

Annual Report **20 25**

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We strengthen the workforce *from the inside out.*



Mission

We strengthen the youth and young adult workforce ecosystem through coordinated leadership development, intergenerational mentorship, inclusive pathways into skilled and digital careers, and the integration of creative arts — while intentionally building mental resilience across all initiatives.



Vision

A resilient and inclusive workforce ecosystem where youth and young adults develop as **Competent, Organizationally Skilled, Responsible, and Ethical (CORE)** leaders who drive sustainable economic and community advancement.

Our values

01.

Concern

A genuine care for the wellbeing of those we serve is visible in how we listen, plan, and follow through.

02.

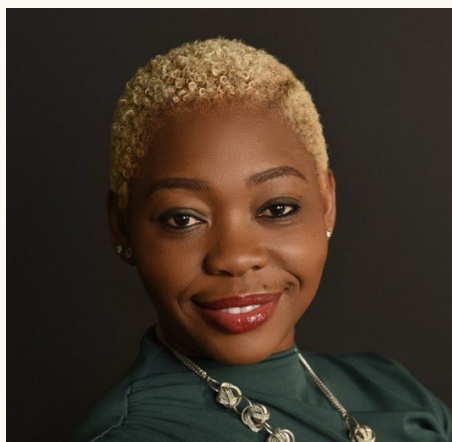
Communication

Clear, honest, and intergenerational. We move at the speed of trust because trust is the only sustainable speed.

03.

Commitment

We don't run pilots and disappear. We build relationships and infrastructure designed to outlast funding cycles.



—Ifeoma Grace-Yvonne Okonji

Founder & Executive Director,
Emerging Lives Initiative

— Message from the Founder & Executive Director

2025 was a defining year of growth, expansion, and deeper community impact for Emerging Lives Initiative (ELI).

Building on the foundation established in 2024, we expanded both our initiatives and our reach, creating stronger pathways for youth, women, and seniors to connect, learn, and thrive. This year marked the introduction of Seniors Tales at Sunset (STAS) and Business Meets Tech (BMT), alongside the continued growth of our CHESS initiative and Women's Sports Initiative.

What makes ELI unique is our commitment to a preventative and community-centered approach, one that focuses not only on addressing challenges, but on equipping people early with the resilience, mentorship, leadership, and opportunities they need to flourish.

Through intergenerational storytelling, workforce readiness initiatives, leadership development, and community wellness programming, we witnessed the power of connection in transforming lives and strengthening communities.

2025 also represented an important step forward in partnership development. We were honored to receive support and collaboration from the Government of Canada, The office of the Councillor of ward 11 Beacon Hill-Cyrville Councillor Tim Tierney, Build Consult, and the African Canadian Association of Ottawa (ACAO), among others. These partnerships strengthened our ability to expand programming and deepen our impact.

As we continue to grow, our vision remains clear: to build resilient communities where people of all ages are empowered to lead, contribute, and succeed. To our partners, volunteers, facilitators, participants, and supporters, thank you for believing in this vision and walking this journey with us.

The work continues, and the future ahead is full of possibility.

The CORE Framework

Four traits we believe define the leaders
this decade is asking for: Competent,
Organizationally Skilled, Responsible, and
Ethical

How **CORE** shows up in the work

C

Competent

Equipped with relevant, current, and applicable skills — both technical and human. Demonstrated through practice, not certificates.

Measured by:
Skill acquisition · Portfolio · Peers

O

Organizationally Skilled

Able to plan, coordinate, and execute within real systems — workplaces, communities, public institutions.

Measured by:
Projects · Feedback · Role progression

R

Responsible

Takes ownership of outcomes for self, peers, and community. Sees follow-through as a leadership skill.

Measured by:
Attendance · Commitments · Contribution

E

Ethical

Operates from a clear moral compass, especially when no one is watching. Names hard things plainly.

Measured by:
Case studies · Review · Self-assessment

Impact Highlights

500+

Beneficiaries engaged
across youth, women, and seniors

04

Coordinated initiatives
delivered (**CORE-aligned**)

07+

Partnerships

Four Initiatives, *in motion.*

Built around the CORE Framework, each initiative develops measurable leadership traits through practice



01.

STAS

(Seniors Tales At Sunset)

Generations, in motion. We pair seniors, working-age adults, and youth in deliberately structured triads where knowledge flows in both directions.



02. **Business meets Tech (BMT™)**

Foundational technical training paired
with workplace literacy — preparing
youth for roles that didn't exist five years
ago.

FACILITATORS



IFEOMA OKONJI
Chief Executive Officer & Founder
Emerging Lives Initiative (ELI)



DOROTHY OGBUMAH
Registered Psychotherapist



SOMTO MBELU
Senior Program Lead
at Ottawa Responsible AI Hub



CHIOMA OBIAKOR
Registered Social Service Worker

C- Career and Leadership Training // H- Health and Wellness (Mental Health)
E- Entrepreneurship training // S- Safety on the Tech space
S- Social and Community Development Training



Venue: Room A Ottawa Public Library-North Gloucester
2036 Ogilvie Rd Gloucester,
ON K1J7N8

11:00 AM 11th August, 2025



03.

CHES

Critical thinking, focus, and patience — taught through chess and applied to leadership, school, and life.



04.

Women's Sports Initiative

Sport as access to confidence, community, and resilience. Designed with and for women who have been overlooked by traditional athletics.

Funding Summary

Government of Canada

CA\$23,488

Personal donations

CA\$400

Build n Consult Ltd

CA\$250

African Canadian
Association of Ottawa

CA\$1000

CA\$210

Drinks for Women Soccer Initiative
from Councillor Tim Tierney BeaconHill/Cyrville

in-kind donations

CA\$100

Partners

01.

Funded in part by the
Government of Canada's
New Horizons for Seniors Program

| Canada 

02.

Build n Consult Ltd

03.

**African Canadian
Association of Ottawa**

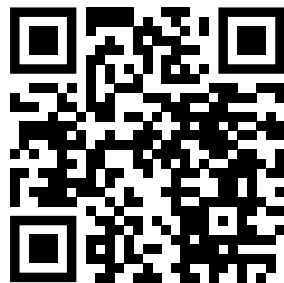
Open to collaboration



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Kindly Scan to
visit our website