
A REPLICATION PLAYBOOK

The AI Literacy Fellowship for African Policymakers

How to design, deliver, and graduate your own cohort. A practical, reusable guide drawn from a real, completed four-month fellowship, honest lessons included.

~870

APPLICANTS

22

AFRICAN
COUNTRIES

55

GRADUATES

40%

WOMEN
GRADUATES



PUBLISHED BY

The AI Literacy Fellowship for African Policymakers: A Replication Playbook

OpenSchool Initiative. Based on Cohort 1, 20 October 2025 to 13 February 2026. The full V-Team who designed and delivered the fellowship is credited in 7.2; resource persons and mentors in Appendix A.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF & LEAD AUTHOR

Najeeb G. Abdulhamid, PhD

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

- Engr. Abba Muhammad Gadanya
- Mr Abubakar Salisu
- Dr Bashir I. Dodo
- Salim Ibrahim
- Dr Zakiyyu Muhammad
- Abdulrahman Hayatu
- Dr (Engr.) Alhassan Haruna Umar
- Fatima Abdulkadir Jidda
- Yusuf Adam Khalil

RIGHTS

© 2026 OpenSchool Initiative, Cosmopolitan University Abuja, System Strategy & Policy Lab, and Tanzeel Colleges International.

BASED ON

Cohort 1, 20 October 2025 to 13 February 2026. For OSi's full mission, vision, values, and focus areas, see the OpenSchool Initiative profile at openschool.sch.ng.

CC BY 4.0

FREE TO COPY,
ADAPT AND SHARE

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence (CC BY 4.0). You are free to copy, adapt, and share this playbook, including for your own fellowship, provided you credit the original.

Suggested citation: Abdulhamid, N. G., Gadanya, A. M., Hayatu, A., Salisu, A., Umar, A. H., Dodo, B. I., Jidda, F. A., Ibrahim, S., Khalil, Y. A., & Muhammad, Z. (2026). *The AI Literacy Fellowship for African Policymakers: A Replication Playbook*. OpenSchool Initiative. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21878549>

Contents

FRONT MATTER

F.2	Foreword: why this playbook exists	iv
F.3	How to use this playbook	v

THE ELEVEN PARTS

01	The case & origin	1
02	Design principles	5
03	Program architecture	8
04	Recruitment & selection	12
05	The capstone engine	18
06	Cohort experience & community	25
07	People & operations	30
08	Evaluation & outcomes	38
09	Sustainability & the afterlife	45
10	Templates, checklists & resources	48
11	What we learned	55

APPENDICES

A	The complete Cohort 1 curriculum	60
B	The full social mixer run-sheet	66

HOW TO READ THE MARGIN MARKS

Why it matters

The reasoning behind a choice

How to run it

The operational steps

What goes wrong

Failures we observed

Remix

What to adapt locally

F.2 Foreword: why this playbook exists

This playbook was written by the people who ran the program it describes. It was written alongside the delivery and close-out of the fellowship, drawing on the operational records, communications, surveys, reports, and implementation artifacts generated throughout, so it reflects lived implementation rather than retrospective recollection.

OpenSchool Initiative (OSi) is a non-profit founded in Nigeria in 2020, during the COVID-19 school closures, when we used the Google Applied Digital Skills curriculum to put free digital learning within reach of people cut off from the classroom. Since then we have reached over 20,000 learners across Africa through free classes, workshops, and webinars, and our work has grown to include a specific focus on responsible AI: helping educators, institutions, and policymakers navigate a technology moving faster than the rules around it.

One habit shaped everything that follows: we learn from our own practice. OSi collects pre- and post-training feedback across every activity we run, and across those 20,000-plus learners that produced a large body of responses on AI and digital literacy. When we examined it, one finding stood out and would not go away, and it became the reason this fellowship existed at all.

In 2025 we turned that finding into a program: the AI Literacy Fellowship for African Policymakers. It ran for four months, fully virtual, built and delivered almost entirely by volunteers, and it took approximately 870 applicants from 22 African countries down to 55 senior leaders who graduated with a real policy artifact in hand.

This document is our attempt to give that program away. In it you get the full four-month architecture, the recruitment and capstone mechanics, the operational checklists, and an honest account of what worked and what we would change, enough for a ministry training unit, a university, a think tank, or another non-profit, in Africa or anywhere, to stand up something similar without starting from a blank page. Where you should not copy us but decide for

yourself, we say so. We share the inconvenient lessons alongside the good ones, because that is the only kind of playbook worth trusting.

For OSI's full mission, vision, values, and focus areas, see the OpenSchool Initiative profile at openschool.sch.ng.

F.3 **How to use this playbook**

This is a modular playbook, not a script. You are not meant to read it cover to cover and copy it. You are meant to take the parts you need, adapt them to your context, and consciously reject the parts that don't fit.

Start where you are

- Deciding whether to run a fellowship at all? Read Part 1 (the case) and Part 8 (what outcomes to expect).
- Committed, and now designing it? Parts 2 and 3 give you the design logic and the full program architecture.
- Mid-build and stuck? Go straight to the relevant play: recruitment (Part 4), the capstone (Part 5), community (Part 6), operations (Part 7).
- About to deliver? Part 10 collects the reusable artifacts and checklists.

How each play is built. Most sections follow the same rhythm: why it matters, what we did, how to run it, and what goes wrong.

What to keep, and what to swap

- **Keep (the core):** the evidence-first origin, practice-over-information design, a fictional-nation capstone device, the cohort-as-network principle, and explicit completion benchmarks.
- **Swap (the local layer):** the national context, partner institutions, language(s), platforms and tooling, resource persons, and the calendar.
- **Ubuntia** is your template for the swap. Cohort 1 used a hypothetical mid-sized Sub-Saharan nation so fellows could debate freely; you substitute your own jurisdiction (see Part 5).

The case & origin

Every replication starts here. Before you design a single session, you must be able to answer one question in a sentence a minister would nod at: why does this fellowship need to exist?

IN THIS PART

1.1	The problem	2	1.3	The conviction / theory of change	3
1.2	The evidence base	2	1.4	Who this fellowship is for	4

1.1 The problem

Artificial intelligence is entering professional and public life across Africa faster than institutions can govern it. Generative tools are already in ministries, lecture halls, banks, hospitals, and newsrooms. But the decisions that determine whether that adoption is safe, fair, and sovereign are being made ahead of any policy guardrail.

This is not, at root, a technology gap; it is a governance gap. The people with the authority to set the rules are often the furthest from the technical conversation, while the people closest to the technology rarely hold policy authority. Left unaddressed, the default rules get written elsewhere and Africa simply inherits them.

WHY IT MATTERS

Your fellowship's entire value proposition rests on naming a real, felt gap. State it in one line, back it with local evidence, and every later design choice becomes defensible.

1.2 The evidence base

The fellowship was not founded on intuition. OSi reviewed its own training data: on the order of 20,000 pre- and post-training responses. One question cut through the noise: does any policy guide the use of generative AI in your workplace?

The overwhelming answer was "No." Across sectors and seniority levels, clear and usable responsible-AI policies were strikingly rare, a near-universal policy vacuum sitting directly beneath rapid, enthusiastic adoption.

WHAT THE ~870 APPLICATIONS SHOWED

86%

already used AI in their work

28%

had ever contributed to an AI or digital-policy process

53%

were unaware of any national or institutional AI policy

The application process confirmed the same pattern. Of the approximately 870 people who applied, 86% already used AI in their work, yet only 28% had ever contributed to any AI or digital-policy process, and 53% were unaware of any national or institutional AI policy in their country at all.

REPLICATE IT

You do not need 20,000 responses. A focused survey of 100 to 300 professionals in your target sector, asking the same blunt questions, produces a headline statistic compelling enough to anchor a concept note and recruit partners. The evidence is the mandate; collect it before you build.

1.3 The conviction / theory of change

The founding conviction: if AI policy in Africa is written by people who understand both the technology and their own institutional realities, the continent becomes a co-creator of ethical, inclusive, contextually grounded AI, not a late adopter governed by imported frameworks.

- Equip senior policymakers with practical AI literacy;
- Connect them into a cross-border network;
- Hand them tools so they leave able to write policy, not merely discuss it;
- Outcome: policy that reflects African contexts, produced by Africans with the authority to enact it.

We name this ambition "policy democratization."

**↳ REMIX FOR YOUR
COUNTRY**

Keep the three levers (literacy → network → tools) as your spine. Swap "Africa" for your nation, region, or sector. The logic holds at any scale.

1.4 Who this fellowship is for

The fellowship targets senior and mid-senior public-interest decision-makers: leaders whose signature, vote, or mandate already shapes how institutions behave. Cohort 1 included professors at vice-chancellor rank, directors and deputy directors in government ministries, senior officials, security and intelligence professionals, bankers, CEOs, and heads of civil-society and professional bodies.

Choosing this profile has consequences to design around: time is their scarcest resource (the program runs on ~5 focused hours a week); they learn by judging, not memorising; and their networks are part of the deliverable.

REPLICATE IT

Write a one-paragraph "ideal fellow" profile before you open applications. It will drive your eligibility gates, your selection rubric, and the seniority of faculty you need.

Design principles

Seven principles are the DNA of the fellowship. Four we designed before the program began; three Cohort 1 taught us in the first weeks.

IN THIS PART

2.1	Practice and iteration over information	6	2.5	Identity before technology	6
2.2	Localization / context-first	6	2.6	Fiction as a safe space	6
2.3	Cohort-as-network	6	2.7	Learning design for busy senior leaders	7
2.4	Capstone-as-output	6			

Principles we designed from the start

2.1 Practice and iteration over information

Policymaking capacity is built by doing, not by absorbing content. Every module drives toward an applied output. Test: for each session, ask "what will a fellow produce or decide here?" If the answer is "nothing," redesign it.

2.2 Localization / context-first

Imported principles are inert until translated into instruments that fit local realities. Test: every concept should be followed by "...and here is what it looks like in our context."

2.3 Cohort-as-network

The cohort is a deliverable in its own right. Test: does your design create repeated, structured reasons for fellows to talk to each other, not only to faculty?

2.4 Capstone-as-output

The program is organised around producing a real, publishable policy artifact. Test: can you draw a line from each activity to the final artifact? If not, cut it.

Principles Cohort 1 taught us

2.5 Identity before technology

Literacy for this audience begins with agency and identity, not tooling. The real question fellows surfaced was who defines AI's purpose for Africa?

2.6 Fiction as a safe space

A hypothetical nation, "Ubuntia," let senior officials debate politically sensitive trade-offs candidly. Imagination became a governance instrument.

2.7 Learning design for busy senior leaders

For time-constrained executives, contextual examples, interactive tools, and peer-driven exchange consistently outperformed lecture-heavy delivery.

◡ REMIX

The seven principles are the "keep" list; the modules, dates, and faculty in Part 3 are the "swap" list. Expect your own first cohort to teach you a few more.

Program architecture

How the "why" of Part 1 and the principles of Part 2 become a four-month schedule a team can run.

IN THIS PART

3.1	The four-module arc	9	3.4	Worked example: Module 1 in full	10
3.2	Activity taxonomy	9	3.5	Modules 2 to 4: escalating the arc	11
3.3	Duration, cadence, and time zones	10			

3.1 The four-module arc

- Module 1: Foundations & Framing Africa's Position in AI
- Module 2: Risks, Ethics, and Governance
- Module 3: Adoption, Innovation, and Capacity Building
- Module 4: AI for Development & the Capstone Project

Module 1 builds shared information and agency; Module 2 develops judgement; Module 3 turns judgement into applied capability; Module 4 channels everything into producing the capstone.

REPLICATE IT

Keep the four-stage logic (frame → judge → apply → produce) even if you rename the modules. It is what prevents a fellowship from collapsing into a disconnected series of webinars.

3.2 Activity taxonomy

The program ran 25 structured learning activities over four months, fully virtual, in four formats:

25 ACTIVITIES, FOUR FORMATS

12 Lectures — frame the landscape and import expertise	8 Workshops — applied, hands-on skill building	2 Masterclasses — deep dives with senior practitioners	3 Self-paced courses — asynchronous foundations
--	--	--	---

Counted out, that is just under half the program in lectures (12 of 25), a third in workshops (8), and the rest split between masterclasses and self-paced courses. The most important ratio is live time versus self-paced time: foundational knowledge was pushed to self-paced study so scarce live hours went to framing, debate, and hands-on work.

WHEN TO USE EACH

Self-paced for baseline leveling → lectures for framing → workshops for capability → masterclasses for influence. Map every activity to one of these four jobs; if it doesn't have one, it doesn't belong.

3.3 Duration, cadence, and time-zone strategy

A 16-week weekly cadence, fully virtual. Cohort 1 ran from induction on 2 October 2025 through the final working-group session on 24 January 2026, with certificates awarded 15 February 2026. Fellows committed ~5 hours per week.

THE SHAPE OF THE COMMITMENT

16

weeks, weekly cadence

4

modules, fully virtual

25

structured activities

~5

hours a week per fellow

Three choices made the continent-wide spread survivable: one anchor time zone (WAT); everything recorded for asynchronous access; and language access built in (English with translation and captioning for Francophone participants).

REPLICATE IT

Publish the full dated calendar and the weekly hour commitment before applications open. Treat asynchronous catch-up as a first-class path, not a fallback.

3.4 Worked example: Module 1 in full

Notice the shape: settle → level → apply → frame.

- Opening & Orientation (OSi): structure, goals, expectations, channel onboarding.
- Self-paced: "AI for Organizational Leaders" (Microsoft/LinkedIn, ~5 hrs). Between 44 and 48 fellows completed it by the deadline.
- Masterclass: "From Insight to Action" (Dr Murtala M Adogi, System Strategy & Policy Lab).
- Workshop: "Research & Literature Review for the Capstone" (Najeeb).
- Lectures: "Bridging the AI Divide" (Dr Jacki O'Neill, Microsoft Research Africa); "AI Geopolitics & Africa's Role" (Prof Vukosi Marivate, University of Pretoria); "Global AI Trends and Governance Models" (Dr Obinna Anya, Google).

3.5 Modules 2 to 4: escalating the arc

- Module 2 builds judgement: from understanding risk, to choosing the policy instrument, to the craft of getting it adopted. Pattern: teach risk before instruments, instruments before influence.
- Module 3 builds applied capability: the most "how-to" module, tilting from lecture toward workshop. Pattern: by the third module, shift from listening to doing.
- Module 4 builds the product: almost entirely workshop-format. Pattern: the final module should teach delivery, not new theory.

◡ REMIX

Keep the jobs (frame → judge → apply → produce) and the sequencing logic within each module. Swap every speaker and title. The complete 25-session roster is in Appendix A.

Recruitment & selection

A fellowship is only as strong as the room it convenes. This is one of the most transferable parts of the playbook, because the selection logic works regardless of your topic.

IN THIS PART

4.1	The call for applications	13	4.4	Cohort composition & balance	16
4.2	Eligibility & target profile	14	4.5	Onboarding & the induction pack	17
4.3	Selection criteria & scoring rubric	15			

4.1 The call for applications

Cohort 1 drew approximately 870 applications from 22 African countries, narrowed to 70 fellows (plus a 10-person reserve list), of whom 55 graduated. The pool skewed heavily to the host country: about 88% from Nigeria.

THE COHORT 1 FUNNEL

~870

applications from 22 countries

70

fellows selected, plus 10 in reserve

55

graduated

~88%

of applicants from Nigeria

The call was promoted through email, the OSi WhatsApp channels, LinkedIn, and Facebook, a low-cost, digital-first mix suited to a volunteer-run program with no advertising budget. That mix also explains the geography: organic reach concentrates in the network you already have.

WHAT GOES WRONG

A number of selected applicants never saw their acceptance. Nomination emails landed in spam, while some of those same applicants were messaging the team on LinkedIn and Facebook asking whether they had been chosen. Several joined late as a result.

HOW TO RUN IT

The fix, built in from the first announcement

- Tell every applicant to add your program email to their safe-sender list and to follow your official pages.
- Never rely on email alone for the offer. Send by email and confirm through at least one other channel.
- Set a hard "confirm your place by" deadline, and chase non-responders using the reserve list.
- Keep an acceptance-tracking sheet: selected → contacted → confirmed → onboarded. Anyone stuck at "contacted" gets a call, not another email.

WHY IT MATTERS

Your promotion channels are your applicant demographics. If you broadcast mainly through your own network, you will get your own network back, amplified.

4.2

Eligibility & target profile

The application form captured highest education; organisation and job title; organisation type; years of policy experience; current AI/digital-policy involvement; AI use at work; awareness of national or institutional AI policy; and prior contribution to policy processes.

Three participation gates were explicit and non-negotiable: reliable internet, a suitable device, and the ability to commit ~5 hours per week for four months, including agreement to attend at least 80% of live sessions.

WHY IT MATTERS

For a senior, time-poor audience, the participation gates screen for seriousness as much as capability. Someone who will not commit to 80% attendance at the application stage will not suddenly find the time later.

4.3 Selection criteria & scoring rubric

A 100-point rubric across eight weighted dimensions:

TABLE 4.1

The 100-point selection rubric

DIMENSION	WEIGHT	WHAT IT MEASURED
Professional role & policy relevance	20	Can this person actually influence policy or institutional decisions?
Organisational relevance	15	Does their institution matter to AI governance?
Professional experience	15	Depth and seniority of relevant experience
AI / digital-policy experience	10	Existing involvement in AI, data, or digital governance
Motivation statement	15	Clarity, specificity, understanding
Leadership & contributions	10	Projects led, policy drafted, committees, publications
Potential for impact	10	Likelihood of applying the learning and influencing others
Diversity & strategic representation	5	Contribution to gender, geographic, sectoral balance

Two tracks, because one applicant pool was not one problem. Nigeria supplied the overwhelming majority, so it was screened on a much stricter competitive basis. Non-Nigerian applicants were screened on a parallel 100-point track weighted to guarantee continental representation.

A four-step panel process: initial screening → scoring against the rubric → consensus meeting → final ratification checking for gender, regional, and professional balance.

WHY IT MATTERS

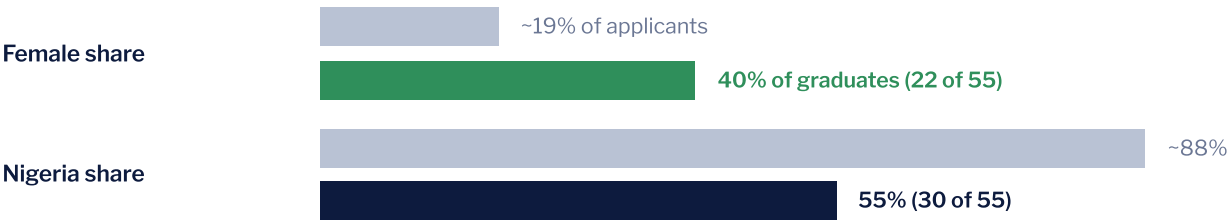
The transferable insight is that whenever one segment of your pool dwarfs the others, score it separately, or your cohort will simply mirror your largest applicant group.

4.4 Cohort composition & balance

The applicant pool was ~19% female and ~81% male, and heavily Nigerian (~88%). Balance was engineered in at two points: country quotas set the geographic shape up front, and gender and diversity balancing happened at the tie-break. Merit set the band; diversity decided within it.

FIGURE 4.1

Selection design changed who finished



Countries represented **21–22** applicant pool → **11** graduating cohort

Bars are proportional to the stated shares. Source: applicant records and the graduating-cohort register, Cohort 1.

TABLE 4.2

Applicant pool against the graduating cohort

DIMENSION	APPLICANT POOL	GRADUATING COHORT
Female share	~19%	40% (22 of 55)
Nigeria share	~88%	55% (30 of 55)
Countries represented	21–22	11

HONEST LIMIT

Quotas substantially corrected the skew but did not erase it. That is the realistic ceiling when one country supplies the overwhelming majority of applicants.

◡ REMIX

Set your quotas against your own legitimacy goal. A national program might quota by province or sector instead of country. Decide the shape you need, reserve the seats, and let merit compete within each block.

4.5 Onboarding & the induction pack

- A welcome note framing the fellowship's purpose and the fellow's role.
- Programme structure: the 16-week, four-module arc.
- Explicit mutual commitments: what the fellow commits to, and what OSi commits back.
- Values and community norms.
- Practical information: platform, community channel, language support.
- Three onboarding actions: join the WhatsApp community, complete the thematic-group preference survey, and begin the first self-paced assignment.

WHY IT MATTERS

Induction is where completion is won or lost. The mutual-commitment framing sets a tone of partnership, which matters when your fellows outrank your facilitators in their day jobs.

The capstone engine

The capstone turns four months of learning into a real, publishable policy artifact. Copy the machine; swap the country.

IN THIS PART

5.1	The Ubuntia device	19	5.4	Team formation & mentor matching	21
5.2	The eight sector working groups	19	5.5	Deliverables, deadlines & evaluation	23
5.3	The Capstone Project Handbook	20	5.6	From capstones to white paper	24

5.1 The Ubuntuia device

"Ubuntuia" is a hypothetical mid-sized Sub-Saharan nation: young population, cultural diversity, uneven digital transition. Because it is fictional, senior officials can debate politically sensitive trade-offs (surveillance, data sovereignty, labour displacement) candidly, without implicating their own governments. Capstone outputs feed a public white paper: National AI Policy Blueprint for Ubuntuia: Governing AI for Equity, Innovation, and Sovereignty.

WHY IT WORKS

The fiction de-risks honesty. Fellows were bold in Ubuntuia in ways they could not be about their own ministries.

◡ REMIX

Invent your own jurisdiction, sized to your region and given just enough texture to force real trade-offs. If your topic is genuinely uncontroversial, you may use a real jurisdiction, but you lose the safety valve.

5.2 The eight sector working groups

- Education & Skills for the Future
- Health & Wellbeing
- Agriculture & Food Systems
- Labour, Employment & the Future of Work
- Finance, Trade & Inclusion
- Justice, Rights & Governance
- Climate Resilience & Urban Systems
- Cross-Cutting Policy & Digital Sovereignty

WHY IT MATTERS

Organising by real policy domain means each group's output maps directly onto a ministry or regulator, which is what lets the work travel into actual policy conversations. Note the eighth group: a deliberate cross-cutting team catching sovereignty questions that sit above any single sector.

5.3 The Capstone Project Handbook

Its core design move: the capstone is built incrementally, one phase per month, so the final blueprint is assembled from pieces produced along the way rather than written in a panic at the end.

TABLE 5.1
The four-phase incremental build

MONTH	PHASE	OUTPUT
1	Foundations & Scoping	Sectoral AI Landscape Analysis (2–3 pages)
2	Risks, Ethics & Opportunities	Sectoral Risk & Opportunity Report (2–3 pages)
3	Governance & Policy Design	Draft AI Policy Brief (4–5 pages)
4	Integration & Presentation	Final AI Policy Blueprint (6–8 pages) + 7-slide deck

It also gave groups guiding principles, per-phase task lists, internal role assignments (Group Lead, Liaison, Researchers, Writers, Presenter), a standard blueprint structure, and a filled Policy Intervention Template.

REMIX

Keep the four-phase, one-output-per-phase rhythm. Hand this out at induction, not mid-program.

5.4 Team formation & mentor matching

Fellows self-selected by ranked preference at induction (first/second/third choice of sector). The team formed balanced groups from those preferences. Mentors were matched to groups by domain expertise:

TABLE 5.2

Mentor-to-group matching

GROUP	MENTOR	WHY THE MATCH
Education & Skills	Dr Fauziya Ado Yakasai (Michigan State University)	AI education, data science, capacity building
Health & Wellbeing	Dr Njeri Ngaruiya Ng'ang'a (Strathmore University)	ICT4D and digital health systems
Agriculture & Food Systems	Andrew Abu (Young Innovators of Nigeria / Agromate)	Agritech and AI for food systems
Labour & Future of Work	Dr Ibrahim Labaran Ali (University of Warwick)	Digital transformation and workforce reskilling
Finance, Trade & Inclusion	Aliyu Ahmad (Microsoft)	Cloud/AI infrastructure and digital finance
Justice, Rights & Governance	Dr Shamsuddeen Hassan Muhammad (Imperial College London)	Fairness and multilingual NLP, ethical AI
Climate Resilience & Urban Systems	Gilles Quentin Hachème (Microsoft AI for Good Lab)	GeoAI and environmental data science
Cross-Cutting Policy & Digital Sovereignty	Felermino Dário Mário António Ali (Microsoft Research Africa)	Multilingual AI for low-resource contexts

Mentors were guided by a structured concept note defining the role as three things: advisor (tools, methods, good practice), connector (networks and case studies), and challenger (probing questions, blind spots). Engagement combined fortnightly "Mentor Surgery Hours" with asynchronous presence. The ask was 2 to 3 hours per

fortnight. Mentors stayed supportive and non-evaluative, since final assessment rested with the fellowship team.

The Mentor Information Booklet

Before mentorship began, each mentor received a booklet introducing the fellows in their assigned group, profiles giving name, country, institution, professional role, a short biography, area of expertise, and stated AI interests. Mentors walked into their first engagement already knowing who was in the room, rather than spending the first session on introductions. It is one of the more portable artifacts here: any replicating team can assemble the same booklet from its own application data.

THE HONEST GAP

Design was strong, delivery was uneven. The plan called for structured mentorship from Week 1. In practice, mentorship started too late, ran for too short a window, and left some mentors unclear on their exact role.

A structural note: mentors and groups were running on two different phase maps. The Capstone Handbook paces work in four monthly phases; the mentor concept note structures support in three phases (Weeks 1–4, 5–10, 11–16). Make the crosswalk explicit:

TABLE 5.3

Mentor phases against capstone deliverables

MENTOR PHASE	CAPSTONE MONTH(S)	GROUP IS PRODUCING
Phase 1: Scoping & Framing (Wks 1–4)	Month 1	Sectoral AI Landscape Analysis
Phase 2: Evidence & Design (Wks 5–10)	Months 2–3	Risk & Opportunity Report, then Draft Policy Brief
Phase 3: Refinement & Presentation (Wks 11–16)	Month 4	Final Blueprint + deck

The Phase 2 straddle contains two separate deliverables with a hard handoff, so a mentor should treat weeks 5–10 as two sub-sprints, not one long middle.

REMIX

Keep the ranked-preference survey, expertise-to-theme matching, and the advisor/connector/challenger framing. Start mentor engagement from Module 1, and align the mentor phase map to the capstone deliverable map before you start.

5.5 Deliverables, deadlines & evaluation

The submission package: an AI Policy Blueprint (6–8 pages); a presentation deck (7 slides: problem → why it matters → solution → implementation → impact → call to action); and a group reflection note (1 page). All groups submitted by the 2 February deadline (Week 16).

TABLE 5.4
The capstone evaluation rubric

DIMENSION	WEIGHT	WHAT IT REWARDS
Relevance & problem definition	20%	Clarity and contextual fit
Analytical rigor & evidence	20%	Credible data and reasoning
Innovation & feasibility	20%	Practicality and creativity
Policy structure & clarity	20%	Organisation, logic, readability
Presentation & engagement	20%	Delivery and visual communication

WHY IT MATTERS

An equal-weight rubric signals that how you communicate the policy counts as much as the analysis. Weighting delivery at 40% of the total (structure + presentation) is a design choice, not an oversight.

5.6 From capstones to white paper

Individual group blueprints are refined by a convened editorial board into the single public Ubuntia white paper.

WHY IT MATTERS

Without a consolidation-and-publish step, capstones die in a shared drive. The editorial board converts "the fellows did good work" into "the fellowship produced a public good." Plan it at the start.

Cohort experience & community

The most durable output is a working network of senior leaders who will actually pick up the phone to each other afterwards. That network does not form by accident. Treat community as a designed deliverable with its own owner.

IN THIS PART

6.1	Induction & expectation-setting	26	6.4	Cohesion through shared deadlines	28
6.2	Social infrastructure	26	6.5	Communication channels	29
6.3	Peer mechanics	28			

6.1 Induction & expectation-setting

Induction is where the cohort becomes a cohort. Beyond practical onboarding, it sets the norms that govern how 70 senior strangers will treat each other for four months: collaboration over competition, diversity and inclusion, pan-African solidarity, respect across regional and disciplinary lines, paired with mutual commitments.

WHY IT MATTERS

The tone set in week one persists. If induction signals "this is a shared, peer-to-peer space where your regional context is an asset," fellows engage as co-creators. If it signals "sit and receive," they behave as an audience, and audiences do not form networks.

6.2 Social infrastructure: engineering the network

Put 70 busy strangers into a series of video lectures and they will finish as 70 strangers who attended the same webinars. Relationships at this seniority form through engineered, low-stakes, repeated contact.

What Cohort 1 did. A designed social mixer, "The Human Side of AI," was built into Module 2. It doubled as learning, and proved rich enough that it could not fit one slot: the single agenda was delivered across two sittings (15 November and 13 December 2025), each about 2.5 hours. Counted as one activity in the roster. The full facilitator run-sheet is in Appendix B.

The mixer run-sheet, as delivered

- Pan-African Padlet map, "Where we're joining from": each fellow pins name, location, country, and "welcome" in their local language. The map lights up in a dozen languages.
- Meet the organizing team: puts human faces to the program and signals transparency.

- AI image-generation activity: fellows prompt an AI to illustrate a reaction; laughter, plus a quiet AI-literacy lesson, AI guesses you from patterns; it does not know you.
- "10 Unique Things About My Country" + live voting: country teams present 2-minute snapshots; peers vote via Mentimeter.
- Speed connections: breakout rooms of 3–4 with rotating prompts; five fellows then share what they learned about someone else.
- Unveiling of the social directory: a shared Google Slides deck where each fellow completes their own slide, a living cohort directory. A free-Linktr.ee walkthrough ensured no fellow was excluded by an unfamiliar tool.
- Module feedback (5-min close): a short questionnaire, so the social event also feeds evaluation.

Communication was an engagement strategy, not just logistics. Across the four months, structured messaging did far more than move information around: session reminders, speaker announcements, appreciation messages, certificate notifications, capstone updates, and post-program resource-sharing all worked to keep a dispersed, senior cohort engaged and feeling looked-after. The steady drumbeat of contact was itself a retention mechanism. It also took far more effort than the team anticipated.

Channels ran layered: Microsoft Teams for live sessions (with recordings); WhatsApp as the day-to-day backbone (a general community plus per-group threads); LinkedIn and Facebook outward-facing.

WHAT GOES WRONG

The silent breakout (fix with a visible prompt and a hard timer); the one-country echo chamber (with an ~88% Nigerian pool, random breakouts still cluster Nigerians, so nudge rooms to cross a line); timezone punishment (use your most inclusive slot); and the two-hour illusion, the agenda needs more time than a single social slot gives it.

◡ REMIX · COMMUNICATIONS AS A WORKSTREAM

The single most underestimated operational load in Cohort 1 was communication volume. Future cohorts should give communications its own planning calendar, a named owner, and a pack of reusable templates, the same way you would resource curriculum or IT. It is a dedicated function, not a background task.

6.3 Peer mechanics: what the network did on its own

The clearest sign the design worked is what fellows did unprompted: they formed study groups, exchanged policy drafts, and began exploring inter-country collaborations beyond the program.

HOW TO RUN IT

Create the conditions rather than the activity. Seed cross-country capstone groups, give people a reason to exchange work, keep a low-friction channel open, then get out of the way.

6.4 Cohesion through shared capstone deadlines

The group-based capstone is the cohort's strongest cohesion engine. Shared deadlines force fellows to work together, learning to coordinate across borders, which is itself the core skill AI governance requires.

WHY IT MATTERS

A group deliverable with a shared deadline makes fellows mutually dependent on each other's follow-through. The capstone is the learning artifact and the single most powerful community-building mechanism.

6.5 Communication channels & community platform

Named Group Admins kept channels warm, and channel onboarding was built into induction so no one was left out at the start.

◡ REMIX

The layers transfer (live platform + always-on community channel + outward social); the specific tools swap to what your cohort already uses. Choose for adoption, not for features.

People & operations

The operational spine: how the team built the program before any fellow arrived, who did what, how partners and faculty were secured, what tools carried it, and what it cost.

IN THIS PART

7.1	The volunteer build model	31	7.4	Technology & tooling stack	35
7.2	Roles & responsibilities	31	7.5	Budget & resourcing	35
7.3	Partners & resource persons	33	7.6	Scheduling across time zones	37

7.1 The volunteer build model

The program was built by a volunteer team meeting every Saturday since March 2025, "rain or shine," across roughly seven months before delivery. In that time the team developed the concept note, shaped the curriculum, recruited resource persons, secured partners, screened applicants, and produced the capstone guidance, induction pack, participation processes, communications, shortlisting, and scheduling.

WHAT THE BUILD COST IN PEOPLE AND TIME

~7

months of weekly build before delivery

15

V-Team volunteers

~80%

sustained participation across the build

What kept the team going. Of the fifteen V-Team members, about 80% sustained consistent participation across the seven-month build. Three things sustained it: learning, connection, and the motivation of contributing to something meaningful. OSi also provided periodic data and airtime support, a concrete retention lever where connectivity has real cost.

WHY IT MATTERS

The single most under-budgeted resource in a volunteer program is time before launch. Four months of delivery rested on about seven months of weekly build. A replicator who starts six weeks out will produce a fraction of the coherence.

7.2 Roles & responsibilities

Cohort 1 ran on a named volunteer V-Team of fifteen. Each line states what that person owned, the transferable part.

- **Project Team Lead / Executive Director — Engr. Abba Muhammad Gadanya:** owns overall direction, executive decisions, and accountability for delivery, and in practice carried the broad coordination spine of the program: stakeholder engagement, speaker coordination, quality assurance, the certification process, major communications, and fellowship close-out.
- **Project Co-Lead / Director of Policy & Program Alignment — Najeeb G. Abdulhamid, PhD:** owns the alignment of curriculum, activities, partnerships, and outputs with African policy needs and strategic objectives.
- **Program Quality & Academic Lead — Dr (Engr.) Alhassan Haruna Umar:** owns the learning architecture, academic standards, facilitator guidance, assessment quality, and continuous improvement.
- **ICT Systems & Platform Manager — Abdulrahman Hayatu:** owns the secure, reliable, accessible operation of digital platforms, live sessions, data systems, and technical support.
- **Visual Communications Designer — Mrs Hauwa Shehu:** owns the visual identity and translation of complex AI and policy ideas into clear visual materials.
- **Research & Technical Advisory — Dr Bashir I. Dodo:** owns technical and evidence review, ensuring AI knowledge, research, and recommendations are accurate, credible, and relevant.
- **Fellowship Technical Advisors — Dr Rislan Abdulazeez Kanya, Dr Sani Abba:** share strategies, feedback, and best practice on how to organise, conduct, and deliver a quality fellowship.
- **Program Support Officer / Operations Coordinator — Mr Ahmad Abdullahi Ahmad:** owns day-to-day logistics, schedules, documentation, task tracking, session readiness, and operational coordination.
- **Curriculum Development Officer — Yusuf Adam Khalil:** owns the conversion of curriculum objectives into session plans, materials, activities, assessments, and facilitator-ready resources.

- **Resource Strategy & Governance Lead — Abubakar Manga:** owns resource mobilisation, budgeting, allocation, governance procedures, risk controls, and accountability to funders and partners.
- **Data Protection & Legal Advisory — Dr (Barrister) Zakiyyu Muhammad:** provides guidance on privacy and data governance, and reviews and manages agreements signed with partners, ensuring collaborations, data-sharing arrangements, and program activities comply with applicable laws, regulations, and ethical standards across African jurisdictions.
- **Group Administrators — Fatima Abdulkadir Jidda, Salim Ibrahim, Mr Abubakar Salisu:** each owns communication, participation follow-up, first-line support, and sustained engagement for their assigned fellow group.

On time commitment. The team deliberately does not publish fixed weekly hours per role, because volunteer capacity does not divide that neatly. Instead the commitment is a shared rhythm everyone keeps: attendance at the standing planning meetings during the build, and once live, engaging fellows, attending the after-action review for each session, and joining the weekly team review. The one role with a documented time commitment is mentors, at roughly 2 to 3 hours per fortnight, and they sit outside this core team.

◡ REMIX

You do not need all these roles as separate people, small teams double up, but do not let one person hold both curriculum and operations. Protect the Group Admin function especially. And if you are handling participant data across multiple jurisdictions, a data-protection/legal advisor is worth having.

7.3 Partners & resource persons

Securing resource persons was the single hardest part of the build. A curriculum in strict thematic succession needed a specific expert, on a specific theme, in a specific month. The team's rule was to lock

every speaker's date before advertising publicly. The upside: minimal interruption. The downside: it dragged planning out and was a major reason the build took ~seven months.

Almost the entire faculty came through the team's personal networks. Cold outreach largely failed: approaches to several major global tech firms went unanswered. The blunt lesson: your faculty pipeline runs on relationships, not cold outreach.

One relationship returned disproportionately. The Microsoft "Change Agent" connection cascaded: it unlocked essentially all Microsoft faculty (7 sessions, ~29% of the program) and the credentialed self-paced certificates. Microsoft also provided the badges for the self-paced courses.

Institutional partners brought more than a logo. Cosmopolitan University Abuja brought credibility and academic weight, co-signing the certificates and anchoring the register, and proposed the LinkedIn Learning courses that became the "outsource the baseline" mechanic. System Strategy & Policy Lab brought strategy templates and policy-influence expertise. Tanzeel Colleges International brought delivery support and the only direct partner-contributed funding.

Every partnership delivered on what was asked, with one honest exception that reflects a deliberate change of plan. Under the founding MoU, Cosmopolitan University was to "provide virtual conferencing tools or relevant platforms required for delivery." The team chose not to take up that provision, because borrowing infrastructure created brand-consistency issues and admin-privilege limitations. Instead, the ICT team purchased and owned the Microsoft Teams workspace outright.

WHY IT MATTERS

A volunteer program cannot pay for faculty of this calibre, so it must convert relationships and mission into donated time. The calibre of your faculty is capped by the reach of your team's networks.

7.4 Technology & tooling stack

- Live sessions: Microsoft Teams throughout, with recordings. The workspace was self-purchased by the ICT team to control branding and admin access.
- Self-paced learning: outsourced to Microsoft/LinkedIn Learning and LinkedIn + EY.
- Community & coordination: WhatsApp (general plus per-group threads), with LinkedIn and Facebook outward-facing.
- Collaboration & activities: Google Slides, Padlet, Mentimeter, Kahoot, plus a meeting-transcription assistant.
- Certification: a verifiable online certificate system backed by Cosmopolitan University Abuja's register, with Credly issuing digital badges.

A candid note on our own AI use. Running an AI-literacy program, the team used generative AI internally throughout delivery, to help draft and edit communications, documentation, surveys, reports, and certificate text. For a volunteer team managing a large, complex program, this was a real efficiency multiplier, and it is worth saying plainly: the program practised what it taught. We flag it both for honesty and because a replicating team should expect to lean on the same tools, with the same care about review and accuracy the fellowship itself preaches.

◡ REMIX

Pick a live platform you can fully control, an always-on channel your cohort already uses, one or two free interactive tools, and outsource baseline content. Do not build an LMS. Do budget for owning your core platform.

7.5 Budget & resourcing

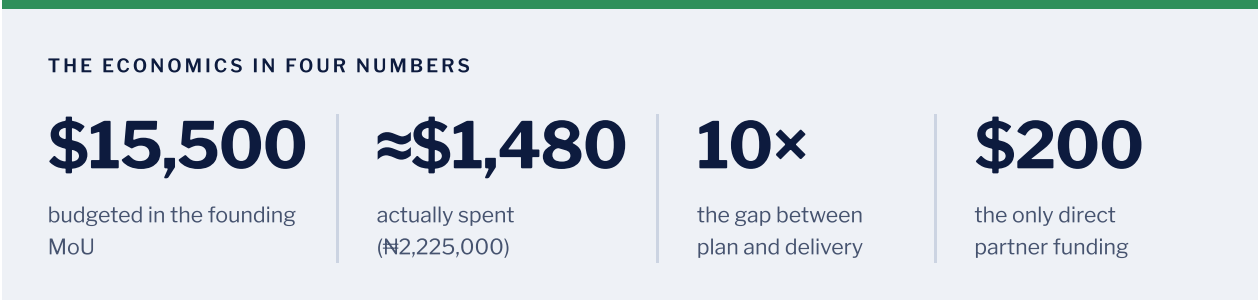
The honest economics: no external grant funding materialised, so OSi largely self-funded the program.

FIGURE 7.1

Planned budget against actual spend



Planned figure from the founding MoU; actual spend ≈ ₦2,225,000. Bars are proportional to the two US-dollar figures.



Where the money came from, and the gap between plan and reality. The program was originally budgeted, in the founding MoU, at an estimated USD 15,500, with OSi as primary funder and Tanzeel committing USD 200 plus 30% of social-media publicity costs. Actual spend came in at roughly one-tenth of that estimate: approximately ₦2,225,000 (about US\$1,480). The gap is the whole economic story in one line: the planned budget assumed you pay for faculty, platforms, and outreach, and the delivered budget shows what happens when nearly all of that comes in donated.

The budget came almost entirely from OSi's own internal funds, with the single ₦300,000 (~US\$200) from Tanzeel. Critically, the majority of OSi's internal funding was generated through Microsoft's employee volunteer-matching program (roughly US\$25 per volunteer hour to the chosen non-profit). In effect, OSi's volunteers helped earn the budget they then spent. Of the total, about ₦2,029,700 (~US\$1,350) was disbursed.

Where the money went. The single largest category was volunteer meeting allowances, which covered volunteers' internet data and generator fuel so team members with unreliable power and costly connectivity could attend the weekly build meetings at all. Next was technical, personnel, and platform services.

WHY IT MATTERS

A "free," volunteer-and-donation-powered program still costs real money, and here the biggest cost was simply enabling people to show up, data and electricity. If power and connectivity cannot be assumed, budget for participation itself, not just for tools.

◡ REMIX · ON BUDGETING HONESTLY

Budget the program twice. Write the estimate as if you must pay for everything (Cohort 1's was USD 15,500), then track the actual against it. The distance between the two measures how much you converted into donated faculty, free platforms, and organic reach. A tenfold gap is not a planning failure; here it was the point.

7.6 Scheduling across countries and time zones

Operationally, what made it work was ownership and a consistent method: speakers were offered 2 to 3 proposed dates at onboarding, and a single owner, the ICT Systems & Platform Manager, was responsible for the calendar, invites, and the recording-and-posting loop, so "was the session recorded and shared?" was never left to chance.

◡ REMIX

Offer speakers a short menu of dates rather than one fixed slot, and assign one owner to the full session-ops loop (invite → host → record → post → log attendance).

Evaluation & outcomes

A playbook that cannot show results is just a plan. Part 8 is the evidence, gathered from the graduates themselves.

IN THIS PART

8.1	Completion benchmarks	39	8.4	Learning gains and satisfaction	40
8.2	The pre/post measurement method	39	8.5	Graduating cohort profile	42
8.3	Early engagement signals	39	8.6	Post-program impact plan	43

8.1 Completion benchmarks

Completion was deliberately demanding. To graduate, a fellow had to meet three bars: at least 80% live-session attendance; completion of the mandatory self-paced courses; and delivery of the capstone. Verifying all three before issuing certificates proved a significant administrative burden. Of 70 selected fellows, 55 met all three bars and graduated.

FROM APPLICATION TO GRADUATION

~870

applications, 22 countries

70

selected, plus a 10-person
reserve

55

met all three bars and
graduated

WHY IT MATTERS

A three-part bar screens for genuine engagement and makes the credential credible. But the stricter your completion definition, the heavier your verification workload, and the more fellows the bar will screen out. Rigor is a deliberate trade-off, not a free good.

8.2 The pre/post measurement method

A pre-training capture at induction (baseline) and a detailed closing survey (outcomes).

WHY IT MATTERS

If you want to prove impact, capture a baseline before you teach anything. Design your evaluation before your first session, not after your last.

8.3 Early engagement signals

Between 44 and 48 fellows completed the first self-paced course by

its deadline. Other markers: 832 engaged applicants, 32 completed the Module 2 self-paced course, 40 attended the AI-Powered Innovation and Visual Intelligence workshops.

EARLY ENGAGEMENT MARKERS**44–48**

completed the first self-paced course by deadline

832

engaged applicants

32

completed the Module 2 self-paced course

40

attended the innovation and visual workshops

WHY IT MATTERS

Self-paced completion is a cheap, early thermometer for who will finish. Watch this number as your earliest attrition-risk signal.

8.4

Learning gains and satisfaction

A closing survey completed by 42 graduating fellows captured satisfaction and self-rated growth. Satisfaction averaged high across every dimension (out of 5): facilitator quality ~4.8, clarity of objectives ~4.6, overall rating ~4.6, curriculum relevance ~4.5, logical flow ~4.4, virtual delivery ~4.4, coordination ~4.4, theory/practice balance ~4.2, materials ~4.2.

FIGURE 8.1

Closing-survey satisfaction, mean score out of 5

n = 42 graduating fellows. Bars are drawn to the full 0–5 scale.

TABLE 8.1

Self-rated capability, before and after

CAPABILITY	BEFORE	AFTER
Understanding of AI concepts	~2.3	~4.4
Ability to apply AI tools	~2.3	~4.4
Awareness of ethical / policy implications	~2.4	~4.6
Confidence discussing AI with decision-makers	~2.2	~4.4
Identifying AI use-cases in their sector	~2.2	~4.5

Self-rated on a 1–5 scale in the closing survey.

Essentially every respondent would "definitely" recommend the fellowship, and a clear majority had already applied what they learned: drafting workplace AI policy, revising company policy for ethics, training staff and postgraduates, piloting AI dashboards, joining a national AI-safety group, building an AI agritech venture.

"AI without governance is like a car with no brakes. AI with governance? That's a rocket."

THE HONEST COUNTER-SIGNAL

"This fellowship turned me from a skeptical, reluctant user of AI to a firm believer in the power of homegrown AI solutions."

Recurring criticisms: sessions sometimes clashed with working hours; several wanted recordings and materials shared more reliably; some wanted deeper hands-on tool training; and some called for less reliance on a single corporate partner and more diverse partnerships.

8.5

Graduating cohort profile

Women made up 40% of graduates (22 of 55). The cohort drew from 11 countries: Nigeria 30, Kenya 6, Ethiopia 5, Somalia 4, Egypt 2, and one each from Algeria, Ghana, Morocco, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, spanning West Africa (58%), East Africa (29%), North Africa (7%), Southern Africa (2%).



TABLE 8.2

Where the 55 graduates came from

COUNTRY	GRADUATES	REGION
Nigeria	30	West Africa
Kenya	6	East Africa
Ethiopia	5	East Africa
Somalia	4	East Africa
Egypt	2	North Africa

TABLE 8.2 CONTINUED

COUNTRY	GRADUATES	REGION
Algeria, Ghana, Morocco, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo	1 each	Across four regions
Total · 11 countries	55	West 58% · East 29% · North 7% · Southern 2%

WHY IT MATTERS

Composition is an outcome, not just an input. That the graduating cohort was far more gender-balanced and geographically spread than the raw applicant pool is direct evidence that selection design shapes who finishes.

8.6 Post-program impact plan

Impact is carried by three vehicles: the alumni network, the published Ubutia blueprint, and fellows extending the work inside their own institutions. Impact is tracked through four mechanisms:

- A standing alumni platform as the persistent home for the cohort.
- 6- and 12-month check-ins that re-survey graduates against the closing-survey questions.
- An alumni-to-faculty pipeline, recruiting graduates back as resource persons and mentors.
- Continuous engagement through OSi's social channels.

TABLE 8.3

The impact-tracking grid

MECHANISM	AT 6 MONTHS	AT 12 MONTHS
Alumni platform	Activation rate (graduates who joined)	Sustained active-participation rate
Check-in re-survey	Early conversions into real policy/pilot/change; re-measured capability scales	Durable outcomes: policies adopted, pilots scaled; retention of gains
Alumni-to-faculty pipeline	Graduates recruited back for Cohort 2	Graduates who actually delivered (committed vs delivered)
Social engagement	Fellow activities surfaced	Cumulative activity trend across the year

The closing survey is the baseline; it secured consent to re-contact and asked graduates whether they would serve future cohorts as mentors or resource persons, so it doubles as the first recruitment step for the alumni-to-faculty pipeline.

Sustainability & the afterlife

A fellowship's real value is realised after graduation, exactly where most programs quietly fail.

IN THIS PART

9.1	The alumni network	46	9.3	This playbook as a replication asset	47
9.2	The editorial board and publishing	46	9.4	Continuity to Cohort 2 and beyond	47

9.1 The alumni network

Graduates automatically join a pan-African alumni network, framed as strategic, not symbolic: a standing platform for continued dialogue, peer learning, policy exchange, and coordinated leadership.

The demand is documented. In the closing survey, near-unanimous interest was expressed, with fellows naming what they wanted: joint research and policy projects, mentorship (many volunteering to mentor the next cohort), and continued advanced learning. That willingness is itself an asset: it means a fellowship can grow its own faculty, this year's graduates becoming next year's mentors, speakers, reviewers, and resource persons.

HOW TO RUN IT

Stand up the alumni network at graduation, not months later. Give it a persistent channel, a recurring reason to gather, and concrete roles graduates can step into. Capture consent to re-contact at graduation.

9.2 The editorial board and publishing the blueprint

Individual group capstones are refined by a convened editorial board into a single public white paper.

Before publication, put the capstones through a real review, editorial, technical, formatting, and a final sign-off, rather than publishing them as submitted. Eight groups writing separately will not produce one coherent voice on their own; the review step is what turns eight capstones into a document a policymaker will actually cite.

Once it is published, share it deliberately. Prepare a short plan for putting the blueprint in front of the institutions that can use it, government bodies, universities, development partners, professional networks, rather than posting it and hoping.

Publishing is only the first step; visibility determines impact.

9.3 This playbook as a replication asset

This document is itself an afterlife mechanism: a public account of how to launch, deliver, and graduate a program like this.

Update the playbook after each cohort, not just once. Fold in new lessons, improved templates, operational refinements, and participant feedback so every edition is more useful than the last. The playbook is only a living document if someone actually revises it.

9.4 Continuity to Cohort 2 and beyond

Cohort 1 was positioned as a proof of concept. Cohort 2 planning begins only after the four afterlife assets are in place: the blueprint published, certificates awarded, this playbook released, and the alumni community established.

Wherever you can, hand outstanding alumni visible roles in the next cohort, mentor, speaker, reviewer, group facilitator. It preserves what the first cohort learned and reinforces the community-driven model.

◡ REMIX

Even a lightweight afterlife captures most of the value. A mailing list, one published artifact, and a short retrospective still preserve the network, the public good, and the lessons. Do not let "no budget for a grand afterlife" become "no afterlife."

Templates, checklists & resources

The toolkit behind the whole playbook. The checklists are printed in full. Everything else lives as a downloadable artifact in the shared folder.

IN THIS PART

10.1	Checklists	49	10.3	Glossary	54
10.2	The reusable artifact library	51			

10.1 Checklists

These pages are meant to be printed and marked up. Items marked with a green rule are the ones Cohort 1 learned the hard way.

The Pre-Launch Checklist (start ~6 to 7 months out)

16 ITEMS

-
- ☐ Evidence gathered and the gap named in one sharp sentence (Part 1).
 - ☐ Mission and co-creator narrative written.
 - ☐ Core volunteer team recruited; fixed weekly standing meeting booked for the whole build (7.1).
 - ☐ V-Team roles assigned (7.2).
 - ☐ 2 to 4 institutional partners secured, chosen for what each adds (7.3).
 - ☐ Faculty pipeline built through personal networks; cold outreach a bonus, not a plan (7.3).
 - ☐ Every speaker's date locked before advertising publicly (7.3).
 - ☐ Self-paced baseline courses sourced from existing platforms (3.2).
 - ☐ Concept note + 4-module curriculum drafted (Part 3).
 - ☐ Induction pack and Capstone Handbook written (4.5, 5.3).
 - ☐ Fictional nation designed; sector working groups defined (Part 5).
 - ☐ Selection rubric agreed; panel process set (4.3).
 - ☐ Resourcing model decided (donated vs paid), your first real design decision (7.5).
 - ☐ Platform and admin access owned, not borrowed (7.4).
 - ☐ Communications planned as a workstream: owner, calendar, template pack (6.2).
 - ☐ Call for applications opened, with safe-sender and follow-our-pages instructions built in (4.1).
-

The Selection & Onboarding Checklist

9 ITEMS

- ☐ Initial eligibility screen.
- ☐ Score every applicant against the rubric.
- ☐ Consensus meeting to resolve discrepancies.
- ☐ Balancing applied at ratification (gender, country, sector, institution).
- ☐ Shortlist and reserve list confirmed.
- ☐ Acceptance tracking: offer sent by email AND a second channel; each fellow tracked selected → contacted → confirmed → onboarded; anyone stuck at "contacted" gets a call.
- ☐ Induction pack sent; WhatsApp community opened.
- ☐ Thematic-group preference survey run (5.4).
- ☐ First self-paced assignment issued with a hard deadline (8.3).

The Session-Day Checklist

RUN EVERY SESSION

- ☐ Invite + calendar hold, time-zone aware, sent early.
- ☐ Tech/host check before the session.
- ☐ Recording on.
- ☐ Recording saved with non-expiring retention, then posted promptly. (Cohort 1 lost recordings to default expiry settings.)
- ☐ Attendance logged (sessions attended ÷ sessions held × 100).
- ☐ Materials/slides shared.
- ☐ Post-session feedback captured.

The Speaker Onboarding Checklist

5 ITEMS

- ☐ Approach via a warm/personal connection where possible (7.3).
- ☐ Offer 2 to 3 candidate dates fitting the curriculum sequence (7.6).
- ☐ State at onboarding that sessions are recorded and shared by default; secure consent then.
- ☐ Confirm honorarium expectations up front; if volunteer-run, say so plainly.
- ☐ Share the session brief, audience profile, and expected output.

The Capstone Milestone Checklist

9 ITEMS

- ☐ Groups formed from ranked sector preferences (5.4).
- ☐ Mentors matched to groups by domain expertise (5.4).
- ☐ Mentor Information Booklet prepared and shared with each mentor (5.4).
- ☐ Capstone Handbook distributed at induction (5.3).
- ☐ Research/lit-review session delivered early, in Module 1 (3.4).
- ☐ Phase outputs tracked: Landscape Analysis → Risk & Opportunity Report → Draft Policy Brief → Final Blueprint + deck.
- ☐ Mentor and capstone phase maps aligned; mentorship started early (5.4).
- ☐ One shared submission deadline set and communicated (6.4).
- ☐ Editorial/publishing path agreed before submission (9.2).

10.2 The reusable artifact library

Download, copy, and edit these from the shared folder. Each note says what to change before you use it.

Recruitment & selection

- **Call for Applications (advert)** — the public call. Adapt your hook, requirements, deadline; keep the safe-sender instruction.
- **Application Form** — the full applicant field set. Adapt your sectors and eligibility gates.
- **Selection Scoring Rubric** — the 100-point, 8-dimension rubric with score bands and two-track logic.
- **Country / Quota Allocation Table** — the tool for engineering geographic balance.
- **Admission / Acceptance Announcement** — the multi-channel acceptance message with confirm-by deadline.
- **Communication Templates Pack** — reusable message templates: acceptance emails, reminders, speaker appreciation notes, certificate notifications, and closing announcements.

Resource persons & partners

- **Resource-Person Invitation** — warm-intro invitation offering dates and stating recording consent.
- **Mentor Invitation** — expertise-to-theme invitation committing to early mentorship.
- **"Confirmed Resource Person" Poster** — master layout for a consistent speaker-poster series.
- **Mentor-to-Group Allocation Table** — the expertise-to-theme matching model.
- **Concept Note (founding vision)** — the original funder-facing document. Read as pre-program vision, not a delivery record.
- **Partner MoU** — the four-party partnership terms. Note the plan-vs-delivery gaps flagged in 7.3 and 7.5. Use legal counsel.

Cohort experience & community

- **Social Directory (slide template)** — the fellow-profile slide.
- **Social Mixer Run-Sheet** — the full delivered mixer agenda (see Appendix B).

- **Linktree On-Ramp Guide** — the beginner's guide so no fellow is excluded by an unfamiliar tool.
- **Community Channel Setup** — the WhatsApp community + per-group thread structure.

Capstone

- **Capstone Project Handbook** — the 4-phase incremental-build handbook.
- **Policy Intervention Template (with worked example)** — the SMART, indicator-linked intervention table.
- **Standard Blueprint Structure** — the common capstone output structure.
- **Capstone Evaluation Rubric** — the 5-dimension, 20%-each rubric.
- **Mentor Concept Note** — role definition, engagement model, and the mentor-to-capstone crosswalk (5.4).
- **Mentor Information Booklet** — profiles of the fellows assigned to each mentor.

Onboarding, evaluation & recognition

- **Induction Pack** — welcome, structure, mutual commitments, norms, practical info, first actions.
- **Closing / Evaluation Survey** — satisfaction + before/after growth + free-text + consent.
- **Baseline / Pre-Training Capture** — the induction data capture that makes before/after measurement possible.
- **Certificate + Verification Setup** — the three-layer recognition, Credly badges, verifiable coded IDs.

Full reference sets

- **Complete 25-Session Curriculum** — see Appendix A.
- **Resource-Person & Mentor Roster** — see Appendix A.

10.3 Glossary

- **Capstone** — the cohort's final applied deliverable; here, sector policy instruments for Ubuntia.
- **Ubuntia** — the fictional Sub-Saharan nation used as a safe shared canvas.
- **Masterclass** — a high-prestige applied session by a senior practitioner with a demonstrated track record.
- **Self-paced course** — outsourced foundational learning.
- **Resource person** — a guest expert delivering one or more sessions.
- **Working group** — a sector-based fellow team co-producing one part of the capstone.
- **Policy instrument** — a concrete governance tool (roadmap, charter, compact, blueprint).
- **White paper** — the consolidated public policy document produced from the capstones.
- **Theory of change** — the cause-and-effect logic from activities to intended impact.
- **Change Agent program** — Microsoft's employee-volunteering channel.
- **Credly** — the platform issuing verifiable digital badges.
- **V-Team** — the volunteer team that built and delivered the fellowship.
- **Remix** — this playbook's convention for what to keep versus swap.

What we learned

A playbook that only reports successes teaches nothing. If you read only one part before running your own cohort, read this one.

IN THIS PART

11.1	The five mid-program lessons	56	11.3	Why 15 of 70 did not complete	58
11.2	What worked, what we'd change	56	11.4	Recognition & certification	59

11.1 The five mid-program lessons (confirmed)

- AI literacy begins with identity, not technology, the real question was who defines AI's purpose for Africa.
- Fiction creates a safe space, Ubuntuia let senior officials debate candidly.
- The network is real and self-sustaining, fellows formed study groups and cross-border collaborations unprompted.
- Motivation scales even when time doesn't, a credible structure held high engagement despite senior workloads.
- Learning design beats lecture volume, active, contextual, peer-driven formats won.

A sixth, surfaced at the social mixer: cultural literacy is a foundation for AI literacy. When fellows taught each other about their own countries, they demonstrated why AI that does not understand African contexts will misrepresent them. Community, for this cohort, was curriculum.

11.2 End-of-program lessons: what worked, what we'd change

What worked (keep it)

The calibre and fit of the faculty; cross-timezone, cross-culture collaboration; the social mixer (fellows wanted more time to interact); the capstone and its group model; and the self-paced baseline courses.

What we'd change (fix it next time)

- Own the recordings, and share them reliably. Some recordings were lost to default folder-expiry settings.
- Publish the full schedule up front and have fellows block calendars. Late or shifting timing was the most common complaint.

- Introduce a proper LMS. Both fellows and team wanted one central home for materials, recordings, and announcements.
- Activate the mentor model earlier, and onboard mentors properly. A well-designed framework existed, but delivery fell short: mentorship began too late, ran too short, some mentors were unclear on their role, and mentors and groups were working to two different phase maps (5.4). Activate it from Module 1, walk every mentor through the concept note, and hand them the crosswalk.
- Integrate the capstone from day one and match fellows to their specialism.
- Reduce the coordination burden. Verifying attendance + self-paced + capstone took multiple manual rounds.
- Treat communication as a resourced workstream. The volume far exceeded "someone will handle the group chat." Give it an owner, a calendar, and a template pack.
- Broaden the base. Include faith-based leaders next cohort, and recruit people connected to partners and funders.

Open tensions (not yet resolved, and that's honest)

RECORDING VS CANDOUR	<i>Recording serves absent fellows and future cohorts, but some senior speakers asked not to be shared. Decide per speaker, and secure consent up front.</i>
RIGOUR VS INCLUSION	<i>The strict completion bar made the credential mean something, but it drove most of the attrition. The question for Cohort 2 is not whether to lower the bar, but how to give loaded fellows more flexible ways to clear it.</i>
SINGLE PARTNER VS REACH	<i>Microsoft's contribution was a decisive force multiplier, but some fellows called for more diverse partnerships.</i>
DESIGN VS DELIVERY	<i>Well-designed mentorship versus actual delivery: a thoughtful concept note and information booklet existed before the program ran, yet execution lagged. A good document is necessary but not sufficient.</i>

11.3 Why 15 of 70 did not complete (an honest analysis)

COMPLETION, PLAINLY STATED

70

fellows selected

55

met all three bars and graduated

15

did not complete

- Workload against the program's rigour (the dominant cause). The high bar made graduation credible but proved hard to sustain for some of the senior, time-poor leaders the fellowship was built to reach.
- Competing office and official commitments pulling fellows away mid-program.
- Communication challenges, including the avoidable missed-acceptance problem (4.1).

THE HONEST TENSION

The strictness that makes your credential credible is the same strictness that will cost you some of your busiest, most desirable fellows. The design response is not to lower standards but to build flexibility into how they are met.

11.4 Recognition & certification

- Course certificates from the self-paced learning: "AI for Organizational Leaders" (Microsoft/LinkedIn); "Ethics in the Age of Generative AI" (LinkedIn); and the "AI Skills Passport" (EY & Microsoft). The AI Skills Passport carried a Credly digital badge from Microsoft.
- Per-module certificates, one for each of the four modules, co-signed by Cosmopolitan University Abuja.
- A final Certificate of Completion, representing the full four-month program and 48 contact hours, awarded 15 February 2026 and co-signed by the Registrar of Cosmopolitan University Abuja, OSi's Lead Volunteer, and the Project Lead.

All certificates are verifiable and coded (format ALFAP-C0125-XXXXXX, verifiable at openschool.sch.ng/verify-certificate), with Credly digital badges.

Recognition was not saved for graduation. Throughout the program, module certificates, Microsoft badges, public speaker appreciation, and milestone acknowledgements gave fellows a steady sequence of wins rather than one distant payoff. For a demanding, four-month commitment, that continuous recognition was a real motivation and completion lever, not a ceremonial afterthought.

◡ REMIX

You do not need a university partner, but you need someone whose name carries weight to co-sign, and you need verifiability. Layer your recognition (early wins → progress markers → final credential) rather than betting everything on one end-of-program certificate.

The complete Cohort 1 curriculum

All 24 structured sessions plus the closing ceremony; 25 activities total: 12 lectures, 8 workshops, 2 masterclasses, 3 self-paced courses.

IN THIS PART

M1	Foundations & framing Africa's position in AI	M4	AI for development & the capstone project	
M2	Risks, ethics, and governance	R	Resource-person & mentor roster	63
M3	Adoption, innovation, and capacity building			

Module 1 — Foundations & Framing Africa's Position in AI

#	TITLE	RESOURCE PERSON	ORGANISATION	CATEGORY
1	Opening & Orientation	OSi Team	OSi	Workshop
2	Individual Assignment: AI for Organizational Leaders	OSi Team	OSi	Self-paced
3	From Insight to Action: How to Translate AI Trends into Policy Impact	Dr Murtala M Adogi	System Strategy & Policy Lab, Abuja	Masterclass
4	Research & Literature Review for Writing the Capstone Project	Najeeb G. Abdulhamid, PhD	Microsoft	Workshop
5	Bridging the AI Divide: Africa's Strategic Options in a Fragmented Landscape	Dr Jacki O'Neill	Microsoft Research Africa	Lecture
6	AI Geopolitics & Africa's Role: Global Power Dynamics & Regional Autonomy	Prof Vukosi Marivate	University of Pretoria, SA	Lecture
7	Global AI Trends and Governance Models: Lessons for Africa	Dr Obinna Anya	Google	Lecture

Module 2 — Risks, Ethics, and Governance

#	TITLE	RESOURCE PERSON	ORGANISATION	CATEGORY
8	Designing With, Not For: Building Human-Centred AI for African Realities	Yann Le Beux, Oche Ankeli, Ertony Bahil, Oluchi Audu	YUX Design	Lecture
9	Ethics in the Age of Generative AI	OSi Team	LinkedIn	Self-paced
10	AI Skills Passport	OSi Team	EY & Microsoft	Self-paced

#	TITLE	RESOURCE PERSON	ORGANISATION	CATEGORY
11	Understanding AI Risks: Technical, Social, Ethical, Political, and Economic Dimensions	Dr Ignatius Ezeani	Lancaster University, UK	Lecture
12	Policy Instruments for Regulating AI	Dr Melissa Omino (LLD)	Strathmore University, Kenya	Lecture
13	The Human Side of AI: Fellowship Social Mixer	OSi Team	OSi	Workshop
14	The ABC of Policy and Impact: How to Design, Deliver and Measure Results	Dr Murtala M Adogi	System Strategy & Policy Lab, Abuja	Lecture
15	The Art and Practice of Influencing Policy	Chief Osita Chidoka OFR	Athena Centre for Policy and Leadership	Masterclass
16	Governing AI Risks Ethically: What African Policymakers Must Prepare For	Akua Gekye	Microsoft	Lecture

Module 3 – Adoption, Innovation, and Capacity Building

#	TITLE	RESOURCE PERSON	ORGANISATION	CATEGORY
17	AI for Impact: Addressing Critical Challenges Across Africa	Dr Girmaw Abebe Tadesse	Microsoft	Lecture
18	Accelerating AI Adoption in Africa: Strategies and Best Practices	Dr Oloruntoba Bankole	Nigeria Climate Innovation Centre	Lecture
19	Building Human Capital for AI: Skills, Strategies, and Systems	Winnie Karanu	Microsoft	Lecture

#	TITLE	RESOURCE PERSON	ORGANISATION	CATEGORY
20	Data-Driven Policy in the Age of AI: From Evidence to Impact	Dr Rislan Kanya	Cosmopolitan University, Abuja	Lecture
21	AI-Powered Innovation for Policy Workers	Lydiaiah Karanja	Microsoft	Workshop

Module 4 – AI for Development & the Capstone Project

#	TITLE	RESOURCE PERSON	ORGANISATION	CATEGORY
22	Mentorship Clinic and Final Revision	OSi Team	OSi	Workshop
23	Visual Intelligence: Using AI to Create Images & Graphics	Gurupreet S Dhanjal	Microsoft	Workshop
24	Impact of Storytelling for Policy Influencing	Katie Zoller, Amber Tingle, Sarah McGee	Microsoft	Workshop
25	Capstone Project and Policy Summits	OSi Team	OSi	Workshop

Closing Ceremony – Celebrating continental policy leadership for responsible AI governance – Catherine Muraga (Microsoft).

Resource-person & mentor roster

The 22 named guest resource persons and 8 capstone mentors.

TABLE A.1

Guest resource persons

RESOURCE PERSON	ORGANISATION / ROLE
Dr Murtala M Adogi	System Strategy & Policy Lab
Yann Le Beux	YUX Design — Co-founder and AI Lead

TABLE A.1 CONTINUED

RESOURCE PERSON	ORGANISATION / ROLE
Oche Ankeli	YUX Design — Machine Learning Engineer & Researcher
Ertony Bahil	YUX Design — Machine Learning Engineer & Researcher
Oluchi Audu	YUX Design — Senior Design Researcher
Dr Jacki O'Neill	Microsoft Research Africa
Prof Vukosi Marivate	University of Pretoria
Dr Obinna Anya	Google
Dr Ignatius Ezeani	Lancaster University
Dr Melissa Omino	Strathmore University
Chief Osita Chidoka OFR	Athena Centre for Policy and Leadership
Akua Gekye	Microsoft
Dr Girmaw Abebe Tadesse	Microsoft
Dr Oloruntoba Bankole	Nigeria Climate Innovation Centre
Winnie Karanu	Microsoft
Dr Rislán Kanya	Cosmopolitan University
Lydia Karanja	Microsoft
Gurupreet S Dhanjal	Microsoft
Katie Zoller	Microsoft
Amber Tingle	Microsoft
Sarah McGee	Microsoft
Catherine Muraga	Microsoft — closing keynote

TABLE A.2

Capstone mentors

MENTOR	ORGANISATION	GROUP MENTORED
Dr Fauziya Ado Yakasai	Michigan State University	Education & Skills for the Future
Dr Njeri Ngaruiya Ng'ang'a	Strathmore University	Health & Wellbeing
Andrew Abu	Young Innovators of Nigeria / Agromate	Agriculture & Food Systems
Dr Ibrahim Labaran Ali	University of Warwick	Labour, Employment & the Future of Work
Aliyu Ahmad	Microsoft	Finance, Trade & Inclusion
Dr Shamsuddeen Hassan Muhammad	Imperial College London	Justice, Rights & Governance
Gilles Quentin Hachème	Microsoft AI for Good Lab	Climate Resilience & Urban Systems
Felermino Dário Mário António Ali	Microsoft Research Africa	Cross-Cutting Policy & Digital Sovereignty

The full social mixer run-sheet

The "Connecting Africa's AI Voices" mixer, the Module 2 activity "The Human Side of AI." Delivered across two sittings on Microsoft Teams (15 November and 13 December 2025), each roughly 2.5 hours, because the first ran out of time. Counted as one activity in the roster.

A NOTE ON TIME

Cohort 1 planned this as a single two-hour event and could not finish it. Plan for two sittings from the start, or deliberately trim the agenda. We do not prescribe per-segment durations: Cohort 1's own timings are not reliably recorded, and more usefully, they overran. Size each segment to your cohort, protect the "10 Things" showcase and speed connections as the two that most need room, and assume the whole agenda needs roughly two sittings of about 2.5 hours.

Purpose. Not a "get to know you" call but a designed session that doubles as an AI-literacy lesson: fellows learn that AI represents a continent only as well as it understands it, and that Africans are positioned to teach it to see Africa better.

Setup checklist

BEFORE THE SESSION

☐ Padlet board created and titled "Where we're joining from."

☐ Google Slides social directory deck prepared, one blank slide per fellow, fields pre-templated.

☐ Mentimeter polls built for the "10 Things" voting categories.

☐ Breakout rooms pre-configured (3–4 per room), nudged to cross national/sectoral lines.

☐ Linktr.ee on-ramp guide circulated in advance.

☐ Recording on, with non-expiring retention.

Sitting 1 (15 Nov 2025, ~2.5 hrs) —
facilitated by Najeeb G. Abdulhamid

#	SEGMENT	RUN
1	Pan-African Padlet map	Fellows pin name, location, country, and "welcome" in their local language. The map lights up in a dozen languages. Opener; sets the "identity before technology" tone.
2	Meet the organizing team	Brief introduction to the people running the fellowship. A deliberate trust move, human faces to the program.

#	SEGMENT	RUN
3	AI image-generation activity	Fellows prompt an AI to illustrate a surprised reaction. The lesson, surfaced by fellows: AI doesn't know you, it guesses you from patterns.
4	"10 Unique Things About My Country" + live voting	Each country team presents a 2-minute snapshot. Peers vote via Mentimeter: Most Surprising, Most Inspiring, Funniest Fact. The heart of the event.

Sitting 2 (13 Dec 2025, ~2.5 hrs) — facilitated by Dr Bashir I. Dodo

#	SEGMENT	RUN
5	Speed connections	Breakout rooms of 3–4, 5-minute rounds, rotate 3 times. Back in the main room, five fellows share what they learned about someone else.
6	Unveiling of the social directory	The shared Google Slides deck where each fellow completes their own slide. Becomes a living cohort directory.
7	Module feedback (close)	Fellows fill a short questionnaire, so the social event also feeds evaluation. Optionally close with each fellow dropping one word describing how they feel.

As-delivered outcome: fellows from roughly a dozen countries turned it into a genuine classroom. The Mentimeter results: Most Surprising, Somalia; Most Inspiring, Nigeria & Sudan; Funniest Fact, Egypt.

A LIVING DOCUMENT

This playbook is a living document. Corrections, updates, and Cohort 2 lessons should be folded in as they emerge (see 9.3).