

A new generation of African leaders are on a quest for the skills to effect change #LSEfricanLeadership

On Bill Clinton's first visit to Africa as US President in 1998, he spoke of a "new generation of leaders" devoted to democracy and economic reforms. Today, it is a widely held view that the hopes heaped on those leaders were misplaced. Now there is a hunt for another new generation of leaders, genuine in their desire for change and in their determination to effect it.

At least, this is what echoes back as I talk to various members of the second cohort of the **LSE Programme for African Leadership** (LSE PfAL). The programme is generously supported by LSE alumnus Firoz Lalji and his wife Najma. Its aim is to give Africa's most dynamic emerging leaders access to high-level academic thinking and policy ideas on key contemporary debates around the world.

It was this vision of PfAL that attracted Motunrayo Odusanya-Odunga, Principal State Counsel at the National Agency for the prohibition of Trafficking Persons in Nigeria, to apply for the programme.

"It is meant for emerging African leaders," she says.

"We are seen as reformers, agents of positive change within the African continent, so I felt that if there was a new development in high academic thinking, I wanted to be part of it."

It is just halfway through the three-week programme and the participants are already beginning to develop new ideas about leadership.

"In the past, I confused management and leadership," Abdelatif Bouazza, Director of Social Development at the Ministry of Solidarity, Women and Social Development in Morocco, states.

"Now I see management is not leadership. Management involves technical skills.

"Leadership is a job, we have technical and behavioural skills.

"In leadership we need to have the capacity for mobilising resources and people and we have to attempt to create change.

Already, some of the participants are developing big ideas that they are looking forward to implementing once they get back home.

John Mthandi is the Executive Director of the Mulanje Renewable Energy Centre in Malawi.

"In Malawi, we don't have a water authority," he said.

"I was speaking to Professor Mark Thatcher and he says it is a big problem on the African continent. When I go back home, that is an area I would like to look at and see how we can create an authority in the water sector."

Much like the **Pan-African network of leaders** of the fifties and sixties such as Nkrumah, Kenyatta, Banda and Nyerere who secured independence, PfAL hopes to be the catalyst for a new continental network that extends beyond national borders.

“Networking is very important in my mind and I hope it will be sustainable, I want these networks to be long term, not short term,” Abdelatif Bouazza concludes.

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