



# THE DRIVE REPORT

FEBRUARY 2026



## HUNDREDS CONVERGED IN ACCRA, GHANA FOR NEXTUP

The maiden edition of NextUp drew hundreds of in-person participants, with several others joining online.

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## HUNDREDS CONVERGE IN ACCRA FOR NEXTUP

Drive to Inspire – Africa (DTI-A) brought together hundreds of young people from across the continent for the maiden edition of NextUp, held on the sidelines of the Africa Prosperity Dialogues 2026 at the Accra International Conference Centre in Ghana. Under the theme leveraging technology, driving creativity and innovation to scale ventures in Africa, the event created a space for learning, reflection, and conversations about the future of African youth.

The gathering was structured into three main sessions: the Digital Innovation and Emerging Technology panel, the Creative Economy panel, and a fireside chat. Each session brought together experienced industry leaders who shared practical insights, personal journeys, and reflections to guide the next generation.

### **Technology, Skills, and the Future of African Youth**

The Digital Innovation and Emerging Technology panel featured Clinton Mbah, CEO of Accrue; Josephine Siaw-Agyemang, founder of Enseigne; Irene Elorm Hatsu Fiebor, Senior Instructional Designer and e-learning Project Officer at Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre; and Richard Anim, CEO of Coral Reef

Innovation Africa. The session was moderated by Bernard Dzakpasu, ESG Manager at KPMG West Africa. The session explored the opportunities young people must take advantage of with the increase in technology and AI.

### **Creativity, Ethics, and Sustainable Opportunity**

The Creative Economy panel brought together Aku Addy, Brand Architect and founder of Wollo; Bernard Kafui Sokpe, Co-founder and CEO of Jambo Spaces; award-winning artiste Stonebwoy; Edem Kutsienyo, Partner at Africa Legal Associates (ALPi Ghana); and actress and creative industry leader Juliet Ibrahim, President of Women in Film, TV and Creative Media Forum Ghana. The conversation was moderated by lawyer Vanessa Appiagyei.

This session explored how talent can be transformed into sustainable income through discipline, structure, and a clear understanding of the creative business. Panelists also addressed important challenges such as piracy, unfair compensation, online harassment, misinformation, and the need for ethical storytelling that respects dignity and truth. Young creatives were encouraged to prepare for unexpected opportunities, build partnerships, diversify income streams, and remain disciplined in their pursuit of long-term success.

## HUNDREDS CONVERGE IN ACCRA FOR NEXTUP

### **Entrepreneurship, Leadership, and Shared Growth**

The fireside chat with Anthony Dzamefe, founder of Caveman Watches, provided practical lessons on building and sustaining a business. He urged young entrepreneurs to embrace early mistakes as learning opportunities, believe in their ideas, identify market gaps through curiosity and experience, and think beyond local markets toward global standards. He also emphasised humility in leadership, teamwork, employee well-being, and continuous personal growth as foundations for lasting success.

### **Why Platforms Like NextUp Matter**

Beyond the panels and conversations, NextUp highlighted an important reality: many young Africans have ideas, passion, and talent, but lack consistent access to practical guidance, industry exposure, and real opportunities for growth. Events like NextUp are necessary because they create spaces where learning moves beyond theory into lived experience, allowing young people to hear directly from those who are building, creating, and leading across different sectors.

DTI-A remains committed to bridging the gap between knowledge and

practice by connecting youth with credible voices, relevant skills, and opportunities that prepare them for real-world impact.

### **Appreciation**

DTI-A expresses sincere gratitude to all speakers, moderators, partners, and participants who contributed to the success of the maiden NextUp gathering. Your willingness to share knowledge, experience, and encouragement has planted seeds of possibility in the lives of hundreds of young Africans. The impact of these conversations will continue to grow through the ventures, stories, and innovations that will emerge across the continent.









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## DTI-A Visits Tema Technical Institute

In February, we took our outreach to Tema Technical Institute, engaging students in a day of career guidance and important dialogue. Accompanied by a strong team of dedicated volunteers, the session created an atmosphere of energy, reflection, and purposeful conversation.

During the general session, students heard from speakers across diverse professional fields. Brand Strategist Edward Dakpey spoke on entrepreneurship and the positive use of social media. He encouraged students not to remain idle after school but to begin building something for themselves. Emphasising discipline, faith, and skill mastery, he reminded students that skill is their capital and that mastery secures their future. He urged them to take their education seriously, use social media to showcase their craft, and build a name that would make their families proud.

Chef Maamle inspired students with lessons on innovation and growth, encouraging them to start where they are and remain passionate about what they study and pursue. She challenged them to stay open-minded, identify problems around them, and work towards solutions even before leaving school. Her message reinforced the importance of initiative, curiosity, and resilience.

Ogee, the MC, delivered a message on the dangers of drug use and the importance of education. He urged students to say no to drugs and cautioned them against abandoning school to pursue the creative industry. Instead, he encouraged them to hone their skills while still in school, preparing responsibly for future opportunities.

The engagement concluded with breakout sessions, where students interacted directly with volunteers in smaller groups. These sessions provided space for deeper conversations, personalised guidance, and honest questions about career paths and life choices.

Our outreach to Tema Technical Institute once again reflected DTI-A's commitment to equipping young people with clarity, discipline, and direction as they prepare for the future.





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## Cohort 1 of the 2026 DTI-A Mentorship Programme Set to Begin

Cohort 1 of the DTI-A 2026 Mentorship Programme will officially run from 1 March to 30 May 2026, marking the beginning of another structured journey of growth, guidance, and transformation for young people within our network.

The previous mentorship cycle recorded participants from 12 countries across Africa and beyond. As we continue to review and finalise applications for the upcoming cohort, we anticipate an even broader geographical representation. This growing diversity reflects the expanding reach and relevance of the DTI-A mentorship model.

The programme is delivered virtually, allowing mentors and mentees from across the continent and beyond to be intentionally paired for engagement. Through scheduled conversations and structured sessions, participants discuss academic growth, career direction, personal discipline, leadership development, and other topics central to the holistic development of mentees.

Mentorship plays an important role in developing Africa's human capital. Across the continent, millions of young people are entering the workforce each year, yet many lack access to guidance, networks, and practical exposure that can help them translate their potential into real opportunities. Structured mentorship programmes help bridge this gap by connecting young people with experienced professionals who can provide direction, share knowledge, and support informed decision-making. By strengthening skills, confidence, and leadership capacity among young Africans, initiatives such as the DTI-A Mentorship Programme contribute to building a generation that is better prepared to contribute to the continent's social and economic development.

In past cohorts, we have also had mentors joining from the United States, further enriching the cross-border exchange of knowledge, perspectives, and experiences. This international participation strengthens the programme and exposes mentees to global insights while remaining grounded in African realities.

As Cohort 1 of the 2026 cycle prepares to commence, DTI-A remains committed to fostering intentional mentorship relationships that move beyond inspiration and focus on sustained development. We look forward to the impact this new cycle will generate across communities and countries.

## Webinar: Start Right with Ifesinachi Okpagu



Many young professionals desire financial independence and career success, yet often lack the structure needed to build both intentionally. Without the right foundation, income can increase while financial stability remains fragile. This reality inspired Drive to Inspire – Africa’s recent Financial Literacy Month webinar, themed Start Right.

The session was led by Ifesinachi Okpagu of Heirs Insurance Group, who shared insights on how young professionals can position themselves for long-term career growth and financial security.

Participants explored what it truly means to start right. The discussion went beyond earning money to emphasise the importance of investing in career development, strengthening leadership capabilities, and committing to personal growth, especially in one’s 20s.

While technical skills are essential at the beginning of a career, the session highlighted that leadership skills, emotional intelligence, and professional presence become increasingly important as one advances.

A key takeaway was the need for intentional behaviour in the workplace. Participants were encouraged to choose when to speak, think before acting, and develop the confidence to command presence. The speaker emphasised that growth requires both competence and character.

The webinar also underscored the importance of building relationships at every level. She described connections, mentorship, and professional networks as powerful assets that can create opportunities over time.

Financial discipline formed a central part of the conversation. Attendees were reminded to build a safety net while earning through consistent savings, structured investment plans, and insurance protection. Insurance was reframed not as an expense, but as a strategic safeguard that protects one’s financial progress from unexpected events.

## PARTNER

Partner with DTI-A to provide guidance, offer internships, support programmes, and create opportunities for youth.

## DONATE

Donate to DTI-A and help sponsor the education of talented young people, empowering them to reach their full potential.

# WE CAN DO SO MUCH TOGETHER...

## SPONSOR

You can sponsor students' tertiary education or fund an outreach programme at your alma mater to inspire the next generation.

## VOLUNTEER

Join DTI-A as a volunteer mentor and help guide youth through outreach and mentorship programmes.

Drive to Inspire  
Africa

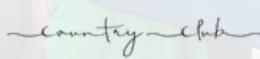
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