Participant Guidebook

Introduction and Purpose.

The NYFF Hackathon at the SIPA Conference 2025 is designed to unlock innovative, youth-led, technology-driven solutions tackling Nigeria's pressing challenges in digital civic participation, governance, employment, financial inclusion, and literacy. This hackathon, as a side event to the SIPA Conference, provides a platform for young innovators to pitch ideas, receive mentoring, and secure seed funding to bring their solutions to life.

Hackathon Format at SIPA Conference.

On the conference day, selected participants will convene at the NYFF booth, where they will receive hands-on mentorship and coaching from experienced professionals to refine their proposals and strengthen their pitch presentations. This preparatory session is designed to empower teams for success in the pitch competition.

Participation Eligibility and Team Formation.
- Open to Nigerian youth innovators, leaders, and technologists aged 18 to 35.
- Teams can be individuals or groups with complementary skills in technology, governance, finance, social enterprise, or related fields.
- Diversity and inclusion are strongly encouraged, with teams expected to include at least one female member.

Hackathon Themes.

Participants should develop solutions aligned with one or more of the following priority themes:

1. **Digital Innovation for Civic Participation and Good Governance**
   Solutions that leverage technology to increase youth engagement in democratic processes, promote transparency, accountability, and foster inclusive governance mechanisms.
2. **Future of Work and Employability**
   Innovations addressing youth unemployment by supporting skill development, career readiness, job matching, and empowering youth to adapt to the evolving digital economy.

3. **Financial Inclusion and Literacy**
   Tools and platforms that expand access to financial services for underserved youth and enhance their financial knowledge and management skills to foster economic independence.

Mentorship and Support.

Mentors from civic tech, governance, finance, and youth development sectors will provide:

- Technical guidance on solution design and prototyping
- Strategic insight on aligning solutions with policy frameworks and youth needs
- Coaching on delivering compelling pitches

Development Process:

Each team is expected to develop a prototype solution addressing one or more of the challenge prompts. This could be a data pipeline, a web or mobile app, a visualisation dashboard, a machine learning model – whatever format best fits your idea. Given the limited time, aim to develop a functional, minimum viable product that effectively demonstrates your core concept. Iteration is key: start with a basic version and then refine it. It's okay if your initial idea evolves; part of the hackathon spirit is learning and adapting quickly. Divide tasks among team members (e.g., one person focuses on data collection, another on modeling, another on frontend visualization) to work in parallel. Keep an eye on the time and set internal milestones to stay on track. The organising team will provide a channel (e.g., Slack, Basecamp, or a similar platform) for posting updates or requesting help at any time during the hackathon. Remember, the emphasis is on collaboration and creativity – use each teammate's strengths and communicate often.

Submission Requirements and Evaluation

Participants should prepare:

- A clear, concise pitch presentation (oral and/or slides)
- Basic project documentation outlining the idea, challenge addressed, and anticipated impact

Projects will be evaluated on:

- Innovation and creativity

- Feasibility and technical soundness
- Relevance to youth empowerment, governance, and financial inclusion
- Effectiveness of the pitch and presentation skills

Awards and Post-Hack Support

- Winners will receive seed funding of $1,000 to prototype and implement their ideas.
- Selected projects will access extended mentorship and incubation opportunities.
- Participants will gain visibility through NYFF media and partner networks.

Code of Conduct

- Respect and inclusivity in all interactions
- Integrity and originality in ideas
- Responsible use of data and privacy compliance
- Collaboration and openness to learning

Logistics and Contact

- The hackathon is hosted in-person at the SIPA Conference with hybrid participation support.
- Participants will have access to reliable internet, workspace, and refreshments at the NYFF booth.
- Contact NYFF at nyff@leapafrica.org for support.