

**PRESS**

15 inspiring Young Leaders to debate inequalities at the European Development Days

**Fifteen Young Leaders have just been
selected by the European Commission.
They will make their voices heard
at the European Development Days.**

The European Commission has just announced the names of the fifteen inspiring young people from around the world who will enrich the debates at the 2019 European Development Days (EDD). These Young Leaders, aged between 21 and 26, have been chosen from among 404 applicants from 99 countries for their exceptional skills, expertise and active contributions to find solutions to development issues. They will share their vision on how to address inequalities to build a world which leaves no one behind, the main topic of this year's edition of the EDD.

The Young Leaders Programme aims to ensure that young people have their say on the issues spotlighted each year. The Young Leaders will be able to share their views and experiences with heads of state, human rights activists, business and industry leaders, policymakers, entrepreneurs, representatives from non-governmental organisations and academics during the forum's high-level panels.

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Introducing EDD 2019's Young Leaders

This year's Young Leaders come from a wide range of countries: Nigeria, the Philippines, Brazil, Zambia, Eswatini, Ghana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Benin, Malawi and Peru.



Sandra Ajaja
Nigeria, 23 years old

INVESTMENT AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Sandra is the founder of FemPower Africa, a social enterprise teaching women in Nigeria and Africa about technology, leadership and entrepreneurship. With over 2,000 members and 30 volunteers, FemPower Africa has facilitated the creation of 52 women-owned businesses, trained over 2,000 people in three countries, and taught 200 people Google Digital skills. Sandra worked for a year and a half for an organisation studying and investing in start-ups/entrepreneurs (for local and global firms seeking expansion in Africa). She takes an interest in ecosystems for women techpreneurs/developers/designers and advocates. She has a Bachelor's degree in engineering from the University of Agriculture in Makurdi.



Lourence Balatbat
Philippines, 21 years old

SOCIAL PROTECTION AND THE EU SOCIAL MARKET MODEL

Lourence is currently the Project and Development Officer at Edukasyon.ph - Engadin Corporation. He manages the delivery of local, regional, and national advocacy projects and develops substantive impact evaluation reports. He is the founder and president of ASEAN Youth Philippines, a not-for-profit organisation in sustainable development representing over 15,000 young Filipinos. Lourence has also held leadership positions in several development organisations, through which he has spearheaded 52 projects, actively engaging around 60,000 young people. Lourence is pushing the idea that poverty alleviation through tailored social protection programmes must always be supplemented by state-initiated labour market integration if governments want to reduce income inequality. Lourence is currently pursuing an MA in political economy, international relations and development from the University of Asia and the Pacific.



Leticia Pinheiro Rizério Carmo
Brazil, 24 years old

TERRITORIAL INEQUALITIES

Leticia has an MA in urban planning, sustainable development and territorial systems and a BA in civil engineering. Currently, she is a Local Pathways Fellow at the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network Youth Projects, and is working on "The voices of Belo Horizonte's women: collectively building public spaces that are safe and inclusive for all". Leticia works on women's empowerment and the creation of public policies with a gender perspective in public places to enable women to engage and participate in political and economic decision-making processes. She was a youth representative to the national delegation at World Urban Forum 9 for implementation of the New Urban Agenda.



Inota Cheta
Zambia, 26 years old

INEQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Inota is the Co-Founder of 'She Entrepreneur', an NGO training women in financial literacy and entrepreneurship which has impacted 500 girls already. She has also worked with teenage mothers, helping them to enhance their skills and to identify and take up income opportunities. Inota was selected as a Mandela Washington Fellowship (Young African Leaders Initiative) in 2018 and as a global youth leader for the Restless Development agency, which saw her develop global campaigns seeking to hold leaders accountable for the promises they had made on meeting the SDGs. For Restless Development, a youth-led development agency, she spoke on a panel titled 'Innovators and Disruptors'. She holds an MSc in economy and finance.



Sephutile Mhlongo

Eswatini, 26 years old

TAXATION, PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, FINANCIAL FLOWS AND EQUITY

Sephutile currently works as an Analyst with CHAI Eswatini. CHAI is the Ministry of Health's development partner, acting as a technical advisor on health initiatives (introducing new drugs, prioritising the health service delivery benefits package, etc.). She is currently conducting research to be used by the Ministry of Health in advocating for system reform. Sephutile was previously a finance officer in budget and economic affairs at the Ministry of Finance of the Kingdom of Eswatini. She tracked and approved public expenditure for three government departments and ministries. She also assisted these departments and ministries in creating their annual budgets with a budget ceiling in place. Sephutile has a BA in social sciences.



Aaron Atimpe

Ghana, 24 years old

GENDER INEQUALITY

Aaron is a youth advocate for access to education, health and sexual reproductive rights, with a rural background. As part of his work in the Marie Stopes International Ghana Youth Advisory Board, he has been advocating to increase investment in youth sexual and reproductive health and rights across Ghana. In total, they trained close to 1,000 young advocates to become ambassadors for adolescent health and development with support from the United Nations Population Fund and UNICEF. Aaron holds a BA with a major in Geography and Rural Development and a minor in Political Science.



Louison Mbombo

Democratic Republic of Congo, 23 years old

EDUCATION AND HEALTH INEQUALITIES (HEALTH)

Louison is the Founder of the Mbombo Initiative Against Malaria (Solidariedade Na Mokili), a not-for-profit organisation that, in partnership with Google and Microsoft, implements data analytics and machine learning to advance Malaria prevention and research, raising money for treatment, providing health education to families and health professionals, and distributing mosquito nets. The initiative has reached over 10 million people since its creation in 2015. In 2017, Louison was rewarded by UNESCO at the Youth Citizen Entrepreneurship Competition for the best project to prevent childhood malaria death. Louison is a student in Medicine at the Federal University of Minas Gerais in Brazil.



Val Amiel Vestil

Philippines, 24 years old

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL INEQUALITIES

Val is the Executive Director and Founder of the Association of Young Environmental Journalists in the Philippines. Their flagship project is "Camp SEWI: Student's Environmental Writing Initiative", a youth-led capacity-building training workshop on environmental journalism and stewardship for university journalists all over Negros Oriental, Philippines. This project has trained over 50 young university journalists across 5 universities in the region. Val also helped change the university publication policy to include environmental topics in its editorial agenda. He has been named part of the 'Ten Accomplished Youth Organizations in the Philippines 2019' and '2nd Negros Young Heroes: Gawad Parangal sa Kabataan 2019'. Val has a Bachelor's Degree in Mass Communication.



Akosua Peprah

Ghana, 26 years old

EDUCATION AND HEALTH INEQUALITIES (EDUCATION)

Akosua is the Founder of the Mmaakunim Foundation, a social venture with the aim of educating, creating opportunities and making resources available to marginalized women in Ghana. Through this foundation, Akosua engages with peers and experts in underprivileged communities and works with government officials to influence policy to make education accessible and available to kids in rural Ghana. Akosua has launched the Happy Flow Project, providing access to sanitary well-being to 135 girls between the ages of 13 and 18 in Damongo in Northern Ghana. The initiative provides monthly sanitary materials and organizes workshops on sex education, leadership, health and nutrition, and hygiene. Akosua holds a BA in English and Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies from Ohio State University.



Inès Tatiana Hounjo

Benin, 25 years old

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE: MANAGING DIGITALIZATION AND TECHNOLOGY FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Inès is an African IT expert, currently interning at Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in coordination with the Ministry of Planning, giving technical support and capacity building for CSOs. Prior to that, she was an intern at Comtel Technologies. She has also participated in programmes to increase the digital capacities of young women and acts as a voluntary mentor for Women TechMakers. She wants to address access to digital tools and its barriers (financial means or education). Inès holds a BS in Computer Science from The Benin School of Applied Economics and Management (ENEAM).



Rejoice Namale

Malawi, 24 years old

REDUCING INEQUALITIES: A CATALYST FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH, POVERTY REDUCTION AND ENSURING THAT NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND

Rejoice is working on fostering youth/women participation in socio-economic and political decision-making processes in Malawi. She founded the Youth Arise Network to teach entrepreneurship skills and train over 120 youth in bricklaying, electrical installation, carpentry, woodwork, joinery and painting. She trained over 300 urban youth volunteers and reached over 1,000 youth in numerous speaking engagements focused on enhancing volunteerism, leadership skills and personal development. In Kenya, she successfully assisted in facilitating a Training of Trainers session on budgeting and social accountability with youth trainees and she mobilized over 600 women to participate in county budget planning processes. She holds a Bachelor in Communication and Cultural studies and a certificate in Youth Employment and Development.



Mwala Mooto

Zambia, 24 years old

INEQUALITIES, TRADE AND PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Mwala Mooto is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Mooto Cashew Suppliers Ltd, a social enterprise aimed at reforesting Zambia and addressing gender inequality by empowering women with perennial cashew trees that will supply them with food and an extra income. They have 50,000 cashew seedlings that will be ready for planting this year. Mwala's company has established a network of 100 women who they are training on Eco-inclusive entrepreneurship and will supply with cashew trees for planting. They have acquired 100 hectares of land where they intend to plant cashew trees this year. Mwala has spoken at Global Entrepreneurship Week and International Youth Day in 2018. Mwala is currently pursuing an MBA in Finance at the University of Zambia.



Carlo Angeles

Peru, 26 years old

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE OF INEQUALITIES IN MIDDLE INCOME COUNTRIES, TAILORING TOOLS AND PRIORITIES TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND INEQUALITY DYNAMICS OF THESE COUNTRIES

Carlo Angeles is an advocate for sustainable development. At 25, he was appointed National Director at the Organization of Youth of the Ministry of Education, becoming Peru's youngest senior government official. In this capacity, he designed Peru's first civil society participation and accountability mechanism for the Sustainable Development Goals. He has represented youth in various international development processes and served as a regional focal point for Latin America and the Caribbean at the United Nations Major Group of Children and Youth for the UN Habitat III process. Currently he serves as the Executive Director of Lab2030. In this capacity, he is leading a national discussion that represents over 500 USD million annual investment for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, by implementing Sustainable Procurement processes.



Yasmine Quirhrane

Italy/Morocco, 23 years old

REDUCING INEQUALITIES: A PRECONDITION FOR PEACEFUL, INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT SOCIETIES

Yasmine is the newly recognized "Young European of the Year 2019". She has interned at the Permanent mission of Morocco to the UN, and spent one year working with the United Network of Young Peace Builders in the Netherlands to implement UNSCR 2250. Prior to this, she was an intern at the National Human Rights Council of Morocco supporting CSO participation in COP22. Yasmine is an expert at the AU-EU Youth Cooperation Hub, where she works in the Peace & Security cluster. In this role, she wrote a proposal on the role for youth in tracking basic services in fragile contexts with accessible digital support to feed into peace processes. She worked with the European Youth Forum on the organisation of YO!Fest, gathering 8,000 youth and worked with the UN/EU, being selected several times as a youth representative. Yasmine obtained her Master in International Security, Geopolitics and Intelligence from the Italian Society for the International Organization.



Judicaelle Irakoze

Burundi, 24 years old

MOBILITY AND INEQUALITIES

Judicaelle is a feminist writer, social entrepreneur and refugee advocate highlighting the positive contributions of migrant people. As an immigrant in the US, she has worked on different projects focused on racial and gender equity in Maine where she organized the first conference to celebrate the contributions of immigrant women. She interned with UNHCR Uganda and has worked with young women refugees in the Nakivale refugee camp in Eastern Uganda on sexual and reproductive health. She raised funds for refugee children in Northern Kivu to go to school and launched a movement for immigrant youth to tell their stories through art and fashion. She also co-organized the Refugees Matter show in Rwanda.

Background - Addressing inequalities: building a world which leaves no one behind

The European Development Days (EDD) highlight Europe's commitment to building a sustainable and fairer world. The forum builds on the core belief that cooperation is key to achieving real change towards a poverty-free and sustainable world where everyone has the prospect of a decent life. An essential aim is thus to inspire the desire to work together in a spirit of true partnership through facilitating networking.

This year the EDD will take place on 18th and 19th June 2019 in Brussels and focus on promoting inclusiveness and equality as a catalyst for progress towards global sustainable development. The EDD 2019 will examine and discuss the goals of the 2030 Agenda and the EU's commitment to addressing inequalities.

The EDD 2019 forum – **Addressing inequalities: building a world which leaves no one behind** – will be structured around the three main themes: Why inequalities matter for sustainable development; Understanding the structural causes of inequalities; Working better together through more effective policies to address inequalities; and the 5 "Ps" of the 2030 Agenda: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, Partnership.

Everyone is given a voice in this open, collaborative and inclusive platform. Each year, the global development community is invited to contribute directly to the official EDD programme by proposing activities and sessions.

Each year, the forum attracts more than 8 000 participants from over 140 countries worldwide, representing 1 200 organisations from the development community. The forum fosters a true spirit of partnership with all development actors. Since its launch in 2006, the forum has been an incubator of new ideas to bring about real change towards a poverty-free, sustainable and fairer world, where everyone has the opportunity for a decent life.



You can find more information about the Young Leaders Programme [here](#).

You can find more information about the EDD [here](#).

You can find the media section [here](#).

You can find the programme, regularly updated, [here](#).

Contact

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