



AFC Fellowship

Impact Report, June 2025

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Introduction

The AFC Fellowship is a collaboration between Common Purpose and Africa Finance Corporation (AFC).

The need

The combined climate and biodiversity crises are highlighting the very practical challenges of bringing about the transition to a sustainable way of life. One of the most important issues that must be resolved is the dissonance between the positions and perspectives of those in the global North and those in the South.

The Fellowship aims to respond to this by strengthening the capacity of a cohort of dynamic emerging leaders who, as they progress in their careers, will build bridges between the global North and South and find new ways to address the environmental crisis.

The Fellowship

A pilot programme ran very successfully in 2023. It brought together fifty dynamic emerging leaders from eighteen countries across Africa, the wider global South and the global North. As a result of the success of the pilot it was agreed to establish the AFC Fellowship, which will run over three years.

The objectives of the Fellowship are to:

- Build links and understanding across the global North and South.
- Develop the participants' ability to lead across boundaries.
- Generate new ideas and approaches to a climate challenge.

This report sets out the extremely positive feedback and outcomes of the 2024 Fellowship.



Being a part of the AFC Fellowship has been an eye-opening journey. It has provided me with a platform to collaborate with brilliant minds across Africa, equipping me with the tools and perspectives needed to tackle pressing climate challenges. The experience has been both inspiring and transformative, driving me to turn innovative ideas into tangible solutions.

Tukwatanise Bonnita, Program Coordinator, Treescape Planet Organization

At a glance

92%

feel better prepared to be a bridge builder between the global North and South

100%

would recommend the programme to another person

100%

feel better prepared to have a greater impact in their organisation/community

88%

plan to work on a project with at least 1 other Fellow

92%

plan to work on a project related to the Challenge

"The AFC Fellowship was such a vibrant experience; it challenged my assumptions while also highlighting my strengths. I left each session feeling more inspired and curious than before and look forward to applying these learnings in both my personal and professional life."

Ambar van der Wath, Investor Relations, Baobab Network

The Climate Challenge process

Took place over a three-month period between October and December 2025 and had two parts:

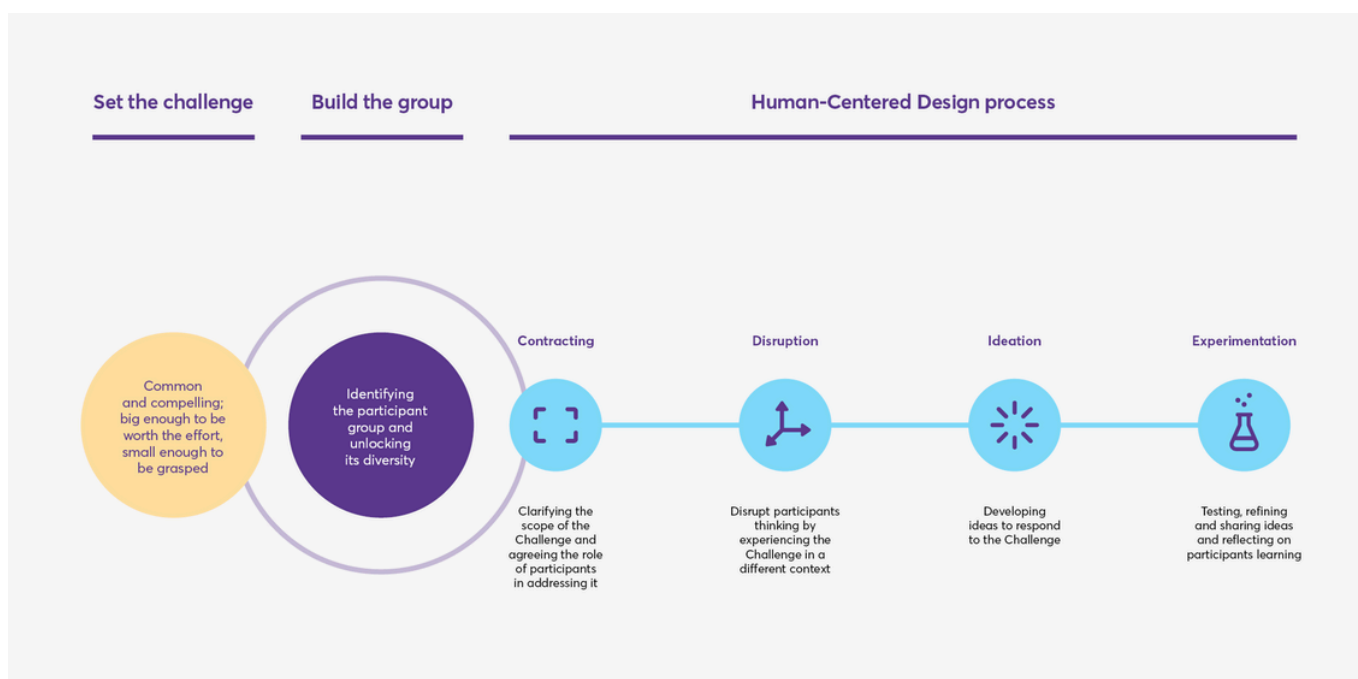
Leading Beyond Authority:

Participants were introduced to the Common Purpose thought leadership of 'Leading Beyond Authority' - the ability to cross boundaries and deliver results outside of your direct circle of control. Essential to tackling any complex challenge.

Climate Challenge:

'How can the world reform carbon markets to incentivize the preservation and expansion of forests, grasslands, peatlands, and mangroves in Africa and across the global South in the interest of achieving global net zero?'

After a grounding in Leading Beyond Authority participants worked on the challenge using the Common Purpose Innoventure process based on Human Centred Design.



Objectives

- Build links and understanding between emerging leaders from the global South and their peers in the North.
- Develop the next generation of leaders and equip them to Lead Beyond Authority, to work across boundaries; a pre-requisite to solving any complex problem.
- Generate ideas and identify new approaches to meet this hugely important challenge.

100%

recognise the value of bringing in wider perspectives when making key decisions

100%

feel better prepared to adapt to new environments

96%

feel better prepared to live with ambiguity



"Collaboration is key to tackling climate change. The AFC Fellowship allowed me to collaborate with other excellent leaders in the field.

After the program, I am certain to use the lessons gained to work closely with stakeholders, such as local communities and environmental organizations, to contribute to sustainable practices and technologies. By fostering partnerships, I can help ensure our services are resilient to climate impacts."

Eti-eno Ntuk, Operations Officer, BlueGreen Initiative for Sustainable Development

Outcomes

Build links and understanding

A key objective was to increase understanding and dialogue between the emerging leaders taking part, and build relationships that can continue beyond the programme experience.

100%

say that their colleagues on the AFC Fellowship will help them make a more positive contribution to tackling the climate/ environmental crisis

100%

feel better prepared to build strong working relationships.



I learned an incredible amount and am very thankful for the opportunity to connect with passionate, intelligent individuals and to discuss the complex issues facing us today. Their energy and expertise made me more optimistic and energized about solving these challenges.

Erin Maher, Sustainability Strategist & Advisor, ENSO Initiatives

Outcomes

Develop the next generation of leaders

We wanted to equip the emerging leaders taking part with the leadership skills to tackle complex challenges by developing their ability to 'Lead Beyond Authority'.

96%

feel better prepared to thrive in complexity

100%

feel better prepared to influence beyond their circle of authority



The AFC Fellowship has been a transformative experience, deepening my understanding of carbon markets, climate change, and leadership—particularly the power of leading beyond authority.

It has equipped me with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to influence change and drive impactful solutions in the Republic of South Sudan and most importantly, for vulnerable communities across Africa and the global South."

Magook Daniel Mayom Lueth, Programme Associate, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Outcomes

Generate Ideas - the Challenge

Participants were invited to address the challenge:

'How can the world reform carbon markets to incentivize the preservation and expansion of forests, grasslands, peatlands, and mangroves in Africa and across the global South in the interest of achieving global net zero?'

The challenge process based on human centred design asked participants to work together on a complex problem. The aim is to increase their understanding and appreciation of what is needed to tackle this kind of challenge – some ideas may be developed beyond the programme but our primary aim is to develop their leadership learning through this process.

Slides from the final presentations are available in the Appendix.



The AFC fellowship gave me a unique opportunity to explore how innovative methods can tackle Africa's climate challenges. From sustainable infrastructure to nature-based solutions, I saw firsthand how targeted investments can drive both climate resilience and economic progress.

Anab Ovidie Grand, Climate Security Specialist, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Carbon X Change

Carbon X Change is a peer-to-peer platform that fosters equitable participation in carbon markets by improving bargaining power, enhancing capacity, and facilitating collaboration. Global South nations face undervalued carbon credits, limited local benefits, and insufficient financing due to lack of bargaining power, transparency, and collaboration in global carbon markets. Small projects are side-lined by bureaucracy, while communities lack access to resources, financing, and technical expertise. This peer-led platform will provide Global South nations with a custom-built opportunity to collaborate and pool resources online.



Premium Green Tokens

A custom-built carbon trading system and premium green token that protects natural carbon repositories and generates revenue for communities, with the aim to empower Africa's participation in carbon markets. Including a new Triple-Use Green Token which support clean cooking, conservation, and renewable energy projects, with proceeds benefiting African communities. Tokens will be priced for fairness and traded on a unified platform, accessible to individuals and small investors.

Collective Financing for Small-Scale Projects

Small regenerative farmers face exclusion from the global carbon market due to its complexity and high costs. By working through farming cooperatives, they can pool resources, share costs, ensure accountability, and gain bargaining power to negotiate fair terms. The proposed solution involves a centralized platform for aggregating and trading smallholder carbon credits. Steps include securing funding from corporations like AFC, building knowledge of regenerative agriculture, distributing funds to implement practices, and aggregating credits for market sale. This scalable model empowers farmers with market access and fair outcomes while providing buyers with a transparent, centralized marketplace.

Connecting the Dots

Empowering communities with education, trust, and access to Carbon Markets. Connecting the Dots is a localized toolkit designed to empower communities by bridging global carbon markets and local realities through education, trust, and access. It addresses the complexity of carbon credit systems and the lack of tailored verification processes, incentives, and education for community-led conservation projects. The toolkit simplifies carbon market engagement, offering region-specific resources on market basics, partnership building, revenue sharing, and storytelling to stand out in the market. Developed with local experts and stakeholders, it incorporates indigenous knowledge, local dialects, and offline accessibility to ensure inclusivity. By leveraging platforms like ESSA and Revolut, it fosters transparency, builds partnerships, and supports sustainable community funding.

Global South Carbon Xchange

This platform connects project developers, funders, and credit buyers to address two key issues: lack of upfront funding for small projects and the unequal distribution of carbon credit benefits to communities. It emphasizes transparency by vetting developers and funders, using third-party standardizers, and employing blockchain and AI to monitor credit eligibility, impact, and compliance. The platform ensures financing reaches end users and focuses on community benefits by coordinating with developers. Built collaboratively with stakeholders, regulators, and tech start-ups, it will pilot in select regions before scaling to larger communities, making the system more accessible and equitable for small developers.

Challenge Lab

We ran the Challenge Lab for the first time this year.

The aim was to support, inspire and challenge the Fellows with the strongest ideas and projects to take them to the next stage. This learning is relevant both to the ideas that emerged from the Climate Challenge Programme, and to projects they are working on in their professional life outside the Fellowship. This opportunity was opened to the 2024 Fellows with a maximum number of 25 places available – 23 of the 40 Fellows in the cohort took part.

It was delivered online over three days between 29 April and 7 May 2025. The objectives were to give the Fellows:

- Exposure to the leadership competencies needed to launch and develop new ideas/projects.
- Practical strategies and inspiration to help take their ideas from concept or early stages to the next stage of development.
- A strong cohort who can remain connected and provide ongoing challenge and support.

83%

said that they are better equipped to work on new ideas and projects

83%

said that they will commit to working on a project related to the Challenge



A mind opening, inspirational programme absolutely worth your time.

Maureen Ayikoru, Senior Lecturer in Sustainability and Business Ethics, Royal Holloway University of London



Feedback six months on

We asked the Fellows who took part in the Challenge Lab about their experience of the Fellowship six months on from the end of the Climate Challenge Programme. The results from those who completed the survey are as follows:

100%

said that they have begun taking action to lead beyond their circle of authority

100%

said that they feel better prepared to have a greater impact in their organisation/community

100%

said that they feel better prepared to be a bridge builder between the global North and South

100%

said that their colleagues on the AFC Fellowship will help them make a more positive contribution to tackling the climate/environmental crisis

2024 Fellows

- Abisola Peters, Dentons ACAS-Law
- Ali Anwar, Deloitte
- Amara Conteh, Green Scenery Sierra Leone
- Ambar van der Wath, Baobab Network
- Anab Ovidie Grand, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Anastasiia Chenash, Q Terminals
- Beth Njeri, Metabolic
- Bhavya Mehta, Social Finance
- Branka Španiček, CEE Bankwatch Network
- Chiamaka Enendu, Trust Television
- David Ezeonyekwere, Dece Agro & Farms
- Edwin Maingi, Conservation International
- Elizabeth Obode, Circular Carbon Africa
- Erin Maher, ENSO Initiatives
- Esther Ajah, Governor Otti of Abia State
- Eti-eno Ntuk, BlueGreen Initiative for Sustainable Development (BlueGreen ISD)
- Faith Ogedengbe, FMO: Dutch Entrepreneurial Development Bank
- FNU Samintang, Sustainable Development Goals Center for Eastern Indonesia
- Gabriel Dadvid, International Finance Corporation
- Gayathri Govardhana, Newtrace Private Limited
- Ifeoluwa Akanmu, Dun and Bradstreet
- Ilija Franeta, The World Bank
- Ismael Ocen, Ocean One Social Research Centre
- Juan Pierre, FXB International
- Kaidi Ru, SnT Consulting
- Lok Hang Abraham Chan, Centre for Development Economics and Sustainability, Monash Business School
- Magook Daniel Mayom Lueth, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Mary Ellen Angland, FoodCloud
- Maureen Ayikoru, Royal Holloway, University of London
- Mobalaji Idowu, Wildlife Conservation Society
- Mona-Lisa Eva Gbae, MTN Cameroon
- Mutale Mwila, Aspect Advisory
- Paul Issifu, Mott MacDonald
- Pelumi Fadare, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)
- Puneet Singh Singhal, Billion Strong
- Sadiq Abubakar, Sahara Group
- Syakaa William, Axum
- Thibault Le Pivain, Independent and United Nations
- Thubelihle Moyo, Borena Energy
- Tukwatanise Bonnita, Treescape Planet Organization



Partners



Common Purpose

Common Purpose is a leadership development organization that specializes in cross-boundary leadership. A not-for-profit, we run programmes in over 100 cities worldwide. Founded in 1989, we have over 130,000 alumni globally. Our leadership development programmes inspire and equip people to work across boundaries. This enables them to solve complex problems in organizations and in society.



Africa Finance Corporation (AFC)

AFC was established in 2007 to be the catalyst for private sector-led infrastructure investment across Africa. AFC's approach combines specialist industry expertise with a focus on financial and technical advisory, project structuring, project development, and risk capital to address Africa's infrastructure development needs and drive sustainable economic growth.

Sixteen years on, AFC has developed a track record as the partner of choice in Africa for investing and delivering on instrumental, high-quality infrastructure assets that provide essential services in the core infrastructure sectors of power, natural resources, heavy industry, transport, and telecommunications. AFC has 42 member countries and has invested US\$12.7 billion across Africa since inception.



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