



Work in Progress! in Nigeria

Economic perspectives of youth are extremely poor and unemployment rates staggering high. Even when jobs are available there is often a mismatch between the skills youngsters can offer and those required by the employers. Poverty, social instability and political violence are on the brink, often leading to migration and radicalization. This is why addressing the youth employment challenge ranks high on the international and local development priorities, including the priorities of the Dutch development policy and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

Work in Progress! seeks to stimulate entrepreneurship among youth and to enhance their employability. Young entrepreneurs are supported by business and social skills training, mentoring and support services are provided to establish local co-working spaces, incubators and innovation labs. They can be linked to interested investors and are supported in getting access to finance. Through business and social skills training youngsters are helped to enhance their changes on the labor market. It is financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' program *Local Employment for Development in Africa (LEAD)*. The overall objective of LEAD is to generate sustainable income for youth by creating in total 17.000 sustainable direct decent jobs for youth in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Mali, Nigeria and Somalia.

Together with VC4A (Venture Capital for Africa) Oxfam Novib supported the *She Leads Africa (SLA) Accelerator program*. The 4-month program is designed to identify, support and fund the next generation of Nigeria's brightest entrepreneurs.

Angel Adelaja is one of them. She is a young Nigerian entrepreneur, living in Abudja and participant of SLA. Angel started the program in July 2016 and spend one week of residency at SLA HQ in Lagos being trained by the SLA team and connecting with some of most prominent business and operational experts. After that, she returned to Abudja to implement the lessons she had learned and was supported by the SLA team whenever she needed support. In November 2016, she joined the Demo Day to pitch Fresh Direct. Fresh Direct is an agricultural production and processing company that provide exquisitely grown organic fruits, vegetables and meats and processed end products, to potential investors. Fresh Direct won the 2 million Naira prize provided by the Guaranty Trust Bank that joined the Accelerator Programme of SLA.

Since winning the Demo Day, Angel is focused on developing the technology her business uses through the use of sensors and automation to build a fully off grid solution for African Farmers. Angel stated *"She Leads Africa Accelerator program helped us really focus activities at Fresh Direct. The classes plus peer interaction ensured that we could bounce ideas around and critically look at our business in a safe and honest way. She Leads Africa helps us make sure that we are heading in the right direction, focus on key goals, measure our progress critically, develop a market strategy and ultimately become investor ready. I'm really glad we could participate in the program and we'll continue to utilize the resources available on the She Leads Africa Platform."*



For Oxfam Novib and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs these results work to the benefit of young entrepreneurs like Angel Adelaja. The Work in Progress! project aims to inspire structural solutions to give young people the productive economic future they aspire and deserve.