



# ACUMEN ACADEMY IN WEST AFRICA: 2023 FELLOWS SELECTION





# THANK YOU

To our esteemed panelists, the West Africa Fellows Team would like to extend our sincere gratitude for your participation in the 2022 Selection Conference.

Your valuable insights and expertise tremendously assisted the process, and we greatly appreciate the time and effort you dedicated to making the event a success. Your willingness to sit through almost 60 elevator pitches, review panelist binders, and focus on the task, not only made our job easier but, also reminded us of how fortunate we are to be accompanied by you.

Time and again we come out of this experience not only with a renewed sense of hope for our region but also with a much-needed enthusiasm and belief in the idea of collective success. We opened the 2022 Conference with a story about Africa that we don't hear enough. Written and voiced by the Executive Director of Global Rights and Acumen Fellow, Abiodun Biayewu, and translated into a video by another Acumen Fellow and Co-founder of Shammah Schools, Nelson Owoicho, please click on the image below to view.





# INSIGHTS FROM THE SELECTION CONFERENCE

If we had to choose a common thread that stood out at the 2022 Selection Conference, it would be "diversity".

If we had to describe the experience in a way that encompasses how it was displayed by the candidates, we would say it was a tapestry of life - a rich and varied landscape of humanity, a mosaic of unique perspectives and experiences drawn from the harmonious blend of diverse voices, visions, and experiences found throughout Anglophone West Africa.

Though there were 58 different individuals, they were united in purpose by their joint commitment to creating a more just and equitable society.

Together, the finalists are making a positive impact in communities in Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia through their innovative approaches to social change.







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**The diversity of persons in the fellowship is actually part of the magic in this fellowship.**

**Ifeoma Malo  
2022 West Africa Fellow**

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# SELECTION OVERVIEW



West Africa Applicants



Stage-2 Applicants



Stage-3 Finalists



20 Selected Fellows

## SELECTION PATHWAY



## INPUTS



# DIVERSITY METRICS ACROSS THE STAGES

	ALL APPLICANTS			SELECTION CONFERENCE		
<b>Country</b>	20%	14%	50%	16%	16%	55%
	Ghana	Liberia	Nigeria	Ghana	Liberia	Nigeria
	7%	6%		8%	5%	
	Sierra Leone	The Gambia		Sierra Leone	The Gambia	
<b>Gender</b>	50%	50%		53%	47%	
	Female	Male		Female	Male	
<b>Top Focus Areas</b>	17%	14%	13%	16%	16%	15%
	Agriculture	Activism	Education	Agriculture	Education	Skills Devt.
<b>Model of organization</b>	43%	25%	14%	47%	23%	11%
	Non-Profit	Social Enterprise	Hybrid	Non-Profit	Social Enterprise	Hybrid
	7%	2%	2%	10%	6%	3%
	For profit	Government	Academia	For profit	Government	Academia
<b>Archetype</b>	50%	10%	20%	53%	6%	18%
	Founder/Co-Founder	Junior-Mid Management	Executive Level	Founder/Co-Founder	Junior-Mid Management	Executive Level
		20%			23%	
		GEO/ Equivalent		GEO/ Equivalent		
<b>Location</b>	74%	22%	4%	71%	26%	3%
	City	Town	Village	City	Town	Village
<b>From crisis affected regions</b>	50%	50%		21%	79%	
	Yes	No		Yes	No	
<b>Top Channels</b>	30%	26%	13%			
	Acumen Fellow/Staff	Social Media	Acumen's Website			

Note: Data excludes "prefer not to say" responses



# MEET THE 2023 COHORT

As we reflect on the 2023 West Africa Fellows cohort, we are struck by the incredible passion and drive of the 20 individuals who make up this group. From providing data to smallholder farmers to help them make informed decisions for their next planting cycle, to addressing the issue of illiteracy caused by dyslexia, which puts children at risk of dropping out of school, this cohort is truly making a difference in a wide range of areas, including activism, prison reform, health, and more. With a gender balance of 53% women to 47% men, these Fellows are poised to make an impact in West Africa, a region brimming with potential.

Upon completing their first year of the fellowship, the Fellows will become part of our global community of more than 1,300 social innovators. This community has made a significant impact on the lives of over 8 million people around the world and is dedicated to creating a world where dignity is ensured for all.

**To learn more about the 2023 West Africa Fellows and how they are redefining success through their work, please visit the following pages.**







Ahmed is the Co-Founder and CEO of Afrimash, a leading agritech platform in Nigeria that utilizes e-commerce technology to streamline the farm input supply chain and make agriculture more accessible. Ahmed is passionate about using technology and agriculture to create a positive impact in Africa. He aims to empower smallholder farmers and improve their livelihoods through the use of technology.

**Ahmed Ayoade Oyedotun**

Amy is the Managing Director at Nuru Nigeria Development Initiative. She has over a decade of experience in leading impact-driven teams and programs. Her passion lies in sustainability and working directly with communities to develop solutions that combat poverty and support vulnerable people. In addition to her role at Nuru Nigeria, Amy also serves as a ONE Champion and community volunteer.



**Amy Gaman**



Anita is the Founder of Amina Dyslexia Center, a social enterprise that aims to address illiteracy caused by dyslexia, a learning difference that puts 1 in 5 children at risk of dropping out of primary or secondary school. Before starting Amina Dyslexia Center, Anita was a teacher specializing in early years and key stage 1. She has also received training as a Dyslexia Practitioner from the Orton-Gillingham Academy.

**Anita Kevin**





Anthonia is a Senior Development Planner at the Bono Regional Coordinating Council in Ghana. In this role, she supports the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of government policies and programs in the region. With over a decade of experience, Anthonia has successfully led the delivery of socio-economic interventions in vulnerable communities.

**Anthonia Ayamga**

Dieudonne is the Executive Director of SMART Liberia, an institution that connects young Liberians and youth organizations to relevant skills, resources, and information to enable them to drive social change in Liberia and beyond. With a focus on Education Advancement, business development and entrepreneurship, SMART Liberia brings together young leaders and equips them with resources.



**Dieudonne Perry**



Eleanor is the Deputy Director for Programmes at Namati Sierra Leone, an organization that helps communities to shape laws to protect their land rights and environment. She holds a bachelor's degree in Government and African Studies from Harvard University, a Juris Doctor from American University Washington College of Law, and a master's in International Human Rights Law with distinction from the University of Oxford.

**Eleanor Thompson**



## WHAT OUR FELLOWS SAY

Aishatu is the Founder of Baba Azimi Foundation, an organization providing effective protection services for women, children, and persons with disabilities.

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I now clearly see that it is truly possible to change the world.

Aishatu Jahun  
2022 West Africa Fellow

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Emeka is the Founder of Kitovu Technology Company, an agritech company that provides smallholder farmers with the data to make smart decisions. He is a graduate of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where he studied Mechanical Engineering. He has also received specialized training in Business and Entrepreneurship from Enterprise Development Centre, Pan-Atlantic University, Lagos.

**Emeka Nwachinemere**

Jefyne is the Co-Founder of The Vantage Group, a boutique consulting firm based in Monrovia, Liberia that helps small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) build capacity and become more competitive in the market. At The Vantage Group, Jefyne leads the business development division and manages programs for SMEs at various stages of their entrepreneurial journeys. Jefyne holds an MBA from Texas



**Jefyne Togba**



Jeph is the Co-Founder and CEO of Blossom Academy, an organisation on a mission to close the tech skills gap in Africa through analytics boot camps and dedicated careers support. Before co-founding Blossom, Jeph was a founding member of Esusu Financial, a leading financial technology. Jeph holds a bachelor's degree in Economics from New York University and in 2019, he was recognised as a Global Innovator by Expo 2020.

**Jeph Acheampong**





Josephine is the Founder and CEO of Teach For Sierra Leone, a woman-led results-oriented leadership organisation, that is developing transformational world-class female leaders to end systemic injustices in the education sector in the most deprived and marginalised communities in Sierra Leone. She holds an MBA in International Business from Cardiff Metropolitan University, UK.

**Josephine Saidu**

Oluwafunke is the Founder of Hope Behind Bars Africa, an organisation that provides access to justice to indigent pre-trial detainees. Over 7,000 incarcerated persons have benefited directly from their interventions. Oluwafunke holds an Executive Certificate in Non-profit Leadership and Management from Lagos Business School and is a Cornell University Makwanyane Fellow.

**Oluwafunke Adeoye**



Omar is the National Coordinator at Activista The Gambia, a youth-led civil society organization working to promote the rights of young men and women through empowerment, campaign and solidarity. He is interested in building an inclusive society that values and respects the rights of every human being. Omar has led both national and global Campaigns and has contributed to the democratic transition of The Gambia.

**Omar Danso**





## WHAT OUR FELLOWS SAY

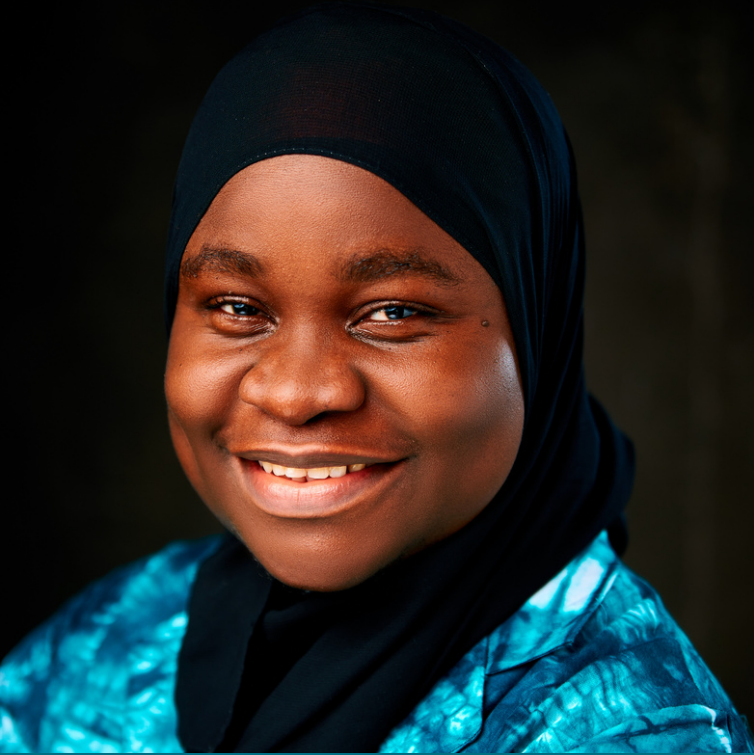
Yahya is the General Manager of the Water and Sanitation Promotion (WaSAP) Company which provides Water Sanitation to rural communities in Sierra Leone.

“  
We can get a better Africa if we have the same set of people from this fellowship in our development spheres.

Yahya Kargbo  
2022 West Africa Fellow

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Rahmah is the Founder of Rashak Farms & Agro Allied Limited, where she leads a team to creatively address Nigeria's food insecurity challenges. She is a social impact entrepreneur with a keen interest in agriculture and the crop production and food processing value chain. Rahmah is passionate about providing economic opportunities to women, youth, and persons living with disabilities by empowering and financially including them.

**Rahmah Aderinoye**

Richard is the Regional Program Officer at Sustainable Development Institute. He is an experienced environmentalist and natural resource governance and management practitioner with more than 9 years of experience in managing natural resources, conducting environmental social impact assessments and natural resource policy on land and forests.



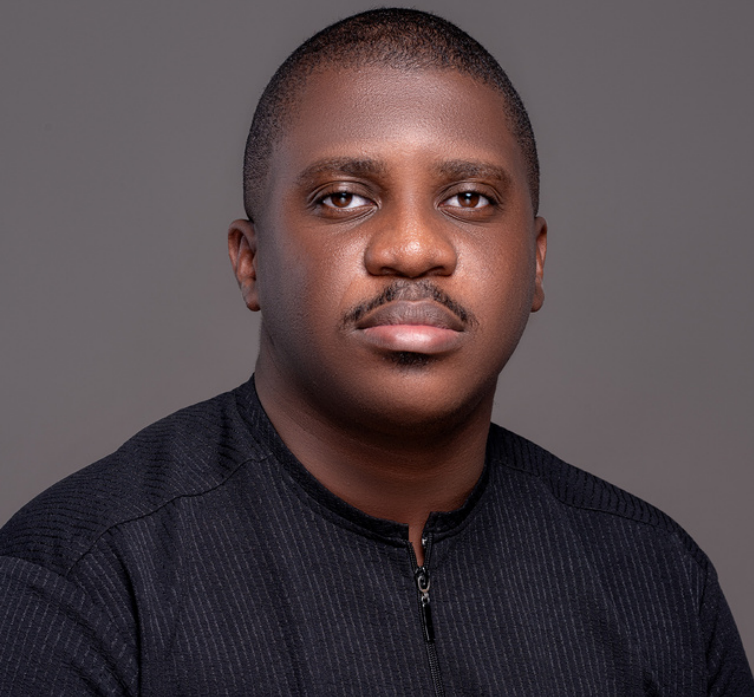
**Richard Sam**



Solomon is the Co-Founder and coordinator of Unique Foundation The Gambia. A charitable organization that focuses on increasing opportunities and improving educational qualities for underprivileged and at-risked children and young people in The Gambia. Since 2020, Solomon's different initiatives through his organization have directly benefited over 20 communities, 35 schools, and more than 51,000 people.

**Solomon Ifeanyi Nathaniel**





Theo is the Director of Operations, Expansion and Partnerships at Saha Global, an organization that brings the cleanest water to the hardest-to-reach people. Theo leads the development and implementation of operational structures and systems that support growth. He also leads program expansion and external relations with government agencies and civil society organisations in the WASH sector.

**Theo Boateng**

Ujuaku is the Founder and Creative Director of the Eastern Nigeria Film & Arts Initiative. An organisation that invests in film/media training and entertainment in Nigeria, with a focus on Southeast Nigeria, grooming young talents to create more authentic African stories. She uses film as an agent to educate people. She is an alumna of the New York Film Academy.



**Ujuaku Akukwe**



Wande is the Co-Founder and CEO of The Bulb Africa, a tech talent incubator strategically designed to close the skill gap in Africa's job market. The Bulb creates employment opportunities, helps startups scale, and fosters the development of young Africans into tech experts.

Wande is a graduate of the University of Baltimore and holds a masters in forensic accounting from the University of Maryland UC.

**Wande Adams**





Yatta is the County Health Officer of the Montserrado County Health Team, a government organization that manages the health care delivery services for the most populous county in Liberia. Yatta ensures access to quality health care services and responding to diseases of epidemic potential. She holds an MD in general medicine from the University of Liberia and an MPH in Health Policy from Cuttington University.

**Yatta Sackie Wapoe**

Yawa is the Founder of the Leading Ladies' Network. For over a decade, Yawa has nurtured female leadership and social entrepreneurship in Africa through the Leading Ladies Network (LLN), a nonprofit she founded in Ghana. Yawa has fostered an ecosystem of 12,000 African women and girls who have ambitious goals, strong character and resolve to serve as impactful leaders in business



**Yawa Hansen-Quao**

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The Fellowship took me back to my purpose, values and identities, exposed me to my biggest weaknesses as a leader, and how they affect my quest to change the world.

**Shehu Shamsudeen**  
**2022 West Africa Fellow**

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# PARTNER WITH ACUMEN WEST AFRICA

In conclusion, we invite you to take part in shaping the 2024 cohort of West Africa Fellows. There are several ways for you to get involved, which are outlined below:

## 1 **Nominate a Fellow:**

If you know a candidate who you believe is a right fit for the Fellowship, please write to us at [westafricafellows@acumen.org](mailto:westafricafellows@acumen.org). You have experienced the selection conference and are seasoned with the evaluation process. We have found that there is no better way to strengthen and grow this community than leveraging our collective networks and understanding of the West Africa Fellows Program.

## 2 **Refer Us to Potential Channel Partners:**

We have had success in developing 90 leaders with the skills, character, and moral imagination to take on the toughest problems of our time, our investment in them has led to an impact of 6.7 million lives, but we want to do more and reach more people in West Africa.

To do that, we need support. We are currently seeking partnerships with organizations that share our mission. If you know of any organizations or individuals who may be interested in sharing our recruitment materials with their networks, we would greatly appreciate an introduction.

## 3 **Give us your feedback:**

Do you have any feedback about our recruitment process? Please share your views via email to [westafricafellows@acumen.org](mailto:westafricafellows@acumen.org).





# THANK YOU TO OUR WEST AFRICA PARTNERS

Thank you to our West Africa partners for believing in this team and enabling us to do our work. None of this would have been possible without your generous support.

# Canada



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