



BOOK OF STORIES

**Centre LSD, Raising Change
Agents in Bayelsa State Through
Her Youths Can Lead Project**

FUNDED BY



**FORD
FOUNDATION**



(Centre LSD)

**Centre LSD Impact Stories
Series 2.0**



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**Centre LSD, Raising Change Agents in Bayelsa State Through Her
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ABBREVIATIONS

Centre LSD, Raising Change Agents in Bayelsa State Through Her Youths Can Lead Project, Funded by Ford Foundation

A. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The African Centre for Leadership Strategy and Development, sincerely returns all the glory and praise to the Almighty God, the giver of life and grace, for His strength and protection throughout the implementation of this project and the development of the “Youths Can Lead” Bayelsa Book of Stories. This product was made possible only because He made a way.

We also want to thank our funder, Ford Foundation, for supporting Centre LSD to implement this project that is changing the political landscape and entrenching the youths in Bayelsa into mainstream politics. The great foundation laid is yielding unimaginable results.

Our profound appreciation goes to Dr Otive Igbuzor, our Founding Executive Director, who led the conceptualization of this project and was a strong force in its implementation. Your technical support and facilitation in some sessions of the capacity building were instrumental to the great harvest of results we have witnessed in Bayelsa State.

To our amiable Executive Director of Centre LSD, Mr Monday Osasah, we want to sincerely thank you for your leadership, supervision and guidance throughout the implementation of this project, the results harvesting, and the development of this final output. We sincerely thank you for being instrumental in making this happen.

Our immense appreciation goes to Mrs Victoria Ikearu-Udoh, for delivering on this task. She harvested and developed the stories in this Book of Stories. Victoria is a Programme Coordinator at the Centre, and she oversees among other things, the M&E department of the organisation. She was assisted by Emmanuella Nwahiri and Vincent Dania whose great inputs have contributed to this result. To Lawal Amodu, we appreciate your top-notch implementation that has resulted in these great outputs. It is rare to see a single project birth so many results like this. Thank you, Martina Nomsule, for ensuring that we had all the funds needed to do this. Not left out are other staff of Centre LSD. Thank you for all your support and assistance in one way or the other during this period. We really appreciate you all.

Lastly, on behalf of Centre LSD and Ford Foundation, we want to appreciate all trainees and beneficiaries of this intervention in Bayelsa State, especially those that were interviewed during the harvesting of these results. Thank you for being the change. We look forward to seeing you at the top.

Centre LSD

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B. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nigeria has one of the fastest-growing youth population in the world. Unfortunately, this great opportunity is lying untapped politically. Most Nigerians have consistently argued that the Nigerian youths have no notable place in tomorrow's scheme of things. This is chiefly because of the negligence and indifference they are meted on the youth by those who are the leaders of today. Until the Nigeria political class and relevant stakeholders deliberately inculcate relevant democratic culture in the youths, there may be no future for the largest country in the African continent.

It was to lay the foundation for this healthy democratic culture and to build the capacity of the youths in Bayelsa State, that the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development designed and implemented a project with the tag "Youths Can Lead." The project was implemented over the space of two years, to build the capacity of the youths in Bayelsa to engage and participate in elective and appointive positions. The Centre LSD through this project successfully built the capacity of 88 youths (45 being males and 43 females).

The result of the project evaluation in the state showed the following: increased youth interest in politics; increased youth participation in political party activities; increase in youth contestants/candidates; increased recognitions for Bayelsa youths; increased youth appointees; increased youth entrepreneurs and increased number of young ambassadors of youths participation and inclusion in governance, all in Bayelsa State. From these results, a total of 42 stories of change were developed.

This Book of Stories captures significant changes in the lives of the trainees of this project. It tells the stories of change from passive and apolitical youths to vibrant and determined youths. Some of the stories recount the steps and strides of these determined youths from the point of training to 2 years after the training.

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C. OUR RESULTS FROM THE CENTRE LSD YOUTHS CAN LEAD PROJECT IN BAYELSA STATE

The youths are a dynamic and an indispensable segment of any population. They are the driving force of development in any country. It is often said that the future belongs to the youths. Unfortunately, “Action speaks louder than words.” From all indication, there are little, or no provisions made to adequately position and prepare the Nigerian youths for the future that is said to belong to them. The leaders of today are frantically doing all they can to cling on to the reins of leadership at all costs and to the detriments of the youths. This very important segment of the population if not strategically and constructively harnessed, engaged, empowered and invested upon, their energy and drive will be misdirected and channelled to negative endeavours.

In 2018, the African Centre for Leadership Strategy and Development conceived and designed a project to build the capacity of youths in the Niger Delta on politics (for elective and appointive positions). The goal was to bridge this identified leadership gap. The project for 2 years continuously built the capacity of youths in Bayelsa (which was one of the project locations) to contest for elective positions and prepare them for appointive positions within and outside the state.

Over the 2 years, the Centre successfully built the capacity of 88 youths (45 male and 43 female). At the point of evaluating the project, 2 years after its implementation, 64 of these youths were interviewed (45 males and 19 females). Overall, this project has recorded significant results, some of which are listed below:

1. Increased youths interest in election in Bayelsa State

According to some of the trainees, before the intervention by Centre LSD they believed election was not a fair game and whether they voted or not the outcome of every election was determined far before the polling day. Therefore, “their votes do not count.” According to them, that is one of the reasons they are apolitical. But after the training, there was a change in orientation. The youths who were hitherto apolitical went ahead to register for voters' card and voted in the 2019 general elections. Some of them had registered in the past but to just use the voters' card as a means of identification and thus didn't mind the location of their polling units. Some of these polling units were far from their homes, and to them, it didn't really matter, because they had not intent to vote.

But after the training, some of these youths changed or transferred their polling units to the ones closer to their homes to enable them vote in the 2019 general elections. Overall, about 45% of the trainees that registered to vote after the training voted for the first time. A peculiar story was that of **EDE ALAKERE NOEL**, whose entire family collected their permanent voter cards (PVC) and voted for the first time in the 2019 elections.

2. Increased youths participation in political party activities in Bayelsa State

Before the Centre LSD intervened in the state, many of the youths were apolitical and a few of them who were members of political parties were just to make up the numbers.

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According to them, they were not regular in political parties' activities or meetings. But during the capacity building, the trainees were taught that the first step of youth participation in politics and inclusion in governance was to be an active member of a political party. As a result of this, 16 trainees, who were not members of any political party, joined a political party, obtained membership forms, began to regularly attend party meetings and became actively involved in party activities. A total of 10 youths joined the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) 3, All Progressives Congress (APC) 2, Progressive Peoples Alliance (PPA) and 1 Young Progressive Party (YPP). Some of them as a result of their active participation in their respective parties were appointed as party agents, mobilisation coordinators, etc. in the just concluded 2019 general elections.

3. Increase in youths contestants/candidates in Bayelsa State

2019 general elections in Bayelsa State marked the rise in the number of youths candidacy or candidates for elective positions in the state. Out of the total of 64 youths interviewed 2 years after the training on the Centre LSD “Youths Can Lead” project in Bayelsa, 27 of them contested in the 2019 general elections. Of this number, 18% won their respective positions. This is a great improvement from what it was before the Centre LSD training. Before the training, only 13% of the 64 trainees interviewed had ever contested. Some of the positions won by our trainees were:

- Councillor, Ward 1, Nembe LGA.
- State House of Assembly Constituency 1, Kolokuma/Opokuma.
- Councillor, Brass Constituency 3, Ward 7.
- Chairman, Membe Bassambiri Community.
- President Female Youth Development Forum.
- Councillor, Kolokuma/Opokuma Ward 3.
- Brass Membe Federal Constituency.
- Chairman, Community Development Committee (CDC) and Councillor Yenegoa Ward 14.
- Treasurer Otuoke Youth Council.
- Councillor Ward 9 Southern Ijaw, Amassoma.
- Councillor Ward 5, Sagbama LGA.
- Assistant Secretary Bayelsa West Senatorial District National Youth Council of Nigeria.
- Association of Safety and Security Professionals of Nigeria Bayelsa State.
- Youth President, Liama community.
- Ward 12 Sec, Southern Ijaw.
- Exco PDP.

4. Increased recognition for Bayelsa youths

As a result of the active participation of some of our trainees in their various political parties, some of them got recognised in various capacities. Some of these are **Ginah Festus**, who became popular as a result of his activities in his party. This popularity positioned him and

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opened him up to several invitations to every political meeting in his ward. **Yibo Ebenezer Oti** was made a member of Brass Rural Development Authority, Beletieama, as a Subsidiary Councillor and **Ateki Ruth** became actively involved in political activities in her community. This gave her the recommendation that made her benefit both financially and politically in her community and constituency.

5. Increased youth appointees

According to [Jonas Salk](#), "The reward for work well done is the opportunity to do more." This was the experience of some of Centre LSD's trainees of the #YouthsCanLead capacity building. For so many of these youths, the training was an eye opener, that completely changed their orientation and fired up their desire to see a new Bayelsa, where youths are active players in governance. Immediately after the trainings, Centre LSD's trainees became major voices and actors in different segments of the states and community activities. They led several interventions individually and collectively. Some of them became very active at the party level, and others took a step further and contested. The result of this was a growing consciousness of the potentials of young people in Bayelsa State, to act as agents of change. This awareness led to several appointments into key positions at the ward, community and state level. Some of these appointments are:

- SWAP Coordinator Darlong Oil and Gas Security;
- APC State Publicity Secretary;
- Regional Director Initiative for Integrity Development (i-Cube);
- Personal Assistant to the SA of the immediate past Governor on NYSC;
- Principal, Glorious Name School;
- Protocol Officer to the Chairman Yenagoa LGA;
- Media Aide to Hon. Ebiango Former LGA Chairman of Ogbia LGA;
- Youth Representative;
- Youth Leaders Sagbama, Member Education and Health Committee Central Zone Ijaw Youth Council;
- Director, Youth Mobilisation to Bayelsa State PDP Chairman;
- PPA Campaign Manager;
- Member of Mein Oyekiri Rural Development Area (RDA);
- Member Brass Rural Development Authority Beletieama;
- Exco Member Ward 9 Southern Ijaw Constituency 1;
- Supervisory Councillor;
- Women Group Secretary.

6. Increased young entrepreneurs in Bayelsa State

Nigerian youths are not lazy, but lack the prerequisite knowledge, opportunities, platforms and motivation to discover and unleash their hidden potentials. This was evidenced by the success stories of many young Bayelsans who were trained by Centre LSD. Just 2 years after the training, where they were taught the tenets of entrepreneurship and the need to provide jobs for themselves, instead of waiting for the white collar job that was nowhere in sight. The youths have maximised opportunities to showcase their positive talents. Just within the

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space of 2 years, the 88 youths trained in Bayelsa, some of Centre LSD's trainees got employed while others established their businesses. A total of 50 business outlets/ /income generating ventures were established by Centre LSD's trainees. These business outlets are outlined below:

1. The revamping of “Inelly Technical Service Sub-Station power supply in Nembe” and also the expansion of the business in Ogbia LGA;
2. Barbing Salon;
3. Buying and selling of clothes;
4. Buying and selling frozen foods;
5. Buying and selling of building materials, building construction/ architectural;
6. Cassava farming and plantain plantation;
7. Catering business and production of beauty products;
8. El-Maracana resources dealing on ICT, internet network, CCTV camera, etc;
9. Employed as Admin Officer 2, Ministry of Information Bayelsa State;
10. Engineering certification;
11. Established a provision / chemist store;
12. Established a provision store/ hotel business;
13. Established an NGO called “Own or Take Back Your Life Campaign”;
14. Established a boutique for unisex shoes;
15. Established a fish farm, but it collapsed;
16. Established a mini gas re-filling plant;
17. Established a school "Achievers Group of School";
18. Established a skin care business registered under CAC named “Ani-Dazzle Enterprise”;
19. Established a small-scale business (kunu, zobo);
20. Established a speed boat business;
21. Established an NGO “WukuLite Initiative for Nigeria's Development (WIND) Foundation”;
22. Established an NGO called “KON Foundation”;
23. Established four fish farms but yet to stock it;
24. Established Strategic African Media (media content development, publishing, general media services)
25. Farming;
26. Farming/bakery;
27. Fast food business (sharwama, smoothie, etc);
28. Gas re-filling;
29. Established a cosmetics shop (soap, shampoo, hair cream);
30. Started a hospitality business, “Ato Alfreder Ventures/ Ato Alfreder Foundation”;
31. ICT and waste disposal outlet;
32. Started a jewelry business;
33. Started a mini bar business;
34. Started musical equipment hiring;
35. One of our trainees was employed by “Darlong Oil and Gas Securirty” as a result of my confidence to contest for election;

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36. Established a POS business;
37. Established a poultry farm
38. Established a poultry farm called, “Yibo and Sons Enterprise Nigeria”;
39. Established a printing press;
40. Began the sale of handbags and slippers;
41. Started a make-up/ pizza business;
42. Started selling wares;
43. Ventured into wares/clothes;
44. Was employed as a temporary staff in Ministry of Health;
45. Opened a welding shop and a fish farm;
46. Launched a foundation called “Pad the Slums Foundation”, with the mission of correcting the abnormalities in the female reproductive health by providing menstrual education, hygiene awareness, sanitary kits for teenage girls and women living in the slums across Africa;
47. Launched the “Franklin Kemebimo Foundation,” a non-profit social enterprise that aims to provide access to education to the less privileged and extremely needy in the society;
48. Established “Africa Rescue Mission”, a civil society organisation, positioned to project policies that will advance and develop the African continent.
49. Co-established Auro Nig Ltd, registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission that provides services ranging from website development, graphic designs, etc;
50. Co-established “Kejof integrated services”, registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission and it is into protocol, ushering services, catering services, event management and general contracting.

7. Increased number of young ambassadors' participation and inclusion in governance, in Bayelsa State.

The Centre LSD/Ford Foundation “Youths Can Lead” training has produced several ripple effects. The trainees after the capacity building that fired up their passion, identified platforms and seized the opportunities to share what they had learnt from the training with others. In the space of these 2 years, the trainees have created great impact in their communities, associations, and in Bayelsa State at large. This they achieved through the implementation of various activities like workshops, seminal, sensitisation, etc. Below are some of these activities and the trainees involved:

1. **Community Engagement: Egbe Gibson** organised some trainees from the same locality and together they set up a community engagement group. The goal of the group was to a lead campaign on youths participation in some communities in Bayelsa State. They visited the youths of ONOPA community and educated them on youth's participation in politics in their community. They also taught them using the resource materials (soft copy) provided by the Centre.

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2. **Community Sensitisation: Kosu Gloria** organised a door to door campaign and sensitised people in her community on the need to vote. She has now established her own group where she is now the head.
3. **Established a Youth Group Called Kolga Babes: John Beatrice** through the knowledge gotten from Centre LSD, changed the narrative in her hometown. She formed a youth group called Kolga Babes, a group of 60 persons with the aim of sensitising the youths and women on the need to participate in politics and electoral processes.
4. **Revived His NGO: Eneyi Edwin Eseimokumoh**, before the Centre LSD's training had formed an NGO called **Citizens Right Network (CRN)**, with a friend of like mind. Unfortunately, he lost focus and motivation to continue with the NGO. But after he participated in the Centre LSD's training, he got the motivation and he revived the network. He has begun implementing projects and partnering with other NGOs.
5. **Established an NGO: Meredith Ozori** planned and structured an NGO called **Brains and Brans**. This organisation partially kicked off on the 1st of January, 2020. The NGO is undergoing the registration process.
6. **Community Engagements: Korobo Otonye Nathaniel** realised that the voters register in his community wasn't published by INEC before the 2019 election. So, with the freedom of information bill, he engaged INEC and got the community register published and pasted. The community members were able to vote in the 2019 elections as a result of this intervention.
7. **Community Sensitisation: Oburo Samuel** formed a sensitisation group in the community and convinced those that did not have their PVCs to get theirs and enlightened community members on the need to participate in elections.
8. **Youths Sensitisation: Walter Collins** together with his friends organised a sensitisation programme for schools and students in Ekeki community, Yenagoa LGA. The activity sensitised students in schools on good morals and curbing moral decadence in the community. These activities were funded through their individual contributions.
9. **Advocacy: Sain Edward Igbogiam** embarked on a tour meeting of various election delegates to dis-abuse their minds from violence, during the 2019 party primaries and the 2019 general elections.
10. **Community Mobilisation: Monday Lelegite** is a grassroot mobiliser, he used his network to organise a door to door mobilisation for youths participation in the 2019 general elections in his community.

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11. **Talk Show: Timi Ekios Tomzine** organised a talk show with her age group, most especially the females. The talk show was on women participation in politics.
12. **Youths Sensitisation: Laderi Joseph Wanaemi** sensitised youths on the need to engage in politics. Several people through him identified with one political party or the other and one of those youths contested for the position of a Councillor for Ward 9, Nembe LGA in July 27th, 2019 elections.
13. **Non-Violent Elections Campaign: Mac-Donald Taribo Jim-Dorgu** promoted non-violent elections through a door-to-door campaign.
14. **Advocacy: Tamaradoubra Benjamin** recruited young determined youths and partnered with an NGOs called **Youth Arise** and together they advocated for youths inclusion in politics. This was to push the frontiers of educating youths on political processes. He also formed a political support group called **Youths Vote**. This group comprised of previously apolitical youths from 3 LGAs, who are now transformed.
15. **Community Mobilisation: Dokari Sharimam Ranita** successfully registered herself and assisted community members, who were unable to collect their PVCs because of transport fare.
16. **Established Dokran Old People's Home: Dokari Sharimam Ranita** also successfully established an old people's home called "Dokran Old People's Home." This has begun operation in Bayelsa.
17. **Advocacy: Daniel Martins** paid courtesy visits to his paramount rulers, community chiefs, youths, women and elders and sensitised them on their right to join any political party of their choice.
18. **Youths Sensitisation: Eleve Timi Darlington** sensitised the youths against ballot box snatching and vote buying in the 2019 general elections.
19. **Community Sensitisation: Monday Goodluck Ayebanoa** is the Information Manager of the community sound system in Ogbolomaibiri Nembe LGA. He used the community radio system to disseminate information on the need to avoid violence with the slogan "Vote Not Fight", "Election No Be War"; "Life Has No Duplicate." He also organised a seminar called "Windows of Opportunity" to educate the youths and women not to sell their permanent voters' cards (PVCs) and the right of women to hold political offices
20. **Youths Mobilisation: Alexander Peretu** leveraged on his position as the party chairman of PPA, to mobilise, and encouraged the youths through public speaking. The aim was for them to get registered and collect their voters' card. As well as for party members to get their membership cards.

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21. **Youths Sensitisation: Okala Igwe** brought together about 100 youths from different political parties and they came out in numbers to educate the youths of the community on the need for a violence free 2019 election in Elebele community.

Community Sensitisation: Tamaraudobra Gibson carried out town hall community sensitisation on “Youths Can Lead.” This was to increase youths participation in politics in Onopa community, in the 2019 general elections.

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D. SUCCESS STORIES FROM BAYELSA FORD FOUNDATION PROJECT

1. From nobody to a political stakeholder

I have been a member of a political party for so many years) and I have been very active. But in spite of how active I have been, I was not usually considered during stakeholders' meetings in my ward. My opinion didn't count. Majority of the elders and party chieftains in my ward never respected me until I attended Centre LSD's training and I decided to contest. Centre LSD awakened my dream, restored my voice and enhanced my personality at the ward level, in my party.

In 2018 I came across Centre LSD's training on Youths Can Lead. I was fortunately shortlisted and invited to attend the 3-day training, organised by Centre LSD. I learnt a lot at this training, including things I never knew before, like campaign financing, mobilisation, some leadership skills and many others. As a result of the knowledge I have gained from Centre LSD, I made up my mind to run for an elective position. Immediately after the training, I went to my ward, met the executives of the party and I indicated my interest to contest. In preparation, I went further and constituted a think tank/campaign team with a mandate to help sell my candidacy.

I began my campaign and every knowledge acquired from the training came very handy. I campaigned vigorously and contested for the immediate past chairman/councillorship elections in Bayelsa State. In 2018, I vied for the councillorship seat in my ward, ward (3) in Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA of Bayelsa State. At the end, I unfortunately lost the election at the party level with just 2 votes. After coming out second position, I was now considered a stakeholder in my ward. My popularity has now helped me in politics because I'm now always invited in every political meeting both within and outside the ward level. The training by Centre LSD has taken me to a great level within a very short period and I know that the sky is my starting point.

Ginah Festus

Phone: 08062707011

E-mail: ginahfestus@yahoo.com

2. The motivator

Centre LSD has motivated me and made me a motivator to others like me.

For many years, I have always thought my vote didn't count and election was a fraud. I have always been on the fence politically. I never had any zeal to join any political party or rallies. Election for me was like confronting a monster, because I was always afraid of street violence. These factors kept me in the dark for over 15 years.

In 2018, I attended a training by Centre LSD on "Youths Can Lead". At the training, my eyes were opened and there was a rebirth. Among other things, I learnt that I cannot stay on the fence politically and expect things to change and that youths need to take proactive steps into leadership positions. Suddenly I realised that I have been wrong all along. Politics is not a game and that my vote and every other vote does counts. After the training I joined a party and became very active. As a result of my active participation in party activities, within a

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short while, I became very popular and known by party stakeholders and became very relevant in the party. Now, I have passion for politics because I have overcome all my fears. I have been more enlightened since I joined the party. My eyes are now open to the few secrets of politics. I now know I have the right to vote and be voted for. I have conquered all my fears. Centre LSD has motivated me and now, I am also motivating others of my kind to actively participate in politics. Now, I am a political leader and fully participating in every function in my party.

All thanks to Centre LSD and Ford Foundation for this rebirth.

ESSIEMIEN TOMBARA

Phone: 08064513030

E-mail: tomkuti4excel@yahoo.com

3. I stood out

In the early part of 2018, there was a rise in cultism activities in my community; ODI, in KOLGA, Bayelsa State. It degenerated into rival members maiming and even killing one another and innocent citizens became casualties. These cult boys in some cases molested other villagers and even youth corpsers. The community experienced unrest and there was palpable fear in everyone living in the community.

In 2018, I heard of a proposed training for youths who wanted to participate in politics. I was curious and although I never knew the organisation before, I put in for the training and was shortlisted. The training by Centre LSD awakened my consciousness of problem solving. I was taught that leadership is identifying a problem and proffering solution to it. I wanted to be this leader so, I boldly waded into the youth crises in my community, gathered some ready youths, went to the king, held a meeting with the cabinet and informed him about the steps we have planned to take to resolve the youth restiveness in the community. We got his approval and we went around the community, publicised our resolutions, which was that all cult members leave the community within 24 hours, announcing the consequences in terms of failure to abide.

I was amazed at the results. With speed, almost all that were members of different cult groups who were responsible for the unrest in the community left one by one. In one month, there was absolute peace in the areas of gang fighting, molestation of law-abiding citizens with guns and till today the good people of Odi community now enjoys relative peace from cultism.

Suddenly, I became a celebrated youth. The Odi community chief (King) and members of his council and every member of the community are till today happy and appreciate me for standing out in times of a communal need. I thank God that he used me to make my people sleep with two eyes closed in the community.

All these achievements were because I attended the Centre LSD's training. Thanks to the organisers and Ford Foundation

James Uvie (Proxy name)

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4. I overcame fear, this earned me a political appointment

Centre LSD's training took away my fear and shyness, now I have become bold and can now speak in public.

I have always been a very shy person who was always afraid to address the public, because of the fear of making mistakes when speaking in public. No matter how small the crowd was, it was a herculean task to face. As a result of my shyness, I usually stay away from public glare, leadership positions or any task that will entail that I address people.

In 2018, I overcame my fear. Centre LSD's Youth Can Lead training happened. I was one of the many youths that benefitted from this training. I must say that my life completely changed. It was as if I traded my shyness at that training. The group work, group presentation, mimicked campaign and all the group activities at the training emboldened me. I left the training not the shy timid person I was before it, but a very bold youth. Today, I can stand in the public, seminars, workshops and I can now address any crowd, no matter the size. This has made me a known voice in my ward and community, and I am no longer afraid of making mistakes when speaking.

As a result of how vocal I have become, I was appointed a member of Mein Oyekiri Rural Development Area (RDA) by the government of my state, Bayelsa. I am now a bold and vibrant youth in my area. With Centre LSD's training, I was able to overcome my fear, which was my major limitation. Now, I see no limit to my expectation. Thank you, Centre LSD and Ford Foundation for this new me.

Warri Samuel

5. The emergence of a youth movement

I am a young man from Nembe, who is passionate about the development of my people; passionate about youth's and women inclusion in governance. I didn't feel at ease when the people in my community were excluded from the list of those that will vote in the 2019 general elections. I realised the voters register in my community wasn't published and no one could really do anything about it.

Shortly after this drama, I heard of a proposed training for youths interested in politics. Although I was not in politics, I said to myself, I am a youth. So, I applied for the training and fortunately I was invited to participate in the 3-day training. It was a knowledge packed training with life experiences from the lecturers. This meeting was an eye opener. At that meeting, I got an idea and the solution to the drama of voters' exclusion in my community. My takeaway from the training was my resolve to find a solution to the problem and ensure that my community votes in the 2019 general elections.

So, armed with the Freedom of Information Act, I visited INEC state office in Bayelsa, obtained a soft copy of the voters register for my community and went back to publish it.

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The Freedom of Information Act helped me to get easy access to INEC, and I was able to get the voter register for my community and made it public. The good news was that they were able to confirm their names on the voters register and a lot of them voted in the 2019 general elections. I contested the primaries, got the ticket and contested at the general elections for the House of Representative, Brass Membe Federal Constituency. The training gotten from the Centre helped in conceptualising my campaign story. Although I did my best, and did not win, I would like to contest in the future, if funded by somebody or any youth friendly organisation. I really desire youths' inclusion in politics. Thank you, Centre LSD and Ford Foundation, for making this happen.

Korobo Nathaniel
Delta State

6. Centre LSD positioned me for appointive position in Bayelsa State.

Centre LSD helped to reshape my perspective towards politics.

Before I attended the Centre LSD's training on youths interested in politics, I was not an active politician. I was not interested in politics because of the behaviour of our politicians and how they make campaign promises they never keep. But after the training by Centre LSD, I made up my mind to build my political career and having a strong zeal for leadership, knowing the qualities it takes to lead.

At the training in 2018, I learnt that to actively participate in politics, one must be a member of a political party. After the training, I got registered in a party. I became an active member of PDP in my ward. In the cause of discharging my duties as a member, I became interested in contesting for the position of a counsellor. But I also remembered that we were taught to start from a lower position and build upward, so I decided to quit the ambition for counsellorship, for the position of a community youth leader.

I picked an interest in the youth president position. I began my campaign and used the strategy of reorganising the youths networking in the community to support my ambition and garner supports. I even organised a free medical outreach as one of my strategy to reach out to the entire village. I also bought a fishing local canoe for women mobilisation. About 30 women participated to win a single fishing boat in the game. In 2019, I contested as a community youth president in Liama community in Brass LGA and I won the election against two of the contestants. I emerged 1st out of the 3.

As a result of the leadership skills I displayed, which of course I learnt from Centre LSD and as a result of my activeness in my community for the Bayelsa State guber elections 2019, I was appointed by the Bayelsa State Government as a member of Brass Rural Development Authority Beletieama.

Today, I am not just a politician, I have also established a poultry farm. All thanks to Centre LSD for making this possible.

Yibo Ebenezer Oti

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7. I became a card-carrying member of a political party

Knowledge is power! After attending Centre LSD “Youth Can Lead” training, I became a card-carrying member of a political party.

Initially I hated being a politician. I never wanted to play any vital role in politics because of the way some members of my community were monopolizing elective positions. They hijack everything to themselves at every opportunity. As a result, I didn't see the need of wasting my time to join any political party or suffer myself to queue up in the name of voting. Even if I registered to vote, it was so I could have a means of identification. Usually, I use the voters' card as my national ID. “I don't “waste” my time in politics, when I have better things to do with my time”

April 2018, I attended Centre LSD training. At the training, I learnt that politics was not a waste of time and that it was wrong for me as the future leader to stay aloof. After attending the training, I formed a youth group in my community and convinced those that do not have their PVCs to have theirs. I enlightened them of the need to participate in every election. They became aware of the need to participate in election and that, it was the only way the youths can successfully collect power from those that were monopolizing everything allocated to our community. Now I am a card-carrying member of a political party and many of the youths in the community are also doing same. Together, we have begun to change the political narratives of my community.

As a result of the training and interactions with Centre LSD, I became bold to contest for the office of the Community Development Committee Chairman (CDC) of Kalaba community in Yenagoa LGA and I won. Still yearning for the development of my community, I took a step further and contested for a councillorship position in Ward 14, Yenegoa and was asked to step down due to the internal arrangement in my party. This was after I have begun mobilisation for the position. But although I did contest; I have learnt from the process. I am now able to form a formidable campaign structure as a young politician, courtesy of Centre LSD. Till date, I am the current CDC chairman of Kalaba Community till 2023.

I have begun to prepare for 2023 and I know I will be successful. I have taken the bold step to begin building my financial base. To this end, I have built a giant fish farm to enable me save for the next election.

Thank you, Centre LSD and Ford Foundation. My political journey has just begun.

Oburo Samuel

8. The mandate or my family

Centre LSD's training on “Youths Can Lead” was for me a turning point.

Youths participation in election has always been a huge challenge and, in most parties, it was near impossible. This is also more complicated if the said youth is a female. The fact that I was a single mother and a woman was more than a challenge. I was confronting two monsters of Women and youth inclusion. Although I have worked in the political arena for 4 years as the PA to the First Lady of Bayelsa State, in the capacity of the Senior Special Adviser to Her Excellency, I have never contested for any elective position. In fact, I was at

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the peak of my appointive position. I could say I lacked nothing. But you see, there was a gap, a hunger to impact lives and bring succour to the masses. But I didn't know how to fill this longing.

In April 2018, I heard of an on-going 3-day capacity building for youths interested in politics in Bayelsa State. I didn't get to know about it until the training started in Bayelsa. I travelled all the way from Aghoro Community in Ekeremor Local Government, to the venue of the training to meet with the organisers and seek for permission to participate. Although the accommodation and spaces for participation were all filled, with a promise to foot my bills myself (accommodation, transportation, etc.), I was told I could participate.

The training was the bomb. It was a turning point! It exposed me to better ways of strategic planning, advocacy, what constitutes electoral malpractices, how to give mandate to women and women campaigns. I was fired up and realised that there was “no turning back for me. if I want a change then I should be part of the change.” I decided to contest for the Bayelsa State House of Assembly. I knew the risk I was getting into because I was still a PA in Government House. I knew I would be perceived as an enemy. It was more like working into hell fire or dragging a meal with the devil. It was worse not getting the approval and ticket of the party and the boss I have worked with for years. I was seen like someone that was confronting the Governor himself. First, I resigned my position and declared my intention to contest on the platform of another party.

On September 18th, 2018 under SDP, I purchased my nomination form, campaigned extensively, and engaged skilled hands to monitor my votes. Unfortunately, I was rigged out. I lost the election. But history was made, because I became the first lady to purchase a form and run for election in Constituency 3, Ekeremor LGA. I was able to change a narrative of the old tradition. I got a stronghold of followers in the state, as I became a frequent guest on radio, television, interviews as a person and as a motivational speaker in schools, churches to share my story both within and outside the state. This resulted in several awards and some of which were: Bayelsa Youth Leaderships Award, Magnanimous Award, Most Active Female Grassroot Politician Award and lots more.

I am warming up for the next election and I know I will get “there.” Centre LSD has helped me discover my vision and helped me see that a lot still needs to be done on youths and women inclusion in politics. This is just a starting point. I will continue to advocate until the desired change comes. It is a new dawn

Ato Ebibofayei

9. I actualised my dreams of educating teenagers and youths

For so many years, I nursed the dream of teenagers and youth's education. I have this huge burden to address some of the vices that youths and teenagers are often confronted with. I have been concerned about the moral decadence among youths; poor ethical and moral values; increase in HIV/ AIDS teenage patients; youths cultism; and so many other vices. So many of these young adults do not even know their roles in the society and what the future

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holds for them. Interactions with many of them shows that they are just moving with the tides, directionless.

In 2018, I was lucky to be one of the participants of the Centre LSD Youths Can Lead training. I met Centre LSD by recommendation and that training changed the course of my life. It did not only change my perception about leadership, project implementation, and deepened my knowledge about politics, it also broadened my vision and gave me direction on how to achieve my dream for youths and teenage education. In that training, I got insight on how in my little way I can help make the society become a better place.

After the training, I took some of my friends who also had similar visions with me and we visited five schools, namely: Glorious Name International School, Blessed Trinity Academy, Community Secondary School Kpansia, Community primary School Onopa and Ben Ville Academy, and held lectures. Some of the teenagers and youths opened up and shared their stories with our team. Although we didn't have funds to do much, my friends and I contributed the little we had and ensured we conducted these school visits. The revelation from these youths were shocking and mind blowing. I intend to sustain these visits, all things being equal. I desire to see a change in these youths, which is the only guarantee for a better society and a better Nigeria.

Centre LSD had really motivated me and made me take a bold step towards the dream I had for years but could not actualise until I met them. Thank you, Centre LSD and Ford Foundation. You made my dream come true.

Walter Collins

10. How we achieved a peaceful party primary in my community

I have been in politics for years before the Centre LSD's training. I have always been one of those who would say that "election is not a do or die affair." There is always life after any election. But unfortunately, for so many years, party primaries have become a major problem in the process of choosing the right candidate. In recent times, it has become a bloody process of choosing who should be the party's flag bearer. The flag is often always soaked with blood before the election itself. First, is that the violence during party primaries are planned and orchestrated by either the party candidates or their supporters.

Early 2018, I got a call from Centre LSD that I have been shortlisted to attend the "Youths Can Lead" training which was a capacity building workshop for youths in politics. I actively participated and I learnt a lot in those few days. One of my key learning was one of the definitions of leadership given at the training, which was that "leadership is identifying a problem and proffering solution to it." I held on to this and decided it was time to change the bloodshed during party primaries.

After the training, I embarked on a peace mission to each delegate for the primary election and engaged them on vigorous talk. I succeeded in changing their mindset and charged them on how we can avert the killing of one another because of elections. From Centre LSD's

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training, I understood that peace is the only key that can prevent killings during election period. Apart from meeting individuals, I also met delegates that were camped in hostels/hotels and spoke with them on the need to let peace reign in the 2019 election.

Indeed, it was a remarkable success. Most persons, after my talk with them, saw reasons and towed the line of peace. To my surprise, I saw opponents from different camps embrace one another, smiling and shaking hands after the primaries, irrespective of who won or did not. That was how fighting and killings were averted in the primaries of my party. I can categorically state here that, peace is the only key factor for the needed development in Nigeria. Let's give peace a chance in every of our conducts during and after any election process, like party primaries, congresses and in general election.

Thank you, Centre LSD and Ford Foundation, for making me a peace ambassador.

Osain Igbogilam

I learnt that leadership requires grassroots presence

Centre LSD helped me discover my lack of preparedness to contest for the governorship position in the 2019 general election in Bayelsa State.

I have often heard that dreams do come true. So, for so many years, I have kept my dream of contesting for the seat of the governor of Bayelsa State. I thought I had all it took to contest and win the position. I mean, I had the charisma, qualification, I was a member of a political party, I knew a few people who could pull strings, etc. But I was to discover after Centre LSD's training that I was wrong. If I had ventured into joining the governorship race in 2019 election, I would have lost woefully and would have wasted my resources.

I was part of the privileged youths who participated in the Centre LSD's Youth Can Lead training that took place in Bayelsa State. Those 3 days of training helped me x-ray myself and my preparedness for the position of the Governor of the state. I was taught at the training that I needed to have a grassroot presence and start contesting from the grassroot and then climb from bottom to the up. After the training, I did a self-evaluation and I found out that my preparation still needs to be starched and dry cleaned. So, I refrained from contesting in the 2019 general elections. This saved me from losing my resources, with the knowledge I gained from the training, I started applying them and preparing myself mentally and academically for the next election. I have enrolled myself in pursuit of my MSc, so I can be academically sound, I have attended motivational trainings and public speaking lessons. I am building my communication skills and building relationships with already established leaders.

One of the lessons from the training was also that we should have presence in our political parties. As a result of this, I started attending party meetings and participating in party activities. As a result of my activeness, I was made the deputy director general to a frontline PDP gubernatorial candidate 'Great Joshua Maewer' and currently an automatic stakeholder in Nembe politics of Bayelsa State. I am preparing for the next election and I believe my story will be different in the next election.

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Thanks to Centre LSD trainings for making me avoid a major pitfalls.

Goodluck Dighabo

11. "Wetin concern me and politics and voting"

"Before now, I dey always say nothing concern me and politics or voting, but after Centre LSD's training, everything about me now na politics and I see say politics no be dirty game." This has been my slogan for many years. I was not only on the fence politically, I didn't care about who wins or not, which party is ruling or not, when is the election, etc. My orientation or mindset about politics or politicians is that nothing good comes out of it/them. For me, it was more of deception, stealing, dishonesty, "promise and fail," nepotism, etc. Many of them kept their children abroad and then use the "poor men's" children to do all sorts of violence during election. I didn't want to be a victim or a sacrificial lamb. However, I had a change in mind set when I attended the Centre LSD's training.

In September 2018, I was invited to participate in a 3-day training by Centre LSD's YouthCanLead training. After the training, my orientation about politics and politicians changed. I took a bold step and joined a political party. Today, I am now an active member of a political party. I have also started attending meetings, I organised talk shows with my age group, most especially the women.

Centre LSD gave me back my self-esteem. After the training, people started seeing some of the qualities I have already seen in myself after the workshop. By the next election I know, and I am confident, that I will contest.

Timi Tomzine

12. Training inspired rejuvenation of Citizens Right Network (CRN)

Centre LSD's training stimulated my desire, and this led to the rebirth of Citizens Right Network (CRN).

The need for the youths to be conscious of their rights and their responsibilities as citizens of Nigeria and Bayelsa State stimulated our desire to kick start this project/organisation. This consciousness was as a result of the 3-day impartation by the Centre LSD's Youths Can Lead training.

After the training, a few of us like-minded youths came together and revived the CRN as a not-for-profit organisation. The aim was to educate Nigerian youths of their responsibilities to our nation with regards to the election processes, the environment, education and other issues that mitigate against our progress as citizens. We intend to achieve our aims through advocacy visits to the other NGOs, National Orientation Agency, etc.

Centre LSD has transformed me to a human right activist.

Esieomokumoh Eneyi

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13. After the training, it was like I just had a clean bath

Centre LSD has made me bold and has taken away my stage fright, I can now talk to a crowd. I can now contest for elections in my community. I now can address issues and most of all, I now have a voter's card and I voted for the first time in the 2019 general election. I was not a politician nor am a fan of politics. I just lived my life and minded my business. After all, the politicians do not know if we exist. To me they were all after their pockets and what they will get, not necessarily to serve the electorates.

In 2018, I heard about a training that would be taking place in Bayelsa. I applied and was shortlisted for the 3-day training. At the training, I was refined. It was like I just had a clean bath. My understanding of politics changed. I was told I needed to actively participate in election by first registering to vote, because power belongs to the people, then be a member of a political party and get on board politically because YouthsCanLead.

After the training, I visited my cousin who is a farmer. I decided to share with him and a few people in my community my inspiration from the Centre LSD's training. After speaking to them and others, I left. Few weeks later, he called and told me he has decided to contest for Youth Leader of Ibelebiri Community and had already picked the nomination form. I became his campaign adviser and he won. Today he is the Youth Leader of Ibelebiri Community.

During the general elections, I noticed that during the election process, a lot of problems and arguments ensued about who will vote and who will not vote, who should be the people's choice and people demanding money. My partner and I gathered everyone and educated them that leadership is not all about money, after addressing the crowd, they were calm at the end of the day and everyone voted in peace.

Also, I have established a catering business, where I offer indoor and outdoor services. Also, I started a beauty line where I produce creams, facial and body scrub. During the last election, I participated as a party Agent under PPA.

Centre LSD has changed my thoughts about politics. After my encounter with them, I was able to speak to groups of people. I became a good leader and I now have my voter's card too. Thank you, Centre LSD and Ford Foundation for changing my insight about politics.

Ola Kate

14. How Centre LSD changed voter apathy in my family

My family was always apolitical and never interested in political activities, including me. My parents will almost skin you alive if you ever considered going into mainstream politics. We never asked why it was that way, we just obeyed and followed suit. We reluctantly will register for voting, maybe just to have an additional national ID card. On election day, we are always indoors jesting or playing. Election day was for us a public holiday. A day of rest. In 2018, this changed after I attended the Centre LSD's training on "Youths Can Lead." I learnt a lot about politics, youths involvement and how youths can redefine politics and

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change the narratives in Bayelsa State. Charity, they say, begins at home. My first step was to start with my parents and brothers. I educated them on how important it is to get involved in politics and taught them a few things from what I learnt from the capacity building. I am happy because as a result of the training I got from centre LSD, I was able to convince my family to get involved in politics and they got their PVCs and voted for the first time during the 2019 general elections.

I was not interested in politics until after the training from Centre LSD. After the workshop, I participated in a contest in the union election for the position of Secretary Association of Bayelsa State Indigenes in Federal Medical Centre Bayelsa but lost. I went a step further and became a member of the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE). At the training, I was taught that I needed to have a grassroot presence before I can contest and now, I organise a grassroot football campaign to increase my popularity.

Now I am not just the only one interested in politics in my family, my brothers have also become interested too. Today, I can now speak publicly without any stage fright. As a matter of fact, one of my brothers was the campaign protocol coordinator of the PDP gubernatorial flag bearer in the 2019 general elections. To add to this, I now have my personal company registered with the cooperate affairs commision named; El Marracana Resources, which is into ICT/CCTV and fire alarm installations/product management.

All these were as a result of Centre LSD training workshop.

Ede Noel

15. How I became involved in politics

Politics to me before the Centre LSD's training was one evil venture. But after the training, I realised that it is for service and to change the narrative, so I became involved in it.

Generally, because of the way politics is played in this part of the world, I and other youths were not involved in political activities. The belief then was that politics is a dirty game and it is for liars and those who are fetish.

However, after the Centre LSD's Youths Can Lead training in 2018, it gave me a different orientation about what politics is about. I learnt that it was strictly for service and that leaders identify needs and solve them. So, I started convincing my fellow youths who had the same belief with me prior to the training.

Today, several people through me have identified with one political party or the other and one of them contested as a Councillor Ward 9, Nembe LGA. All thanks to Centre LSD and Ford Foundation.

Laderi Wanaemi

16. From political apathy to a Presiding Officer

Centre LSD's training ousted my apathy for politics and flamed the spirit of patriotism in me.

Right from the onset, I have detested politics, especially in Nigeria because of its bloody and

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violent nature. These, however, did not reflect the interest and choices of the people/masses involved. The majority of youths involved in politics were always short-changed due to the system of godfatherism and monetization of the process. As a result, I was not ready to venture into such dangerous and bloodletting terrain.

24th March 2018, I was sent the link to register online for the Centre LSD training through the NGO I work with. The 3-day training was a total overhauling of my belief and disposition about politics and politicians. At the training, we were enlightened by numerous speakers including Godson Jim Dorgu, Otive Igbuzor, Monday Osasah and a lot of others who spoke on campaigning and finance, confidence and communication, strategy and planning, etc. The topic that influenced me most was that on “youths as a major influencer in the political process.” This melted my apathy for politics and flamed my spirit of patriotism. Political apathy, because of the reoccurring violence had previously eaten away my interest in any political activity, but due to the training from Centre LSD in 2018 on political inclusiveness, confidence and the need for youths to participate in elections, I gathered confidence to participate in the 2019 general elections.

After the Centre LSD's training, I became an advocate of good governance, free and fair election and youth participation in electoral processes. For the first time in my life, I participated in the general elections in 2019 in Ogun State as a Presiding Officer in ward six, unit 11 Obafemi-Owode LGA. I became a promoter of a non-violent election in Nembe LGA, through door to door campaign under MacJim Foundation with support from INEC. We went around the Local Government appealing to the residents to be peaceful in their involvement in the voting process and follow the due procedures for voting and not to sell their votes. Consequently, the Nembe elections were peaceful and generally accepted.

I have also ventured into animal husbandry (goat rearing) and intend to expand. My goat farm has about 15 goats located at Ogboloma in Yenagoa

I am an emerging ambassador of youths participation in politics, all thanks to Centre LSD and Ford Foundation.

MAC-DONALD TARIBO JIM-DORGU

17. My self-confidence improved

We have a major problem in Gbarantoru community, and this is the fact that the youths over there are not very educated or enlightened. This has resulted to several of them being idle. And you know the saying that “an idle hand is the devil's workshop.” The result of this idleness is that many of them get involved in cultism, creating nuisance in the community. You see as a young lady, there's just little I can do to influence them, except you are above their level or more enlightened.

I was continuously in search of knowledge until I heard about a proposed youths training in Bayelsa. This caught my interest and I applied. Miraculously, I was invited to participate in the 3-day training. I learnt a lot from this training. After it, I decided to put the knowledge I acquired in the training to enlighten the youths in my community, through one-on-one

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interaction, on how they can be more useful with their lives than being cultists.

Through this training, I have become more enlightened and I have become very active in my community and grassroot politics. Today, I am now a women leader in an organisation called Digifa's Heritage Vanguard Organisation. And the good news is, I voted for the first time in the 2019 general elections.

I am now confident of myself and very proud of Centre LSD for this transformation.

Tara James

18. How I became active in politics and contested as a councillor for my ward in Sagbama LGA

The general understanding of politics in Bayelsa State is centered on godfatherism and favouritism. I shared in that perception as a youth. I never thought young people had a place in the workings of politics. As a result, I was not in any party and was not contesting nor was I supporting anyone. My lack of interest in politics was also fuelled by vote buying, the overbearance of many party leaders, etc. But all that mindset changed after the Centre LSD leadership training.

In 2018, I attended the Centre LSD's training, and this exposed my responsibility in changing the flawed electoral system in my constituency and my state. Knowing my vote will count, also aided my impetus to change my perception, making me more active. First, I set out to identify the issues responsible for political apathy in my community. Having made my findings, I progressed to register with a political party to better reach out to more youths, who see politics from the view of the old narratives in political parties.

Certainly, I didn't only change my thinking but that of my immediate environment, as I was able to educate young determined youths to see the advantages of participating in politics. Today, I partner with Power Card Campaign under the Youth Arise Initiative advocating for youth inclusiveness in politics to push the frontiers of educating youths on political processes and participation. After Understanding my place in politics from the training, I consulted renowned grassroot politicians, got registered with a political party, formed a political support base which comprised of previously apolitical youths who understood the change message I tabled. I thereafter moved to contest for councillor in ward 5, Sagbama LGA, but due to the internal politics at play, I lost in the process.

Today I have successfully registered my media company, Strategic African Media. All thanks to Centre LSD and Ford Foundation.

Tamaradoubka Benjamin

19. How I overcame my political fears

Centre LSD has built my confidence and given me the courage to pursue my political dreams and aspirations.

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Back in my days in the university, I had interest in going into circular politics, but I did not know how to go about it. Shortly after leaving school and coming back home, I realised that majority of the youths in my environment and Bayelsa state at large were moving around with politicians. These politicians were also using them as official thugs and arm bearers. I said to myself, "I will not engage in such practices". I had a vision and dream to be a better leader, so I decided to take some vital steps. And one of the most meaningful steps I took was participating in the Centre LSD's training on youths can lead.

Although I have been a Party Chairman of PPA since 2014, I must admit that after the training, I was unstoppable. I contested in the National Assembly election (Bayelsa West) in February 2019. Although I didn't win, I became more popular. Now, I am sensitising every youth I come across to aspire for greatness and stop being thugs to politicians, so that the marginalization done by other politicians against the youths will stop or be reduced in our time.

More youths are now embracing education and developing interest in productive ventures. Most of the youths in my vicinity are now participating in politics at better levels rather than working as thugs or alms bearer for politicians. I may not say we have achieved 100% of our goals, but we are wiser today than yesterday. Now, those who are looking up to me as a youth leader are also emulating some of the things I do, because I have been trained by Centre LSD to be a good, accountable, humble and dedicated youth leader. I shall continue to spread the good news.

All thanks to Centre LSD and Ford Foundation.

Alexander Peretu

20. Centre LSD gave me the scaffold to begin my campaign for female inclusion and participation in politics in Bayelsa State.

Politics they say is not for the faint-hearted or for the weak. Unfortunately, the first on the list of this categorization are women. For many years, one of the major problems in my community was that women are not allowed to participate in politics and are always set aside for one or two reasons. And this was largely why youths of my age do not partake in politics. Our only participation was to join in mobilisation and campaign for a chosen aspirant. After the elections, they give money to women/females to share and that is all, until another election period. I wasn't satisfied with this status quo. I wanted real participation in politics and not the type I saw in my community.

As fate would have it, Centre LSD training came my way, and this became my scaffold for my campaign for female participation in the political process in my community. After the training, I had the passion of initiating and ensuring that female participation in the political arena in my community is given top priority. My first step was a visit to my KOLGA chairman, sir Dengiyie Ubariga to talk to him about this problem, that has become a burden. I also used the opportunity to intimate him about my plans to campaign for female inclusion in elective and appointive position in the community. After meeting with the chairman and

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chiefs in council, the chairman agreed and approved that women/females be allowed to participate in politics. He volunteered to groom them on how to become successful politicians. He added that politics is not bloody, and the chief council also approved the proposal, so I am now a leader of KOLGA Babes. It is a campaign group for the past gubernatorial candidates of the 2019 elections.

To further drive this campaign, I have formed a campaign group of about 30 persons, who have similar thinking about women and youth's participation in politics. We will not relent until we see female inclusion in politics.

Thank you, Centre LSD and Ford Foundation for this opportunity

John Beatrice

21. I voted for the first time in the 2019 general elections.

I was able to go out and vote for the first time in my life after I attended the Centre LSD's training.

I was always scared of voting. Before now, I saw voting as a battle ground. During election, I seldom leave my house for any reason. I used to say, "I cannot come and die for people who don't even know I exist." My fear disappeared after I attended the Centre LSD's training.

At the 3-day training, I learnt a lot and some of these were that election is not a battle like I have always thought. From that training, I got the knowledge I needed to enlighten people about voting. Today, I can now exercise my franchise and I can discuss politics like a civic duty to my country.

I also registered and became a card-carrying member of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), established a business called Toruba's Ventures, majored in architectural practice and consultancy, building construction works, sales/supply and distribution of building materials and general contracts.

Centre LSD has taught me that voting is not a battlefield as I saw it before. I now have a steady source of income.

I want to thank Centre LSD for this great programme.

Toruba Inibio

22. I became a better leader

To become a leader is not easy in my LGA because the people are not united. They believe in violence against one another. Unfortunately, what is practiced in my LGA is a single political party system.

In 2018, I attended the Centre LSD Capacity building tagged "Youths Can Lead". It was 3-day of explosive teachings and impartation. Centre LSD taught me that as a leader, my duty is to identify problems in my area, and proffer solutions. I took a bold step and resolved the problem in my LGA, Brass. I paid a courtesy visit to the youths, women, elders and my paramount ruler in my LGA, Brass. We had a meeting with the paramount rulers, community chiefs, youths, women and elders and I told them of the need to allow everyone join any political party they desire. I educated them of the need to practice multi-party

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system for peace to reign in the communities This became a resolve at that meeting, and this led to great peace in the LGA.

As a result of this, I became a peace ambassador, and a safety officer in my LGA, Brass. Currently i'm a member of Bayelsa State Oil and Gas Association. Thank you, Centre LSD for helping me restore peace to my LGA.

Daniel Martins

23. Centre LSD Improved my political leadership skills

The challenges of leadership were enormous and was becoming a strain on my organisation. As the Director General of an NGO, I found out that several of my staff were not comfortable with my leadership style. This has led to some cases of insubordination and rebelling. I must say before the Centre LSD's training, I encountered so many headaches as a result of the different views and understanding about my style. Some of them constantly look for how to thwart my effort. I was continuously looking for ways to curtail their behavior for the progress of the organisation and our activities.

When I encountered Centre LSD at the Youth Can Lead training, I realised that I have been bossy and that is not the characteristics of a good leader. Being the Director General of my organisation, I unilaterally prescribe the template of activities, give directions and often, close out other peoples' opinion. But after the training, using the lessons learnt from Centre LSD's training, I changed my leadership style and I began to make the efforts to as much as possible carry every member of the organisation along. I no longer command my staff like a boss. I am now a changed leader. Majority of my staff members have confessed about my changed attitude. Along the line, I have also changed some policies to reflect this change. Some of these policies are those bothering on the restriction of staff members from financial sources, participatory approach, etc. I ensured sources of funds are transparent. Until now, these have become policies in the organisation.

Thank you, Centre LSD for bringing a change to my organisation and giving me a voice.

Wuku Wilson

24. I became a mobiliser at my ward level

I didn't know how to go about secular politics before the Centre LSD programme. I just watched others do their things. I never thought I would one day be a politician. But Centre LSD came my way and made me a full-blown politician and made me overcome that challenge.

I attended the Centre LSD training for 3 days and with the zeal from there, I began a sensitisation tour to the youths in my community. The message was simple, no ballot box

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snatching, no vote buying, and election is not war. As a result of these sensitisations, my party nominated me as a party agent in my polling unit, where I monitored and sorted votes after the election. I must say there was relative peace all through the election process due to my presensitisation efforts. Today, I am always contacted due to the peace project initiated during elections in my village. I am becoming a major stakeholder in my community politics.

I have totally overcome my fear and naivety about election and how to participate and be an active player. I am now seen as a peace ambassador in my community, all thanks to Centre LSD and Ford Foundation.

ELEVE DARLINGTON

25. I became an ambassador for my community's inclusion in political process.

I am a young man who is passionate about the development of my community, Nembe Ogbolomaibiri in Nembe LGA in Bayelsa State. For many years, my community has a political problem of vote buying and gender discrimination. Women or female participation in politics was almost like a taboo. We were part of those people who thought the place of a woman is not politics. For years, we lived with this ideology.

But this changed after my attendance of the Centre LSD's training on "Youths Can Lead", which took place in April 2018. After the training, I decided that the trend of excluding youths and females from the political process must stop. I also wanted to see that the 2019 elections were peaceful in my community. Immediately after the training, I organised a seminar to educate the youths and women not to sell their permanent voters' card (PVC) and that selling their PVCs meant selling their destiny. Again, I told them that women can also hold political offices, therefore women should be given the opportunity to contest, which they did agree.

After then, I met the leaders in my community and enquired about their meeting days and took permission to be part of the next one. On the next meeting day in October 2019 in Nembe City Hall, I attended the meetings and used that medium to sensitise them of the need for every community member to collect their PVC's and for those who have not registered for their PVC's to do so. I went ahead and I also applied the use of community radio's/community system (I am like the modern day town crier in my community) to disseminate information about the need to avoid violence with the slogan "VOTE NOT FIGHT", "ELECTION NO BE WAR," "LIFE HAS NO DUPLICATE."

After my intervention, the youths and women started participating in the election, by first collecting their PVCs. Again, vote buying was drastically reduced. Furthermore, youths and women who are not card-carrying members of a political party decided to vote for candidates and not the party as it was before, which reduced violence in some quarters. I am glad that in my community, there was massive participation and vote buying was drastically reduced in the 2019 general elections.

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Thank you, Centre LSD for making me an ambassador of peace.

MONDAY AYEBA NOA

How I came into politics through Centre LSD's teachings

I never saw politics as a dirty game like a lot of youths, mine was that I was very naïve and not knowledgeable on the steps to take. Although I had the dream and desire to actively participate in politics, I could say, I didn't know my left from my right. However, in 2018, I ventured into politics when Centre LSD told me everything I needed to know about politics. In 2018, I was invited by Centre LSD to participate in a 3-day training tagged "Youths Can Lead." I was told that the training was for youths who wanted to participate in politics. My joy knew no bound. Infact, it was pure ecstasy. 'I told myself Alfred, seize this opportunity'. For those 3 days I listened, took notes and thereafter made my decision to contest in the 2019 election. After the training, I took my nomination form, declared my intention to run, campaigned like I was taught at the Centre LSD's training and I contested, but unfortunately, I did not win.

Although I did not win in this first attempt. I am happy that I have it in my CV. I believe that in the next attempt, I will win, God willing.

All thanks to Centre LSD and Ford Foundation for the giant stride.

Hon. Bokolo

26. Working my way to success

Without Centre LSD's training and support, I would have been a shadow of myself. Moving from one place to another begging for help, but now I am an employer of labour and the campaign manager in my party.

I am a youth trying to fend for myself in the face of lack of employment and with no help in sight. However, I was a shy and the rude type, confusing right? I was stubborn but could not stand and address my peers or any crowd at that. Although I am schooled, I am not yet where I want to be academically. I have never believed in myself and facing my fears was a problem. You see, with all these challenges, participating in any election was not on my scale of preference.

When I got the mail that I have been shortlisted to attend the Centre LSD's 3-day training on "Youths Can Lead" and that the training was for youths interested in politics, I reluctantly accepted. First because, I was not keen about joining politics and second because I thought it was a political gathering for youth empowerment (sharing money) to buy the votes of the youths in Bayelsa. But after the training, I realised that they had given me more than money. Centre LSD training gave me my self-confidence, I left the training very bold.

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Part of what I learnt was the need for youths to take investments and planning seriously. I realised I had no definite plan that I was pursuing for my life. I was also taught of the importance of associating myself with people and actively participating in elections within and outside the state. I must confess, after the training my lost self-confidence returned and now, I can stand out among my peers and friends. I became the CEO of my own boutique, a campaign coordinator and a rally manager due to my confidence. For the first time ever, I voted in the 2019 general elections. Now I have been employed as an Aviation Safety Officer (ARFFS), all thanks to Centre LSD and Ford Foundation for showcasing me.

Jasmine Samayin

27. My Sensitisation messages made me relevant in Bayelsa State political space

Centre LSD completely changed my orientation about the political space in my state. First, I became highly interested and participated fully in politics.

Before the Centre LSD's training, I had no interest in politics and I had no interest in contesting for any elective position. Although I was very active in my political party as the Chairman of my ward, Southern Ijaw Ward 4, I have never contested as a candidate in a party.

In 2018, Centre LSD came my way and turned my life around. In the 3-day meeting, I learnt how to design a campaign message and what should constitute my campaign messages. Centre LSD taught me to campaign on what the people (electorates) need and not what I as an aspirant/candidate feel is best for them. Centre LSD has equally taught me to listen more because in listening, you learn more about a problem and the best strategic way to solve it.

These became the thrust of my message throughout my sensitisation programme during the 2019 general elections. This brought me to lime light and made me relevant in the political space in Bayelsa. In addition, with the knowledge on finance and investment received from Centre LSD, I am now an owner of a plantain plantation and vegetable farm. I am also into fish farming, courtesy of all the lessons learnt from the Centre LSD.

I really thank Centre LSD for the positive shift in my life.

Pedro Ebi Peter

28. My journey into agro business as a youth

My journey into poultry farming has been eventful courtesy of CentreLSD's teaching and motivation.

I was just a curious youth searching for how to better my life, when I heard there was going to be a training for youths in Bayelsa, I decided to partake. These 3-day training laid the foundation and motivated me into becoming an agropreneur. We are all aware that as a country we depend on the importation of most poultry products and as a state, we depend on the importation of poultry products from outside the state, sometimes as far as from Ibadan.

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In the first quarter of 2018, I was shortlisted to attend a training organised by Centre LSD for youths interested in politics. The training was tagged “Youths Can Lead”. Although I was into politics before the training, I wanted to learn more, because I knew that no knowledge was a waste. I attended the 3-day training. I learnt a lot of lessons from this single training and one of it was that as aspiring leaders, we need to identify a gap and find a way to fill it. Instantly, I got the idea to establish a poultry farm. Therefore, after the training, I started a savings plan and made consultations with professionals who were into poultry business. I wanted to learn from their successes and failures.

On the 12th of October 2018 at Azikoro Town in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, I began the construction of the farmhouse. Been disciplined with the savings plan, I made orders for supply of birds and identified markets for them. Within a period of 3 months, I had sold N87,500 and had recouped my capital. I am growing in the business and I know I will succeed. We are sure making progress as we prepare for the December sales and hopefully restock the farm by January 2020.

Thank you, Centre LSD, for making me financially independent.

Edwin Eseimokumoh

29. The overwhelming power of boldness and self confidence

Centre LSD helped me discovered how lack of boldness and self-confidence hindered my growth, politically, socially, financially and mentally.

I have always had issues with taking intelligent steps towards contributing meaningfully when and where necessary in my immediate environment, family, political groups and community. But this changed when my path crossed with Centre LSD. I was one of the youths who were lucky to be trained by Centre LSD in the “Youths Can Lead” capacity building training in Bayelsa State. After the training, I began to experience changes in my daily life, and this has facilitated my growth. I realised that there is power in being bold and self-confident. The ability to take risks were no longer my problems.

As a result of my boldness, I became recognised. Unknown to me, such recognition brought about other recommendations which enabled me benefit both financially and politically in my community and constituency. My community recommended me and I was given some amount of money to support my school fees by the members representing my constituency. Because of it, I became the Deputy Speaker of the SUG Federal University Otuoke. I also contested for the position of Treasurer Otuoke Youth Council in my community and won.

Ateke Ruth

30. Centre LSD made me an employer of labour

I Okuro Anita want to thank Centre LSD, for all they have done and the positive impact in my life.

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Before the Centre LSD'S training, I was an on-looker when it comes to politics. I do not participate, and I am not in any party. But all that changed after the training and during the past general elections, I participated as a party agent. In addition, Centre LSD has taught me how to explore opportunities and this I have applied business wise. Now I am a business owner and I can proudly call myself an entrepreneur. I am now a beautician, a skincare therapist and a specialist in the production of skincare products of various categories. I have registered my business name with the CAC as Ani-Dazzle Enterprise. I am going global.

A very big thank you to Centre LSD.

Okuro Anita

31. I became a good leader, a counsellor.

I had the fear of going to communicate my ideas and views on leadership; advocacy for child right, violation and the campaign against child, drugs, sexual abuse, cultism, crime and criminality.

But after the Centre LSD's training, I traded my timidity for boldness. Since the training, I have been going from home to home to discuss with parents and teenagers on how to prevent these abuses. For the parents, when possible we discuss the problems and solutions, how best they as parents can raise their children and help them to overcome addictions, give them security from all forms of abuse and show them love and contribute in helping them stay away from practicing cultism.

These parents have been able to establish a relationship with their children. This has enabled them to share their worries, fears, challenges with their parents. Also, they have been able to show the children some good levels of love. In this, Centre LSD gave me a platform that enabled me to plan, research, prepare and better handle the situation. Now, I have concluded the plan for the establishment of an NGO. It is currently undergoing registration process.

Also, I have been able to set up my personal and private business, SMILES DA REPUBLIC. We are into Shawarma, barbecue, pizza and smoothie. I am also the State Secretary of the Progressive People's Alliance (PPA), Bayelsa State Chapter.

All thanks to Centre LSD for transforming an orphan like me and making me instrumental to the lives of young adolescences. Now I can provide the platform for them to enjoy the parental love I missed, growing up.

Meredith Ozori

32. Centre LSD made me venture into politics

Before I start telling my story, I wish to use this medium to say a big thank you to Centre LSD

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for this opportunity to be educated as an oncoming politician. Before my training in Centre LSD, I have had interest in politics, and I was into it fully. From 2015 to 2016, I was involved in student politics, where I contested for some leadership positions in my faculty. I lost some and I won some.

After my university days, I developed interest in venturing into secular politics. That is where I joined the Progressive People's Alliance and I rose to the position of the youth leader of the party in Bayelsa State.

In April 2018, I was nominated by my party to attend the Youths Can lead training in Yenagoa. After the 3-day training, I developed more confidence in myself and learnt new things about being a leader. One of the things I learnt was to be prepared and to be sincere in my dealings. I also participated in electoral processes like party agent at the LG level, and constituency agent. I created a social media group called "Vanguard friends in politics and business," where I share daily political news and updates to enlighten group members. At present, the group has over 3000 members.

I want to say thank you to Centre LSD for educating me and giving me the confidence to achieve all I have achieve in this short period.

Boma John (Proxy name)

33. Centre LSD gave me a new outlook on Life

I have always loved to influence change in my environment. It troubles me a great deal to see oil spills unremedied and youths killed for cult activities. I was worried about the problems we faced while growing up, where militancy and sea piracy was like a monster that is insurmountable. After my NYSC, I volunteered for FHI360 and German Leprosy and Tuberculosis Relief Association (GLRA). These programmes were funded by international donors, with the aim of increasing the uptake of tuberculosis services, in hard to reach areas of Bayelsa State. It was also to strengthen HIV/ AIDS services in Bayelsa State. I volunteered because I wanted to create a difference and help my people, but this resolve became stronger and clearer when I met Centre LSD.

The Centre LSD training taught me a lot about politics. I suddenly realised that one of the fastest means of achieving change is with politics. Prior to my training with Centre LSD, I was partially involved in political party activities. After the training, my dedication increased and I contested for the first time and for a university position, as the Assistant Secretary of Bayelsa West Senatorial District. Fortunately, I won. I also contested for the Association of Safety and Security Professionals of Nigeria Bayelsa State, the apex security/health association with members for safety and environmental office, first aiders, fire fighters and security officials with membership body of over 1800 members.

Thanks to the Centre LSD's training, I set up a team called Community Engagement Group, we go to communities in Yenagoa to sensitise and share with them the lessons and materials provided by Centre LSD. I wouldn't be contesting for any position if not for Centre LSD.

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Now, I see politics differently. I now have a larger followership and can easily access stakeholders that are needed to effect change.

Centre LSD has given me a new outlook on life, and I am aspiring to go for more positions that will enable me to solve communal, environmental, health and other social problems.

Egbe Gibson

34. Centre LSD'S training ignited my passion which translated the establishment of Old People's Home In Bayelsa State.

After Centre LSD fired up my passion at their “Youths Can Lead” training, I summoned up courage and made my dream a reality. This training led to the birth of what was fired up by the training, I was able to establish a home called Dok-Ran Old People's Home.

I have been a passionate woman right from my days as a youth. I was passionate about leadership, politics and more passionate about the well-being of senior citizens in Nigeria and Bayelsa in particular. Although I have been quite concerned about their social, emotional and psychological well-being and was nursing the idea of an elderly people's home, I never had the courage to actualise this dream.

In 2018, I heard of a training for youths who were interested in politics. I told myself “although I am above the age bracket required for the training, I will try my luck”. So, I applied for the training. As God would have it, I got a call from Centre LSD that I have been shortlisted and would be participating in the “Youths Can Lead” training in Bayelsa State. Although, I didn't quite know what to expect, I was open minded and willing to learn. Little did I know, the meeting was going to be the beginning of great strides for me.

At the training, I learnt a lot of things, from the importance of youths' inclusion in politics, to the steps that should be taken for contesting, how to raise finance for elections, how to draft outstanding manifestos, etc. One of the things that stood out for me in that training was that I was part of the Nigerian problem by not voting. After the training, I took the first step and joined/registered in one of the 2 major political parties in Nigeria, registered with INEC, collected my voter's card and voted in the 2019 general elections. I didn't stop there, I went to my church to create awareness on how to register for voting, where to register, how to collect the voter's card, how to vote and where to vote. As a result, many who were ignorant before then, were able to perform their Civic right. They picked interest in politics and voted in their own polling units in the 2019 general elections.

During the 3-day training, I had time to reflect, learn new skills, plan and strategized on how to make my dream of establishing the old people's home a reality. After Centre LSD training I was motivated, and I picked up the challenge to start this home even at a small level. In 2019, I established a home called Dok-Ran Old People's Home. Although it is not yet registered, it is located at Chief Tekebu Dokari's compound popularly known as Teks. “By the grace of God, as I am speaking with you now, I am rendering home services at small scale bases.” These services include treatment of all kinds, drugs administration, bathing, feeding and changing of pampers/cleaning.

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Thank you Centre LSD, for helping me take the first step.

Dokari Ranita

35. I found my strength, boldness and growth

Centre LSD's training has brought out the strength and boldness in me.

Before the training, I was not a very active youth politically. Although I often register to vote, I never really considered being actively involved in politics. But in 2018, I attended Centre LSD's capacity building for youths interested in politics. At the training, we were taught a lot of things. One of which was that as aspiring youths, we must be active in our various political parties. After this training, I made up my mind to join a political party.

Today, I have become politically involved in grassroots politics. I am presently one of the youths representing my family at the community level. I am working on my political career and I know the sky is my starting point.

All thanks to Centre LSD for the boldness and participate to venture into politics.

Diffa Ebido

36. Centre LSD's training enhanced my capacity and positioned me for a state appointment

Centre LSD built my capacity and this positioned me for an appointment as a Special Assistant on Political Matters in Bayelsa State.

Although I was into politics before I attended the Centre LSD's "Youths Can Lead" capacity building, I was not popular or known; not in my party or my community. I wanted to make a head way in politics but did not know how.

But in 2018, all that changed when I was shortlisted for the Centre LSD's Youths Can Lead capacity building, for youths who were interested in politics in Bayelsa State. I attended the 3-day training and became emboldened politically. After the training, I decided to participate actively in all party activities. This made me more popular politically. I was so diligent with my responsibilities and task at party level and this paid off. This paved way for the opportunity to serve as a Special Assistant on Political Matters to Hon. Maculay Dokori. He was a House of Assembly aspirant in the 2019 general elections, under the platform of All Progressive congress (APC) in Ogbia Constituency 1. Within that same period, I was assigned to work as an Assistant Secretary/Public Relation Officer to a campaign team in my constituency in the 2019 general elections.

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I have become relevant politically. I am now an active member of my party. Thank you, Centre LSD for the knowledge you have impacted in me through the programme.

Okala Igwe

37. I broke the jinx

After my training with Centre LSD tagged “Youths Can Lead,” I became enlightened about politics; my negativity about politics and politicians came to an end.

My perception and idea of politics was like several of the young people of my age. It was a dirty game and full of so much deceits and rancor. I was not a very active player in the political arena. But all this changed when I met Centre LSD.

In 2018, I was shortlisted as one of the participants of the capacity building for youths interested in politics. I listened to all the lectures with keen interest. I must say, it was 3-days of complete overhauling of my political belief system. After the training, I became a changed person. My first step after then was to first register to vote in the 2019 elections. I didn't want to remain indifferent. I wanted to have a say on who should lead us in the state. That was the first time I registered for voter's card and acquired one. Ironically, 2019 was also the first time I took part in the presidential election and worked as a POI. During the November 16th, 2019 gubernatorial elections in Bayelsa State, with the confidence I had from Centre LSD training I boldly came out and voted.

In 2019, I broke the jinx. I registered to vote for the first time and voted for the first time in my life. All thanks to Centre LSD for this great transformation.

TariPraya Dakolo

38. The birth of a paradigm shift in my life

With Centre LSD's training, I challenged the status quo in the 2019 general election.

An insight into the emotional, psychological, economical, physical and environmental damage that has flooded the Nigerian society, birthed a paradigm shift in my life which eventually led to my involvement in politics in 2019. My venturing into the Nigerian politics that led to my contesting for the State House of Assembly election in my constituency was divine and really helped in motivating the youths to standup and actively participate in the governance of our dear nation. I got involved in politics by a divine revelation, which began precisely on the 16th of March, 2017. I knew I was supposed to be different and do things differently, if I must make a difference in the society.

Prior to my exposure to the Centre LSD, I had little knowledge of politics and I detested politics as well. But the various happenings in my state and country motivated me to take the bold step. I literally struggled and begged friends, family and well-wishers to raise money for my nomination and interest form. Going forward the process of contesting for the

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party candidacy was another hurdle I had to face, as I had to start lobbying for support from party members to help me emerge victoriously in the primaries. I got to know about Centre LSD after a leadership competition I was involved in 2018. My pastor introduced me to the Centre LSD platform, where I was taught and prepared for the just concluded 2019 general elections.

After the Centre LSD'S training, I bought a nomination and interest form from the Young Progressive Party (YPP) on the 16th of September, 2018 and went forward to contest for the primaries on the 6th of October, 2018. By the special grace of God, I emerged victorious allowing me to contest and represent the party as its flag bearer for the 2019 State House of Assembly elections. After campaigning extensively, I came out fifth position in the state election. All these were totally new to me as a novice in the game of politics, but with the training from Centre LSD, which I received prior to the primaries and elections, I was able to scale through. I faced different forms of treats on my life and associates. Many said I was too young to run for office since I was only 25 years old at the time. I faced pressure from family and friends to step down for the candidate of the ruling party and support him in a bid to gain financial benefits and later appointments. I got threats from powerful people in the state, telling me to step down. I got the big break a month to the elections, when I was able to secure some funds to kick start my campaign fully. I was able to visit two communities out of the three that made up my constituency, After that, I faced the challenge of threats to my party members and adhoc staff, some were beaten and injured on the day of election while trying to cast their votes and exercise their civic responsibility.

I witnessed thuggery, snatching of ballot boxes and vote buying on the day of the elections. I noticed that people loved me and wanted me to represent them and wanted me to do what other politicians from bigger parties were doing (vote buying, thuggery and snatching of ballot boxes). In all, the major challenge I faced was that of funding of my campaign from one location to another. Because of the training I received from Centre LSD, I was able to avoid political jobbers and entrepreneurs who wanted to invest in me at all cost. Some of them made things very difficult for me, but to the glory of God, I overcame all the hurdles. It took me months to finally recover from the shock and trauma I faced during and after the elections. Now I can say I have come to finally understand why I got involved in Nigeria politics and the role to play going forward. I have come to understand that being a Nigerian with integrity pays, even if it doesn't give you instant gratification. We really do not need new leaders in Nigeria, but leaders with a new set of value system, from the ones that created the problem we are in today as a nation.

After the election I had to deliberately invest in myself knowing what was ahead of me. I enrolled at the "Change Agents Academy," an initiative of Apostles in the marketplace (AiMP) on graduation, I launched my foundation and carried out my change project which was a prerequisite for graduation. The name of the foundation is "Pad the slums Foundation" with the mission of correcting the abnormalities in the female reproductive health by providing menstrual education, hygiene awareness, sanitary kits for teenage girls

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and women living in the slums across Africa. Furthermore, I was able to launch the “Franklin Kemebimo Foundation” A non-profit social enterprise that aims to provide access to education to the less privileged and extremely needy in the society. Later, I went on to enroll at the “School of Government and Politics (SOGP) Abuja, I also established “Africa Rescue Mission”, a civil society organisation positioned to project policies that will advance and develop the African continent.

Also, business wise, I am a co-founder of a few start-ups registered with the Corporate affairs Commission that provide services ranging from website development, graphic designs, protocol and ushering services, catering services, event management and general contracting. The names of the company are “Auro Nig Ltd, Kejof Integrated Services”.

I have learnt and benefited so much from the training I received from Centre LSD. I know that come 2023, the dream of having transformational leaders across the various legislative organs would not be a mirage, if I apply all I have learnt and also transfer the knowledge to other aspiring leaders.

I say a big thank you to Centre LSD and God bless you.

Franklin Favourankie



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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.

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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

Centre LSD, Raising Change Agents in Bayelsa State Through Her Youths Can Lead Project, Funded by Ford Foundation

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.

ORGANS OF CENTRE LSD

International Advisory Council
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Founding Executive Director

Dr. Otive Igbuzor

Headquarters:

Suites 27, Tolse Plaza,
4, Franca Afegbua Crescent,
Formerly Lawan Gwadabe Crescent,
Off Jereton Mariere Road,
After Apo Legislative Quarters,
Apo, P. O. Box 9661, Garki, Abuja Nigeria.
Website: www.centrelsd.org
E-mail: info@centrelsd.org
Tel: +23498703178

**Centre LSD, Raising Change Agents in Bayelsa State Through Her
Youths Can Lead Project, Funded by Ford Foundation**

Niger Delta Office:

Odeyovwi Villa
Emonu Orogun, Ughelli, Delta State.

Northern Regional Office:

Kebbi Office: No 4, Off Muhammed Adamu Aliero Road,
Behind Bahamas Food Restaurant,
Birnin Kebbi, Kebbi State.

Yola Office: Suite 220-221 Police Shop Wasiri Street,
Opposite Murtala Mahammad College,
Jimeta, Yola-Adamawa State.

Website: www.centrelsd.org

Email: info@centrelsd.org

Facebook: @centrelsd

Twitter: @centrelsd

Tel: +234(0)8122556434



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