me. I am very convinced that in 2023, I will contest with full force and win the HOA seat in my constituency.

No doubt, my political journey is worthwhile, and all thanks goes to Centre LSD. They really exposed me more to the antics in the political arena and by God's grace, my dream of delivering the people of Bomadi from political slavery will be achieved by my humble self come 2023.

Odubolu Ebikem

Delta State

21. The transformation of APC leader by the Centre

From the scratch, Egedovo Ituru Pius of the All progressive Congress (APC) contested and won a couple of elective posts having attended a leadership

training provided by the Centre LSD. Pius explains how the transformation took place

Youths have been mentally conditioned to believe that they can only be useful as political thugs rather than as leaders. Although I have always been a member of a political party, I was not really an active member. This is because in 2014, I contested for councillorship and lost because the election was hijacked. Based on this, I decided to withdraw from politics and thus became a passive member of the party. All these mindset change immediately after the **Youth Can Lead** capacity building workshop.

I was introduced to the Centre LSD youth training by Hon. Benjamin Ogbalor who believes that the old narrative must change in Isoko land. He got most of us involved in the capacity building workshop held at the Peemos Hotel in Warri in 2018. This workshop was organised by the Centre LSD with support from the Ford Foundation. In this training, I realised I can vie and contest for the leadership of the party. After the self-realisation, I began consultation on becoming the ward chairman just immediately after the training in April. First, I bought the nomination form on May 3rd, 2018. On the 5th of May 2018, the congress was conducted. I bought form and contested for the party ward chairman in Aviara Ward 3, Isoko South LGA.

To achieve victory at the congress, I campaigned vigorously, went from unit to unit, met with my party elders/stakeholders of the ward. I contested and I won. This was the first time a youth became a chairman of the ward in any of the political parties at the ward level. This was a dream come true. Initially I was just a member of the party before the **Youth Can Lead** capacity building.

Immediately after my emergence as ward chairman, I set up an agenda on how to run the party and this initiative was received as a progressive innovation. My ward is made up of 14 communities, broken down into sub-wards. I set up five sub ward committees and all the chairmen of the different committee's report to me. Part of my task was to mobilise my ward executives for primary election, select candidates and coordinate all campaign activities in the wards. My leadership as the ward chairman motivated other youths to pick courage and they contested for positions such as DTHA, NASS etc. Second, most of my executives were youths.

Today, I Egodovo Ituru Pius, a youth from Aviara in Isoko South is now currently the ward chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC). In December 2019, I also indicated interest in the leadership of my clan made up of 14 communities. At the 2019 annual general conference of the Aviara Clan Federal Union, I contested and won the position of Secretary General. This has further brought me into the Isoko Development Union (IDU) Decision Making Body. This was only made possible through the motivation and self-realisation that was midwifed by the Centre LSD through their capacity building workshop. This has given me more momentum to aspire for higher position.

Egedovo Ituru

Delta State

22. I am now refined - *Ehied*

Just like all the participants to the three-day training given by the Centre LSD, Nkwor Theophilus Ehied of the Emerging Dream Of Positive Delta, feels he has acquired the necessary skills and capacity to stage a comeback at the electoral track. 2023 is his target

I have always been an active member of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and had the mind to contest in the nearest future. But how near the future was the big question. I had no knowledge of the sources of campaign financing. Coupled with this, I did not have the boldness and the capacity to speak to people in public. I knew I had to find a way to achieve my dream and the Centre LSD's capacity building for youths in politics came handy. I participated in the training through recommendation.

We were trained on communication and public speaking in module 7. The training was so awesome. I learnt enough on financing/spending limits, ethical laws/rules guiding election, need to register for election, need to have followers register for election, etc. After this training, my timidity disappeared. I was able to speak to the public with boldness. When I got home after the training, I consulted with my ward chairman, local government area chairman, etc. and declared my intention to contest for

State House of Assembly. I purchased my nomination form for the party primaries but unfortunately, I was asked to step down which I did. This did not discourage me, I went ahead and mobilised 50 youths to register for their voter card. As a result of my active participation in spite of the ill treatment, I conducted a grassroots mobilisation of delegates through a door-to-door campaign and I did this with great passion.

I am eager to re-contest in 2023. Am looking forward to the victory and I know this is sure. Thank you, Centre LSD/Ford Foundation, for this milestone.

Ehied Theophilus

Delta State

23. My quest is to break the cabal in Uvwie LGA – *AAC stalwart*

Uvie Daniel(Proxy name) Is the leader of the Youth Awakening Movement (YAM) and member of the AAC. He said his training at the Youth Can Lead workshop has brought him face to face with like minds - those who feel really concerned about the under development of their area, he said he is more in a position now to lead a movement to bring development to their land

Since 1999 till date, Uvwie constituency has always had a caliber of leaders who emerged as chairmen, councillors or House of Assembly representatives to be people from the National Union of Road transport Workers (NURTW) Agberos. Uvwie, like Nigeria, is blessed with rich human and natural resources, yet the people have been grappling with basic necessities of life, youth restiveness, unemployment and abandonment of the most critical demography of any population (the youth). It is my belief that, if we have morally upright and educated youths in politics and governance, many of the problems we have will not be there. Peace and stability will be restored in Uvwie and we will no longer be referred to as 'I Go Die' local government area.

I have been in politics since 2012, after my national service. I joined the All Progressives Congress (APC) in 2014 and since then, have been championing youth's inclusion in politics. I knew politics is capital intensive but did not know how to go about raising funds for my campaign.

After my university education in 2012, I returned to my community Ekpan hoping to get a job in one of the oil companies. It was then I realised that we had leadership failure at the community level and jobs were sold to the highest bidders and those who had power. I knew then that I need to get into politics to change so many of the anomalies in Uvwie. Because I already had the orientation of the need for morally upright youths to be involved in politics, I convened a religious, social group called **"Youth Awakening Movement (YAM)**. In August 2017. We started a programme Righteousness Exalts A Nation. The vision of this group was to bring together church youth leaders, like the youth presidents of various churches in Delta State to advocate for morally upright youths to go into political leadership. We formed a WhatsApp group, sent letters to various youth presidents of different churches. In 2018, one of the youth leaders from the Church of Anointing, Mr Frank Waive, sent the link for registration for the **Youth Can Lead** training by the Centre LSD to the YAM. group and encouraged everybody in the group to register,

I registered to participate in the **Youth Can Lead** programme as an APC member, I was an executive member of the APC Uvwie, though the APC is not popular in my community. The training was a meeting point of people with the same worry, it turned out that I was not the only one who is concerned in the direction of youths' inclusiveness. Having heard similar stories during the **Youth Can Lead** training, I got all the information I needed. At that point, I resolved that I need to switch to a smaller party that can accommodate my idea and candidacy. Also, at the training, I learnt how to raise fund and write catchy manifesto.

Immediately after, I declared to run for the office of the DTHA, I then joined an alliance of young contestants under the name Delta Third Force. At that point we haven't adopted any party. I announced my fund-raising campaign. I developed my manifesto based on the needs of the residents of Uvwie constituency and ideas I believe would solve their problems and then started my campaigns. I got the party nomination and became the flag bearer of the AAC in the last general election. I came fourth in the contest, of course, I didn't win, but I have been able to announce my presence and gave the youth of Uvwie the audacity to stand up for elective positions.

Today I am recognised as one of the leaders of Ekpan community. No political gathering is called within Uvwie kingdom without me being invited. I am now a critical stakeholder and leader of my party at both constituency and state levels. With the knowledge gathered so far on the strategies to win the hearts of the people, I have organised a youth workshop on conflict resolution. Currently, I am now the Secretary-General of my community. I sit in the highest decision-making body in my community, all thanks to Centre LSD and Ford Foundation.

Uvie Daniel(Proxy name)

24. Centre LSD stirred me up on my political career they made me an entrepreneur and a motivational speaker

Mr. Umukoro Perseverance is a member of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) who has also seen the light courtesy of the Centre LSD and is rearing to go. Like others he talks of the challenges posed by the old brigade who would not give youths leadership positions. He has his plan on how to overcome this old politicians

I have always seen the political space in my community as a place where people just go to make money and wealth for themselves and families. A place where the older generation oppresses and intimidates the younger ones with money and influence. The problem of today politics in the state and in my community is circled, in the sense that they operate on what they called the Zoning formula. And with this, no youth has ever been given a very crucial place. The major problem with the youth of our time is just money. I always thought that Oghara politics only favored old people in spite of the zoning formula. But after Centre LSD's training on **Youths Can Lead**, I had a complete reorientation and discovered I have been wrong all along.

I had an encounter with the Centre LSD through an email sent by my mentor who happened to be my elder brother, Rev. David Ugolor Executive Director Aneej in Benin. This training took place from April 22, 26, 2018 at Pemos Hotel, Warri. It was indeed an eye opener for me, as it brought out the political lion in my bones. I acquired enough knowledge that will last a lifetime. It completely changed my perception on politics and equipped me

with the basics of politics and the political processes. I realised that I presently had no political structure in Oghara that I can build on and that this needed to be in place first before I can successfully win any election.

After my encounter with Centre LSD, I got inspired and oriented to a point where I knew very clearly that politics has a lot to offer. A key lesson for me was the need to increase my financial base and be financially stable and independent as a young politician. Although I had established a fashion home in 2016, after the Centre LSD's training in 2018, I expanded it and added the section on laundry services which now spin more money for me. In addition, now, I can make bold to say that I now have the courage to speak in any political gathering in sensitisation on the role of every youth in our present day politics and electoral process.

After the training I began to push for change and started an online campaign. These financial outlets were to help me raise more fund for my political dream, come 2021 Although my income greatly increased after the expansion of my business, my quest for stable financial base is unstoppable. I went ahead to attend a skill acquisition training and a starter pack of an industrial machine and the funds for store rent was given to me. This led to a further expansion. I am now a multi-income earner. I have also begun an entertainment career as an MC and public speaker. All thanks to the lecture at the training on Public Speaking.

The Centre LSD has contributed immensely to the success story of my political ambition and has created a lot of changes in me as an individual in the sense that before now I could not be this bold to speak about politics or confront any aspirant or challenge a political godfather. By the special grace of God, I now have presence in Oghara and have decided to begin my political career from the grassroots and contest for LG councillorship (Ethiope West) as we were taught. I have dedicated 2019 and 2020 for planning and strategizing. I have started the journey of 2021 councillorship for Ethiope West LG, Federal Ward 11, Oghara Town. By the grace of God, 2021 will speak of great success.

Thanks to Centre LSD for the journey so far.

Umukoro Perseverance

Delta State

24. The push that urged an SA on

According to this trainee, Comrade Inetianbor Hero, all along he was contented serving his principal, but the Centre LSD training gave him the push to contest for Delta State House of Assembly Oshimili South Constituency seat in the 2019 General Election. As a gallant loser of the election, he was okay with that, but is set for another round now more prepared than before because of his first experience

"I was just a personal assistant to an APC stalwart Although I had my PVC and was a card-carrying member of my party, I never ventured into contesting for an elective position no matter the level. I initially, thought to myself, though I love politics, I told myself I was not ripe yet and that I will go into politics in the future. All I ever wanted was more knowledge and skills on how to better serve my principal.

In the first quarter of 2018, I saw an advert on facebook by the Centre LSD for a youth training in Niger Delta and I registered because I wanted to go for as many trainings as possible. I was not sure that they will call me. But I said to myself "whether they call or not, let me apply". I just wanted to attend so I can serve my principal better. Some weeks after my registration, I received a call from the Centre LSD to attend the training. I had the opportunity and I took it. On the first day of the meeting, I remembered Dr Otive saying, "after this training, you will not remain the same". Although I did not know how the training will change my life, I was so happy and wanted to acquire knowledge so I can serve perfectly in the political space, especially my principal. True to his words, my life never remained the same in my political career since after the training. I took notes and jotted as much information as I could. On the last day of the programme, I went through all my notes from day one to day three and I said to myself, "I must contest in the forth coming 2019 election". Throughout that night, in my hotel room, I prayed and planned and reflected till 4am in the morning. A day after the training, I returned to Asaba and I declared my intention to contest to my principal.

Although I had no prior experience, I was sure the three days of training by the Centre LSD had prepared me for this new twist. My major encouragement came when instantly my principal supported me with N2

million and two cars. Two days later, I consulted with my ward chairman (Ward 9, Oshimili South). The Ward chair then took me to the LGA chairman for consultation. Another two days after then, a ward consultation of 28 principal excos of the party in Ward 9 was convened and there I declared my intention to contest for Delta State House of Assembly Oshimili South constituency. A day after that, still within just one week, the 25 principal excos and ward chairman joined me to meet the LGA principal excos for consultation. At the beginning of the second week after the training, I constituted my campaign team. This was made up of 1 person per ward. A total of 11 members in this team,

Thereafter, I purchased a nomination form for one million naira. This was the first-time a youth participated in big political parties in my ward, even when the nomination form was too expensive. Expenses for consultation and then primaries were not a child's play. I got screened. Made it through screening because I had more than one-year party membership, had three years tax clearance certificate and had my PVC etc. I spent 100,000 per wards then 200,000 for LGA consultation. These excluded other several expenses. Thereafter, we began a ward-to-ward consultations to canvass for delegate vote before my party primaries and this we did for two weeks. But unfortunately, lost to my main opposition with only nine votes out of 286 votes cast. I may not have won, but it was an excellent first attempt.

The Centre LSD inspired me so much and gave me the major push to contest for the Delta State House of Assembly. This singular act has made me a leader in Oshimili South APC. Am warning up for the next opportunity. Thank you, Centre LSD/Ford Foundation, for making this happen.

Inetianbor Hero

Delta State

25. The transformation from activist to politician

The story is almost the same for all trainees who participated in the three-day workshop organised by the Centre LSD for youths who are interested in taking into politics. They come and leave with different ideas of how things can be done better and differently. So it was with Makelemi Vogt

I have always been an activist and been involved in CSO work, demanding for accountability from the government. Before the training, I was not interested in joining the political sphere and was not a member of any political party. Because of my activities as a CSO person, I was perceived to be anti-government. There is a structure in my community "Ibori leading the LGA" and if you are seen or perceived as a threat, you would not have a say in the community. The community leaders saw me as a threat to them in my quest for good governance. Early 2018, I heard of the Centre LSD's training from ANEEJ. When I asked my boss, he said it was all about training of young leaders to engage in politics. I wanted to change the status quo in my community and the state at large. I wanted to contribute to the good governance course I was pursuing using my CSO platform. So, I embraced the training, applied, was shortlisted and participated in the entire three-day workshop.

After the training, I decided that I must redeem my people because the leaders we had in our community were not doing enough on youth participation in the affairs of the community. I wanted to see changes in my community- I wanted a regime change in the government of my LGA and I wanted the youth to be carried along in the government of the day. For the first time, I went to my ward and decided to attend their meeting, I showed interest and joined the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). I am now a card-carrying member of the PDP. Being a very vocal person, I was made the Assistant PRO in my Ward 8 where I served as party agent in the 2019 election.

I wanted to do more, so I formed a peer group with 65 youths (both male and female) with the aim of training, empowering and grooming the youths to engage the government and be involved in politics. With this group, we met major government officials, LGA chairman, councilors, etc. to seek support for the youth's participation in elective and appointive positions. The group decided to come together and assist the youth of the community. We began to find the means to get good teachers to my community school, we taxed ourselves and paid for an accommodation so that at least corps members sent to the school can be accommodated. We assisted some persons who had domestic cases as we raised fund and assist them. We have continued to empower the youth at the grassroots,

currently the support is coming from individual pockets, but this group will be registered officially.

I joined a political party for the first time and now I regularly attend all their meetings. All thanks to the Centre LSD/Ford Foundation for this transformation from an activist to a politician.

Makelemi Vogt

Delta State

26. Am now financially stable – *Another woman participant*

Mrs. Ighosuehe Abiloye is among the women who got trained by the Centre LSD for three days. Like other participants, she had a wrong view of politics and election. She has since been enlightened and is doing things differently in a better way, according to her.

For so many years, my idea about politics was that it's a dirty game and when you vote, it does not count. So, there was no need wasting my time voting nor canvassing for anyone in election. I was not at all into politics and didn't have any interest in politics because I saw it as a risky dirty game. All I do before the training was selling of jewelries. I got to hear about a Centre LSD's training through Edema Timeyin. I really didn't know that the training was about politics. I just attended because it was a training. At the training, I learnt that politics is about service to the people and not what I thought it was before I started the training. This training changed my perspective on political issues and made me to develop interest in it and that prompted me to vote for the first time in the 2019 election.

After the Centre LSD's training, I started my business in June 2019. The aim was to be financially independent and save enough to contest for 2023. I now have a shop where I sell food stuff. I had a changed mentality about savings. Before the training I spent a lot. I mean, I spend money unnecessarily and recklessly and have no savings. But now, I save a lot and spend little (started the piggy box saving). Although I have not joined any party yet, I have identified with the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and have the intention to contest for councillorship come 2023. I will start

attending very soon.

Now I am financially independent and my ways of reasoning and how I see politicians have changed. Am glad I was introduced to this programme because in all, it keeps me in check of myself financially, business perception and all that.

Thank you, Centre LSD and ford foundation.

Ighosuehe Abiloye

Delta State

26. The training made me vote for the first time– *Miss Joy*

Like the other ladies who were here for the training, Joy Asiwe Isioma never participated in politics nor voted during any elections. She gave the same reasons as others too in this story

I stopped staying on the fence on politics. I have never voted in any election, but this 2019 election was my first time of voting, because of the training by Centre LSD.

Although I am a graduate of Political Science, I was always scared of venturing into politics because I didn't want to be victimised and due to financial reasons too. In fact, I never wanted to go into politics, because I always thought that politics was a dirty game. I feared the outcome of being involved in politics. I didn't want to be used by the leaders. Before the Centre LSD's training, I was not in any party. To compound this, I was also a very timid person. I wanted to be bold, I wanted to increase my leadership skills and knowledge for myself and others. I realised that I can't be the only leader and the Centre LSD made that possible.

I came to know about the Centre LSD through a friend in politics who asked me to register. I registered and Walla! I was shortlisted. I must confess that I learnt a lot from the training and it completely met my expectations. I did study Political Science in the university. Yes! But that was because that was the course I was given and didn't have any interest in politics, but this training, totally changed my mindset about politics. The training enhanced my knowledge about leadership and politics, and I took the first step which was to register for the 2019 general elections. I

obtained my PVC and voted for the first time in my life.

I took a step further and now I am a member of the Peoples democratic Party (PDP) and an active member at that, we have a WhatsApp platform in my party for any of the party's activity. I became very actively involved in party activities. During the campaign, I sensitised the youth and community on the electoral process, what to do and what not to do during the elections. During the campaigns, I also was opportuned to address the citizens and I did perfectly well. This I couldn't do before the Centre LSD's training. As a result of my activeness, I was made the party agent of Ika South Agbor, at the 2019 general election.

Centre LSD made me realise I could be a leader. Now am warning up to be a candidate in the nearest future. "Thanks to Centre LSD who brought me out from the curtains".

Asiwe Isioma

Delta state

27. A political career begins after encountering Centre LSD

For Umukoro Wisdom, his participation of the training set him on the path of a steady political career. He tells how it all began

I have been a very active member of the All Progressives Congress (APC) since its formation. In spite of that, I never had the mind to contest for any elective position. This is because all my life, I have been playing my politics at the unit level. I have held several positions at the unit level under the APC as the Youth Leader, Organising Secretary and the PRO of the unit 12 Daily Market Road Oleh. I was satisfied with my local league and had no ambition to climb higher until I participated in the Centre LSD's training.

In 2018, I was shortlisted to participate in the Centre LSD **Youths Can Lead** capacity building for youths interested in politics. These three days of training completely changed my political orientation and I got motivated to do what I could not do before in the political arena. Instantly, I told myself, "am going to contest for Delta State House of Assembly". I guess I was over ambitious. I remember, we were taught at the training, to always start from the bottom and progress to the top. So, I retraced my steps and was

motivated to graduate from unit to ward to prove my political strength. So, I picked nomination form and contested for the position of Financial Secretary of my Ward 02, Isoko South LGA of Delta state, constituency.

And the good news was I won. I am building my political career, financial base and warming up for future elections. I have become a mediator between aggrieved members of the party.

Thank you, Centre LSD and Ford Foundation, for showing me the light.

Umukoro Wisdom

Delta State

28. Moses: I'm transformed to lead

According to self-employed Penaowei Moses, the Centre LSD through its Youths Can Lead capacity building changed his mentality towards politics. "Now, I believe that this is my time and I need to seize the opportunity', he said.

Although I have been a registered member of the Action Congress of Nigeria (CAN) since 2011, I have not been actively involved in politics till after the Centre LSD's training. Although I was a member of the All Progressives Congress (APC) but not as a card-carrying member. I was continuously in search of strategies to defeat the sit-tight leaders in my LGA if not now, but in the future. Since the beginning of this democratic dispensation in 1999, there has not been change of leadership in Bomadi and Patani Local Government Areas. Those who represent us at the House of Assembly, House of Representatives and the Delta South Senatorial Constituency have been there since the inception of this democratic era. The youths in the local government areas have been relegated to beggars. No youth holds a political office nor appointment. They blocked everything good coming to other communities except theirs.

The burning desire to defeat these sit-tight leaders in my local government area made me to apply for the **Youth Can Lead** training that was advertised by the African Centre for Leadership Strategy Development (Centre LSD) online. You can imagine my joy when I got a mail that I have been shortlisted to attend the three-day training on **Youths Can Lead**. At

the training, Dr. Igbuzor and other resource persons taught us a lot of things we didn't know as youths. And one of those things I needed to change the status quo in my community was to gain popularity at the grassroots and build my financial capacity. I discovered that I was in a wrong party where I may not be able to achieve my goal. So, I immediately took a decision to join another party, became very active by attending political meetings within the LGA and at the state level. Due to the training I got, some youths and myself embarked on grassroots campaigns. We visited so many communities including Sapele, Koko, Ozoro, Oleh and others.

During the preparation for the 2019 general elections, an application was developed known as **Poll Watch** to enable my party track results of all units. As a result of my active participation in the party which was triggered by the training I got from the Centre LSD, my zeal to actively take part in political gatherings made them to recommend me for training at the Government House, Asaba. I was the only person from my local government area trained to train the party agents at the unit level and all the local government leaders of the party, on how to transmit results and incidents at the polling units to the situation room with the mobile app. This is even before the results got to the collation centre. With the training, my popularity increased in my community and in Bomadi local government in general. Today, I am known by the leaders and almost everyone in the towns under Bomadi LGA. I did not contest in this 2019 election, I believe that by 2023, I will defeat the sit-tight leaders in my local government. I am planning to test my popularity in the forth coming local government election in Delta state as a chairmanship candidate under the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

At the Centre LSD's training, one of the key lessons was that politics and elective position are not means for enrichment, rather it is for service. We were taught on the need to build our financial base before embarking on contesting for elective position. So, one of the steps I took immediately after the training was to establish a fishpond, in order to be financially independent. I started in Dec. 2018, with two fishponds of 2,000 fingerlings in each pond. Currently I have expanded it to three ponds and now, this leader you are seeing has begun to make some proceeds from this

business. I am becoming very popular in my community. All thanks to the Centre LSD and Ford Foundation.

I took a step further to increase my financial capacity by applying for a job and was employed as Information Officer 11, in the Ministry of Information and Orientation, Bayelsa State. Furthermore, as a First-Class graduate, the governor of the state gave us the opportunity to choose between working in the Ministry or become lecturers in the tertiary institutions in the state. I chose lecturing because it will help me to grow academically and avail me the opportunity to do business as well as work on my political quest. Eventually, I was posted to the University of Afrcia, Toru-Orua as a Graduate Assistant in the Department of Mass Communication.

Lastly, I have concluded plans to invest N100,000 in Baraza Multipurpose Cooperative Society, Yenagoa in their compound interest package that will give me N1,400,000 at the end of the year. I have become a registered member of the cooperative and hope to make more money from it to support my political ambition.

Penaowei Moses

Delta State

29. A new me is emerging – *Corper-participant*

Ijeoma Deborah Joseph was among the few graduates who attended the training. Her high academic background gave her edge to fully grasp the contents of the training, this also has sharpened her focus, she said

Before the Centre LSD **Youth Can Lead** training, I had a very wrong impression about leadership. I used to see it as a means of acquiring powers and dealing with opponents and perceived enemies. I thought it was all about having powers and authorities over your followers and making money. These were also my intention for going into politics. Although I have always been involved in politics, I have never been a card carrier of any political party. I was just attending meetings and had the intention to contest in the future.

I was told about the Centre LSD **Youths Can Lead** capacity building by one of the first set of participants (Batch A) of the training Mr. Nwkor Collins.

He told me it was all about leadership, politics and equipping youths who wanted to know more about leadership skill and to get knowledge on how youth can get involved in politics and their roles in governance. Luckily, I applied and was shortlisted. During the training, which took place in June 2018, we were taught leadership skill, from definition of leadership qualities and characteristics of good leader. We were also taught about election processes from pre-election processes to the post-election stage, which involve making your intention known that you want to contest down to the stages of the election proper. In fact, I was exposed to the things I never knew in politics, like how to fund my campaign without getting into debt and how to win the mind of the electorate without godfatherism. It was mind-blowing lots and lots of lessons. Of course, my expectations were met.

After the training, my whole orientation on leadership and politics finally changed as a result of the knowledge I got from the training. I started thinking on how to serve the people/followers as a leader and no longer just what I am going to get out of positions. It also helped me to go back home to restrategise politically. Instead of looking for godfather in politics, I started walking my way into the minds of the people. I have become more active in my party. My savings culture has improved. Now I have started saving more to finance my election, unlike before. I have started reflecting the leadership skill in my everyday life. Now, I listen and get ideas from others instead of always dishing orders. Before the training, I only go for campaigns just to collect money but now in the last election of 2019, I worked with my other party members in Ward 1, unit 1 to campaign for my party.

With the training I had with Centre LSD, I was able to overcome low self-esteem. I was able to train my fellow corps members on my cosmetology skills. And this led to my being invited by the state coordinator to Asaba and was assigned to train corps members every year during their orientation camp.

A new me is emerging. All thanks to Centre LSD and Ford Foundation.

Ijeoma Deborah

Delta State

30. How Centre LSD made me politically famous'

Excellent Oziboro is an activist right from day one, however, his skills were honed at the Centre LSD training for youth interested in politics in Niger Delta region. What next for him after the training? Oziboro provides answers to these posers among others

I have been in the political arena since my school days at the university. At the student level, I was one time a departmental president. After I graduated, I joined the Action Congress of Nigeria (CAN) and then the All Progressive Congress (APC) as a card-carrying member. With all these activities, I was never interested in any elective position. Before I came for the Centre LSD's training, I didn't have the mind to contest. This is because it was always difficult for youth to get into political positions in my political party. The leaders especially the elders every time recycle almost all the positions among themselves and this became a major concern for me and other patriotic youth in the party. However, in April 2018, something happened.

The Executive Director of ANEEJ, Rev. David Ugolor called and sent me an online link to apply for a leadership capacity building training. This was organised by the Centre LSD for the youth in the Niger Delta region and this time, it was happening in Delta State. I did and few weeks later, I received a message that I have been shortlisted as one of the participants of the three-day training. During the training, I received a turnaround word from a professor who was one of the resource persons. The word was “for you to make a change politically, you must be bold and courageous”. These words lighted fire in me. I became bold and passionate about good governance within and outside my political party and the group I belong. This changed my mentality about politics and good governance. I question myself where I should start from.

I told myself that “the youths still have a lot to do and we can do better than the elders in terms of politics and governance” and told myself that “I can do it”. Together with some youths we organised and travelled to Abuja to meet with the BOT Chairman of APC Volunteer International. My activities in the party gave me the opportunity to meet with President Muhammadu Buhari under the platforms APC Volunteers and Patriotic Youth Forum of

Nigeria (PYFN) for the inclusion of the youth. We were received by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) Boss Mustapha and we were nominated to serve in different capacities in the presidential campaign committee.

My first attempt in politics was to contest for the position of the National Coordinator of the group, but I lost. But was later appointed as the Assistant National PRO to compensate me. Through the help of the Centre LSD, the yoke of elders recycling positions was minimized in my political group nationwide. This was the first time since the formation of the group. This also, gave other youth the opportunity to serve in different capacity across the country.

I have learnt so much within this short time. I am climbing the ladder of leadership one step at a time. I know I will get there soon. All thanks to Centre LSD and Ford Foundation for this foundation.

Excellent Oziboro

Delta State

31. I'm now rich from N1,000 investment – *Ex-applicant*

As a result of the Centre LSD's training, my life has changed. I am now more knowledgeable on political issues. As a result, I was made the Ass. Sec. of my ward. These were the words of one of our trainees known as Mr. Bartholomew Idhike once an applicant

I am from Isoko South, Oleh Ward 2. A young struggling youth who could hardly make ends meet. I am the first son of the family. I had no job and had no one to help me. My father who was the head of the home, left behind great responsibility at his demise. I was struggling to fend for the family in the best way I can. Unfortunately, my best was not good enough. I never wanted to be a politician. I didn't have the mind to get into politics. Nothing concern me, during elections, I go just thumbprint and go my way. I have never attempted to go into business either. I did not even have any idea of how to start a business. Although my father was a banga harvester, it never crossed my mind to do the business. I was at the lowest point of my life. The only thing I have not done was giving up hope. So, each day, I tried

hard to keep hope alive.

In 2018, a friend told me about a proposed training for youths interested in politics. Since I could not afford to go to a café, he asked me to send my details and I did. Weeks later, I got a message that I have been shortlisted for the Fords Foundation (Centre LSD) capacity building. The three days of tutorials were the turning point in my life. I was touched with the knowledge that I can invest no matter how little is the capital. I took an inventory of how much I had. Home and abroad, I had only N1000. After the training, I added what was left of the transportation I was paid by the organisers plus the little from a friend and I started a banga business with N15,800. I started retailing in harvested banga from farmers. Old women patronized me more, because it was surprising to see a youth doing banga business. I made N20,000 from my first sales with N4,200 as profit. Months later, I graduated into oil processing. I hired oil processing engine to process the banga. I started sending the processed oil through trader friends to the north. As a result, I made more sales. And a childhood friend assisted me with finance to support my business, I started buying in large quantity.

Few months after the training, my life changed. At least I can boast of having my own money. As the first son of the house, I can now buy books for my younger ones to go to school. I now spend money prudently and not lavishly. With a relatively stable income and a changed mindset regarding politics, I decided to join a political party. I did join and became very active in mobilising at the ward and unit levels. I took a step further and purchased the nomination form for the position of Ass. Sec. in Oleh 02. Ward 02, Oleh. We were three contestants for the same position, and I emerged the winner. Till today, I am the Ass. Sec. of my ward. My life has changed. I am more knowledgeable on political issues.

I never thought my life could be transformed in such a short period. God bless the day I met Centre LSD. Thank you, Centre LSD. Thank you, Ford Foundation.

Bartholomew Idhike

Delta State

32. How Centre LSD changed my life'

Ekerehavwe Ogaga Amos at the onset was into politics but stopped. After attending the training offered by the Centre LSD, he has returned to the familiar terrain now more prepared, and joining it with business. He explains how the changes were achieved

I have been involved in politics since 2012. But after a while, I stopped every involvement in politics because it was becoming like a game. I limited myself to voting only for presidential and governorship elections. Before the training I was just into buying and selling of shoes. It was just to keep mind and soul together. I could only eat and barely pay rent. I could not cater for my family financially. But all these changed when I came to the Centre LSD. The training equipped me for leadership position, and I decided to embark on politics. But I was also taught the needed to have savings and that without finance, people will not hear my voice. So now I have expanded my business, started saving N20,000. I voted in the last election.

I got to know about the Centre LSD through a friend who told me about the **Youth Can Lead** training. He told me that if I get to the programme, I will be happy forever. I was curious, so I registered online. At about a month later, the Centre called me to come for a three-day training. These days were a life changer. The training brought back the zeal to get involved in politics. I was not in any political party before, so I registered in one of the political parties. The Centre LSD has given my life a direction. At the training, I was taught how to save. And through this saving, I got a shop. Within months, I added another shop, making it two on Digbori Street and Gbudu Market. I didn't stop there, I also ventured into poultry farming, where I got N72,000 profit for every N100,000 invested.

Before the training, I had no accommodation of my own, I was squatting with a friend. Now, I have my own accommodation. I am now able to make decisions on my own. God has given me the means to assist my community. Today, I can now assist my sibling financially and put them through schools. I have started grassroots engagement by helping people in my community, because I know that in the future I will contest, and they will be my supporters. What else can I say, than to say thank you to Centre

LSD and Ford Foundation, for your impact in my life.

Ogaga Amos

Delta state

33. Changing the narrative in Delta politics

A graduate trainee, Oghorobada Stanley Efe in his story, said youths are changing the narratives in youth's engagement in politics in Delta State as the youths are now coming up with ideas and measures to engage and effect changes in the lives of the masses.

I had always told myself that I was not yet ready for any appointive or elective position. Although I was a political aid, all I do was move around with politicians. In time past, politicians have always promised us the usual platitudes and slogans of "projects," "empowerment," "infrastructural development" etc., without any corresponding measures to address these issues. They keep using the youths to achieve their selfish goals without any desire to empower them. As a result, I had no dream for any position. At least that was what I thought. Although I have been a political arena, I was sincerely not set for political or elective positions. No, not yet.

In 2018, I was invited to participate by the Centre LSD in a training on **Youth Can Lead** for youths interested in politics. Out of curiosity, I attended, and this training exposed my inadequacies to vie for any elective position in Delta State. I saw my weaknesses like in a mirror. I identified my gaps and decided to work on them to position myself for any appointive or elective position. My first step was to form a political pressure group known as **Emerging Dream of A Positive Delta**. The aim was to stir up leadership qualities among Delta youths and encourage them to vie for elective positions come 2023. Part of our activities in the pressure group is also to carryout skills acquisition programmes that will help make the youths financially independent.

To achieve our goals of youths' empowerment, we partnered with an NGO, Onuesoke Foundation to conduct a Needs Assessment in August 2019, where we visited over 100 communities in the state. The report of the

exercise will be used to design our skills acquisition programme to suit each community which was expected to kick off by October 2019, in 25 LGAs of the State. Our activities so far have yielded some positive outcomes. In Emerging Dream of A Positive Delta, we now have youthful governorship aspirant who is 38 years old and now ready to vie for governorship position come 2023. Others have also indicated interest to vie for chairmanship position by 2021/2022. There is increased youth awareness for political involvement. My involvement in all these also led to my being appointed as an Administrative Assistant, Office of the Executive Assistant to Gov. Okowa on Project Monitoring.

. All thanks to Centre LSD and Ford Foundation.

Stanley Efe

Delta State

11. Centre LSD Made my dream come true

Centre LSD's training spurred me and fueled my passion for primary education intervention in Delta State, so says

Before I met Centre LSD, I was a political aid. Although I wanted to affect lives and give hope to the downtrodden, I was not ready for any political position. This made me constantly search for means to achieving my goals, without necessarily becoming a politician. I wanted to impact people's life positively. But I also never thought I could achieve this through an NGO. I also didn't have the mind to establish an NGO. My passion for strengthening our educational system, especially at the primary school level was strong. The conditions of the primary schools in Delta state is really appalling. The moral decadence in our public primary schools and the sight of seeing pupils learn under deplorable conditions was disheartening.

In 2018, I responded to Centre LSD's call for application for training of youths who were interested in politics. I was fortunately selected and invited to attend. One vital inspiration I got from the Centre LSD capacity building training is that “true success in life comes from making others happy.” To this end, in October 2018, I floated an NGO together with a UK

based Nigerian lady, with a focus on primary school education. The aim was to address some of the challenges faced by pupils in primary schools in Delta state. The NGO is known as "Rave International Charity Foundation" (Rave HQ on Facebook). It was formed solely to provide writing and other learning aids to indigent pupils who could not afford such "luxury" of school uniforms, bags, sandals and notebooks. This is also as a result of the need to address the low school enrolment and attendance due to learning aids and this was really depriving many children from attending classes.

Since 2018 till date, we have given out over 1000 pair of school sandals, school bags, distributed notebooks to pupils in public primary schools in Uwiore LGA and Ughelli North of Delta state. Pupils and their teachers in these primary school are happy as many pupils are now willing to go to school.

Thank you, Centre LSD, for helping me realise my dreams of helping the less privilege without becoming a politician.

Stanley Efe

Delta State

37. Modest: The game changer

After the training from the Centre LSD, Ogbalor Modesty returned to his community to make history. For the first time, another party won elections in his area. He explains how this feat was achieved in this story

In three days, the Centre LSD caused an ideological shift, reset my political reasoning and I made history in Oleh Ward 02. In my locality, the rich and the mighty were the only ones who run for elective positions, while the poor keeps hoping that one day, he/she will also be opportunes. Of course, this is almost a mirage for the later.

For the past twenty years, I have been in politics. I have been actively involved in politics since 1999, where I moved from the All Nigeria Peoles Party (AN) to Democratic Peoples Party (DPP) and finally to the All Progressives Congress (APC). I have actively participated as chief security officer of election at the ward and LGA levels adviser to the board, executive

and the ward entirely. Although I do much at the party level and am often encouraged to take up positions, I never really agreed. But I was happy guiding other contestants and encouraging them to take up party positions. I never thought I should contest or be among the executives. The truth is it never crossed my mind to contest for anything.

In three days, the Centre LSD successfully overhauled these mindsets of not wanting to lead. I was instilled with the thinking that the Youths Can Lead and that includes me. I felt like I just woke up from a deep slumber. I left the training with this passion and hunger for leadership. Immediately after the training, I picked the APC nomination form for the position of ward youths' leader in Oleh Ward 02. I paid for the bank draft on 4/5/2018, contested the election on the 5/5/2018, with security agents, INEC officials, party returning officer conducting the election and I won the congress as the youth leader of the ward duly elected. I moved ahead going for the position of the youth leader. It was strategic and deliberate. I wanted to mentor the youths in my ward and teach them what I learnt from the Centre LSD's training. That changed my life. On June 2, 2019, I was sworn in as the Youth Leader.

Shortly after my election, the PA and state coordinator for Ogboru saw my zeal for the party and made me the Isoko South Youth Coordinator to the gubernatorial candidate of APC in Delta State, Chief Great Ovedhe Ogboru. With this new appointment, I doubled my level of mobilisation and with a greater zeal took over the ward from the opposition. In the 2019 general election, I delivered my unit, 09 Oleh Ward 2 for the APC both for House of Rep and the Senate. In 2019, history was made because since 2003 only the PDP wins in that ward.

My plan is to contest for the state House of Assembly or support any youth who have a stronger advantage and shares the same vision and dream for my people. As part of the preparation to contest in 2023, I have begun to build my financial base. I have learnt POP installation and now I build POP ceilings for buildings and make money.

Centre LSD made a giant out of me politically and I am grateful for this.

Ogbalor Modesty

Delta state

38. 'I was appointed aide to Dep. Senate President'

Engineer Kelvin Kdokpo Djagbo, like other graduates who attended the training on high academic stakes came out more honed, and with his tenacity, he hit it biggest than all the other participants. Read him below

It is no longer news that youths in Nigeria are grossly underrepresented in the political space, especially in Delta State. A situation I have tried to change for a long time. My quest for this change and my political consciousness started back in my university days. I was a student activist at the Enugu State University of Science and Technology, where I held several positions like the President of Urhobo Student Union (NUUS), Senator to the National Association of Delta State Students, National Convention Secretary of NADESSTU, etc. After my graduation in 2007, I got to my village and discovered I needed to take my politics to the next level to attract the needed infrastructural development to my community.

Then I began to play politics in Okumagba Warri South LGA but was victimised. So I returned to my village Erhuwaren. I took it upon myself that I must make the place known politically. In 2011, I contested for councillorship under the Democratic Peoples Party (DPP) and was suspended. Then I decided to rechannel my energy and worked for Ughelli South constituency candidate in 2011. Then the party collapsed, and I moved to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). In 2011, I contested again as a councillor and was again asked to step down, with a promise to give me the position of supervisory councillor but this promise was not kept. My experience from the party showed that they have no interest in the youths being in positions other than their family members. So, in 2017, I moved to the All Progressives Congress (APC) and was yet indecisive whether to contest or not before the Centre LSD's training.

I heard about the Centre LSD **Youth Can Lead** Capacity Building in Delta State. Initially, I said I would attend just to please my sponsor, but on getting here, the first class was explosive, and it was a blast. I got the missing link. After being equipped on how to write a manifesto, fund an election, etc. from the training, I made up my mind to run for the State House of Assembly in Delta State. I purchased my nomination form, consulted widely with party leaders within and outside the local

government area, drafted my manifesto that was detailed and reflected the needs of the people. I took time to list the needs of the community: industries and resources and proffered solutions. It was quite different from any other or past manifesto they have seen. I formed my campaign team. A lot of people bought into the campaign, with many recommending high profiled members in the campaign team. My campaign was hot, and it became clear that with the way my team and I were going, I was going to win the contest.

Just as we were getting close to victory, I was called by party chieftains to step down and negotiate. I refused and continued with my campaign. Then they called the second time and asked that I negotiate and step down, again I rejected this offer. It was a hot chase, and the intensity of the calls to step down became unbearable. On the day of the primaries, I contested and came third. I started my campaign with less than three million naira, and I ended up spending about N18 million. Although I lost the position, but it was devastating for my supporters, yet I was still actively involved in the party's activities. As a result, I was made the LG Coordinator to campaign and mobilise for the Senatorial candidate in Ughelli South. By God's grace, I won the LG for the candidate. After the election, the Senatorial candidate saw in me a rare trait of leadership and sportsmanship and chose me to work with him and that was how I was appointed a Senior Legislative Aide to the Deputy Senate President.

As a Senior Legal Aide, I know that this position is for law-making and not an executive one. But I promise to attract development, improve capacity for youth in my community (Erhuwaren)

Thank you, Centre LSD, for giving me the platform to climb this high.

Kelvin Djagbo

Delta State

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.

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
- 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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Published with support from

ISBN: