

Develop Your Leadership

Join the New Leaders Lab

Application deadline: July 19, 2026 at 11:59 PM (GMT)

Do you want to make a difference around you?

- Are you between 18 and 30 years old?
- Do you have a project idea, a community initiative, an entrepreneurial activity, or simply the will to create a positive impact around you?
- Whether you are a woman or a man, whatever your background or where you live, this programme is for you!

The New Leaders Lab gives you, youth from all walks of life, the confidence, skills and network to take action.

1. A leadership programme accessible to all

The New Leaders Lab (NLL) is a **leadership programme** for young **women and men**, aged 18 to 30, from **diverse backgrounds**, living in **urban, peri-urban and rural areas** in the following 19 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Congo, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia.

The New Leaders Lab aims to help you:

- Develop confidence in yourself and your project in a supportive environment
- Overcome obstacles and turn your idea into a concrete project
- Connect with other young women and men who share the desire to act, innovate and have a positive impact in their community
- Learn alongside trainers, mentors and experts dedicated to your project
- Strengthen your leadership, entrepreneurship and civic engagement skills
- Become part of a network of dynamic young women and men, drivers of change
- Benefit from mentorship by African and European experts

At the end of the programme, each participant will have the opportunity to present their project to a jury and a diverse audience. The 57 most promising projects will receive small incentives to start implementing their activities.

2. A programme adapted to local realities

The New Leaders Lab training sessions take into consideration the professional, personal and family constraints of selected candidates.

Spread over a period of 4 months starting from September 2026, the New Leaders Lab will last on average 90 to 120 hours (about 10 hours per week).

Each training week is organized around varied activities including personal work, group work, plenary sessions, masterclasses, field visits, etc.

In Benin, Congo, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mauritania, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal and Togo, sessions will follow a hybrid format.

In Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia, sessions will be held exclusively in person.

Participation in the New Leaders Lab is **entirely free of charge**.

The New Leaders Lab is a programme carried out by the Africa-Europe Youth Academy project, funded by the European Union.

3. The New Leaders Lab is made for you

The New Leaders Lab highly encourage applications from young women and men from all backgrounds, including persons with disabilities, individuals from different living environments, those with unique life experiences, and those who may require specific support during the training programme. All levels of education are welcome (primary, secondary, university, etc.).

You can apply to the New Leaders Lab if:

- You are between 18 and 30 years old;
- You reside in one of the 19 eligible countries;

- You have a basic knowledge of French, English or Portuguese,
- You are involved in community, association or entrepreneurial initiatives, or wish to get more involved in your community;
- You have a project or business idea to implement;
- Your idea relates to topics such as climate change, rural development, urban development, social and gender inclusion, entrepreneurship, etc.

Don't wait any longer, submit your application!

4. Join the New Leaders Lab!

Your application to the New Leaders Lab is your chance to tell us about yourself, your background (personal, professional, academic, etc), your ambitions and motivations for joining the programme, any potential difficulties and support needs within the programme, as well as your project and your vision for it.

The application form is divided into 3 key parts covering:

- Your presentation (who you are, your background, your aspirations, your motivation, etc)
- Your leadership experiences and activities (entrepreneurial, community, civic, social, environmental),
- A presentation of your project idea to be implemented.

To submit your application, click on the link below:

<https://ee-eu.kobotoolbox.org/x/iDhzani1>

5. About the selection process

Selection criteria

If your application is eligible (see section 3), it will be assessed based on:

- Your leadership potential;
- Your personal experiences and motivation for the programme;

- the relevance and coherence of your project idea in relation to the needs of your target group and the project themes (see section 3).

Feel free to share as much information as possible about yourself, your background, your motivation, and the potential impact of your idea, while staying within the required word limit (500 words maximum).

Any incomplete applications, or applications submitted through any channel other than the official online New Leaders Lab application form, will not be considered.

Notification of application results

You and all applicants will be notified of the result of your application within 45 days after the call for applications closes.

Results will be communicated by the partner universities, incubators and training centers responsible for implementing the New Leaders Lab in each country.

Important: *The notification timeline may vary depending on the number of applications received.*

6. Congratulations, you've been selected!

For selected candidates:

Following the selection notification, all selected candidates will receive an additional email sharing programme details, including the training calendar, activities, logistical aspects and next steps, including per diem arrangements.

As each country has different realities, per diem arrangements (amount, eligibility, logistics) will be communicated directly by the local partner responsible for implementing the New Leaders Lab in the country.

7. Need more information?

For any questions regarding the call for applications in particular, and the New Leaders Lab in general, feel free to write to us at: aeacademy@expertisefrance.fr . by June 30, 2026 at the latest.

Every week, until July 6, 2026, our answers will be updated on the programme website: Capacity4dev.europa.eu.

Information sessions will be held to support you in your application. Dates will be announced on social media and on the website mentioned above.

8. Privacy Policy

All personal data shared as part of this questionnaire is confidential. It will be stored securely and processed solely for purposes related to the implementation, management and monitoring of the Africa-Europe Youth Academy project.

9. About the Africa-Europe Youth Academy (AEYA)

The **“Africa-Europe Youth Academy”** project (AEYA) is one of the flagship programmes of the European Union's Youth Action Plan in External Action (YAB) and is part of the “Youth Mobility for Africa” initiative under the **“Global Gateway”** Africa-Europe investment programme. The project is implemented by Expertise France and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS).

It aims to support young people (18-30 years old) in developing their leadership skills and implementing sustainable solutions while building connections between Africa and Europe.

As part of the New Leaders Lab within the AEYA project, youth studies and consultations were conducted in the 19 participating countries to address the real needs of young people and offer them a learning experience that is relevant, practical, and adapted to their context.

The implementation of the New Leaders Lab will therefore be carried out by local universities, incubators and training centers, under the coordination of Expertise France, AICS and its partners (University of Turin / University of Pavia).
