



EMPOWERING WOMEN FOR
EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE (EWEI)

KATT LEGACIES

KATT: African Youth Voices Volume One
Theme: Budget Priorities

“In Cameroon, despite a substantial annual budget of 6.679 billion 500 million adopted in 2024, women and girls continue to face significant challenges due to a lack of gender-sensitive budgeting.



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Real time data quoted in this brief, visit: [Budget Prioritisation Survey Summary](#)
Access this policy advocacy brief here: [KATT Legacies](#)

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ABSTRACT

Citizens of many nation states often receive announcements of national budgets with little or no interest. With limited consultation and input into the development of national budgets, this comes as no surprise. While this complacency can be understood, it is quite ironic since budgets are a key developmental instrument to facilitate the achievement of the social and economic goals of their nations.

In this first Kabilun Africa Think Tank Policy Advocacy Brief, we amplify what the youth of Africa think should be the priorities of governments as they reflect on the previous and current year's national budgets. It is important that this profile of citizens have a collective platform to share their views based on their experiences of what they believe their leaders should be focusing on. Too many policies and key advocacy messages highlight the importance of engaging youth as active partners in the development of a nation and youth are accordingly gracing the world stage in taking action through advocacy and diverse initiatives addressing their key issues of concern – budgets should be no different.

We find that the issues they identify are no surprise from what we hear and read, but it is noteworthy that young citizens across nine countries in three regions of Africa are saying the same things, they want their countries to become more resourceful, more respected for their resources and want opportunities that will enable them to live within a basic standard of wellbeing. It is no surprise that Africa still accounted for the highest number of internal conflicts in the world in 2023. According to UNHCR and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), at least 40 million people were displaced in 2023 due to various issues, primarily conflicts on the continent. It is extremely informative that the nature of the conflicts are non-state i.e. not between states but internal. Africa has experienced 214 coups, the most of any region and 106 have been successful. Of 54 African countries, 45 have had at least one coup attempt since 1950. Something needs to change and we seek to amplify the voices of our youth in our maiden edition of KATT legacies. Our aim is to make our policy briefs simple, but evidence based – to reach all audiences and catalyse positive action in favour of the people of Africa.

Too many of our youth have to suffer and strive for the minimum needs to enable them simply to survive much less thrive; and the trend continues on decline on some major indices. They have spoken about the need to pursue and prioritise gender equality, quality education, and We hope you find this policy advocacy brief informative and most importantly, actionable.

BACKGROUND

Simply put, a budget is a plan for how you will spend your money/resources. Budgets are developed for individual and collective use, to reach planned goals within a specific amount of time. Groups, organisations, business, events and countries need to budget to track their income and expenditure as this ensures a conscious projection to be able to reach planned goals.

In the sphere of national development, it is the duty of all government agencies to develop a plan on how they will allocate revenue, loans and any other sources of income to meet the economic, developmental and social goals of the country. Government must also ensure responsibility in the carrying out of this exercise including developing a responsive and pro-prosperity budget that will support economic growth for all as well as provide platforms for proper tracking and accountability.

A country's fiscal position which refers to government spending and taxation needs to be planned to be healthy and progressive, serving the needs of the citizen and being prudent with the tax being paid by citizens.

Money in government's care should be channeled to the implementation of projects that benefit the nation internally and externally and should be the concern of every citizen. Ideally, budgets should be built based off consultation with communities and informed by evidence-based needs, developmental goals and aim to support the growth of key sectors of the economy.

It is the also the responsibility of governments to ensure that budgeting is carried out responsibly within the limitation of the nation's financial capacity – and making sure that economic burdens are not placed on future governments and generations to serve the present only.

Simply put, a budget is a plan for how you will spend your money/resources. Budgets While they may be named slightly differently in various contexts, overall, national government budgeting involves four distinct phases; budget preparation which includes submission budget authorisation or legislation, budget implementation or execution and budget accountability and audit and evaluation.

Within a fiscal year it is expected that the phases will overlap so that while one year's budget is being implemented, the accountability and audit mechanisms are in motion for the previous year. This ensures a continuous feedback loop and improvement of budgets every year.

BUDGETS POLICIES FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

“According to the United Nations, at the midpoint to 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which consist of measurable indicators to track progress, indicate ‘deep trouble’. In fact, if the current concerning trend continues, nearly 580 million people will still be living in extreme poverty by 2030.

This highlights an even bigger looming problem as the world’s population – particularly in Africa is projected to reach 42% of the world's youth population by 2030. In order to proactively address extreme poverty among youth, concrete action needs to be taken in the design and implementation of development instruments like budgets.

A series of global shocks have made the situation very challenging. The adverse effects of the global financial crisis of 2007-09, the COVID-19 pandemic and the continuing commodity crisis following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine have increased the estimated annual investment gap in developing countries from \$2.5 trillion to about \$4 trillion. This includes the mounting costs of making the transition to clean energy in response to climate change.”¹

Consequently, a conscious engagement of youth and their (youth) critical understanding of the importance and workings of budgets would serve both them and the wider society well to support the recovery process and necessary adaptations for a sustainable planet.


Every country’s systems are affected by its unique contextual factors and is therefore driven by its own priorities and plans. Unfortunately, in some cases, the citizens and governments priorities seem to be at odds and can lead to a sense of disillusionment on the part of the citizenry and the perception that governments are out of touch with what matters to the people. This is why adequate investment into audit and evaluation and widespread consultation with different groups and interests are key to developing pro-people, citizen centered budgets and help the citizenry understand the strategic goals of any government.

Budgets should be regarded as one of the most important policy documents of any government. The need to adequately connect pro-people immediate needs with the longer-term strategic goals of a country cannot be overemphasised.

The Economic Times (2023)² highlights some key reasons why budgets are important to achieve economic stability and growth and support development.

¹ World Bank Blog - [The Importance of Budget support for Progress on Sustainable Development](#). Shahrokh Fardoust, Stefan Koeberle Moritz Piatti, Lodewijk Smets, Mark Sundberg 1 December 2023

² The Economic Times Online - [Why is it Important for the Govt to have a Budget?](#) 23 December 2023



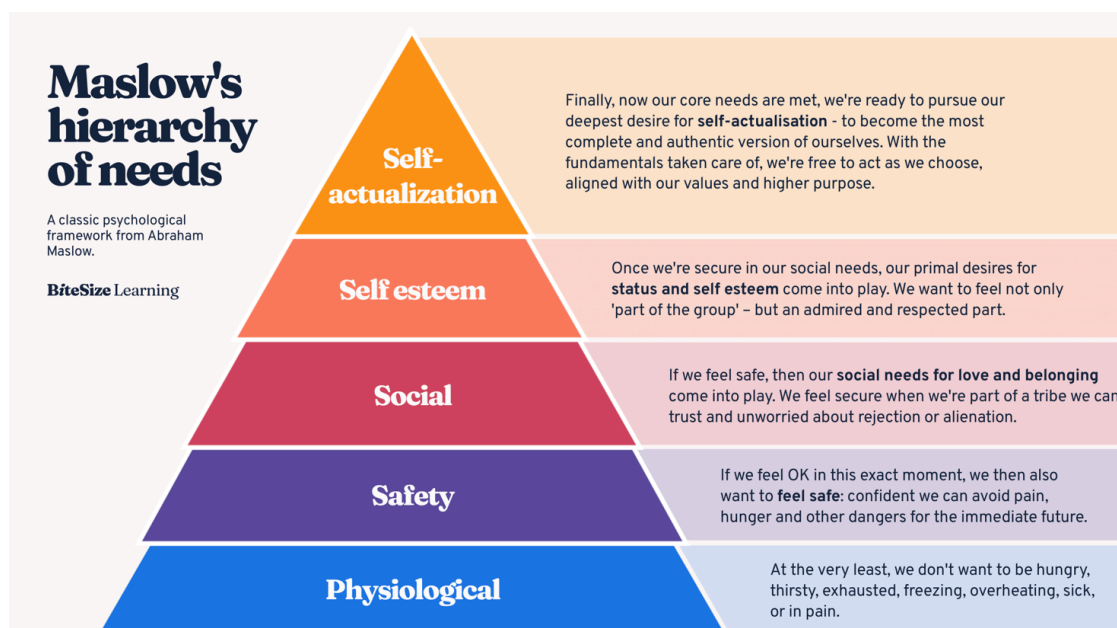
These include:

- **Proper resource pool allocation** which facilitates the identification of areas of weakness and strategically allocating resources to address them.
- **Ensuring economic growth** supporting the regulation of taxation in different sectors and promoting investment and expenditure encouraging individuals to focus more on savings and investments fostering economic prosperity and contributes to the overall growth of the country.
- **Boosting business and trade** as enterprises anticipate the allocation of resources to various sectors enabling them to adjust their policies accordingly and contribute to the country's economic progress.
- **Reducing economic disparity** by introducing public and economic welfare policies for the underprivileged sections of society. By targeting these disparities, the government aims to create a more equitable and inclusive economy.
- **Supporting public sector enterprises** as public sector industries play a crucial role in generating employment and revenue, significantly contributing to the nation's economy. A well-planned budget enables the government to focus on these industries and introduce policies that facilitate their growth. This ensures the continued operation and success of public sector enterprises.

Aside from context specific issues that arise from the dynamics within a country, there are important human development indices that drive key areas that stakeholders including citizens, civil society, multilateral partnerships , aid agencies and other relevant actors focus their attention for budget prioritisation.

“Human development – or the human development approach – is about expanding the richness of human life, rather than simply the richness of the economy in which human beings live. It is an approach that is focused on people and their opportunities and choices. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and having a decent standard of living.” (UNDP).³

³ United Nations Development Programme – [Human Development](#) and [Human Development Index \(HDI\)](#)



As human beings who make up communities and countries, we should be the central focus of any development efforts in a nation. Our self-satisfaction is brilliantly captured in Maslow's Hierarchy and visualised above that further details the five human levels of need to reach a state of authenticity and satisfaction to grow and thrive.



Please take a moment to reflect on the needs you believe are being met and what you think needs more attention and should be advocated for. You can share your thoughts [here](#) and view real time results [here](#).

Thank you in advance for your contribution.

THE YOUTH SPEAK

Youth will address future crises, lead nations and develop new policies. They are important now and for the future and that will always be the case. We asked African youth to share their thoughts about what their governments should prioritise in national budgets at a time when we believe governments should be both implementation and audit and evaluation phases of national budgets.

First of all, let us examine what three young changemakers shared.



Pic 1: Nkengafack Eucharia

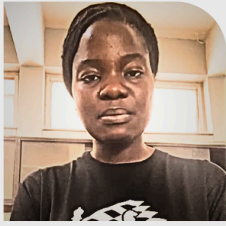
Nkengafack Eucharia is from Cameroon. She is the Regional Communications and Social Media Coordinator at Sonke Gender Justice headquartered in South Africa. Her work experience spans from Cameroon, to Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal, Malawi and Uganda where she coordinates communications officers in establishing an

effective social media presence, documenting good practices of meaning youth inclusion and participation in accessing their sexual reproductive health and rights and partnering with local leaders to promote girls' education. Eucharia contributes to the fight against harmful practices and works to promote gender equality and youth leadership. She believes that gender equality should be prioritised by the state during implementation of national budget.

She highlights that in 2024, the National Assembly of Cameroon adopted an annual budget of 6,679 billion 500 million. Communities are still highly patriarchal in nature, with negative cultural practices and armed conflict which perpetually keeps women and girls in subordinate and disadvantaged positions. Apart from creation of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family, the state has also designated tools for the promotion of equality like the penal code and the national gender policy. However, this is inadequate as the policies and the tools have not been prioritised during state budgeting. Also, there exist some nuances in laws which still pose a challenge and impede the promotion of gender equality

The state can only prioritise gender equality by engaging in gender sensitive budgeting and implementation; to strengthen their partnership with civil society organisations; and fund innovative solutions to promoting gender equality. In addition, all the other over thirty ministries in the country should engage in gender components in their projects; and include women-specific components in general projects to be able to attain a pluralistic and holistic approach to promoting sustainable development goal 5, gender equality.

Watch Eucharia's short video [here](#). Learn more about Eucharia [here](#).



Pic 2: Grace Okunola

Grace Okunola is a young change agent from Nigeria. She served as Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Officer at Empowering Women for Excellence Initiative (EWEI) after her internship as part of the Educational Subsidy Programme. Grace is currently a STEM Ambassador with EWEI.

Grace founded Stand Firm for Girls, an organisation with a mission to inspire adolescent girls through peer-to-peer education, skills acquisition, advocacy, and volunteering, and works to protect the interest of young women and girls, through its community clubs. The clubs hold meetings virtually and on-site in rural communities across Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Grace believes quality education is a cornerstone for policy change and acts as a catalyst for societal progress, empowerment and social development. She further highlights that quality education is a fundamental human right able to break the cycle of poverty, promote gender equality, foster innovation and drive economic growth. For individuals to reach their full potential and meaningfully contribute to society, inclusive quality education needs to remain a top priority in national fiscal plans. She notes that the achievement of SDGs 4, 5, 10, and 16 can all be facilitated by quality education helping to eliminate barriers and creating an inclusive society for all. She noted that investing in education is not only a moral imperative, but also a strategic decision with far reaching benefits including unlocking human potential, driving sustainable development and building a more prosperous and equitable future for all.

Watch Grace's short video [here](#).

Learn more about Grace [here](#).



Pic 3: Anthonia Uche Okafor

Anthonia Uche Okafor is a highly skilled Data Analyst and Researcher with a solid foundation in Economics. She is proficient in using Python for data modelling, Power BI for creating reporting solutions, and statistical analysis tools like SPSS, E-views, and Stata. Beyond her professional expertise, Anthonia is

is passionate about mentoring undergraduates, helping them enhance their research skills and stay informed on the latest developments in their fields.

Uche views Nigerian youth as vibrant, energetic and the key to the nation's sustainable future though oftentimes neglected. She lists three key issues that should be given priority in the consideration of the national budget.

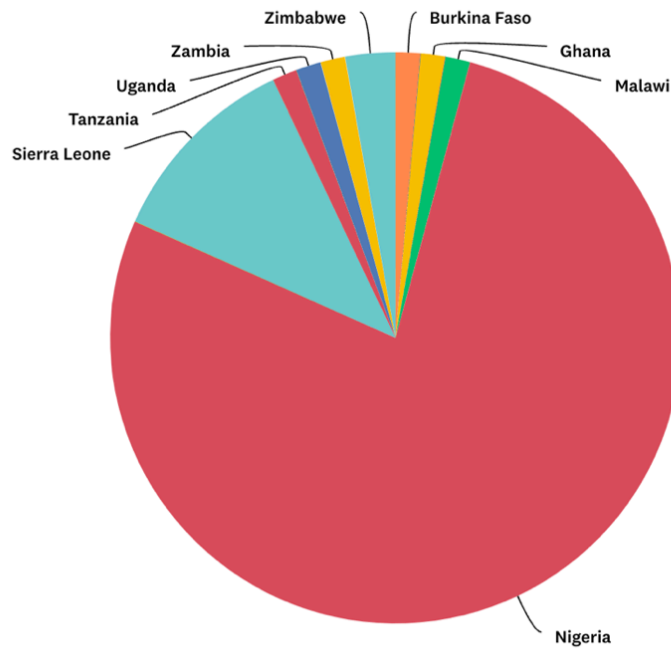
Uche notes that quality education is a fundamental pillar for the proper functioning of any society including the provision of and accessibility to technology, scholarships and qualified teachers to support the youth's educational goals which are concrete pathways she believes resources can be channelled to in the sector. She also believes that the health needs a boost by allocating resources to better welfare for healthcare professionals to reduce brain drain, improved services should be also prioritised and the provision of mental health care services and support considering the growing need among youth and citizens in general. Lastly, Uche highlights the limited job opportunities that exist and despite those limitations, many youth are trying to set things up for themselves but face a frustratingly difficult environment. She believes resources should be channelled to projects like innovation hubs and accessible loans to support young Nigerian entrepreneurs.

Watch Uche's short video [here](#).

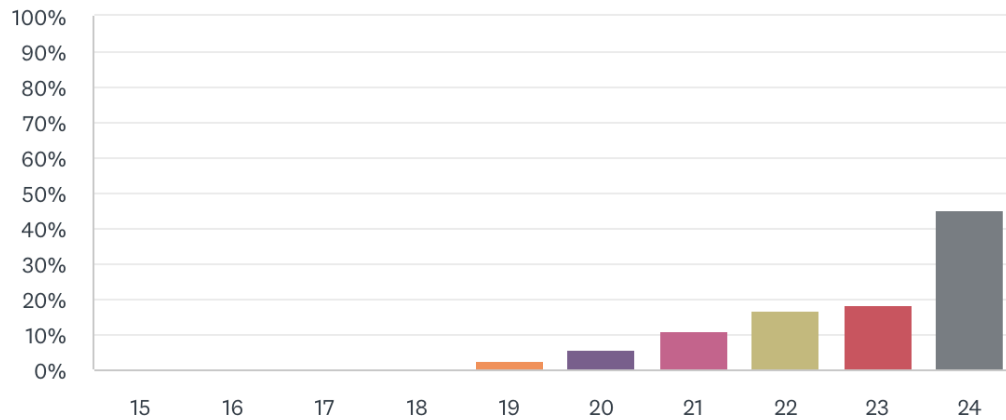
Learn more about Uche [here](#).

In addition to the messages from these three exceptional young women, the following insights emerged from a survey targeted at African youth aged 15 – 24 over the course of March to July 2024.

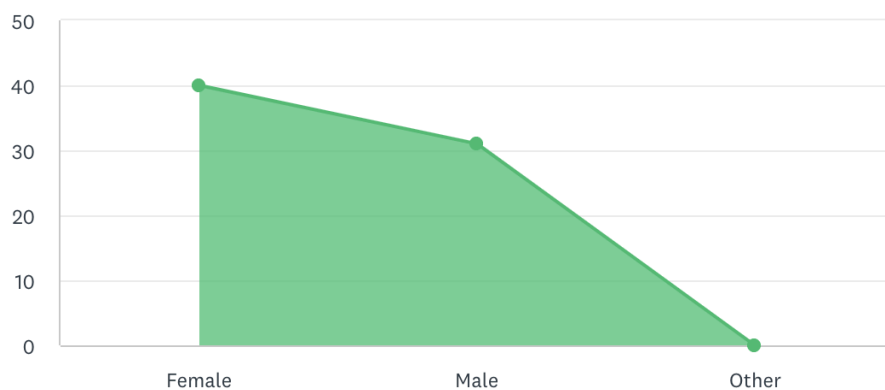
AFRICAN COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE



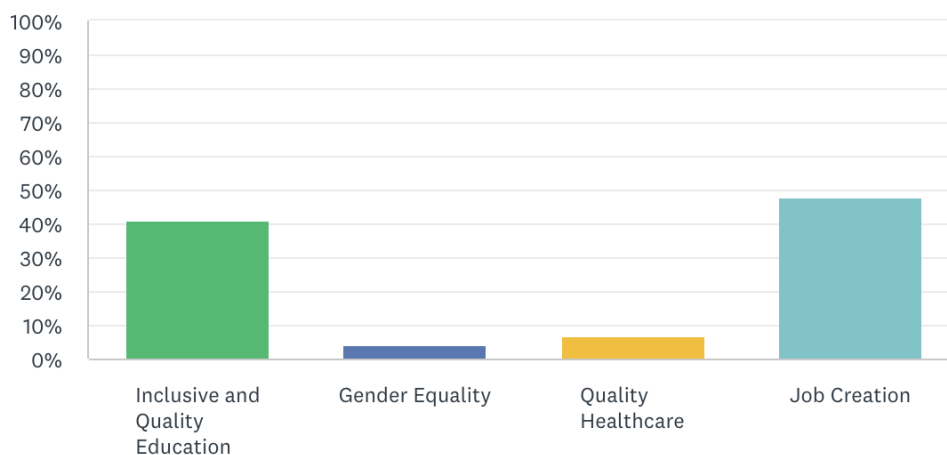
AGE



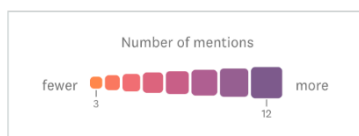
GENDER IDENTITY




Of the four priorities identified by youth who responded to our request for interest, which do you consider should be the highest priority for your government?



What other sector(s) should your government prioritise in resource allocation and spending this year?



You can also view a live visual of the summary of findings [here](#).



As the visual above shows, there are two issues that are on the minds of surveyed African youth. The survey responses also mentioned infrastructure, climate change and environment, water, housing, skill acquisition, public welfare, basic amenities and social infrastructure, security, wealth creation, rural infrastructure, energy and gender-based violence.

Examining the two highest mentioned issues, it is clear from the findings that agriculture is being seen as a viable and necessary sector that needs further development on the continent. Africa is a sought-after destination for agricultural trade with intra-African agricultural trade increasing significantly since early 2000s, though remaining below the peak value of US\$16.1 billion as recorded in 2013.

Goedde, Ooko-Ombaka, and Pais highlight how untapped Africa's full agricultural potential is. In a 2019 report,⁴ published by McKinsey and Company, they refer to a recent analysis, in which they determined that Africa could produce two to three times more cereals and grains which would add 20 percent more cereals and grains to the current worldwide 2.6 billion tonnes of output. This could support the efforts to improve global food security, reduce poverty and hunger, and protect biodiversity.


This may also indicate a healthy mindset transformation of African youth in favour of agriculture as a potential path for economic prosperity and benefit for them as individuals, nation states and the environment.

Job creation is a pressing development issue in any nation – and more so within the African continent.

Statista⁵ records that the “unemployment rate in Africa is expected to reach seven percent in 2024. From 2012 - 2024, unemployment in the continent peaked at 7.2 percent in 2021. Unemployment levels varied significantly across African countries. South Africa was estimated to register the highest rate in 2024 at around 30 percent.”

⁴ McKinsey & Company Winning in Africa's Agricultural Market - Private-sector Companies can find practical solutions to enter and grow in Africa's Agricultural Market. Lutz Goedde, Amandla Ooko-Ombaka, and Gillian Pais. February 2019.

⁵ Statista. Unemployment rate in Africa from 2012 to 2024. Saifaddin Galal. 14 November 2023



The Africa Development Bank Group ⁶ projects Africa's youth population will reach 850 million by 2050 and by 2063, with young people constituting half of the 2 billion working-age population. Africa will remain the world's youngest region, with a median age of 25 years.

In order to prevent a crisis, it is key to implement key recommendations like the African Decade Plan of Action ⁷ which focuses on five key priority areas including education and skills development, youth employment and entrepreneurship, governance, peace and security. Attention should be given to the provision of job opportunities, economic growth, a conducive environment for entrepreneurship and capacity building to adequately leverage the massive potential of African youth and also support more peaceful societies which can be supported by the productive engagement of youth.

⁶ African Development Bank African Development Institute. Leveraging Potentials of the Youth for Inclusive, Green and Sustainable Development in Africa. Eric K. Ogunleye. 2023

⁷ African Union. Youth Development.



RECOMMENDATIONS

KATT's first consultation with youth aged 15 – 24 indicates there is capacity and interest to contribute to the discussion on budget priorities. We therefore recommend the creation of more avenues for consultation and engagement of these and other age groups as part of nation states budget development process. These could include consultative town hall meetings, focus group discussions, participatory action research and special task forces to help monitor and provide feedback to relevant authorities.

KATT acknowledges and commends the many policies, plans and instruments in place for the development of youth on the continent including national budgets. However, we recognise the recurring gaps in participatory implementation and monitoring. We recommend deliberate focus on the participation of youth themselves in budget implementation and monitoring, contributing to the feedback loop for decision making and course correction.

KATT recommends a concerted awareness campaign to educate and support capacity strengthening for citizen inclusion in budgeting processes. This will help to equip citizens of all profiles to contribute meaningfully to the process and enable state experts to utilise data garnered from diverse consultation and feedback platforms and modalities.

KATT recommends a continuous dialogue with young citizens with key nation state actors across their national territories – particularly including less heard voices or areas including rural areas. KATT encourages honest and earnest engagement, not polished, not media friendly, but honest and real engagement and dialogue on issues of concern and what governments are doing to address those concerns.

KATT encourages youth to get more involved in non-violent peaceful civic action and platforms like Kabilun Africa Think Tank to further amplify their voices and needs to relevant actors through participation in surveys, events, calls to action and capacity building.

KATT will utilise the data received from this process to provide capacity development opportunities on the top two issues identified. We will continue to consult with youth and listen – to transform the realities and narratives in fulfillment of our driving mission.



ABOUT KATT

Watch the Introduction to KATT here: [KATT Intro Video](#)

The word 'Kabilun' is derived from Kabilar which directly translates in the Hausa language. The Hausa language is widely spoken in Africa by about 70 million people, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. Kabilun Africa Think Tank (KATT) is hosted by Empowering Women for Excellence Initiative (EWEI), located in Kaduna state Nigeria where Hausa is a social language of communication.

While Africans working in different spheres around the world, especially in developed countries continue to make significant strides that have earned them global recognition, their home countries continue to suffer from the consequences of dearth and inefficient leadership. KATT presents a platform for brilliant Africans within and in the diaspora to give back to the continent by coming together and brainstorming on issues that concern us locally; then presenting to our respective country leadership innovative ideas and policies to give us the Africa we deserve. KATT collaborates with passionate professionals of African descent and beyond, globally, who desire change.

OUR MISSION

To change negative narratives and present Africa to the world as the superpower she truly is.

OUR VISION

To influence policy to deliver the Africa, we deserve.

GET INVOLVED

Academics and practising professionals are invited to present/engage on issues they are passionate about on any of the SDGs or relevant topics through virtual spaces for ongoing dialogue, quarterly virtual events on key sustainable development topics, policy or policy advocacy papers, journals, blogs or other types of publications and advocacy.

To join the KATT Think Tank, kindly fill out the [membership form here](#).
Please join us on [LinkedIn here](#).

If you have any enquires, kindly send them to kabilunafricathinktank@eweing.org



www.eweing.org/katt-legacies

