

2025 ANNUAL  
IMPACT REPORT

# AFRICA SOLVES.

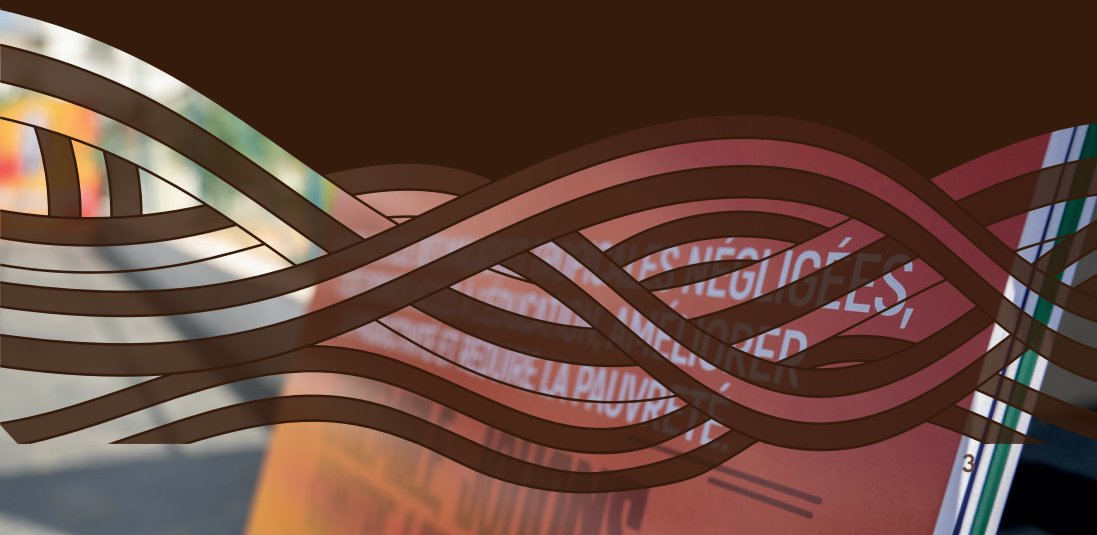
DESIGNING SOLUTIONS.  
TAKING OWNERSHIP.





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*DESIGNING SOLUTIONS.  
TAKING OWNERSHIP*



2025 was a stress test for the global development architecture. Funding volatility and geopolitical shifts exposed a structural vulnerability long understood by African leaders: progress that depends on external decisions is inherently fragile.

Where systems were financed, governed, and defended domestically, progress held. Where they were not, it stalled. Speak Up Africa entered 2025 with a clear conviction: resilience is not rhetorical. It is institutional. It is built into who sets priorities, who controls financing and who ensures implementation.

Across health, gender equality, research and innovation, and sanitation, our work focused on strengthening the architecture of African ownership, connecting community leadership, political decision-making, and budget governance so that commitments move beyond announcements to execution.

In 2025, Speak Up Africa boosted the ecosystem that allows African research and innovation to move beyond “breakthrough” headlines and into policy, financing, and scale. Through African Voices of Science, the organization supported a cohort of 20 African Health Research and Development (HR&D) champions – scientists and experts who are not only positioned to do the work but also to advance priority agendas and advocate for sustained investment. When African experts are consistently centred in public and policy discourse, locally-led solutions become easier to fund, defend and scale.

One of the clearest markers of durability is when collaboration becomes institutional. In the sanitation sector, six countries – Senegal, Cote d’Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger – came together to establish the West African Platform of Sanitation Directorates, concluding with a founding charter and a joint roadmap – a step towards regional peer learning and coordinated action.

Regarding health financing and sustainable development, parliamentarians from Francophone countries launched a regional network of parliamentary champions, reinforcing an increasingly clear idea: health outcomes depend not only on technical plans but also on political continuity, oversight, and financing.

Speak Up Africa’s convening power is built to do one thing: turn alignment into movement. In 2025, more than 400 participants gathered for the second edition of Speak Up Africa Day, less an anniversary than a platform designed to bring decision-makers and implementers into the same room through a series of Solution Labs.

The year also opened with Go Beyond, a campaign to accelerate the elimination of NTDs by building broader coalitions where communities are co-creators rather than afterthoughts. Because when communities are invited only at the end, implementation becomes persuasion; when they co-design from the start, implementation becomes ownership.

Perhaps the most visible expression of taking ownership in 2025 came through the scaling of Voix EssentiELLES.

### ***SPOTLIGHT ON VOIXESSENTIELLES***

The initiative backed women-led community organizations across French-speaking Africa with catalytic support close to \$3 million, supporting 76 organizations across 6 countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Togo and Senegal). The shift here is not only numeric. It is structural: women-led organizations move from service delivery to agenda-setting, changing who gets heard, and increasingly who gets funded.

And Speak Up Africa did not stop at mobilizing moral urgency; it sharpened the financing pathway. The report outlines the Voix EssentiELLES Fund for Malaria Elimination, with a goal of mobilizing \$4 million by 2030 and supporting at least 210 organizations. This is a direct invitation to the private sector not to sponsor a moment, but to invest in a mechanism that sustains women-led action to fight malaria every day.

### ***TWO LESSONS EMERGED ACROSS GOVERNMENTS, PRIVATE-SECTOR ACTORS, AND COMMUNITIES***

**First:** resilience cannot rest on volatile external financing. The funding shock of 2025 was a warning flare: progress holds best where there is domestic ownership, political accountability, and financing pathways that don't collapse when external priorities change.

**Second:** decision-makers act when they help design the solution. Co-creation is not a process detail; it is the difference between symbolic commitment and implementation that survives friction.

Speak Up Africa enters 2026 with a clearer mandate: move from momentum to durability, and measure success not only by announced commitments but by implemented commitments through budget execution and last-mile delivery.

The organization will also advance a strategic step taken in 2025: expanding its mandate to include education, with a focus on foundational learning reforms because lasting health outcomes and gender equality cannot be sustained without strong education systems.

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*FROM VOICE TO  
RESILIENCE: AFRICA'S NEW  
CHAPTER*



2025 forced the world to admit what many African health leaders have long known: the global assistance architecture can shift overnight - and when it does, the most vulnerable are the first to pay the price.

Africa is now laser-focused on a decisive transition: away from overreliance on donor funding and external frameworks, toward resilient systems grounded in health sovereignty and accountability. That transition is not a slogan. Rather, it is a set of choices - budget choices, governance choices, partnership choices, made repeatedly, in full public view.

If 2024 was about sustaining momentum, 2025 was about choosing durability. In a year marked by economic unpredictability and shrinking global health funding, Africa remained focused in one direction: solutions driven by its own citizens. One truth became unmistakable - the new era will reward countries and institutions that can finance, govern, and communicate their own solutions, while building fair partnerships that respect national priorities.

African countries took the reins by laying out a plan to reset Africa's path toward health sovereignty. The Accra Reset provides an African-led accountability framework for a re-imagined health governance architecture, one that aligns national plans with multilateral commitments and explicitly builds on the Abuja Declaration and the Lusaka Agenda. It sees countries taking charge of their own health financing and engaging in fair global partnerships to ensure that everyone has access to healthcare, regardless of location or social status, and drawing on local solutions. Essentially, it places Africa's vision for health sovereignty firmly on record and on a clock.



At Speak Up Africa, we have leaned into the work that helps those choices become possible. We help communities lead, institutions deliver, and ideas win, so progress is owned, financed, and sustained from within the continent.

Our work is built around people, not projects: the scientists turning evidence into policy; the women leading digital health ecosystems; the institutions building gender into governance; and the public-sector leaders making evidence-based choices that protect trust.

This year, African Voices of Science amplified the voices of African researchers and experts to increase visibility, influence policy, and drive investment in African-led solutions, because sovereignty is built on capacity, and capacity is built on people.

We continued to strengthen women's leadership in digital health through the African Women in Digital Health (AWiDH) mentorship program. We also invested in gender systems that outlast any single project by building communities and strengthening women's leadership through our flagship Voix EssentiELLES program.

For sanitation, we supported regional collaboration grounded in evidence-based decision-making to protect public trust, even



*WE'VE TALKED, WE'VE PLANNED.  
2026 IS FOR ACTION.*

when the right decision is to stop, decommission responsibly, and reset the strategy.

The end goal of this transition is resilient health systems across Africa. 2025 was decisive, but it was not the finish line.

We've talked. We've planned. We've written the strategies; 2026 is for action.

Sincerely,

*Yacine Djibo*  
FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR

# ABOUT SPEAK UP AFRICA

EVERYTHING WE DO IS  
DESIGNED TO TACKLE THE  
PRESSING SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES  
FACING OUR CONTINENT



Speak Up Africa drives lasting change across Africa by enabling African leadership and collective action, strengthening advocacy, and building movements that transform systems and improve lives.

At Speak Up Africa, we champion African leadership, connect changemakers, and advocate for accountability to turn commitments into real, measurable results.

Every initiative we drive, from malaria prevention to sanitation and gender equality, is rooted in one belief: strong systems and collective action create lasting impact.

Our work cuts across sectors and challenges, because we understand that strong, resilient health systems are essential to achieving universal health coverage.

### **WE CONVENE**

We bring together diverse stakeholders to elevate the issues that matter most to our continent and turn attention into action. By uniting governments, civil society, academia, media and private sector leaders, we amplify African voices, align on shared priorities, and catalyze coordinated responses that move the needle now, not years from now.

### **WE ENABLE**

We equip our partners with the technical, financial and strategic support they need to drive lasting change in their own contexts. Through data, tools, mentoring, and visibility platforms, we help organizations test, prove, and scale solutions rooted in local realities and owned by communities.

### **WE ADVOCATE**

We work alongside leaders in government, parliaments, the private sector, civil society, media and global institutions to secure policies and investments that endure. By shaping agendas, mobilizing resources and demanding accountability, we help turn commitments into measurable progress for health and sustainable development across Africa.

# OUR VALUES

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These values shape everything we do, from the way we build partnerships to how we influence policies and investments.

They keep us grounded in Africa's realities while pushing us to imagine and deliver better futures.



## I – INCLUSION

We believe the people most affected by decisions must shape them. We intentionally create space for women, youth, communities, and under-represented voices to lead, be heard, and drive solutions.



## D – DILIGENCE

Change requires discipline. We are rigorous in how we plan, implement, and measure our work, making sure every action is thoughtful, evidence-informed, and aligned with our mission.



## E – EXCELLENCE

We hold ourselves to high standards in everything we do, from our research and advocacy to our partnerships and communications, so that our work can be trusted, scaled, and sustained.



## A – ACCOUNTABILITY

We are transparent about our decisions, our results, and our use of resources. We listen, learn, and adapt with our partners and communities, and we hold ourselves accountable for the impact we seek.



## S – SUSTAINABILITY

We design initiatives that last: strengthening local capacity and systems, and investing in solutions that governments, communities, and partners can own and carry forward over time.

# OUR STORY

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Speak Up Africa was founded in 2011 by Yacine Djibo with one clear conviction: lasting solutions to Africa's most pressing challenges must be imagined, led, and owned by Africans themselves. From the very beginning, the ambition was to work with actors across society to design and implement effective, sustainable responses to the issues shaping people's lives.

At the time, Yacine and her co-founder, Fara Ndiaye, were deeply engaged in malaria prevention and control. Working across West Africa, they saw a critical gap: too many public health responses were imported or generic, and too few were tailored to the specific realities, data, and priorities of each country and community. They set out to change that. Drawing on their strategic, communications, and partnership-building experience, they created a platform that could connect governments, civil society, the private sector, researchers, and communities around concrete, locally grounded solutions.

What began as a small office in Dakar with a team of three has scaled into a pan-African advocacy organization. Today, Speak Up Africa brings together a team of around 40 experts and implements projects across nine countries, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

Since 2021, Speak Up Africa has hosted the Ouagadougou Partnership Coordination Unit. Formed in 2011, the Ouagadougou Partnership works to improve access to quality family planning services in West Africa by strengthening collaboration and coordination among countries and donors.

From our base in Dakar, we continue to connect voices, ideas, and action, working every day to build a healthier, more sustainable Africa.



# OUR REACH

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Speak Up Africa operates across Africa, with a strong Francophone footprint and global engagement, amplifying African voices in global spaces.



## WEST AFRICA:

Based in Dakar, Senegal, our solid relationships with key decision makers uniquely qualify us to drive policy change and advocacy across the region.



## FRANCOPHONE AFRICA:

With a strong Francophone footprint, we coordinate regional collaboration by linking decision-makers, community leaders, and partners across countries to align priorities, strengthen accountability, and amplify collective impact.



## AFRICA:

Our work spans the continent, catalyzing systemic change in health, equality, and sustainable development.



## GLOBAL:

Our approach elevates African perspectives to shape the frameworks that drive sustainable progress worldwide.



# 2025: OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

*BEYOND DATA, THERE ARE  
MOVEMENTS GROWING,  
LEADERS RISING, AND  
SOLUTIONS TAKING HOLD.*



## **\$3 MILLION**

in grants provided to 76 women-led organizations across 6 countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Togo and Senegal)

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## **43**

staff trained on gender-transformational approaches to strengthen the internal capacity needed to embed gender across program design, delivery, and monitoring

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## **6**

countries (Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso) created the West African Platform of Sanitation Directorates

## **2**

Flagship studies completed mapping **35** health, research and development (HR&D) priorities and **52** research and development platforms

## **394**

cases of SRH/GBV monitored through the monitoring and alert systems put in place by community-based organizations in the Voix EssentiELLEs program

## **400+**

Attendees at the Second Edition of Speak Up Africa Day

## **337**

African Women in Digital Health applied for our Mentorship Program

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## **20**

African Health Research & Development and Innovation (HR&D) champions selected for the second edition of the African Voices of Science (AVoS) initiative

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## **58**

Champions engaged in Speak Up Africa activities across all of our programs

## **63**

women are now in decision-making spaces across Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Togo through the Voix EssentiELLES program

# AFRICA SOLVES: OUR IMPACT



*INNOVATION ISN'T ONLY  
ABOUT TECHNOLOGY,  
IT'S ABOUT LEADERSHIP,  
CREATIVITY, AND FINDING  
NEW WAYS TO DRIVE  
CHANGE*

**AISHA ABUBAKR**

*Preparedness and Readiness Officer, Nigeria  
Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, African  
Women in Digital Health Mentee*



# AFRICA SOLVES THROUGH INNOVATION

*Advancing homegrown research, knowledge, and digital solutions.*

In 2025, Speak Up Africa strengthened Africa's innovation landscape by doing what often makes the biggest difference: building the platforms and pathways that help African ideas travel faster - from evidence to policy, from pilots to scale.

We supported the launch of the 1st Continental Coalition for Health Research and Development. The African Health, Research, Innovation and Development Alliance (AHRIDA) in March 2025, by bringing together three continental and regional organisations under one umbrella to drive more coordinated, African-led action on health research and innovation: Amref Health Africa, the Strengthening Africa's Health Technologies Advocacy Coalition (SAHTAC), and the Coalition for Health Research and Development (CHReaD).

In parallel, through African Voices of Science (AVoS), we continued elevating African scientists as credible public leaders who can shape priorities, influence policy, and drive investment in locally led health solutions—an approach reinforced by the rollout of the second edition of AVoS in September 2025.

Through the African Women in Digital Health (AWiDH) initiative, co-chaired with Africa CDC, we expanded the pipeline of women innovators in digital health by launching the second mentorship cohort and the Dakar Mentorship Bootcamp, strengthening women's leadership and closing the gender gap in digital health.

The second edition of Speak Up Africa Day, in October 2025, convened policymakers, civil society, private sector, youth and media in action-oriented "Solution Labs" designed to co-create practical solutions and accelerate African-led progress.



## *CASE STUDY:* **AFRICAN VOICES OF SCIENCE**

### ***THE CHALLENGE***

Across Africa, breakthrough research and locally relevant ideas exist—but too often they stall between the lab and real-world impact. Limited visibility for African scientists, weak links between researchers and decision-makers, and underinvestment in homegrown R&D slow the translation of evidence into funded pilots, policies, and scale.

### ***WHAT WE DID***

We built a cohort of 20 champions selected not only for scientific excellence, but for their capacity to influence policy and communicate strategically, across public health, biomedical research, innovation, policy and governance. Through African Voices of Science (AVoS), Speak Up Africa strengthened a pipeline that turns research excellence into innovation outcomes. We are:

- Positioning African scientists as public leaders through strategic communications, media engagement, and storytelling —building credibility and demand for their work.
- Connecting researchers to policy and financing conversations, equipping champions to translate evidence into clear budget asks, policy briefs, and investment narratives.
- Building a cross-country community of practice, enabling peer learning, replication of what works, and faster iteration of solutions.

### ***WHY IT MATTERS***

AVoS makes African-led health research and development more visible, investable, and usable. Decision makers are more likely to support locally led solutions when scientists have the means and platforms to influence agendas, driving stronger products, programs, and policies grounded in African evidence. The result is a shift from isolated discoveries to adopted innovations that strengthen health systems, build research sovereignty, and deliver better outcomes for communities.

## AFRICA SOLVES THROUGH LEADERSHIP

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*Strengthening accountability, advancing policy reform, and mobilizing sustainable, African-led investments for health, equity and country-led achievements.*

On the sidelines of the African Water and Sanitation Congress in Kampala, Uganda, the continent's central convening platform for sanitation policymakers in 2025, Speak Up Africa led a side event. The event culminated in the creation of a first-of-its-kind West African Platform of Sanitation Directorates, convening Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso to align policy dialogue, peer learning, and investment readiness.

Speak Up Africa spurred further collective action amongst decision-makers during its Speak Up Africa Day. During this event, parliamentarians from four Francophone African countries officially launched the Regional Network of Parliamentary Champions for Health and Sustainable Development. The network aims to strengthen political commitment and ensure sustainable financing to close the funding gaps in national health programs.



*AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE, WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO PLACE HEALTH AT THE HEART OF OUR PRIORITIES. WE ARE THEREFORE DELIGHTED TO HAVE WORKED TOGETHER TO ADOPT A COMMON AND REGIONAL ROADMAP THAT WILL ENABLE US TO ADVOCATE FOR INCLUSIVE POLICIES AND MOBILIZE SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES TO PROTECT OUR POPULATIONS AND ENSURE A HEALTHIER FUTURE FOR AFRICANS*

### **HON. KOUAKOU DAPA YAO KOSSONOU MARCELLIN**

*Member of Parliament of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and Coordinator of the Regional Network of Parliamentary Champions for Health and Sustainable Development*



**SPOTLIGHT:**  
**LOCAL LEADERSHIP IN  
SUPPORT OF MALARIA  
ELIMINATION**

*Across West Africa, Speak Up Africa supported high-level political engagement to accelerate malaria elimination through strengthened leadership, domestic resource mobilization, and multi-sectoral partnerships.*

In Senegal, a Parliamentary Caucus for Malaria Elimination was launched in October 2025, convened by Speak Up Africa in collaboration with the Committee for Monitoring, Vigilance and Advocacy (CSVA), the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM), and the National Malaria Control Program. Parliamentarians were briefed on health financing

challenges as budget debates and the Global Fund's eighth replenishment approached, with Honorable Khady Sarr calling for authorities to honor the commitment to allocate 15% of the national budget to health.

In Benin, leaders responded to the mounting pressure from global funding cuts by convening in Cotonou with the support of Speak Up Africa. The result: parliamentarians, government, civil society, and the private sector committed to increasing domestic resources, mobilizing private investment, ensuring equitable access to care, and contributing to the Global Fund's eighth replenishment, which aims to save 23 million lives by 2029. Through initiatives such as Benin's Zero Malaria Fund and Senegal's parliamentary engagement, Speak Up Africa continues to champion the message that malaria elimination requires political will, community leadership, and sustainable financing moving forward as one.





## **SPOTLIGHT: VOIX ESSENTIELLES EXPANDS TO TOGO AND BENIN**

*Voix EssentiELLES is an initiative launched in 2021 to support the leadership of women-led community organizations across French-speaking Africa through targeted small grants and capacity strengthening, including mentorship. It supports women leaders working across malaria, TB, HIV, gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health, to ensure lived realities shape decisions and not just the delivery of services.*

Voix EssentiELLES entered a new phase with the expansion into Togo and Benin, adding 20 new organisations (10 in each country) in

March 2025. The newly integrated organizations met to identify strategic partnerships with local and international institutional players, consolidating a strong momentum in favor of women's inclusion in these two new countries. This expansion will foster the emergence of a new generation of women leaders capable of influencing decision-making, health policies, and human rights in French-speaking Africa.

## **AFRICA SOLVES THROUGH COLLECTIVE ACTION**

In 2025, we were building cross-sector coalitions that transform narratives, change conversations and place feminist movements, youth voices, and citizen expertise at the center of policy and action.

We kicked off the year by launching GO BEYOND, a people-powered campaign to accelerate the elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs).



The campaign was built on a broader, bolder coalition in which communities are co-creators of solutions not passive recipients. The initiative deliberately “goes beyond” traditional health advocacy by encouraging cross-sector collaboration, amplifying community voices, fostering inclusive partnerships, and pushing decision-makers to prioritize NTDs with investment, policy action, and community-led solutions.

Speak Up Africa’s 2025 media partnerships show collective action

by pooling the credibility, reach, and resources of governments, broadcasters, advocacy organizations, and continental partners around shared African priorities.

They show impact because those partnerships are being used to generate more than awareness: they help unlock funding, strengthen prevention efforts, shape institutional agendas, and move issues from communication into action.



*THROUGH GO BEYOND, WE ARE AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF ARTISTS, ATHLETES, AND COMMUNITY LEADERS ACROSS AFRICA TO TRANSFORM HOW WE FIGHT NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES. BY BRINGING THESE DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES TO DECISION-MAKERS, WE'RE BUILDING THE POLITICAL MOMENTUM AND GRASSROOTS ENGAGEMENT NEEDED TO ELIMINATE NTDs ONCE AND FOR ALL*

**YACINE DJIBO**

*Executive Director and Founder of Speak Up Africa*





## **SPOTLIGHT: COLLECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS**

Our partnership with Canal+ Senegal and Senegal's National Malaria Control Program (NMCP) brings together the public sector mandate and national strategy, together with the media company's reach and corporate resources, aimed at strengthening awareness, accelerating prevention, and mobilizing sustainable resources. On the sidelines of the Africa CEO Forum Speak Up Africa replicated this collective action approach in Cote d'Ivoire by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Canal+ Côte d'Ivoire and the National Malaria Control Program.

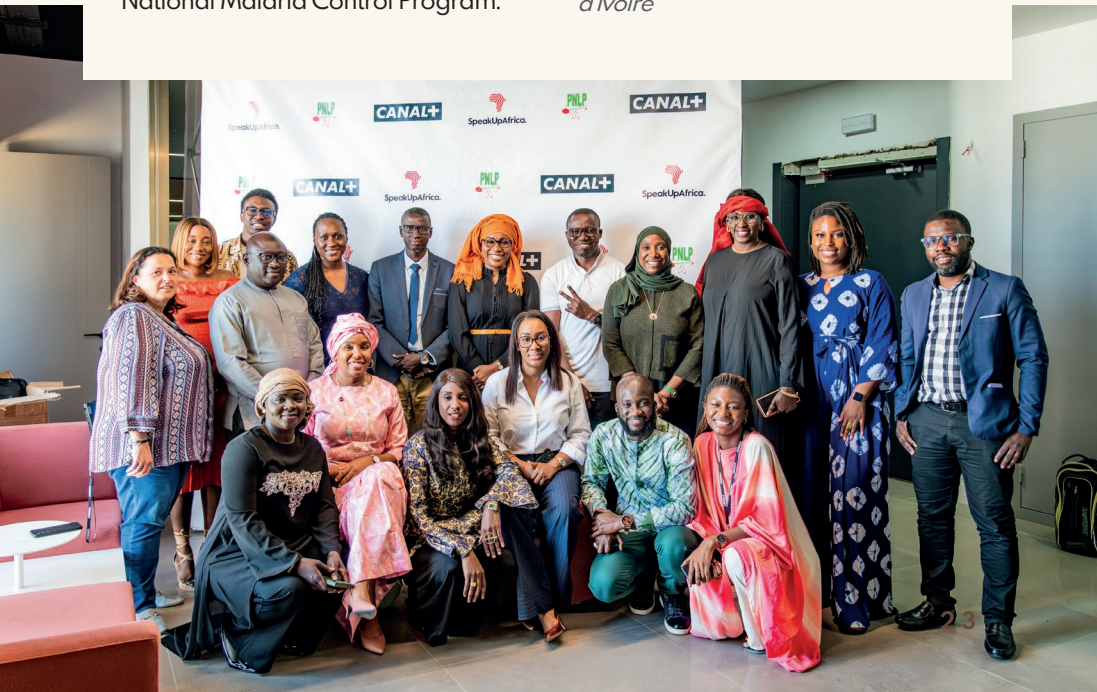
These agreements also build on a five-year collaboration between Speak Up Africa and Canal+ Group, which has contributed more than \$1.5 million in airtime and in-kind support.



*THROUGH OUR PLATFORM,  
WE ARE PROUD TO DRIVE  
AWARENESS AND CONTRIBUTE  
TO THE FIGHT AGAINST  
MALARIA. TOGETHER WITH  
SPEAK UP AFRICA AND THEIR  
PARTNERS, WE ARE COMMITTED  
TO CHANGING THE STORY TO  
END MALARIA IN AFRICA*

**ADAMA KONÉ**

*Director General of Canal+ Côte  
d'Ivoire*





## **SPOTLIGHT:** **CORRECT THE MAP**

Correct the Map marked a collective action milestone in 2025. We built the campaign in partnership with Africa No Filter and with the endorsement of the African Union leadership to replace one of the most entrenched symbols of distortion in global education and media: the Mercator map projection, which distorts Africa's size, making it appear significantly smaller.

Together with Africa No Filter, we rallied institutions, educators, media platforms, and citizens behind a tangible solution: adopting more accurate, equitable projections such as Equal Earth and no longer producing visuals that shrink Africa and the Global South. Accurate representation is not cosmetic; it's strategic, educational, and deeply linked to equity. The campaign's momentum reached a major milestone when the African Union (55 Member States) publicly endorsed Correct the Map in August 2025, elevating it from advocacy to a continent-backed call for institutional change.

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## **AFRICA SOLVES THROUGH CHAMPIONING WOMEN AND GIRLS**

By championing women and girls, Speak Up Africa turns gender equity into a delivery strategy. Our solution focuses on supporting communities, shifting who holds influence, and financing what works.

In 2025, we scaled up the Voix EssentiELLES Fund. The Fund was already supporting women-led community organizations to overcome the various obstacles – administrative, communication and logistical – to ensure meaningful engagement in decision-making spaces. Through leadership and capacity strengthening, women-led organizations have moved from



*I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT INCLUDING WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES IS CRUCIAL—THEIR PARTICIPATION STRENGTHENS GOVERNANCE, MULTIPLIES THE IMPACT OF HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES, AND ACCELERATES THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE AFRICAN UNION'S AGENDA 2063 GOALS*

**YVETTE SESSI ALAVO**  
*Voix EssentiELLES (Benin)*



service delivery to agenda-setting and health decision-making. Since its inception, the initiative has awarded \$3 million in grants to 76 women-led organizations and five national networks, working on issues including malaria, HIV, gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health, and climate resilience. This work is not only closing equity gaps, but also reshaping who gets heard and who gets funded in global health.

The 2025 scale-up creates a dedicated Voix EssentiELLES Fund for Malaria Elimination. A practical investment vehicle for private-sector partners to support women-led, community-driven malaria action. The goal is to mobilize \$4 million to fund at least 210 women-led community organizations across French-speaking Africa by 2030. Providing women with the resources

and tools to lead sustainable change, whilst building a regional feminist coalition to elevate malaria as a political and budgetary priority.

Beyond malaria, we supported six African women in the digital health space, through the African Women in Digital Health (AWiDH)

program, from policy experts to innovators. The AWiDH mentorship program pairs early career professionals working in digital health with experienced practitioners to provide guidance, networks, and practical support to further their digital health careers.

The program also supported the development of the «Gender Mainstreaming in National Digital Health Strategies in Africa» guidelines. These guidelines, aimed at policymakers, champion a bold vision: to reimagine digital health in Africa as a space of empowerment, equity, and innovation—where gender is not a box to check but a principle to lead with; not an add-on but a foundation. The AWiDH guidelines were subsequently applied to Niger’s digital health policies and strategies to strengthen gender integration in this sector.

2025 also saw us making inclusivity of women’s health research and development (R&D) more measurable and, in turn, more actionable. In collaboration with Gawani Africa, The Center for Africa Justice and Gender Equality, we developed the Women Health Research and Development scorecard. The Women’s Health R&D Scorecard is an African-led accountability tool designed to measure and track women’s inclusion, leadership, and participation across the research and development (R&D) value chain.





## **SPOTLIGHT:** *WORLD NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASE (NTD) DAY 2025*

During World NTD Day, Speak Up Africa's flagship GO BEYOND campaign bridged culture, sport and public health by connecting

youth-focused engagements in Senegal, Kenya and Ethiopia with sports-centered activations in Benin and in Senegal, delivered in partnership with the Basketball Africa League (BAL).

A flagship milestone was the launch of the "No to NTDs" Champions Club, mobilizing young advocates, influencers, and creators who signed a commitment charter to use their platforms to fight NTDs and build a youth movement determined to end NTDs by 2030.





## **SPOTLIGHT:** *CHANGE THE STORY - CHAMPIONING WOMEN AND GIRLS*

### **WHAT WE DID**

We launched the Francophone chapter of the Change the Story Campaign on the sidelines of the Africa CEO Forum, the largest global CEO gathering in Africa, in Abidjan, alongside our partners, Malaria No More UK, the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA), and the RBM Partnership to End Malaria.

This private-sector moment was an opportunity to position malaria elimination as a strategic investment in economic growth and to make a clear case that progress depends on empowering women and girls as change agents, not only as beneficiaries, and also recognizing female entrepreneurs and innovators driving solutions in malaria prevention and treatment. The campaign amplified the voices of women and girls to mobilize

corporate action and was bolstered by the publication of a dedicated report on the private sector's role in ending malaria, spotlighting credible models of corporate engagement and inviting companies to move from awareness to investment. Grammy Award-winning artist Angélique Kidjo was also the campaign ambassador, addressing national decision-makers, international donors, funders, and the private sector, calling for renewed commitment and investment in the fight to eliminate malaria.

For the private sector, the call to action is simple: invest in women-led, community-driven malaria action, including initiatives such as the Voix EssentiELLES for Malaria Elimination Fund, to sustain impact on the ground where malaria is fought every day.



## WHY IT MATTERS

Malaria remains a major barrier to health and economic progress, and it deepens gender inequality, particularly through its impact on girls' schooling, women's unpaid care burden, and women's under-representation in decision-making and funding flows. The goal of the campaign was to transform malaria from an "endless crisis" to a solvable challenge, while making gender equity a core part of the solution.

## WHAT CHANGED?

By publishing our report on the private sector's role in ending malaria, we moved corporate engagement from a "nice-to-have" corporate social responsibility conversation to a clear investment case, equipping business leaders with evidence, practical pathways and examples of action. This strengthened our ability to mobilize private sector partners around gender-responsive malaria strategies and increase momentum for concrete commitments.



*TO AVOID LOSING YEARS OF PROGRESS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST MALARIA, SECURING NEW AND DIVERSIFIED SOURCES OF FUNDING IS URGENT. THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAS A DIRECT STAKE IN MALARIA ELIMINATION. HEALTHY COMMUNITIES LEAD TO THRIVING ECONOMIES.*

### **PIERRE N'GOU DIMBA**

*Minister of Health, Public Hygiene and Universal Health Coverage of Côte d'Ivoire*



Changez  
l'histoire

ZÉRO PALU !  
M'ENGAGE

# ELLE OUVRE LA VOIE : LE CHEMIN VERS ZÉRO PALUDISME

Lutte contre le paludisme : un levier économique et sociétal  
pour le secteur privé africain



# CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE

*THE SPEAK UP AFRICA DAY  
AND LEADERSHIP AWARD*



**SPEAK UP AFRICA DAY:  
CATALYZING COLLECTIVE  
ACTION – FROM SPORT TO  
CO-CREATING SOLUTIONS**



*TODAY'S AFRICA NO LONGER  
WAITS FOR SOLUTIONS TO  
COME FROM ELSEWHERE: IT  
INNOVATES, IT CREATES, IT  
INSPIRES*

**MR. SAMBA KOR**

*Chief of Staff, Ministry of Health and  
Public Hygiene*

In 2025, Speak Up Africa launched an innovative engagement dynamic by leveraging sport as a powerful tool for awareness, inclusion, and collective action. Through a community event held in Yoff in partnership with the Basketball Africa League and Special Olympics, the organization demonstrated the power of sport to convey key messages on health, equity, and inclusion—particularly among youth and local communities.

This momentum continued with Speak Up Africa Day, which brought together 409 participants from multiple countries—including policymakers, technical and



financial partners, civil society, media, and the private sector—around a shared ambition: to elevate and advance African-led solutions to health and development challenges.

At the heart of the event were four Solution Labs, designed as co-creation spaces aimed at generating concrete and actionable proposals. These Labs moved beyond traditional discussions to produce high-impact, forward-looking initiatives:

- A call to develop a continental strategy for Africa's pharmaceutical industry, including the identification of regional centers of excellence;
- Strengthening women's leadership, notably through the launch of the Voix EssentiELLES mentorship program;
- A proposal to create a dedicated platform for African journalists, to improve access to information, combat misinformation, and strengthen health reporting capacities;

- The establishment of a network of parliamentary champions, committed to advancing sustainable health financing and budget accountability.

These spaces also highlighted key cross-cutting priorities: strengthening African leadership, promoting locally grounded solutions, and ensuring the active participation of communities—particularly women and youth—in decision-making processes.

By connecting community mobilization, high-level dialogue, and solution co-creation, Speak Up Africa demonstrated its ability to transform engagement into concrete action and scalable initiatives.

This collective momentum also spotlighted committed leaders—policymakers, community actors, youth, and partners—whose efforts are shaping sustainable solutions for the continent. These initiatives and journeys embody what it means to be true Champions of Change.



**THE SPEAK UP AFRICA LEADERSHIP AWARD: CELEBRATING VISIONARY LEADERS SHAPING AFRICA'S SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**

We were proud to celebrate six exceptional leaders whose dedication and impact embody the spirit of African excellence at the Speak Up Africa Leadership Award Ceremony 2025, held in Dakar as part of the Speak Up Africa Day celebrations. These leaders represent the ecosystem that enables health sovereignty.



**DR MATSHIDISO MOETI**  
Former WHO AFRO, Regional Director



**DR IBRAHIMA SY**  
Minister of Health and Social action of Senegal



**YVETTE SESSI ALAVO**  
Founder of *l'icone 360* and *Voix EssentiELLES* from Benin



**ALLISON FEASTER**  
VP of Organizational Growth, *Celtics*



**DR. RAYMONDE GOUDOU-COFFIE**  
Minister Governor of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire



**BAMBA YOUSOUF**  
President of the pan-African network of journalists and media professionals on health and environmental issues in Africa (*REMAPSEN*)

The ceremony brought together over 100 guests and was graced by the presence of distinguished former West African Ministers of Health,

- **Dr. Michel Sidibé** (Mali),
- **Prof. Awa Marie Coll-Seck** (Senegal),
- **Dr. Abdourahmane Diallo** (Guinea),
- **Dr. Magda Robalo** (Guinea-Bissau),
- **Prof. Nicolas Meda** (Burkina Faso) and
- **Prof. Ndioro Ndiaye** (Former Minister of Women, Children and Family in Senegal),

whose leadership continues to inspire our shared mission for a healthier, stronger Africa.

**HOW HONOREES WERE SELECTED**

Speak Up Africa Leadership Award honorees are chosen for values-driven leadership and measurable impact: leaders who strengthen African-owned solutions and shift what gets prioritized, funded, and delivered.

- **Value-driven leadership:** Embodies Speak Up Africa's core values of inclusion, diligence, excellence, accountability, and sustainability.
- **Demonstrated impact:** Delivers visible, measurable results in at least one priority area – malaria, NTDs, immunization, global health R&D, sanitation, gender equality, or digital health.
- **Advocacy and policy influence:** Engages decision-makers, strengthens policy dialogue, and helps move commitments from announcement to execution.
- **Innovation and creativity:** Advances bold, practical approaches that unlock progress in public health, sustainable development, or citizen engagement.
- **Community-rooted leadership:** Mobilizes and enables communities especially youth, women and marginalized groups to take ownership and drive change.
- **Partnership-building:** Strengthens multi-sector collaboration across government, civil society, media, and the private sector to scale results.



# LESSONS LEARNED

*LONG TERM IMPACT  
REQUIRES SYSTEMS THAT  
DO NOT COLLAPSE WHEN  
EXTERNAL PRIORITIES  
SHIFT.*

In 2025, Speak Up Africa made a pivotal strategic decision to expand our mandate to include education with a specific focus on accelerating foundational learning reforms across Sub-Saharan Africa while maintaining our core health priority.

## ***WHY THIS DECISION MATTERS***

2025 made clear that health outcomes, gender equality, and long-term resilience cannot be sustained without strong education systems, especially foundational learning. Across Africa, education has become a decade-long political priority, with foundational learning increasingly central to national growth, skills, and inclusion agendas.

Evidence that informed this decision:

- Development of an African Continental Foundational Learning Monitoring Framework, ministerial coalitions and regional commitments focused on learning outcomes, not just access.
- National reform windows opening, including Senegal's "re-founding of the school system," centered on instructional quality, foundational learning, and system coherence.

- A contraction in basic education funding, reinforcing the urgency of domestic leadership, locally led advocacy, and better use of existing resources.
- A persistent gap between political ambition and execution, and between spending more and spending better on instructional improvement.

This decision is a natural extension of our mission: healthy, thriving societies, which require educated children, empowered women, and engaged youth. Education strengthens our ability to unlock long-term, intergenerational impact.

## WHERE WE ACHIEVED THE STRONGEST RESULTS – AND WHY IT WORKED

In 2025, Voix EssentiELLES delivered our most consistent, measurable, and scalable results by strengthening the connective tissue among communities, decision-makers and financing. Four lessons explain why progress was made and what we will replicate:



### *Lesson 1:* **SECTOR INTEGRATION STRENGTHENS THE IMPACT OF SYSTEMS**

When women-led and community organizations worked across malaria, HIV, TB, GBV, SRH, and climate resilience, they were not just delivering services, they were strengthening local systems. Integration reduced fragmentation and increased the credibility of community evidence in national dialogues.



### *Lesson 2:* **COMMUNITY POWER IS THE HIGHEST-RETURN INVESTMENT FOR POLICY CHANGE**

The most durable shifts came when communities were positioned as agenda setters with access, legitimacy and resources and not as last-mile implementers. Small, flexible funding, paired with mentorship and political access, created outsized influence in policy and budget discussions.



### *Lesson 3:* **FINANCING VOLATILITY EXPOSES GOVERNANCE GAPS**

External funding shocks not only reduced resources, but they also exposed weak coordination, unclear accountability, and delays between commitments and delivery. Where governance was stronger – with clear roles, better oversight, and active parliamentary engagement – implementation held.



### *Lesson 4:* **RESILIENCE REQUIRES DOMESTIC ACCOUNTABILITY INFRASTRUCTURE**

Progress proved most durable where priorities were domestically set and defended through parliament, local authorities, and community leadership, shaping budgets and monitoring execution. Resilience is not rhetorical; it is built into institutions that can hold the line when funding shifts.

Together, these lessons confirm a simple truth: community power scales when financing, legitimacy, and access to decision-making move together and when domestic governance mechanisms are strong enough to translate commitments into execution.

## **WHAT DIDN'T WORK AS EXPECTED IN 2025, AND WHAT WILL CHANGE IN 2026?**

The contraction of external financing — most notably USAID funding cuts — exposed structural fragilities in the global health financing architecture. While Speak Up Africa did not directly experience any cuts, the ripple effects certainly reshaped our immediate operating environment. The funding shifts disrupted predictability, delayed implementation timelines, and strained coordination among stakeholders. The moment underscored a hard truth: dependence on external funding leaves critical health and development priorities vulnerable to decisions taken far beyond the continent.

### **WHAT WE LEARNED:**

***Advocacy must anticipate shocks, not react to them. Building scenario planning and rapid-response capacity into how we partner, position and deliver***

- External financing is inherently volatile and cannot be the sole foundation for sustained impact.
- Resilience is built through institutional ownership, domestic financing, and political accountability.
- Where progress held firm in 2025, it was where parliaments, local authorities, women leaders, and communities shaped priorities and budgets, rather than responding to donor cycles.

- Coalitions require infrastructure. We built networks, hubs, and platforms but sustaining them requires: dedicated coordination capacity, clear value proposition for members, shared metrics and financial sustainability beyond convenings.

## **WHAT WE WILL CHANGE IN 2026**

- Shift from budget accountability to budget governance and execution, tracking health budgets from vote to impact.
- Deepen domestic resource mobilization by supporting parliamentary networks, women-led and community-based organizations to translate evidence and lived experience into concrete budget asks.
- Diversify financing coalitions through stronger engagement with African private sector actors, philanthropy, and innovative financing platforms, positioning health, education and gender equity as investable public goods.
- Institutionalize gains by embedding initiatives within national and regional structures, parliamentary caucuses, regulatory platforms, and cross-country coalitions.
- Rather than slowing our work, the 2025 funding shock validated the strategic direction we were already moving toward: from reliance to resilience, from projects to systems, and from donor dependency to African-led financing and accountability.

# LOOKING FORWARD: 2026

*WE SEE THE PATH  
TOWARDS A CONTINENT  
WHERE COMMUNITIES  
DON'T WAIT TO BE  
INCLUDED – THEY SHAPE  
THE AGENDA, WHERE  
EVIDENCE DOESN'T SIT ON  
SHELVES*



In 2026, Speak Up Africa will move from momentum to durability through building systems that can hold their ground when funding shifts, politics change, and crises emerge.

The clearest lesson from 2025 is that decision-makers act when they help design the solution: when governments, private-sector actors, and communities are engaged early as co-architects rather than late-stage validators, commitments become owned, budgeted, and implemented.

This is the practical expression of the Accra Reset, moving from dependency to sovereignty, from pledges to performance, and from fragmented initiatives to systems that countries can finance, govern, and sustain.

In 2026, we will, therefore, focus on integrated platforms where community evidence, political leadership, and financing align within national and regional structures. We will track not only commitments made but commitments implemented, including budget execution and last-mile delivery.

Guided by what held firm in 2025, especially in contexts where parliaments, local authorities, women leaders, and communities shaped priorities rather than responding to donor cycles, we will:

- Shift from budget accountability to budget governance and execution, track health budgets from vote to impact in partnership with parliaments, ministries of finance, and civil society.
- Deepen domestic resource mobilization, supporting parliamentary networks and women-led, community-based organizations to translate evidence and lived experience into concrete budget asks
- Diversify financing coalitions, engaging African private sector actors, philanthropy, and innovative financing platforms by positioning health, education, and gender equity as investable public goods.
- Institutionalize gains by embedding initiatives within national and regional structures, caucuses, regulatory platforms, and cross-country coalitions so progress is protected beyond single funding cycles.

In 2026, Speak Up Africa will advance its most important strategic decision of 2025: expanding our mandate to include education. We will focus on accelerating foundational learning reforms across Sub-Saharan Africa, as long-term health outcomes, gender equality, and resilience cannot be sustained without strong education systems.



# WHO WE ARE



*NEVER DOUBT THAT  
A SMALL GROUP  
OF THOUGHTFUL,  
COMMITTED CITIZENS  
CAN CHANGE THE WORLD.  
INDEED, IT'S THE ONLY  
THING THAT EVER HAS.*

**MARGARET MEAD**



# OUR TEAM

Our team of dedicated, nimble, industrious and bilingual experts partner with African leaders and change-makers to put in place the right policies and secure sufficient resources to achieve our sustainable development goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

## EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP



**YACINE DJIBO**  
*Founder & Executive Director*



**FARA NDIAYE**  
*Co-Founder and Deputy Executive Director*



**MAELLE BA**  
*Communications and External Affairs Advisor*



**NDEYE CODOU SY**  
*Human Resources Manager*

## ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE



**ABABACAR YAGUE**  
*Administrative and Financial Director*



**ANTA GAYE**  
*Administrative & Logistics Manager*



**ANTA MBODJ**  
*Administrative & Logistics Manager*



**AZIZ THIOYE**  
*Accountant*



**EDGARD KOUASSI**  
*Accountant*



**ELISABETH DIA**  
*Administrative & Logistics Manager SUA/OPCU*



**MAMADOU NDIAYE**  
*Accountant*



**MARIEME MBENGUE**  
*Administrative & Logistics Assistant*



**MARIÈME NDIAYE**  
*Administrative & Logistics Assistant*



**SIAKA TRAORÉ**  
*Chief Accountant*

## PARTNERSHIPS AND DEVELOPMENT



**YAYE S. DIOP**  
*Partnership and Development Director*



**ANGELO ZOGO MENYE**  
*Creative Content Officer*



**ASSANE SOW**  
*Monitoring and Evaluation Officer*



**KENNETH PRUDENCIO**  
*Program Officer, Global Health R&D*

## ND DEVELOPMENT



**MAME CHEIKH MBAYE**  
Graphic Designer



**MBEMBA BADIO**  
Concepteur graphique



**ROXANE FIAN**  
Advocacy and Communication Officer



**SEYNABOU SY NDIAYE**  
Gender Expert

## PROGRAMS



**DR. ASTOU FALL GASSAMA**  
Director of Program



**ALEXANDRA ASSAMOI**  
Communications Officer,  
Voix EssentiELLES



**AWA YANOGO**  
Program Officer



**CHRISTIANE YELIBI**  
Coordinator, Voix EssentiELLES Program



**DR. BENJAMIN SABUE ILUNGA**  
Project Coordinator in DRC



**FRANZ OKEY**  
Regional Advisor



**JAMES WALLEN**  
Health Advocacy Advisor



**PAPA DJIBRIL FAYE**  
Health Advocacy Officer



**ROUKIATOU OUEDRAOGO**  
Regional Advisor

## OUR BOARD



**YACINE BARRO BOURGAULT**  
Board Chair



**CECILE NIANG**  
Board member



**FARA NDIAYE**  
Board Member



**MAGATTE DIOP**  
Board Member



**MEG L. DERONGHE, J.D.**  
Board Member



**YACINE DJIBO**  
Board Member

# OUR PARTNERS

## FUNDING PARTNERS

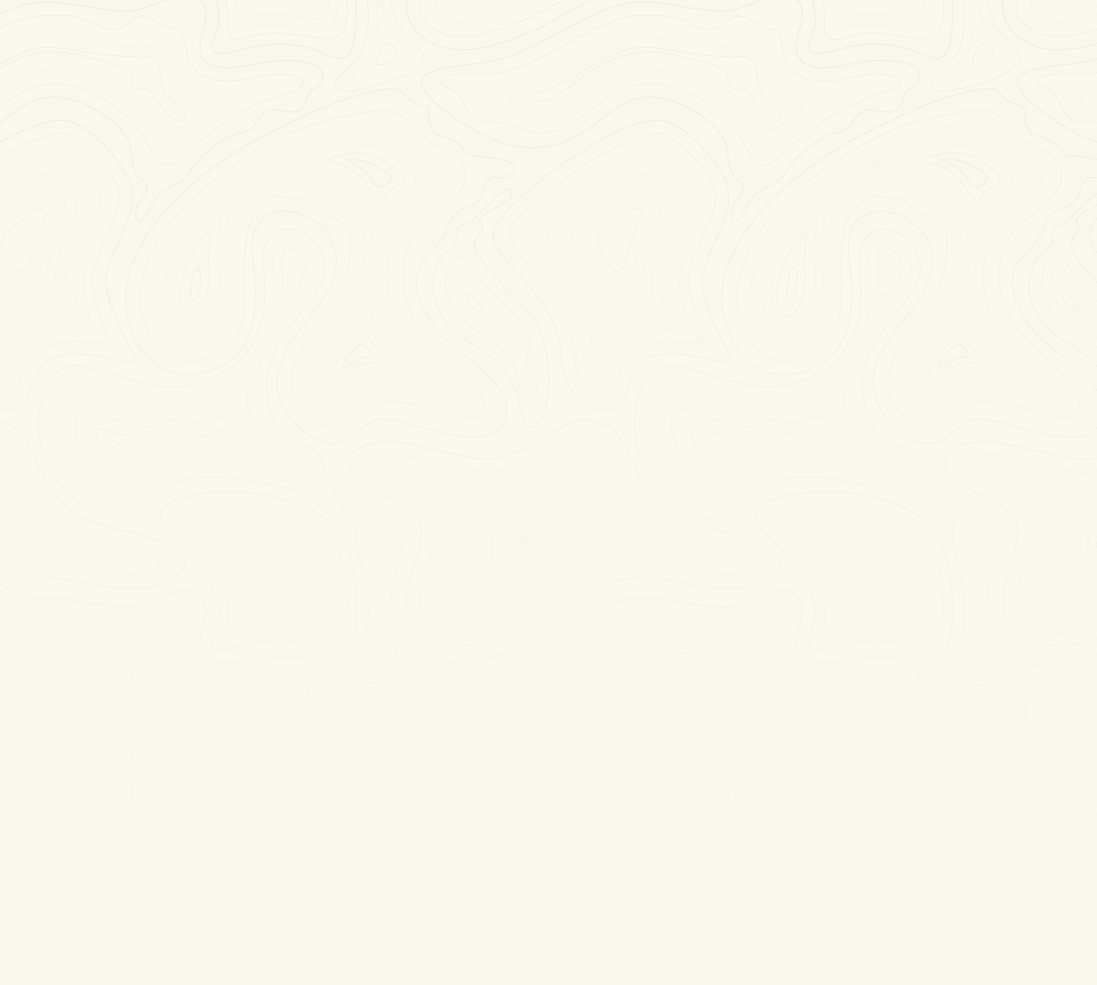


## MEDIA PARTNERS



## STRATEGIC PARTNERS







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