

2025 IMPACT REPORT

Jim Leech Mastercard
Foundation Fellowship
on Entrepreneurship

Prepared by
Dunin-Deshpande Innovation Centre at
Queen's University (DDQIC)

Prepared for
Mastercard Foundation





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01

Introduction

About DDQIC

Our mission is to catalyze potential, develop entrepreneurial mindsets and foster a culture of innovation across Queen's University, the Kingston community, and globally. We believe young innovators have the capacity to solve pressing problems and bring entrepreneurial ideas to life.



Every day, we work to encourage individuals across Africa to develop and foster their entrepreneurial mindset. We have a greater impact on society when we tackle problems from diverse perspectives. Through the Dunin-Deshpande Innovation Centre at Queen's University (DDQIC) three-phase approach, students demonstrate a commitment to learning, risk-taking, and perseverance on their entrepreneurial journeys. We aim to create a growing movement of inspirational entrepreneurs who are impactful on their peers and communities in a manner that can catalyze market and industry innovations.

Core Values



Foster Global Mindsets



Shape Diverse Teams



Cultivate Curiosity



Invest in People & Problems



Champion Self-Sufficiency



Make Entrepreneurship Accessible

Badges & Certificates: Recognizing Achievement

Participants in the Jim Leech Mastercard Foundation Fellowship Program earn badges at each phase to celebrate their progress and skill development. In total, students could earn up to six badges across the program's three phases: Explore Entrepreneurship, Ignite Entrepreneurship, and Launch Entrepreneurship. To further showcase critical competencies, we introduced embedded skill-specific badges for Customer Discovery, High-Performance Teams, and Design Thinking, which were integrated into the curriculum to highlight essential skills gained through the program.

All badges and certificates are accessible online, allowing students to retrieve and share their achievements conveniently. Each badge and certificate includes a unique ID stored securely via blockchain technology, ensuring a permanent and verifiable record of accomplishment. Lastly, mentors who volunteer their time in the program receive certificates of appreciation to recognize their invaluable contributions.

80%

Open Rate

Recipients who open an email or digital notification.



84%

Engagement Rate

Recipients who shared or otherwise engaged with their credential.



The value of these badges is evident in participant engagement. These metrics far exceed industry averages and highlight the pride participants take in showcasing their achievements and the importance of these credentials in demonstrating their skills and progress.



OUR TEAM

THE DUNIN-DESHPANDE INNOVATION CENTRE AT QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY (DDQIC)



Greg Bavington
Executive Director



James McLellan
Academic Director



Joanna Tinus
Assistant Director



Karen Rutto
Finance & Budget
Officer



Megan Sieroka
International
Programs Manager



Virginia Sytsma
Domestic
Programs Manager



Simon Denford
Program
Coordinator

With over a decade of experience designing and delivering entrepreneurship programs at scale, DDQIC has built a strong track record of inclusive, impact-driven programming across Africa. Our multidisciplinary team draws on expertise in entrepreneurship, engineering, education, international development, finance, and program design. The team has supported hundreds of enterprises, developed scalable curricula, and established robust systems that ensure governance, integrity, and adaptability across contexts.

PROGRAM COACHES



Duncan Asamoah
Program Coach & Assistant



Emma Naturinda
Program Coach



Pascale Avenvuka
Program Coach



Jega Rajendran
Program Coach



Enoch Muwanguzi
Program Coach



Rejoice Van der Walt
Program Coach



Aqeela Somani
Program Coach



Jennifer Stephanopoulos
Program Coach



Justin Mosbey
Program Coach



Eva Barasa
Program Coach

Program Coaches support Fellows by guiding them to apply the course concepts to their ventures. All coaches have previously participated in DDQIC programs, the Jim Leech Mastercard Foundation Fellowship, or similar initiatives, and are entrepreneurs or innovators in their own careers. Coaches provide structured coaching, constructive feedback, and accountability while fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment. They monitor Fellow progress, flag support needs, and collaborate with the DDQIC team to ensure program quality. Half of our coaching team is based in Africa, supporting Fellows across the continent.

MENTORS



Esther Ebis
Mentor | Nigeria



Blessing Asiweje
Mentor | The Gambia



Achille Tchidehou
Mentor | Benin



Sindiswa Mampondo
Mentor | South Africa



Daniel Sedohia
Mentor | Ghana



Kaggwa Aggrey
Mentor | Uganda



Jennifer Akologo
Mentor | Ghana



Abigail Johnson
Mentor | Ghana



Lawrence Kosgei
Mentor | Kenya



Lemi Loprimo
Mentor | Uganda



Michelle Nyambura
Mentor | Kenya



Salvador Fernando
Mentor | Angola

Mentors provide Fellows with guidance, advice, and industry insights to support their entrepreneurial and professional growth. They share expertise, offer strategic perspectives, and help Fellows navigate challenges in their ventures or careers. Mentors act as trusted advisors, fostering networking opportunities and encouraging Fellows to explore new ideas. All mentors are program graduates and are experienced entrepreneurs, innovators, or professionals with a track record of success in their fields. They collaborate with the DDQIC team to support the program's goals and enhance the learning experience for Fellows.



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02

Program Overview



PROGRAM TIMELINE



RECRUITMENT | SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2024

OVERVIEW

Over the last 4 months of the year, we focus on attracting high-potential candidates by developing promotional strategies and strengthening partnerships with African universities through targeted outreach.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- **Develop Materials:** Create promotional material tailored to the Mastercard Scholars Program network.
- **University Outreach:** Arrange meetings with universities and co-develop promotional strategies with each institution.
- **Campaign Execution:** Run targeted campaigns across the network to maximize engagement.
- **Networking:** Establish connections between African universities and DDQIC.



PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT | SEPTEMBER - JANUARY 2025

OVERVIEW

Between program years, we continually refine the program based on feedback from alumni and mentors. We also incorporate the latest updates from Queen's learning management platform to ensure continuous improvement.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Revise and update course content and resources on the online learning platform
- Fix technical issues and improve platform navigation
- Update curriculum, assessments, and the program playbook
- Integrate new teaching tools and strategies
- Analyze student feedback and adjust teaching methods
- Test new technologies and plan engaging office hours activities
- Pre-program Baseline Impact Evaluation Survey conducted to understand participants' starting points.



Explore Entrepreneurship At A Glance

Applicants

5,500+

Participants

1,000

Active Users

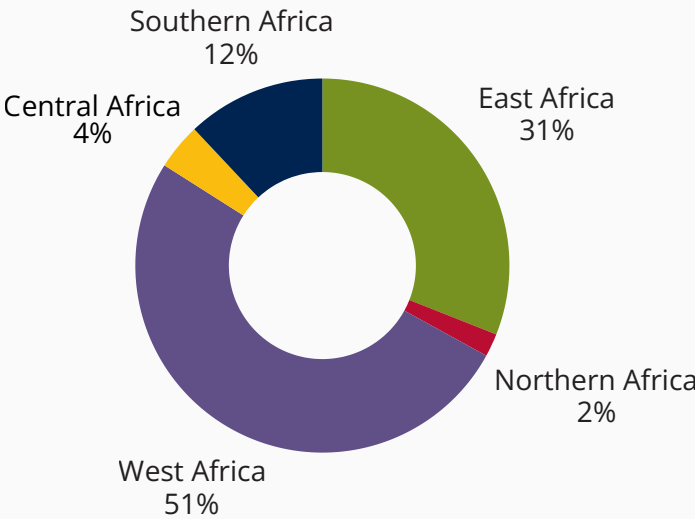
900+

Gender

Female Male



Regions





EXPLORE ENTREPRENEURSHIP | JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2025

OVERVIEW

The Explore phase provides participants with a foundational understanding of entrepreneurship, guiding them through key milestones and critical questions. Over 1,000 candidates gain access to curated online courses and work through the first 11 steps of the Disciplined Entrepreneurship framework. Over several months, they demonstrate their commitment by completing the training and advancing their business ideas.

MILESTONES

- Conduct interviews or other methods to make observations.
- Define and validate the problem by engaging with end-users.
- Test key assumptions underlying the proposed solutions.
- Ideate and generate creative solutions to the identified problem.
- Map the end-user journey and refine the experience using the proposed solution.
- Develop a clear value proposition for end-users and potential funders.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Who is your end user?
- What can you do for them?

KEY ACTIVITIES

- **Online Lectures:** Guided by professors, entrepreneurs, and business experts covering 8 key themes, including market research, innovation, and business strategy
- **Disciplined Entrepreneurship Workbook:** Participants worked through steps 1-11 of the Disciplined Entrepreneurship Framework using their own business ideas, addressing key questions like "Who is my customer?" and "What can I do for them?"
- **Weekly Office Hours:** Weekly sessions with program coaches and mentors to work on ventures and coursework alongside other participants
- **Evaluation:** Quizzes to test module completion, worksheets alongside the Disciplined Entrepreneurship workbook, and a Business Model Canvas submission to mark the phase's completion



Ignite Entrepreneurship

At A Glance

Participants

200

Active Users

100%

Assignment Submissions

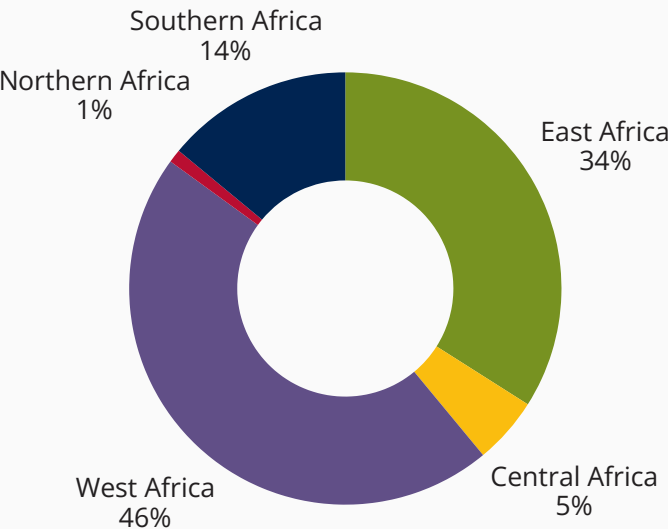
91%

Gender

■ Female ■ Male



Regions





IGNITE ENTREPRENEURSHIP | MARCH - APRIL 2025

OVERVIEW

200 finalists demonstrating exceptional commitment to entrepreneurship and success in Explore milestones advance to the Ignite Entrepreneurship phase. Here, they complete additional online courses and the remaining steps of the Disciplined Entrepreneurship framework. The phase culminates in a pitch competition, where the most promising ideas earn the fellowship.

MILESTONES

- Develop market channels and reach out to necessary partners.
- Create a business model or a plan for funding your solution.
- Prototype your solution in the simplest way possible that still allows you to generate meaningful feedback from end users.
- Validate all critical assumptions by creating experiments and test your solution using your prototype.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How does your end user acquire your solution?
- How will this be funded or become financially sustainable?

KEY ACTIVITIES

- **Workshops:** The DDQIC team hosts a variety of webinars and workshops on several topics related to entrepreneurship and innovation.
- **Office Hours:** The Program Coaches support and monitor students' commitment and progress through weekly office hours, 1-on-1 calls, and more.
- **Online Lectures:** Participants continue through 5 additional entrepreneurship training modules, including financing your startup, pitching, and more.
- **Disciplined Entrepreneurship Workbook:** Participants continue through steps 11-24 of the Disciplined Entrepreneurship framework using their own new business idea or solution as the basis of their work.
- **Evaluation:** At the end of April, participants are required to upload a pre-recorded pitch to OnQ. Each individual or team in the program has the opportunity to pitch for seed funding to advance their project/venture.



Dunin-Deshpande Innovation Centre at Queen's University | Kingston, Canada

Launch Entrepreneurship

At A Glance

Participants

60

Funding Awarded

\$52,000

Active Users

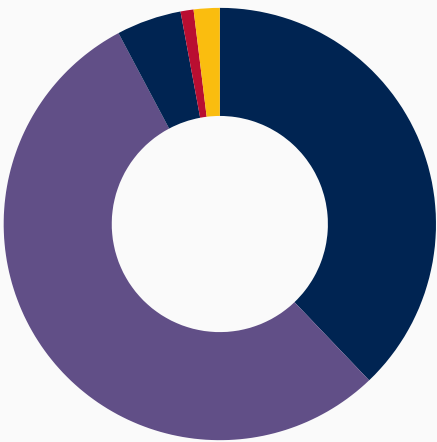
100%

Gender

Female Male



Regions



- East Africa
- West Africa
- Southern Africa
- Northern Africa
- Central Africa



LAUNCH ENTREPRENEURSHIP | MAY - AUGUST 2025

OVERVIEW

During this phase, the 60 selected Fellows have the opportunity to work on their ideas, access seed funding, and participate in weekly 3-2-1 pitch presentations about their work as they transform their ideas into scalable startups. In addition, Fellows will receive a \$500 stipend and dedicated coaches and mentors from DDQIC's Global Network of industry experts and entrepreneurs. Fellows will have the opportunity to compete in a pitch competition for more seed funding at the end of the program.

MILESTONES

- Pilot your solution in a more real life scenario
- Generate expressions of interest, end users, or customers
- Create a plan to scale

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How do you execute your solution?
- How can you scale it?

KEY ACTIVITIES

- **Lectures:** There are 1-3 weekly seminars to gain hands-on skills and mentorship from DDQIC's diverse network. Outside of optional sessions, Fellows worked alongside their team and fellow entrepreneurs to create their venture. Every 2 weeks, all teams and individuals participated in 3-2-1 pitches to update the team on the progress of their venture.
- **Stipends:** As participants in the Launch Entrepreneurship course, Fellows received a \$500 CAD stipend to support their venture's development. A form was sent to them with instructions on how to access the stipend through wire transfer.
- **Practice Pitches:** The entire team hosted 3 Practice Pitch Competitions to help Fellows prepare and understand the format of the Final Pitch Competition. Fellows received extensive feedback on how to improve their pitches prior to the Qualifying Pitch Competition.
- **Data Stipend Support (New!):** Through the support of Future Perspectives and the Greg Jobome Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Fund, DDQIC was able to provide stipends to participants to help cover the costs of attending lectures, workshops, and other online learning activities.



KEY ACTIVITIES

- **Qualifying Pitch Competition:** Launch fellows participated in a competitive preliminary pitch to be considered for the final pitches and the opportunity to pitch for a prize pool of \$20,000 CAD to continue their venture. 25 entrepreneurs, business leaders and alumni from the DDQIC Global Network along with the 10 program coaches judged the pitches submitted and decided the final 15 admitted into the pitch competition.
- **Pitch Coaching Sessions:** The 15 finalists had a 30 minute coaching session with Anil Dilawri, following his live Pitch Excellence lecture.
- **Global Network Practice Pitches:** The 15 finalists have a 15 minute practice pitch session to a panel of 3 international Queen's Alumni part of our Global Network, who provided important feedback before the final pitches.
- **Closed Pitch Competition:** The Jim Leech Mastercard Foundation Fellowship program as part of the DDQIC Africa Initiatives featured a full-day closed pitch competition judged by entrepreneurs, business leaders, and alumni. Fellows provided 7 minute pitches followed by 6 minute of Q&A. Out of 15 Fellows participating this year, 5 were selected by judges at the end of the startup showcase. Additionally, 2 out of the 15 were selected for the audience award during a live watch party held globally the following day.



FINAL PITCH COMPETITION | AUGUST 2025

OVERVIEW

The Final Pitch Competition of the Jim Leech Mastercard Foundation Fellowship in Entrepreneurship is the program's culminating event, where fellows pitch their innovative businesses to a panel of judges. This competition offers entrepreneurs the chance to secure funding, mentorship, and global exposure, showcasing their growth and the potential impact of their ventures.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- **Watch Parties:** In collaboration with various organizations and universities across Africa, we hosted lively in-person watch parties for Fellows and alumni across 11 countries. Finalists delivered dynamic 3-minute pitches that captivated over 1,000 attendees, creating an exciting atmosphere leading up to the award announcements.



POST-PROGRAM | SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2025

OVERVIEW

Post-program support for the Jim Leech Mastercard Foundation Fellowship in Entrepreneurship includes ongoing mentorship, networking opportunities, and access to a global community of entrepreneurs and investors. Fellows receive continued guidance to help scale their businesses, along with resources to secure funding, refine strategies, and navigate challenges on their entrepreneurial journey. This support ensures sustained growth and impact long after the program ends.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- **The Thinker:** Fellows take one week to decide how they wished to move forward with their venture. 'The Thinker' is used to discuss the future of their venture with their Program Coach, advisors, and mentors. Fellows thought about how they wished to continue working on their venture or use their newly developed entrepreneurial mindset to pursue entrepreneurship or a different passion. Fellows are now part of the inaugural class of Jim Leech Mastercard Foundation Program graduates and DDQIC alumni.
- **Graduation Ceremony:** At the end of the Launch Entrepreneurship program, the team hosted a Graduation Ceremony for all the Fellows in the program. This was an opportunity to say goodbye to the Fellows whom we had worked with for several months.
- **Post-program impact evaluation:** This activity assesses the long-term outcomes and effectiveness of the fellowship by measuring the impact on fellows' ventures and personal growth.
- **Funding and Support Matching:** Connecting fellows with funding, incubation, and accelerator opportunities to scale their businesses.
- **Progress Follow-up:** Tracking fellows' progress to identify high-potential individuals and areas for further support.
- **Mentor and Ambassador Identification:** Recognizing successful fellows who can mentor future cohorts and expand the program's network.

03

Impact Evaluation

IMPACT EVALUATION

Overview

This evaluation examines the impact of the Jim Leech Mastercard Foundation program on participants, assessing both intended and unintended outcomes. The analysis focuses on 40 participants who completed all four stages of the impact evaluation surveys: pre-program, post-Explore, post-Ignite, and post-Launch.

While the evaluation provides valuable insights into changes observed throughout the program, it is important to acknowledge the methodology's limitations. As this is not an experimental design, definitive conclusions about causation cannot be drawn.

Note: The figures in this evaluation do not include Delivery Partners. Separate impact evaluations are being conducted in collaboration with Delivery Partners, with results to be analyzed in 2026 once their program cycles conclude.

Shared Measures

The impact evaluation leverages the Shared Measures framework developed by the Mastercard Foundation, alongside key metrics routinely collected by DDQIC, to comprehensively assess program outcomes. This approach highlights how the Jim Leech Mastercard Foundation Fellowship aligns with and complements the Shared Measures framework, enhancing the Foundation's broader impact measurement and evaluation efforts.



LEVEL 1: SKILL BUILDING

Training

Training Impact

- 1,000+ learners participated in training opportunities.

Badges & Certificates Earned

- 225+: Explore Entrepreneurship Badges
- 530+: Design Thinking Badges
- 410+: High-Performance Teams Badges
- 390+: Customer Discovery Badges



Participant Outcomes

- 100% post-Launch agree or strongly agree they have the skills and experience to make a difference in their communities.
- 93% post-Launch agree or strongly agree that they have:
 - A network of support (17% increase from pre-program).
 - An improved ability to recover quickly from challenges (25% increase from pre-program).
- 92% agree or strongly agree they have the skills to maximize the performance of a diverse team (14% increase from pre-program).

Formal Education

- 92% of participants agree or strongly agree with the statement: *“I believe formal education is useful and relevant experience for my future.”*

Professional Preparedness

- 97% of participants strongly agree with the statement: *“Considering my education and experience so far, I feel well prepared for my next professional steps.”*
 - 7% percent increase from all pre-program survey respondents.



Fellows attending the
Kumasi 2025 Final Pitch
Competition

Enterprise Support

Program Coaches & Mentors

- 10 Coaches: Supported Fellows during the Explore, Ignite, and Launch phases of the program.
- 15 Mentors: Fellowship alumni who volunteer their time to support the next cohort of entrepreneurs. Our mentors represent every program year, from 2021 to 2024.

Global Network Support

- 25 Judges: Attended the qualifying pitch competition, representing DDQIC innovation hubs, including Toronto, London, Hong Kong. In addition to the innovation nodes, we engaged members of our global network from cities around the world.



Program Coach Duncan Asamoah (left) with Hagar Apatewen, 2025 Fellow



Aphrodice Nshimiyimana
University of Kigali
Spin-off Fellow

Team Feedback

- Each pitch presentation was evaluated by 3 Global Network mentors who provided written and live feedback.
- 12 mentors and alumni participated in the Practice Pitch Competition.
- The Fellowship program coaches and mentors hosted three "Pitching Den" sessions to better prepare fellows for upcoming qualifying pitches. The Pitching Den is a closed event where fellows practice their pitches in front of their peers. While pitchers receive live feedback to improve their presentations, the cohort also gain insights on tailoring their own pitches. Judges include coaches, mentors, alumni, and members of the global network.

Finalist Coaching

- All 15 finalist teams received a 30-minute private "Pitching Excellence" session with professional coach Anil Dilawri before the Final Pitch Competition.

LEVEL 1: EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The program's primary goal is to create entrepreneurs, and as such, we do not provide direct employment services. However, DDQIC collects data on employment opportunities generated by program Fellows, as outlined in Level 4 of the evaluation.

LEVEL 1: KNOWLEDGE & INFLUENCE

Innovative Research & Knowledge Platforms

The Explore and Ignite Entrepreneurship courses feature 15 comprehensive modules designed to equip participants with critical entrepreneurial skills. These modules cover key topics such as intellectual property, market research, innovation, research and development, and navigating business pivots. This robust curriculum fosters a deep understanding of the entrepreneurial process, enabling participants to effectively translate ideas into impactful ventures.

LEVEL 2: CHANGES IN CAPACITY

Post-Program Outcomes

- 100% of respondents rated the program as “very” or “extremely” helpful in advancing their venture.
- 88% of participants agree or strongly agree that the program improved their entrepreneurial attitudes and mindset. Key areas of improvement include:

Area of Confidence and Skills	Percentage (Agree or Strongly Agree)
Confidence in professional scenarios	92%
Confidence in support network	92%
Confidence in ability to build a venture from the ground up	100%
Comfort assessing and taking risks	97%
Preparedness for next professional steps	97%
Confidence in ability to lead a diverse team	100%
Interest in working with a team of co-founders	69%
Confidence in ability to manage team conflict	89%

LEVEL 3: SYSTEMS IN SECTORS / PORTFOLIOS

Changes in Collaboration & Coordination

- 140% relative increase in participants reporting working in a team with co-founders, staff, and/or volunteers.
- 89% of participants somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree with the following statement: “I would prefer to launch my venture with a team of co-founders”

*Now in the [final phase of the program], I feel like a real entrepreneur. I have built a team, secured partnerships, and created a roadmap for growth. The program has taught me resilience, discipline, and the importance of listening to users. I have also grown as a leader by learning how to delegate, collaborate, and stay focused on our mission. Overall, the fellowship has helped me move from idea to execution. **I am no longer just dreaming about change, I am building it.***

— Nancy Kimani, Founder of Hesal Harvest Ventures



LEVEL 4: OUTCOMES

Self-Employment

- 94% of participants agree or strongly agree that they feel more prepared to create work opportunities for themselves compared to when they first entered the program.
- 82% of participants indicated that their venture has hired at least one youth since January.
- 184 people hired by 24 ventures since January, 88 of them youth.
- 24% relative increase in self-employment from pre-program to post-program.



Fellows whose ventures have hired at least one youth since January 2025.

Enterprise Growth

- 266% relative increase in participants reporting increased revenues from pre-program to post-Launch phase.
- 300% relative increase in participants with paying users/customers from pre-program to post-Launch phase.

LEVEL 5: IMPACT

Resilience

100% of respondents post-launch indicated they agree, or strongly agree that the program:

- Helped them develop a community of support.
- Improved their ability to recover quickly from difficulties.

Community Impact

- 100% of respondents post-Launch agreed or strongly agreed that they have the ability and skills to make a positive impact in their community.
- 97% of post-launch respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their venture is making a meaningful difference in their community.

Quality of Life

Through an evaluation of subjective well-being, program participants reported feeling more satisfied with life, believing that the activities they engage in are more worthwhile, and experiencing greater overall happiness as they progressed through the program. These improvements reflect the program's positive impact on participants' quality of life, aligning personal growth with their entrepreneurial journey.

Throughout the fellowship, I became more confident, disciplined, and ready to take on challenges. I connected with other young entrepreneurs across Africa, which made me feel inspired and supported.

This program has changed how I think. I now see entrepreneurship as a way to solve real problems in my community, not just to start a business. Thanks to this program, I am better prepared to continue building my startup and creating impact.

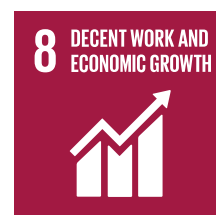
- Irene Nyangasi, Founder of AfyaStrategist



Hadiza Shettima,
Founder of Green Solution

Mission Orientation

100% of participants post-launch indicated that their venture is working towards one or more of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The most common SDGs addressed by ventures:



LONGITUDINAL IMPACT TRACKING

Overview

This year marks the second time DDQIC has conducted longitudinal tracking to assess the sustained outcomes of our programming. Through this initiative, we aim to understand how the skills, networks, and experiences alumni gain continue to influence their personal and professional growth over time. This work reflects our commitment to continually assessing, strengthening, and refining the impact of our programs.

Survey Design and Purpose

The post-program impact evaluation survey was distributed to alumni who participated in DDQIC programs in 2021, 2022, and 2023. Its purpose was to better understand how their experience with DDQIC has shaped their careers and overall development since completing the program. We received 23 complete responses, which make up this year's survey sample. Alumni from the 2024 cohort were not included, as one full year had not yet passed since their program completion.

In addition to the post-program impact surveys, DDQIC hosts several alumni meet-ups and alumni business visits each year during team visits across the continent. These gatherings provide opportunities to collect in-person feedback, strengthen connections, and better understand alumni needs.



DDQIC Team visiting alumni Enoch Muwanguzi and Vivian Anena (second from right and right) in Kampala, Uganda, touring Enoch's Ugabrush factory and its growth since 2021

Limitations & Considerations

While the survey provides valuable insights into alumni experiences and long-term outcomes, we recognize several limitations. This year's sample size is relatively small, with 23 complete responses, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. The data are also self-reported, meaning responses may be influenced by individual perception, recall, or personal interpretation of their progress. Additionally, many alumni participate in other programs, opportunities, or life events that can contribute to (or hinder) the outcomes they attribute to DDQIC, making it difficult to fully isolate our program's impact. These limitations highlight the importance of continuing to strengthen our evaluation methods in future years.



Looking ahead, we aim to make our long-term impact evaluation more rigorous by improving response rates and collaborating with the Faculty of Education to enhance survey and interview methodologies. Through ongoing surveys, interviews, and focus groups with fellows and alumni, we have continuously adapted and enhanced the program over the past five years.

LEVEL 1: SKILL BUILDING

Training

Participant Outcomes

- 100% agree or strongly agree with the following statements:
 - “I have the skills and experience to make a difference in my community.”
 - “The program effectively taught them the skills needed to launch a venture.”
- 97% agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:
 - “The Fellowship helped me build a supportive network.”
 - “My association with DDQIC/Queen’s has supported my venture’s further development, including pitch competitions and business opportunities.”
 - “Compared to when they began the program, they now have a better understanding of their skills gaps as they relate to launching a venture.”
 - “Compared to program entry, I feel more prepared to create work opportunities for myself.”

LEVEL 2: CHANGES IN CAPACITY

Post-Program Outcomes

- 96% of respondents rated the program as “very” or “extremely” helpful in advancing their venture.
- 91% of participants agree or strongly agree that the program improved their entrepreneurial attitudes/mindset. Key improvements include:
 - Gained essential knowledge on entrepreneurship.
 - Became more confident and competent in solving future challenges.
 - Opened their eyes to what is possible.
 - Established valuable connections with people and organizations.
- 100% of participants agree or strongly agree or somewhat agree that they have the skills to lead diverse teams.



Janeper Matini (left), Founder of Women Income Network, pictured with her team members.

LEVEL 3: SYSTEMS IN SECTORS / PORTFOLIOS

Changes in Collaboration & Coordination

- 83% agree or strongly agree with the statement: “I would prefer to launch my venture with a team of co-founders”
- 96% of respondents are working with a team of co-founders, staff, and/or volunteers.

LEVEL 4: OUTCOMES

Self-Employment

- 87% of survey respondents stated that the business they started in the program is still operational
- Survey respondents have hired 137 youth since the end of the program.

Enterprise Growth

- 65% of ventures report increase in funding since the end of the program.
- 63% of ventures report that they have more revenue than directly after the program ended.



Hellen Munyasa, Founder of Helton Traders, winning USD 10,000 at the African Climate Innovation Challenge (ACIC) pitch competition in Kampala, Uganda.

LEVEL 5: IMPACT

Resilience & Quality of Life

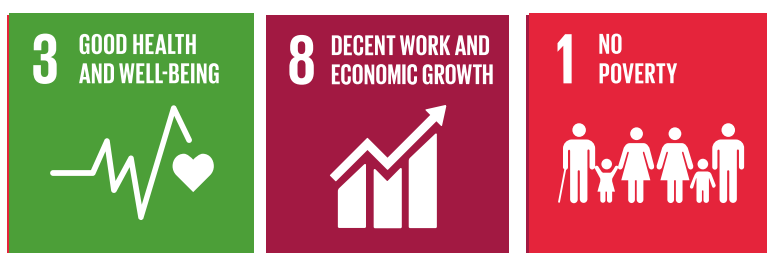
- 96% of respondents post-launch indicated they either somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree that the Fellowship helped them develop a community of support.
- 100% agreed or strongly agreed that the Fellowship improved their ability to recover quickly from difficulties.
- 100% agree or strongly agree that they have the ability to make a difference in their community.



Samson McCarthy hosting an information session about the supports his venture, Elenii Shepard, provides to entrepreneurs with disabilities.

MISSION ORIENTATION

100% of survey participants are aware of the United Nations SDGs.
Most common SDGs addressed by alumni:



Digital Access & Inclusion

This year, DDQIC piloted weekly data stipends with Nigerian participants during the Ignite phase. Based on feedback about what worked and what didn't, the approach was adapted and expanded to the full cohort in the Launch phase. The stipends provided reliable internet access, enabling Fellows to fully engage in workshops, collaborate with peers, and access learning resources without interruption.

Delivered through the Greg Jobome Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Fund and facilitated by Future Perspectives Impact Fund, the initiative reflects DDQIC's commitment to equity and inclusion. Stipends were distributed locally by Fellowship country representatives to ensure timely support.

▲ **10%**

Increase in Online Content Completion Rates
Following Data Stipends (Kenya & Ghana)

This figure shows a 10% increase in online content completion among participants in Kenya and Ghana in the 2024 and 2025 cohorts following the introduction of weekly data stipends. These countries were chosen for their high representation, providing a larger sample size.

Learn more about this initiative [here](#).



Key Takeaways

The 2025 post-program impact evaluation highlights the significant and lasting benefits of the Jim Leech Mastercard Foundation Fellowship for participants. Below is a snapshot of the key findings:

INCREASING DIVERSITY IN APPLICANTS

- Female applicants have grown significantly, increasing 14% between 2021 and 2024 and an additional 19% between 2024 and 2025.
- Growth reflects the effectiveness of strategies such as female ambassadors and highlighting women in recruitment efforts.

BUILDING RESILIENCE & AN ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET

- 100% of respondents in both the 2025 impact survey and the longitudinal survey reported that the Fellowship improved their ability to recover quickly from difficulties.
- From the first module, The Innovator's Mindset, the program builds resilience, entrepreneurial thinking, and problem-solving skills, enabling participants to navigate challenges and seize opportunities with confidence.

BUILDING VENTURES THAT LAST

- 87% of respondents in the long-term survey reported that their ventures started during the Fellowship are still operational.
- While the sample size was small (20+ respondents), this is well above average for similar programs.

BUSINESS SUPPORT & GROWTH

- Participants experienced strong venture growth:
- 266% relative increase in participants reporting increased revenues (pre-program to post-Launch phase).
- 300% relative increase in participants with paying users or customers.
- All respondents rated the program as very or extremely helpful in advancing their venture.

These findings demonstrate the Fellowship's success in equipping participants with the skills, mindset, and support networks needed to build resilient, sustainable ventures, while fostering diversity and inclusion in the entrepreneurial community.



04

Final Pitch Competition

Award Recipients

The 2025 African Initiatives Final Pitch Competition showcased the creativity and dedication of emerging entrepreneurs from across Africa. This competition marked the culmination of the Jim Leech Mastercard Foundation Fellowship on Entrepreneurship.

[Watch the Final Pitch Competition Recording here!](#)



**Eugenia Amoh
Oduma**

Blumlife Cocoa Potash

\$6,500 Award Winner

Blumlife Cocoa Potash is a venture that converts cocoa waste into eco-friendly potash to be used as a basic input for fertilizer manufacturing companies and cosmetic enterprises.

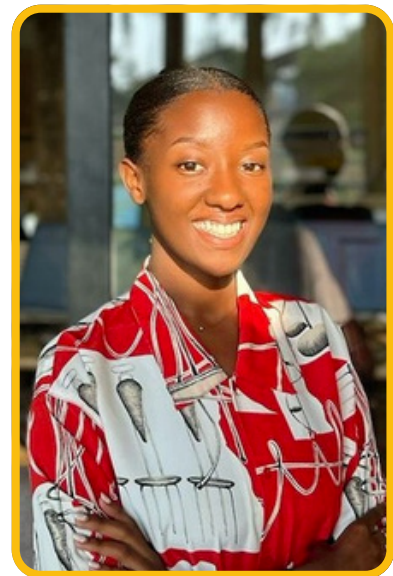


**Nwagu
Nkemjika**

Amalugbo Care

\$3,250 Award Dinner

Amalugbo Compassionate Elder Care Services Ltd is a social venture that provides home-to-home care services to the elderly people in Nigeria.



**Gloria Mutesi
Hakizimana**

AquaSense

\$3,250 Award Dinner

AquaSense is a climate-smart irrigation solution for smallholder rice farmers, offering a low-cost monitoring tube that reduces water waste, boosts yields, and cuts methane emissions.

Award Recipients

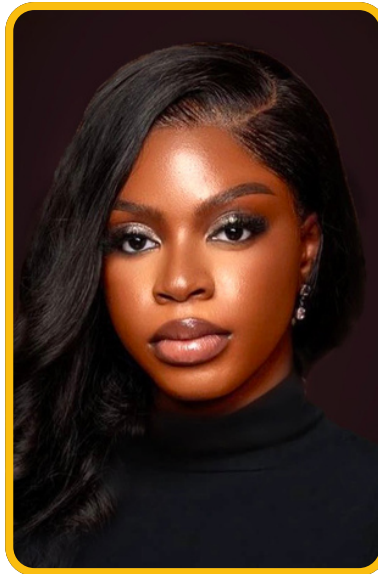


Ngozi Okolie-Odega

Gozy Soaps

\$1,750 Award Winner

Gozy Soaps makes handmade, natural, multipurpose soaps from fruit peels and other natural ingredients, reducing the use of chemicals that cause dermatitis and severe skin reactions.

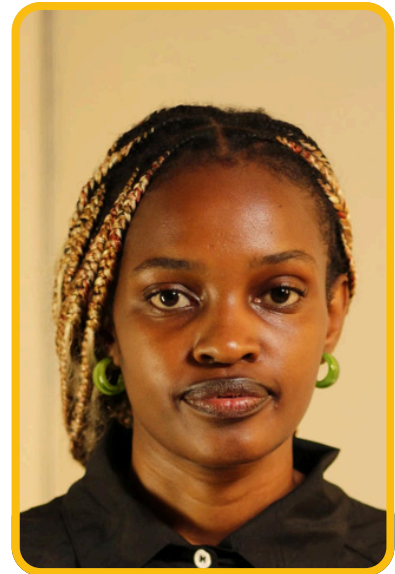


Adebolawa Abimbolu

Nailux

\$1,750 Award Winner

Nailuxe is redefining hand care in Africa with science-backed, botanically powered skincare, intentionally crafted for real people and real experiences.



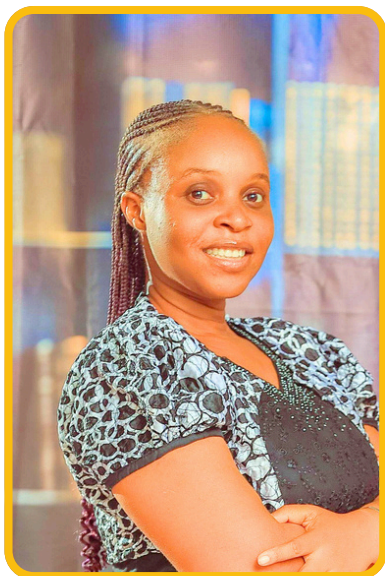
Cynthia Njagi

Soma App

\$1,750 Award Dinner

Soma App is a low-cost, gamified learning platform that delivers the Kenyan primary school curriculum through interactive, engaging lessons.

Award Recipients



**Solomon
Favour**

FortiFi Foods

\$1,750 Award Winner

FortiFi Foods tackles food insecurity and childhood malnutrition in Nigeria with culturally relevant, fortified products. Its flagship, NutriPap, is a nutrient-dense pap made from local grains and naturally enriched with vitamin A, iron, and zinc.



**Gabriel
Uchendu**

Uganda Zeers Solutions

\$1,000 Award Winner

Uganda Zeers Solutions creates evaporative clay coolers providing affordable refrigeration for market vendors.



**Apatewen
Hagar**

Purl Kennel cosmetics

\$1,000 Award Winner

Purl Kennel cosmetics upcycles palm kernel, which is rich in Lauric acid, infusing with plant-based antioxidants like phenols and flavonoids for haircare solutions, providing a safe alternative to harsh sulphate and parabens used to treat dandruff.

Finalists



**Brigitte
Umutoni**

Famora Care

Finalist

Famora Care is a digital companion for mothers, offering personalized guidance, health information, and access to online and in-person consultation services from pregnancy through early motherhood.



**Gloria Manu
Pokuaa**

PureNano Water Solutions

Finalist

PureNano Water Solutions provides affordable, reusable nanomaterial water filters that remove contaminants, tackling unsafe drinking water in Ghana and beyond.



**Fikoue Fabiola
Dariska**

Nutricrunch

Finalist

Nutricrunch is a venture that aims to make nutritious, affordable bread accessible to low- and middle-income earners. Their bread is made from a blend of 80 percent cassava flour and 20 percent wheat flour, offering a healthier and more cost-effective alternative.

Finalists



**Oyekola
Oluwaseun**

Verdoria Haven

Finalist

Verdoria Haven reduces post-harvest losses by preserving farm produce and connecting smallholder farmers to urban markets, making food more affordable and boosting farmers' incomes.



**Nusrot
Abdulsalam**

PureNano Water Solutions

Finalist

NADA Logistics Service Solutions is a Nigeria-based logistics venture that specializes in express shipping, cargo consolidation, and international import services from the USA, UK, China, and Dubai.



**Victoria
Adams**

Bloomwell Care

Finalist

Bloomwell Care is a start-up venture, addressing three critical challenges in the health sector of Ghana: high costs of medicine, limited access to medicine, and frequent shortages of medication.

Watch Parties: Expanding Reach and Engagement

The final pitch competition combined virtual and in-person elements, bringing together participants from across Africa and Canada. The audience featured Fellowship and Queen's University alumni, Mastercard Foundation in-country representatives, students from local universities, and members of the innovation ecosystem. This integration of diverse stakeholders underscored the competition's broad reach, dynamic engagement, and commitment to knowledge sharing.

ATTENDEES

1,000+

In-person & online

LOCATIONS

15

Average event size:
50 guests each

SPONSORS

22

Supporting through
in-kind of financial
contributions

We are deeply grateful to our partners and sponsors who serve as our watch party hosts and create the spaces that make our programs possible. This collective effort not only amplifies our reach but also strengthens the communities we serve. Thank you for standing with us to open doors and shape opportunities for learners across the continent.

- **Kingston, Canada:** Queen's University
- **Abomey-Calavi, Benin:** University of Abomey-Calavi
- **Limbe, Cameroon:** AIMS Cameroon
- **Gaborone, Botswana:** eLab, Botho University
- **Maseru, Lesotho:** Botho University
- **Cape Town, South Africa:** DMS Ministries
- **Accra, Ghana:** University of Professional Studies
- **Kumasi, Ghana:** CARISCA, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST)
- **Mbarara, Uganda:** The WIT Technologies Office
- **Kampala, Uganda:** Makerere University
- **Kigali, Rwanda:** Enterprise Business Centre, University of Kigali / Oaks of Central PA
- **Lagos, Nigeria:** Future Perspectives / African Fintech Foundry (AFF)
- **Borno, Nigeria:** Future Perspectives
- **Jos, Nigeria:** Future Perspectives
- **Nairobi, Kenya:** United States International University (USIU)

05

Alumni Success Stories





Alumni Success Stories

Showcasing the Impact of Fellowship Entrepreneurs Driving Change Across Africa

HELLEN MUNYASA

FOUNDER OF HELTON TRADERS LTD

Hellen Munyasa, founder of Helton Traders Ltd, is transforming textile production in Uganda by turning plastic waste into sustainable polyester sewing threads. Her startup tackles plastic pollution while addressing the country's textile supply gap.

Since 2022, Hellen has grown Helton Traders from a small pilot to a recognized impact-driven business, **recycling over 1,500 tonnes of plastic waste** and **raising more than \$100,000 in non-dilutive funding**, all while building a brand centered on innovation, gender inclusion, and sustainability. She is a 2025 Mandela Washington Fellow, a UNDP awardee, and a leading voice for circular manufacturing in Africa.



The Jim Leech Mastercard Foundation Fellowship was a major turning point in my entrepreneurial journey...It gave me the tools, discipline, and structure I needed to shape Helton Traders into a scalable venture.

Alumni Success Stories

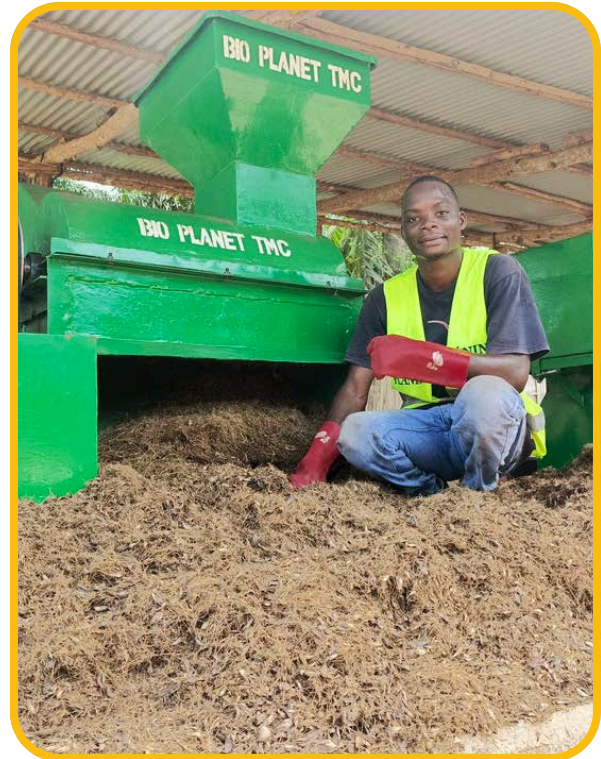
Showcasing the Impact of Fellowship Entrepreneurs Driving Change Across Africa

CHRISTIAN ADOH

KALKAP HONEY ENTERPRISE

Christian Adoh, from Benin, is the founder of BIO PLANET TMC Ltd, a social enterprise that **supports over 18,000 women and indigenous small-scale farmers** through organic pest-control fertilizers and sustainable agriculture training. His innovations improve soil health, boost crop yields, and empower underserved farming communities across West Africa.

The Fellowship provided advanced knowledge in business strategy, product innovation, and leadership that helped me scale BIO PLANET into a high-impact venture.



KALANGWE KAPAIPAI

KALKAP HONEY ENTERPRISE

Kalangwe Kapaipai, founder of Kalkap Honey Enterprise, is creating income-generating opportunities through eco-friendly beekeeping while preserving forests and biodiversity. His enterprise has trained and **supported over 100 rural beekeepers**, transforming conservation into a viable business opportunity.

The [Fellowship] helped me refine our business model to align with sustainability, environmental impact, and rural empowerment...it was more than just training—it was a launchpad.

Alumni Success Stories

Showcasing the Impact of Fellowship Entrepreneurs Driving Change Across Africa

PASCALE MBU-LETANG KOLESHA

SABAOTH GENERAL TRADING (SGT)

Sabaoth General Trading (SGT) is redefining haircare in South Africa with safe, organic, and affordable products rooted in ancestral African techniques. Since launching, SGT has **gained 100+ customers**, expanded internationally, and continues to empower women while contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The fellowship gave me confidence and clarity. I now know I'm adding real value in this space.

Pascale, who is also our program coach, is using her story and experience to mentor other business leaders on the continent.



BALUKU HANNINGTON

TREATINET

Treatinet is transforming healthcare in rural Uganda through a hybrid telemedicine model that combines bedside nursing with remote doctor consultations and solar-powered kiosks. Since launching in 2024, Treatinet has **facilitated 300+ consultations**, **delivered 1,000+ medications**, and created jobs for local health workers. By bridging digital tools with community-centered care, Treatinet is tackling critical healthcare gaps and building a more equitable health system for underserved populations.



06

Program Improvements

Supporting Women Entrepreneurs Through Flexible, Inclusive Programming



36%

Increase in Female Applicants
(2021-2025)



14%

Increase in Retention from
Explore to Ignite (2021-2025)

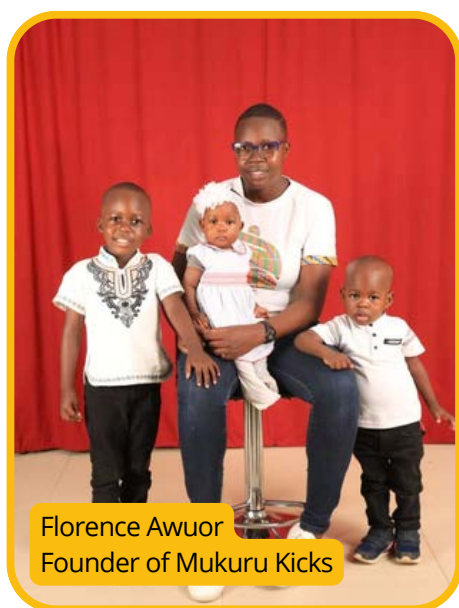


95%

Pitch Competition Funding
Awarded to Women (2025)

The increased impact may be linked to the targeted support and mentorship provided to women throughout the Fellowship, which offers a tailored approach to the unique challenges women face in entrepreneurship.

The program also prioritizes visibility for women by highlighting female entrepreneurs and alumni in workshops and integrating representation within the coaching and mentorship team.



Florence Awuor
Founder of Mukuru Kicks

Spotlight: Mukuru Talent Share

*"I soon discovered that this program was not only feasible but incredibly rewarding... It was structured in a way that allowed me to access content at any time, with office hours at different times and the flexibility to attend any session. **It was perfect for my unpredictable schedule.**"*

Florence Awuor, founder of Mukuru Talent Share, joined the Fellowship just weeks before giving birth to her daughter. Despite the challenges of caring for a newborn, the program's flexibility enabled her to continue learning at her own pace, from hospital bed to home.

The supportive coaching model was especially impactful: *"Coaches were very approachable and ready to help whenever I reached out... booking countless one-on-one sessions that made my entrepreneurial journey very smooth."*

With this encouragement, Florence advanced to the Launch Phase and earned a \$500 stipend, allowing her venture to stock new materials and expand production.

"I was not discriminated against but given a hand whenever I needed it."

Florence celebrated graduation with her baby in her arms, a moment she described as a symbol of the program's inclusivity and support for women balancing caregiving and entrepreneurship.

Accessibility Improvements: Breaking Down Barriers

Improving accessibility remains a cornerstone of our program, and this year saw further advancements to reduce barriers to learning:

KEY ACTIVITIES

- **Accessible Materials:** Providing learning resources and digital content compatible with assistive technologies.
- **Offline content delivery:** Recognizing the challenges of inconsistent internet access, we are collaborating with ITServices and the Mawoudit Foundation to deliver course materials in offline formats, ensuring no student is left behind.
- **Francophone support:** Francophone students were paired with bilingual mentors and coaches and supported with course material translation.
- **Inclusive Partnerships:** Working with organizations to include learners with disabilities in programming.



Spotlight: Ubumwe Education for Disabilities in Rwanda (UEIDR)

Founded by Fellowship alumnus Fabrice Ishimwe, UEIDR expands educational access for Deaf learners in Rwanda through mentorship, workshops, and inclusive activities. After winning funding at the 2025 pitch competition, Fabrice has joined DDQIC as a delivery partner to broaden Fellowship access for Deaf learners.

UEIDR is committed to supporting Deaf children across Rwanda, helping them build confidence, discover their talents, and pursue meaningful careers...The future of inclusion starts with

education and we are ready to walk this journey with them...I am deeply thankful to DDQIC and [Enterprise Business Centre] for their unwavering support. Your guidance helped transform a dream into action, and today's impact is a result of that mentorship.

- Fabrice Ishimwe, Founder of UEIDR



300

Deaf learners engaged at Institut des Sourds de Nyamirambo (IFS)

250+

Students trained over 2 entrepreneurship workshops

60

Parent participants, strengthening family support for Deaf learners

Guest Speakers & Industry Experts

Diverse global leaders guiding the cohort's development

This year, the workshop series featured a diverse group of speakers from around the world who delivered sessions on key topics essential to the cohort's entrepreneurial development. Many speakers shared lessons from their personal journeys as African entrepreneurs, offering practical insight and relatable guidance. Each year, the speaker lineup is intentionally tailored to the unique needs and interests of the cohort. As a result, no two cohorts experience the same workshop series, ensuring that the learning environment remains responsive, relevant, and highly impactful.

See below a snapshot of some of this year's speakers.



Nevan Hanumara

Professor of Human Centered Design, MIT



Aisha Kwaku

Business Development Consultant



Samantha Estoesta

Inclusive Innovation Expert



Muntanzir Hussein

Director Kaffe Koffee



Comfort Ayikoru

Founder of Kangacare



Fatema Dewji

Director of Marketing, MELT Group



Ochora Moses

Founder of Photo Kabada



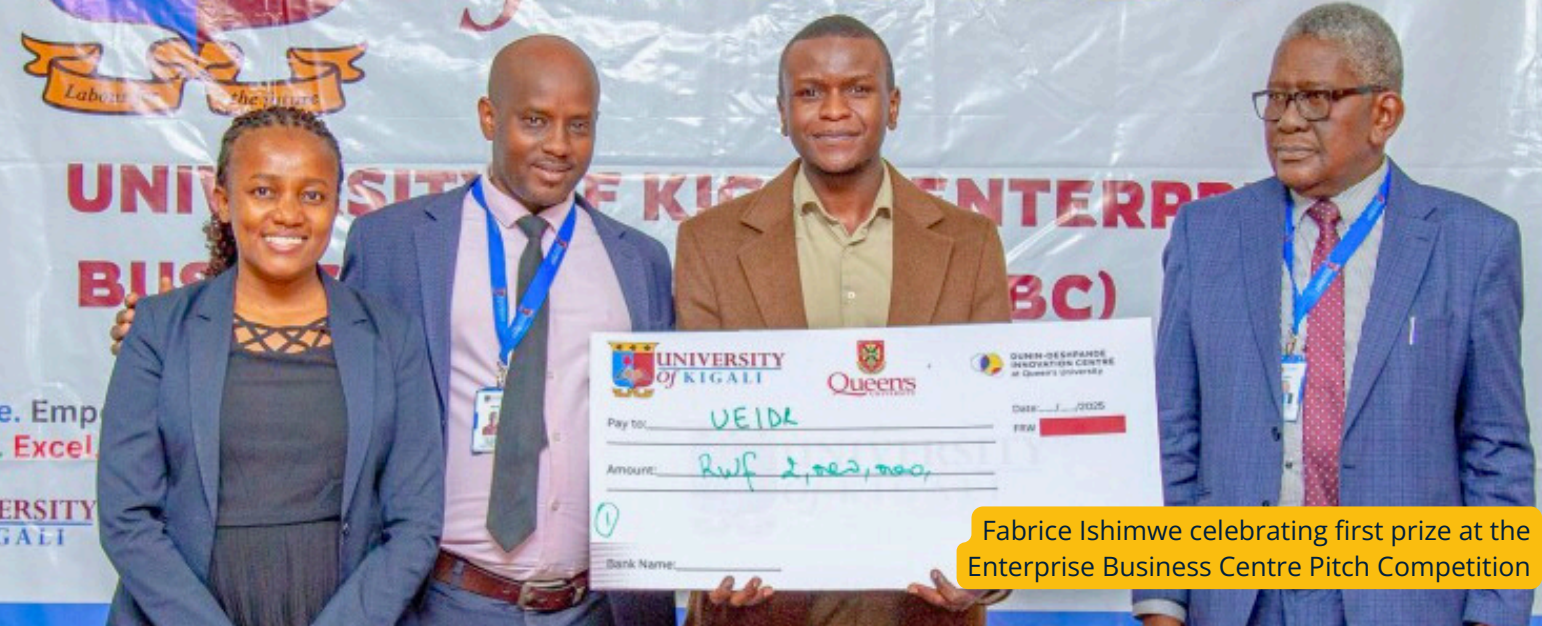
Chintan Vaishnav

Human Centred Design Expert



Roos Oosting

Design Thinking Expert



PITCH PREPARATION: BUILDING CONFIDENCE & REFINING IDEAS

Recognizing the importance of pitching skills, we expanded our pitch preparation efforts. This year, these activities began in the Ignite phase.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- **Workshops:** Three dedicated workshops on pitching were conducted.
- **Live pitching dens:** Students practiced pitching with Program Coaches, receiving real-time feedback.
- **Pre-recorded tutorials:** Tutorials provided accessible guidance on pitching techniques.

Judges and Global Network mentors observed clear improvements in the quality of Fellows' pitches this year compared to previous cohorts. These strategies have helped participants attract investors, identify co-founders, and refine their ideas.

FOSTERING TEAMWORK & FINDING CO-FOUNDERS

To encourage collaboration among 1000+ students, we introduced numerous measures to facilitate connections.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- **Networking groups:** Students were grouped by venture themes to encourage collaboration and idea exchange.
- **1-on-1 connections:** Fellows were paired to explore potential partnerships and support innovative team formation.
- **In-person events & activities:** Alumni mixers and hands-on prototyping workshops, pictured left, provided opportunities for relationship-building and experiential learning.



BUILDING CONFIDENCE THROUGH PROTOTYPING & REAL-WORLD TESTING



Stephen Yachim receiving feedback on his prototype from potential customers

A core feature of the Ignite Entrepreneurship phase is the hands-on prototyping exercise, which helps Fellows apply concepts from their coursework and the Disciplined Entrepreneurship Workbook as they progress through key milestones toward their final pitch.

Fellows turn early-stage ideas into simple, low-cost prototypes and engage directly with peers, mentors, and the public to test assumptions and gather customer feedback. This real-world testing builds confidence, strengthens communication skills, and helps Fellows validate demand.

VoltageAfrica evolved from my experience dealing with unreliable electricity as a child in rural Zimbabwe. Through the Fellowship, I was able to convert that personal struggle into a formalized social venture to improve the clean energy landscape in underserved African communities.

*Before the Fellowship, I had ideas and passion, but I lacked the structure and confidence to implement them. Through **hands-on learning and customer validation**, my venture moved from ideation to early-stage development, and we are now actively preparing for pilot implementation.*

– Sean Mavhima, Founder of VoltageAfrica



Sean Mavhima pitching at the Global HackAtom in Rwanda

Prototyping is often a turning point. Many Fellows describe it as the moment their venture shifts from an idea to something tangible, clarifying what market launch could look like. The feedback loop enables Fellows to refine their value propositions, identify gaps early, and make informed decisions.

Judges and Global Network mentors consistently note that Fellows who complete the prototyping milestones demonstrate clearer business models, stronger pitches, and greater readiness for partnerships and investment.



Delivery Partners

Collaborating to Expand Impact

The success of the Fellowship is made possible through the commitment and collaboration of our Delivery Partners. Their expertise, resources, and shared vision empower us to create meaningful impact and reach communities more effectively. We are proud to work alongside organizations that believe in innovation, equity, and sustainable change; together, turning bold ideas into real-world solutions. These partners bring deep local expertise, trusted networks, and contextual knowledge, while DDQIC provides curriculum, global resources, and training.

How Delivery Partners Strengthen the Fellowship

Capacity Strengthening

Enhancing organizational capabilities, integrating partners into regional entrepreneurship networks, and sustaining peer mentorship and knowledge-sharing

Ecosystem Integration

Integrating entrepreneurship education into local ecosystems, connecting youth to investors, accelerators, alumni, and government, while sustaining mentorship and peer-learning networks.

Local Recruitment & Reach

Ensure the program reaches underserved populations, including financially disadvantaged youth, women, refugees, and youth with disabilities.

Enterprise Support & Mentorship

Guiding fellows through ideation, prototyping, and business launch while providing stipends, seed funding, and financial coaching

Data, Monitoring, & Feedback

Improving program quality by providing data, feedback, and insights to refine content, tools, and delivery.

Program Delivery

Facilitating high-quality, contextually relevant training, mentorship, and workshops

Delivery Partner Spotlights



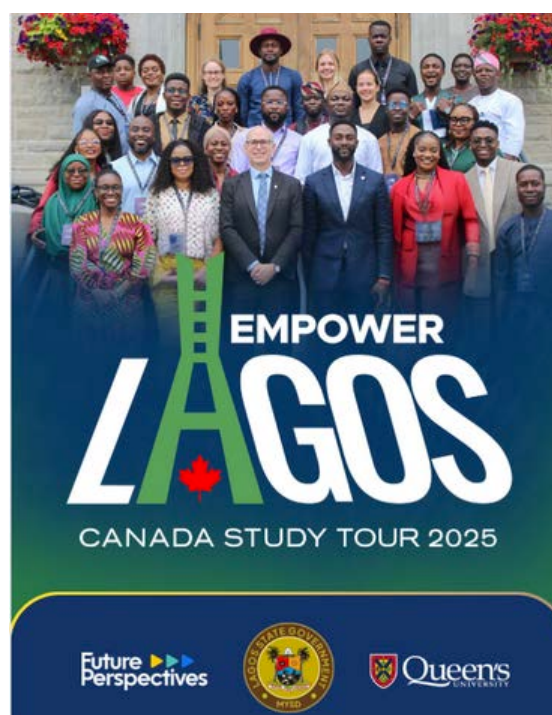
**ABIMBOLA
ASEKUN**

Executive Director
Future Perspectives

"In 2025, DDQIC and Future Perspectives reached a landmark milestone by advancing entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Together, we empowered young innovators with the tools, mentorship, and global networks needed to launch ventures across diverse sectors. This achievement demonstrates that when global expertise meets local ambition, African entrepreneurship can flourish and build resilient futures. Looking ahead to 2026, we are committed to expanding the program, strengthening inclusivity for persons with disabilities and increasing women's enrollment in strategic markets."

— Abimbola Asekun

DDQIC works closely with Future Perspectives to empower young entrepreneurs and strengthen local innovation ecosystems. With their recruitment support, 40% of this year's Explore cohort came from Nigeria, including increased participation from Northern regions, where educational opportunities are generally more limited than in the South. Participants received data stipends (see [page 28](#)) to fully engage in the program. In addition to supporting the Fellowship, we collaborated on the Lagos Youth Study Tour, bringing 12 Nigerian youth to Queen's University for a two-week immersive study experience.



access



AFRICA
FINTECH
FOUNDRY



AFRICA FUND FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT & RENEWAL

**abdul
samad
rabiu
initiative**
ASR AFRICA



ENTREPRENEURSHIP
&
SUSTAINABILITY FUND

Delivery Partner Spotlights



**RUTH
MBABAZI**

Coordinator
Enterprise Business Centre,
University of Kigali

*When I was beginning the EBC, DDQIC came at the right time when the center needed coaches, mentors, training resources, and a platform. DDQIC held the center by the hand, and since its conception, I've seen **600+ youth**, both at the university and in the community, impacted in such a short time...When people come together, when we lift each other, when we invest in the potential of our young people, miracles happen...As an African proverb reminds us: **'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.'** With DDQIC and EBC walking this journey side by side, we're not just going far; we're building a legacy for generations to come.*

— Ruth Mbabazi

The Enterprise Business Centre (EBC) at the University of Kigali partners with DDQIC to provide structured incubation and entrepreneurship support to Rwandan youth. EBC guides founders from idea validation through prototyping and market launch, with a strong focus on inclusive entrepreneurship, sustainability, and job creation. DDQIC supports EBC with training, mentorship, and operational guidance to strengthen delivery capacity and expand impact.



The Enterprise Business Centre's inaugural cohort

600+

Youth engaged through workshops and forums

30

Workshops delivered (in-person and hybrid)

90+

Attendees at the final pitch competition



Reflecting on Five Years of Impact

The Jim Leech Mastercard Foundation Fellowship began with a goal of reaching 60 fellows each year. In our first year, we welcomed 1,000. Five years later, we have supported over 7,000 young entrepreneurs across Africa, representing every region, industry, and background.

Our journey has been guided by continuous learning. Key to the Fellowship has been the power of youth leadership: program coaches, mentors, and delivery partners, who are themselves young innovators, have helped shape the culture, motivation, and vision of the Fellowship. Equally, we have seen firsthand the transformative power of diversity. Fellows benefit from engaging with peers and entrepreneurs from every sector, background, and region, learning from one another's challenges and successes. Our team has grown alongside them, continually recognizing that diverse perspectives drive richer ideas, deeper connections, and stronger solutions.

Each year, we are inspired by the creativity, courage, and drive of the young leaders who join the fellowship. These five years have been marked by hard work, growth, and discovery. We are excited for the next chapter and the future these entrepreneurs will create.





Fabrice Ishimwe
Founder of Ubumwe Education
Inclusion for Disabilities in Rwanda

We extend our deepest thanks to the Mastercard Foundation, Queen's University, and all our partners and supporters. Your belief in young African entrepreneurs makes this work possible, fostering innovation, resilience, and meaningful change across the continent.

We are inspired every day by the brilliance, courage, and vision of the fellows, and we are grateful for the opportunity to continue learning, growing, and amplifying our collective impact.



We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to empower the next generation of Africa's leaders.

With gratitude,

*The Jim Leech Mastercard
Foundation Fellowship Team*

Contact

**Dunin-Deshpande Innovation Centre at
Queen's University**
69 University St, Kingston, ON K7L 2N9

www.queensu.ca/innovationcentre 
jimleechfellowship@queensu.ca 
[@ddqjc](#) 





**DUNIN-DESHPANDE
INNOVATION CENTRE**
at Queen's University