

# AFRICAN LEADHERS

Gender equality is a fundamental human right and is vital for a prosperous world, a thriving Africa.

Women representing half of the world population, it is more than necessary to empower them to actively engage in all areas of society.

Gender equality supports all the essential foundations for a healthy economy and prosperous nations and is vital to the collective success of Africa against the sustainable development goals.

Currently, it is expected that gender gaps will take over 120 years to close in Sub-Saharan Africa, and over 135 years for pay and leadership equity to be reached. Historically women have been excluded from decision making spaces and programs that affect their health and well-being. Voice, participation, and leadership are vital for the empowerment of women.

Achieving gender equality is beneficial for everyone, giving each person equal opportunities at work and in the public sphere. It is about reaching better education and health outcomes, lower mortality rates and a higher per capita income.

The African LeadHERs initiative was launched on the occasion of the Generation Equality Forum which took place from 30 June to 2 July, organized by UN Women and co-chaired by the governments of France and Mexico in partnership with civil society and youth. The aim of the event was to make concrete commitments to gender equality, following the previous ones made in Beijing in 1995.

African LeadHERs started off with a radio show called "Youth – the floor is yours", organized on 30 June 2021 with the National Youth Alliance for Reproductive Health (ANJSR) on the theme of "Bodily autonomy and rights in reproductive and sexual health". The show was dedicated to giving a voice to women who are committed and active in this field and to discussing concrete solutions so that women in Africa can make their own decisions about their health.

Following this, in collaboration with the Senegalese fashion brand Tongoro, a fashion show was held on 5 July, bringing together leaders from the world of culture and art, to inspire and engage women.

African LeadHERs supports the inclusion of women and girls on public platforms and in leadership and aims to encourage women and girls, in all their diversity, to significantly participate in decision-making spaces for improved public health.

Gender Equality is paramount to achieving every one of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals and at Speak Up Africa, we are committed to transforming this belief into meaningful action and engagement.

Through the African LeadHERs program, we partner with leaders from all sectors of society, including sports, fashion, culture and art to creatively work together to build a stronger, fairer and more inclusive world.



Headquartered in Dakar, Senegal, Speak Up Africa is a strategic communications and advocacy organization dedicated to catalyzing leadership, enabling policy change, and increasing awareness for sustainable development in Africa – particularly around issues such as sanitation, immunization, malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs). Speak Up Africa is committed to promoting research and development (R&D) and encouraging scientific innovations as part of public discourse in Africa.

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