

THE DRIVE REPORT

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Drive to Inspire
Africa

JULY 2025



Top News

- DTIA Partners with University of Zambia Debaters & Speech Society for Inspiring Webinars
- DTIA's Spotlight Africa celebrates Ghana's Chef Abby
- Volunteer Spotlight: Dr. Vanessa Apea
- Mentorship Spotlight: A Story of Two Journeys

2nd Anniversary - Special Edition



Get in touch to become a
volunteer!

06/25

Two Years of Impact!



As we mark our second anniversary, we take this opportunity to reflect on the progress made and express our gratitude to all who have supported this journey thus far.

Over the past two years, our outreach efforts in senior high schools have enabled us to:

- Visit 32 schools
- Engage with over 29,000 students
- Facilitate 284 breakout sessions
- Collaborate with 4 strategic partners

In addition to our work at the secondary level, we have extended our reach to tertiary institutions. Notably, we partnered with the University of Ghana SRC for campus-based initiatives and collaborated with the University of Zambia Debaters and Speech Society to deliver a series of webinars focused on personal development and growth.

Our mentorship programme for the first quarter of 2025 brought together mentors and mentees from eight African countries, fostering meaningful cross-border engagement and knowledge exchange. Through various initiatives, Drive to Inspire — Africa has also supported students with access to internship opportunities, offering practical exposure and skills development beyond the classroom.

Seventeen female students are currently benefiting from our scholarship program, which supports their tertiary education.

The recently launched monthly webinar series continues to provide young people with consistent opportunities for learning, reflection, and community building.

We remain committed to nurturing the potential of Africa's youth and are deeply grateful to our volunteers, partners, and participants for their ongoing support. While much remains to be done, we look ahead with a continued sense of purpose and responsibility.

A look at Touched Initiative



1. Public speaking remains a key challenge for many young people, not because they lack the ability to speak, but due to the fear of being judged or laughed at.
2. The Touched Initiative was introduced to address this barrier by creating safe, supportive spaces for young people to participate during our outreach activities.
3. During sessions, students are encouraged to respond to questions or take part in confidence-building activities designed to improve their communication skills.



4. As a reward for their bravery, participants receive DTIA-branded souvenirs, serving as a token of encouragement and recognition.



5. We have received inspiring feedback from beneficiaries who shared how this experience helped them overcome their fear of public speaking and build self-assurance.

6. Since its inception, the Touched Initiative has become a core part of our outreach, playing a vital role in helping students find their voice and speak with confidence.



Volunteer Spotlight



Dr. Vanessa Apea

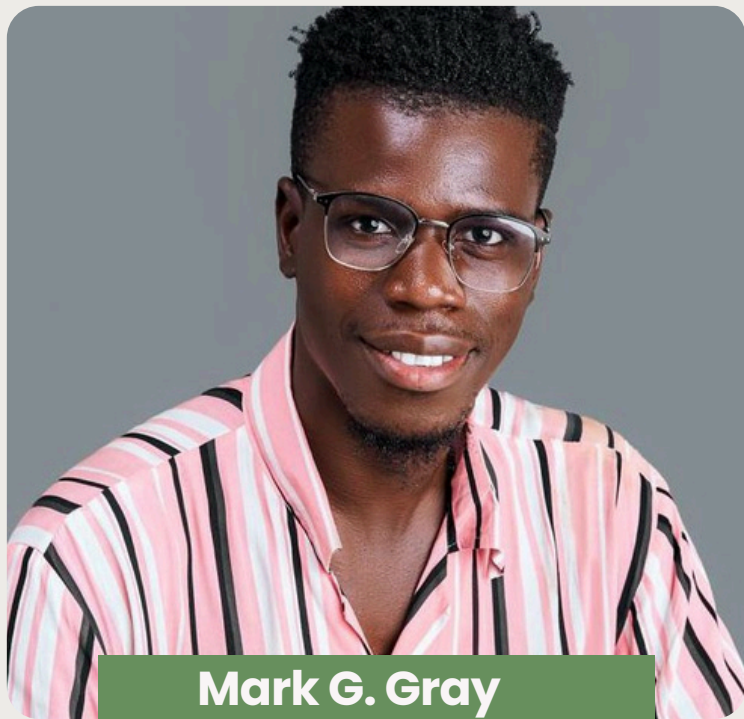
Dr. Vanessa Apea is a highly experienced sexual health clinician, researcher, and speaker. Since 2011, Vanessa has been a consultant physician in Genito-urinary and HIV medicine at Barts Health NHS Trust, and clinical lead for five of those years. She is an Honorary Senior Lecturer and the deputy academic lead for equality, diversity, and inclusion within Queen Mary University of London's School of Medicine and Dentistry.

Vanessa is passionate about reducing inequalities in healthcare. She has made this a central focus of her clinical work and received an NHS 70 Windrush Award for her contribution to improving health equity. She has an established track record of exploring barriers to engagement in care in marginalised populations. She has a particular research interest in participatory approaches and the intersection of race, gender, and health.

She is a member of the London Fast-Track Cities Initiative stigma subgroup working to get London to zero HIV stigma. She is also the medical director of NAZ, a charity advocating for high-quality sexual health and HIV support services for racially minoritised communities. Vanessa is a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and a Fulbright scholar with a Master's in Public Health from Harvard University.

Most recently, Dr. Apea launched the Accra London Health Centre, a pioneering healthcare facility in Ghana focused on women's wellness, preventative care, and holistic health. Described as the "physical embodiment of a Diasporan dream," the centre reflects Dr. Apea's commitment to bridging innovation and inclusion across borders. For her, it represents both a personal homecoming and a bold step toward building a legacy of health creation in Ghana, shaped by empathy, excellence, and deep cultural relevance.

Stories of Impact – Mentor shares experience



Mark G. Gray
Mentor - Liberia

Serving as a mentor for the Drive to Inspire Africa 3-month Mentorship Program has been a deeply rewarding and inspiring experience.

I had the privilege of mentoring Benedicta Owusu Afriyie, a bright and determined first-year student at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, who is pursuing Business Administration with a focus on logistics, supply chain management, and business information technology.

From the beginning of our mentorship journey, Benedicta showed a strong willingness to grow not only academically but also personally and professionally. Her passion for building confidence in public speaking, developing strong peer networks, and exploring technological opportunities within her field was evident.

I was particularly moved by her eagerness to leverage my background in multimedia and youth advocacy to help shape her own path.

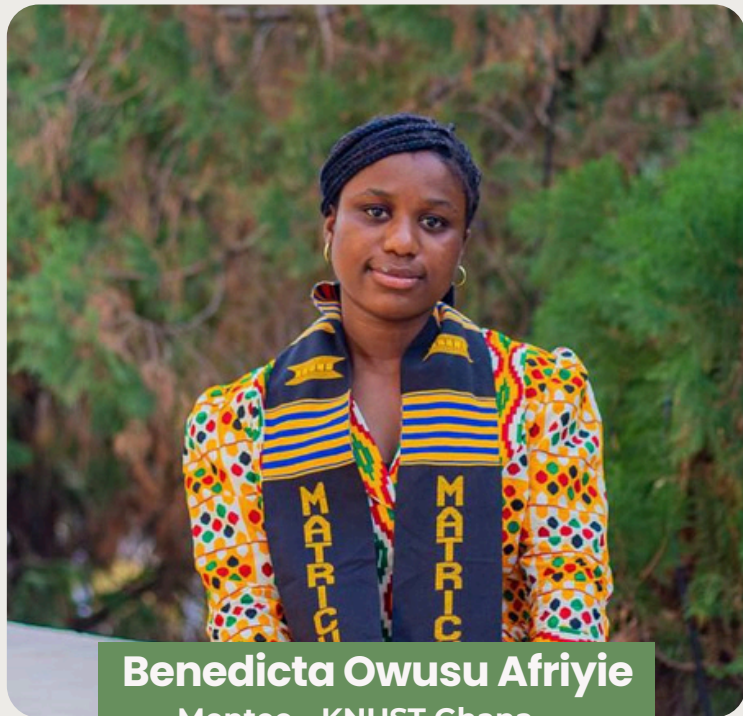
Throughout the program, our interactions were marked by mutual respect, curiosity, and a shared vision for self-empowerment. We explored strategies for personal branding, effective communication, goal setting, and using digital tools for professional development.

Watching Benedicta become more confident in articulating her aspirations and seeking out growth opportunities was a true highlight of my mentorship experience.

I applaud Drive to Inspire Africa for creating this unique platform that bridges generations and empowers young people through mentorship. I am honored to have contributed to this initiative and look forward to supporting future editions.

**Mark G. Gray Social Worker | Youth Advocate | Multimedia Professional
Communication & Advocacy Officer, WE4SELF**

Stories of Impact – Mentorship Beneficiary



Benedicta Owusu Afriyie
Mentee - KNUST Ghana

Hi, I'm Benedicta Owusu Afriyie, a mentee from the Drive to Inspire mentorship program. Working with my mentor, Mr. Mark Gray, was an incredible experience.

He equipped me with valuable knowledge and skills that have had a significant impact on my life.

One of the most significant benefits I gained was overcoming my fear of public speaking. Mr. Gray encouraged me to participate in class discussions, and I was able to build my confidence in speaking up. He also taught me essential skills like time management, self-discipline, and resilience, which have been instrumental in my academic journey.

Through the program, I gained knowledge in business intelligence, data analytics, digital marketing, and e-commerce, which proved invaluable during my exams. I was able to apply these skills and answer questions confidently, even though I hadn't been taught them in class.

Mr. Gray's guidance helped me develop a growth mindset, seeing challenges as opportunities rather than limitations. He also shared strategies for overcoming procrastination and staying motivated, which have been game-changers for me.

As a Level 100 student at KNUST, this mentorship program has been a huge blessing. I'm grateful for the support and guidance Mr. Gray provided, and I highly appreciate the Drive to Inspire program for creating such a valuable opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Mark Gray, and thank you, Drive to Inspire, for making a positive impact on my life.

DTIA Collaborates with University of Zambia Debaters to Equip Africa's Future Leaders

Introduction

In July 2025, Drive to Inspire – Africa, in partnership with the University of Zambia Debaters & Speech Society, organized a webinar series for university students. This important event aimed to provide a platform where students and professionals across the continent could access real-world insights, practical career guidance, and mental wellness tools to succeed in an increasingly complex world.

Overview of the Webinar Series

The series included two sessions focused on personal growth and career preparation. The first webinar covered the theme “From Classroom to World of Work: Thriving in a Competitive Job Market.” It highlighted the challenges many graduates face as they transition into the professional world, a journey often filled with uncertainty, competition, and the need to stand out. Guest speakers Anita Solomon, Head of SDI Lending at Development Bank Ghana, and Kafui Ntow, Director at Devtraco Group, brought dynamic perspectives drawn from years of leadership experience. Both speakers shared personal stories, highlighted essential soft skills, and offered actionable advice on navigating job applications, workplace dynamics, and the importance of adaptability in a rapidly changing economy. Their message was clear: education is vital, but success in the world of work demands initiative, emotional intelligence, and continuous learning.

The second session, titled “Pursuit of Growth,” focused on mental resilience and the importance of inner development. Clinical psychologist and senior counselor Dr. Gladys Setordzie from the University of Ghana led this session. She encouraged participants to reflect on how they handle setbacks, manage self-doubt, and pursue growth during adversity. Dr. Setordzie highlighted that while many young people face hardships, few pause to learn from those experiences. Her session provided space for vulnerability, honest reflection, and healing topics often overlooked in mainstream success discussions. We have one more webinar coming up in August as we build on the previous sessions and strengthen our partnership to achieve even more.

Impact and Outcomes

Across both webinars, participation was robust, with attendees joining from multiple countries across Africa. The engagement during the Q&A segments was particularly encouraging, showing that participants were actively listening and could relate to the content on a personal level.

The partnership with the University of Zambia Debaters & Speech Society marked more than just a successful event; it represented a shared commitment to empowering Africa's youth with the tools, conversations, and confidence they need to thrive. The series affirmed that when young people are given the right guidance and space to learn, they rise with purpose.

DTIA Collaborates with University of Zambia Debaters to Equip Africa’s Future Leaders Cont’d

Conclusion

This inaugural collaboration set a powerful tone for future partnerships with academic institutions across Africa. It demonstrated the value of combining career mentorship with conversations around personal growth and mental wellness.

Drive to Inspire – Africa remains committed to expanding such partnerships and continuing to serve as a bridge between education and real-world transformation. We look forward to building on this momentum and reaching even more young minds with stories that inspire, insights that guide, and tools that empower.

DRIVE TO INSPIRE – AFRICA IN COLLABORATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA DEBATERS & SPEECH SOCIETY

WEBINAR

Topic: From Classroom to World of Work: Thriving in a Competitive Job Market

ANITA SOLOMON,
Head of SDI Lending
Wholesale Investments at Development Bank Ghana

KAFUI NTOW
Director
Devtraco Group

17TH JULY, 2025
5:00 PM (CAT) | 3:00 PM (GMT)

LIVE ON zoom <https://us06web.zoom.us/join/12F2yW0HQW0BoowarLZ1Gg>

DRIVE TO INSPIRE – AFRICA IN COLLABORATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA DEBATERS & SPEECH SOCIETY

WEBINAR

Topic: Pursuit of Growth

Dr. Gladys Setordzie is a clinical Psychologist, a psychometrist, and a senior counsellor at the University of Ghana

Wed. 23rd July, 2025
5:00pm CAT | 3:00pm GMT

LIVE ON zoom **Dr. Gladys Setordzie**

Registration link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/join/KdMCTBV7TVS9IR9ZJGRoqQ>

SPOTLIGHT AFRICA



Chef Abby – Digital Creator

Chef Abby is a Ghanaian culinary influencer and digital storyteller whose creative work has redefined how African cuisine is experienced online. With over 1.4 million followers on TikTok and a growing presence across multiple platforms, she has become a leading voice in contemporary food media, captivating global audiences with her vibrant, visually compelling content.

Chef Abby is best known for her ability to transform everyday Ghanaian dishes such as waakye, kenkey, jollof, and banku into mouth-watering visual narratives that celebrate both flavour and tradition. Through her seamless blend of food, culture and storytelling, she has carved out a unique space that not only delights

the senses but also fosters a deeper appreciation for African heritage.

Chef Abby was recently named in TIME magazine's 100 Most Influential Creators list, a recognition of her global impact in shaping culture and conversation through digital creativity. Prior to that, she was invited to meet TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew during her visit to France, a testament to her influence within the international creator community.

Her work continues to empower young people across Africa and the diaspora to embrace their roots, take pride in their culture and explore the limitless potential of digital entrepreneurship through food.

NEW AGE CAREER OPTIONS



Whether they're teaching a skill, sharing their journey, building a brand, or entertaining millions, digital creators are shaping culture, changing perceptions, and building businesses from their content.

What Do Digital Creators Do?

- Create original content (videos, posts, stories, podcasts, newsletters, etc.)
- Build online communities through platforms like TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter/X
- Collaborate with brands for sponsored content and marketing campaigns
- Sell digital products or services, like e-books, presets, merch, or online classes
- Monetize through ads, memberships, and partnerships

Why It Matters in Africa

For young Africans, this career path is not just about fame — it's about voice, impact, and opportunity. With the digital economy growing fast across the continent, content creation is:

- A low-barrier entry point to entrepreneurship

WHO IS A DIGITAL CREATOR?

In today's world, a smartphone, internet connection, and creativity can open the door to a powerful career: becoming a Digital Creator. A Digital Creator is someone who produces content for digital platforms — from YouTube videos and Instagram reels, to blog posts, TikToks, podcasts, and even online courses. They use storytelling, design, video, photography, or audio to engage audiences, educate, entertain, or influence.

- A platform for telling African stories by Africans
- A tool for advocacy, education, and empowerment
- A source of income from both local and global audiences

Opportunities in Digital Creation

- Niche content creation (tech reviews, fashion, travel, lifestyle, finance)
- Freelance work in photography, video editing, or copywriting
- Digital marketing and brand influencing
- Starting your platform or brand
- Working with NGOs or businesses as a content strategist

The digital world is evolving, and those who understand how to use it to tell stories, solve problems, or entertain meaningfully are the ones leading the future of work.

Maybe you're not just scrolling. Maybe you're sitting on a skill that could shape lives and open doors.

Now is the time to turn your creativity into a career.



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