



2025 Executive and Strategic Leadership Program

Navigating Volatility: Sustaining Think Tanks and CSOs in Unstable Environments

AUGUST 5-6, 2025 | DJEUGA HOTEL, YAOUNDE



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Background

Think tanks and civil society organizations (CSOs) are essential pillars for fostering democratic governance, sustainable development, and regional integration in Africa. These institutions provide evidence-based policy recommendations, advocate for the public good, and support inclusive socioeconomic transformation. However, their operations are increasingly constrained by the volatility of their environments, which are marked by political instability, economic uncertainty, and social challenges.

The Central African region has faced significant disruptions in recent years. The ongoing global ramifications of the war in Ukraine, exacerbated by climate change, rising debt levels, and internal socio-political unrest, have negatively impacted the region's economic and governance structures. These challenges have placed additional pressure on think tanks and CSOs, hindering their ability to influence policy, mobilize resources, and advocate for public interest.

The African Union's Agenda 2063, which envisions "The Africa We Want," emphasizes good governance, peace, and security as critical components of the continent's development (Aspirations 3 and 4). Furthermore, Article 12 of the African Charter on

Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG) highlights the importance of strengthening civil society's capacity to enhance democratic governance. Similarly, the African Union Policy Framework on Strengthening the Capacities of Think Tanks and Research Institutions (adopted in 2013), recognizes the critical role think tanks play in advancing evidence-based policymaking and calls for capacity-building initiatives to enable these institutions to thrive in dynamic environments.

To address these dynamics, the Nkafu Policy Institute, a leading Think Tank of the Denis & Lenora Foretia Foundation and in alignment with these continental frameworks, is launching the third edition of its Executive and Strategic Leadership Program for Think Tanks and CSOs. Designed as an intensive two-day event, the program aims to equip leaders from think tanks, CSOs, and research institutions with the skills and strategies needed to navigate volatility, sustain their operations, and contribute meaningfully to regional integration and democratic resilience within their communities and beyond. By addressing leadership, advocacy, and organizational capacity, the program directly supports the goals outlined in Agenda 2063, ACDEG, and other pivotal African Union initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable and inclusive development.

Objectives

The primary goal of the program is to sustain the leadership and operational efficiency of think tanks and CSOs in Central Africa. Specific objectives include:

Strategic Capacity Building: Strengthen organizational management and policy development skills to produce impactful research and foster democratic governance:

1. **Empowering Leadership:** Enhance the leadership and advocacy competencies of think tank researchers, particularly women, to improve policy advocacy and drive gender equity.
2. **Visibility and Reach:** Expand the regional influence of

Expected Outcomes

1. **Resilient Leadership:** Greater awareness and adaptive capacity among think tank and CSO leaders to address issues like governance, democracy, regional integration, and security.
2. **Enhanced Skills:** Improved managerial, leadership, and research competencies, enabling leaders to better advocate for policy improvements.
3. **Collaborative Networks:** Establishment of a robust regional network of think tanks and CSOs for shared learning and support.

Target Audience

The program is open to:

1. Leaders of think tanks, CSOs, and independent research organizations in the Central African region.
2. Particular emphasis on supporting women leaders and researchers.
3. Policymakers and development practitioners interested in advancing regional governance and stability.

The conference is limited to 25 attendees in Central Africa region comprising 04 foreign partners sponsored by the Foundation and 21 nationals selected upon payment of participation fees.



Participation Requirements

- Demonstrated leadership or research experience in a think tank, CSO, or related organization.
- Commitment to improving organizational impact and advocacy capabilities.
- Submission of a completed application form with a statement of purpose highlighting professional goals.



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Detailed Course Content

The program is designed to deliver practical and interactive sessions tailored to the needs of think tank and CSO leaders featuring keynote presentations, workshops, panel discussions, conversations with policymakers, networking sessions, plenaries with brainstorming sessions led by experts and think tank leaders.

MODULES INCLUDE

Strategic Leadership in Volatile Environments

- Tools for adaptive leadership.
- Crisis management and decision-making under uncertainty.

Policy Advocacy and Influence

- Developing and communicating evidence-based recommendations.
- Stakeholder engagement strategies.

Building Resilient Organizations

- Financial sustainability and resource mobilization.
- Governance and accountability mechanisms.

Advancing Gender Equity in Leadership

- Women in leadership roles: Challenges and strategies.
- Gender-sensitive policy formulation.

Regional Integration and Collaboration

- Opportunities for regional cooperation.
- Networking for mutual support and shared learning.

**Format, Date,
and Venue**



Format: In-person.

Date: August 5-6, 2025 (9:00 AM to 6:00 PM daily).

Venue: Djeuga Palace, Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Facilitators and Organizers



The program will be hosted by the Nkafu Policy Institute of the Denis & Lenora Foretia Foundation.



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About the Denis & Lenora Foretia Foundation



The program will be hosted by the Nkafu Policy Institute of the Denis & Lenora Foretia Foundation and facilitated by experts from both public and private sectors, bringing diverse perspectives to enrich participants' learning experiences.

About the Nkafu Policy Institute



The Nkafu Policy Institute is an African think tank with a mission to provide independent, in-depth, and insightful policy recommendations that enable all Africans to prosper in free, fair, democratic, and sustainable economies. The Institute's team of analysts, experts, and researchers works on governance and democracy, health and education, peace and security, science and technology, and economic policy.

Contacts

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