



**CENTRE FOR AFRICAN
DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS**

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Organisational Overview, Programme Framework & Funding Roadmap

Headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa
April 2026

1. ORGANISATIONAL IDENTITY

1.1 Mission Statement

To empower young Africans through transformative skills development, peacebuilding, innovation, and community-driven health systems — ensuring that youth become capable, ethical, and future-ready leaders advancing Africa's Vision 2063 and contributing to sustainable development across the continent.

1.2 Vision Statement

A peaceful, prosperous, and innovation-driven African continent led by confident, skilled, and socially conscious young people who work collaboratively with families, communities, and institutions to shape inclusive futures.

1.3 Core Values

- **Youth-Centred Leadership** — Young people are central agents of change, not passive recipients of development.
- **Integrity & Accountability** — Transparent and responsible governance across all operations and partnerships.
- **Innovation** — Embracing technology, creativity, and new knowledge systems to solve complex problems.
- **Peace & Social Cohesion** — Promoting non-violence, dialogue, and community resilience as foundational to development.
- **Equity & Inclusion** — Ensuring gender equity, digital access, and participation for marginalised communities.
- **Pan-African Solidarity** — Strengthening cross-country collaboration in the spirit of Agenda 2063.
- **Holistic Wellbeing** — Supporting physical, emotional, social, and economic development of youth and families.
- **Community Partnership** — Working alongside parents, caregivers, local leaders, and institutions rather than in isolation.

1.4 Theory of Change

CADS operates on the premise that durable change in Africa requires simultaneous investment in three interdependent pillars:

INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY — Skills, identity, emotional resilience, and entrepreneurial capability in young people.

COMMUNITY SYSTEMS — Functional health systems, peacebuilding structures, and digital infrastructure at community level.

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT — Policy advocacy, institutional partnerships, and resource mobilisation that create conditions for systemic change.

When these three pillars are aligned, young people transition from vulnerability to agency. CADS measures progress against the African Union's Agenda 2063 and SDGs 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 16, and 17.

1.5 Brand Identity

Brand Positioning:

CADS positions itself as Africa's premier applied youth development institution — bridging the gap between grassroots community work and high-level policy advocacy. The brand communicates credibility, continental ambition, and community trust simultaneously.

Brand Tone: Confident. Pan-African. Evidence-led. Hopeful without being naive.

Visual Identity: The logo's earthy olive map, gold flame, red and green leaves communicate growth, rootedness, and pan-African vitality. All CADS materials carry this palette — deliberately avoiding the institutional blues typical of international development organisations.

2. CONTEXT & TARGET POPULATION

2.1 Target Population

Primary beneficiaries are youth aged 16–30 across the African continent, with particular focus on Southern and East Africa given CADS' Johannesburg base. Secondary populations include:

- Young mothers and expectant women in under-resourced communities
- Parents and caregivers whose agency directly shapes youth outcomes
- Educators, community health workers, and civil society practitioners requiring capacity-building support
- Decision-makers and policymakers influencing youth development, peace, and health systems

2.2 Problem Statement

Across the African continent, young people face intersecting challenges that constrain their capacity to thrive:

- Structural unemployment — youth unemployment in Sub-Saharan Africa exceeds 60% in many contexts
- The digital divide — an estimated 700 million Africans remain offline, limiting participation in the emerging digital economy
- Fragile peace and security — intra-state and community-level violence disproportionately affects youth as both victims and perpetrators
- Maternal and reproductive health gaps — Africa bears 70% of the global maternal mortality burden, with young women most at risk

- Psychosocial deficits — mental health infrastructure is critically under-resourced continent-wide
- Governance exclusion — youth remain systematically marginalised from formal decision-making at all levels

CADS exists to address these challenges through holistic, innovative, and community-anchored approaches. Johannesburg's position as Africa's economic capital enables access to continental institutions (African Union, SADC), a deep South African civil society ecosystem, corporate social investment networks, and proximity to high-need communities across Southern Africa.

3. CORE PROGRAMME STREAMS

CADS' work is structured around four strategic programme streams designed to be mutually reinforcing — an alumna of the skills development stream may become a community health advocate; a youth mediator trained through the peace stream may go on to lead a digital innovation lab.

Stream 1: Youth & Skills Development

Building relevant, future-ready capabilities through structured leadership development, vocational training, sports-based identity programmes, mentorship systems, emotional wellbeing support, and entrepreneurship pathways.

Key Programme Areas:

- Leadership Academies — structured 6–12 month cohort-based leadership development for youth aged 18–28
- Vocational Skills Centres — practical trade and technical skills aligned to labour market demand
- Sports for Development — using football, athletics, and team sports as vehicles for identity, discipline, and community cohesion
- Mentorship Networks — connecting youth with professional mentors across African diaspora and continent-based networks
- Youth Entrepreneurship Pathways — business incubation support, micro-grants, and market linkage for early-stage youth enterprises

Stream 2: Peace & Security

Strengthening youth participation in peacebuilding, conflict prevention, community mediation, social cohesion initiatives, and violence-reduction strategies.

Key Programme Areas:

- Community Mediation Training — equipping youth with structured conflict resolution and dialogue facilitation skills
- Youth Peace Councils — community-level structures enabling youth to participate meaningfully in local governance

- Violence Prevention Programmes — evidence-based interventions targeting gang recruitment, GBV, and community conflict hotspots
- UNSCR 2250 Advocacy — supporting youth participation in national and regional peace and security architectures
- Cross-Border Peace Exchanges — structured youth exchange programmes between conflict-affected communities within SADC

Stream 3: Maternal Health & Community Wellbeing

Promoting health equity through maternal and reproductive health education, young-mother support systems, mental health integration, birth preparedness programming, and community-driven health advocacy.

Key Programme Areas:

- Birth Preparedness & Safe Motherhood — community education and referral pathways reducing preventable maternal and newborn mortality
- Young Mothers Support Networks — peer-support and skills development for adolescent and young mothers
- Mental Health Integration — embedding psychosocial support into health and development programming using community health worker models
- Reproductive Health Literacy — rights-based sexual and reproductive health education for youth
- Community Health Advocate Training — training community members to extend the health system's reach in under-served areas

Stream 4: Digital Inclusion & Innovation

Closing the digital divide by advancing digital literacy, coding and AI training, youth innovation labs, tech-based problem-solving, and pathways into the digital economy.

Key Programme Areas:

- Digital Literacy Foundations — basic digital skills for youth with limited prior access
- Coding & AI Bootcamps — intensive technical training with employment and entrepreneurship pathways
- Youth Innovation Labs — physical and virtual spaces where youth develop technology solutions to local problems
- Digital Economy Pathways — connecting trained youth to the continent's growing tech ecosystem (fintech, edtech, healthtech)
- Digital Rights & Safety — education on online safety, data rights, and responsible technology use

4. GOVERNANCE, STRUCTURE & OPERATIONS

4.1 Legal Structure

CADS will be registered in South Africa as a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) under the Non-Profit Organisations Act (Act 71 of 1997) and as a Non-Profit Company (NPC) under the

Companies Act (Act 71 of 2008). A Public Benefit Organisation (PBO) application to SARS will be prioritised to secure Section 18A tax-exempt status — essential for attracting South African corporate donors.

Parallel registration considerations include continental presence through AU-recognised CSO status and a potential UK or EU registered entity for access to bilateral aid instruments.

4.2 Governance Structure

- Board of Directors — 7–9 members, majority African, including youth representation (minimum 30%), gender parity, and sectoral expertise across health, peace, technology, and finance
- Executive Director — accountable to the Board; responsible for strategy, external representation, and senior partnerships
- Programme Directors — one per stream, with operational accountability for delivery and M&E
- Finance & Compliance Committee — sub-committee of the Board overseeing auditing, funder compliance, and financial risk
- Youth Advisory Council — formal advisory body (aged 18–25) with defined voice in programme design and organisational direction

4.3 Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL)

CADS will develop a robust MEL framework aligned to the African Union's Agenda 2063 indicators, relevant SDGs, and funder-specific requirements.

- Participatory MEL — youth and community partners involved in data collection and interpretation
- Adaptive management — quarterly learning reviews enabling real-time programme adjustment
- External evaluation — independent annual programme evaluations to verify impact claims
- Data systems — cloud-based case management and beneficiary tracking (Salesforce or KoBoToolbox for field data)

5. FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME PROPOSALS

The following five flagship programmes are proposed for CADS' initial operating phase (Years 1–3), designed to generate early impact, build organisational credibility, and create a pipeline of evidence that unlocks larger funding instruments.

PROGRAMME 1: ARISE Leadership Academy

Stream: Youth & Skills Development | Target: 18–26 year olds across Southern Africa

A 9-month cohort-based leadership and entrepreneurship programme delivered across three Southern African cities (Johannesburg, Harare, Lusaka) per cycle. Each cohort of 40 youth undergoes structured leadership development, business incubation, community

projects, and mentorship. Graduates join a pan-African alumni network with ongoing support.

Target: 120 youth per year / 360 over 3 years

Key Funders: Mastercard Foundation, Allan Gray Orbis Foundation, Trevor Noah Foundation (Khulani Nathi Fund — ZAR30m), Gatsby Africa

PROGRAMME 2: YouthBuild Peace Councils

Stream: Peace & Security | Target: Youth 16–30 in Gauteng townships and cross-border SADC settings

Community-level Youth Peace Councils established in 10 communities per year, trained in mediation, conflict early warning, and UNSCR 2250 principles. Councils interface with local government structures and police forums. A cross-border exchange component facilitates learning between peace actors in South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique.

Target: 500 youth trained per year as community peace practitioners

Key Funders: UN Peacebuilding Fund (Youth, Peace & Security window), USAID Southern Africa, PeaceNexus Foundation, UNAOC Youth Solidarity Fund (US\$25,000 seed)

PROGRAMME 3: Mama Kwanza — Mothers First

Stream: Maternal Health & Community Wellbeing | Target: Young mothers 16–28, community health workers

An integrated maternal and newborn health programme combining birth preparedness education, trained community health advocates, and integrated mental health support. Operates in 5 under-resourced Gauteng communities in Year 1, scaling regionally in Years 2–3. Co-designed with SA Department of Health frameworks and UNFPA Evidence-Based Interventions.

Target: 1,000 women reached annually; 50 community health advocates trained per year

Key Funders: UNFPA Maternal and Newborn Health Thematic Fund, Grand Challenges Africa (US\$100,000–200,000), Netherlands HIV-Instrument 2026–2030 (€98.7m Southern Africa), Grand Challenges Canada Youth Mental Health (CAD\$300,000–1.5m)

PROGRAMME 4: AfriCode Youth Innovation Labs

Stream: Digital Inclusion & Innovation | Target: Youth 16–28 with limited digital access

Physical Youth Innovation Labs in Soweto (Johannesburg) and Khayelitsha (Cape Town), plus a mobile lab unit covering rural Limpopo and Mpumalanga. Curriculum covers digital literacy, coding, AI literacy, and entrepreneurship. Labs serve as co-working spaces for youth-led tech ventures with tertiary institution accreditation pathways.

Target: 600 youth trained per year; 30 tech startups incubated across Years 1–3

Key Funders: LEAP-SE EU–Africa Digital fund (up to €1.5m), Africa Digital Rights Fund / CIPESA (US\$5,000–25,000), Google.org Africa, GSMA Connected Society Fund, UNICEF Venture Fund (US\$100,000)

PROGRAMME 5: Sport for Ubuntu

Stream: Youth & Skills Development / Peace & Security (cross-stream) | Target: Youth 14–22

A sport-based development programme using football, athletics, and netball to foster identity, leadership, and community cohesion among youth in marginalised communities. Each cycle combines sports coaching with life skills, conflict resolution, and career guidance, designed to engage both in-school and out-of-school youth.

Target: 1,500 youth engaged per year across 20 communities

Key Funders: FIFA / Global Citizen Education Fund (US\$50,000–250,000), Comic Relief Sport for Development, Laureus Sport for Good Foundation (up to US\$150,000), Anglo American, Nedbank, and Standard Bank corporate CSI foundations

6. FUNDING ARCHITECTURE

The following tables map confirmed and recurrently active funding lines against CADS' programme streams. All entries are named instruments with traceable application portals. CADS should apply to multiple instruments simultaneously, using smaller grants (US\$5,000–\$50,000) to build track record while developing proposals for transformational grants (US\$500,000+).

6.1 Stream 1: Youth & Skills Development

Funder / Programme	Stream	Value	Geography / Notes
Mastercard Foundation — Young Africa Works	Skills / Livelihoods	Multi-million USD	South Africa, Ethiopia, Ghana — apply via partner CSO call
Trevor Noah Foundation — Khulani Nathi Innovation Fund	Leadership / Education	ZAR30 million	South African NGOs scaling education & youth pathways — rolling applications
AU-EU Youth Action Lab — Youth & Entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurship	€30,000	Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Zambia, Uganda — January cycle (recurs annually)
Gatsby Africa — Productive Employment	Vocational Skills	£200,000–£2m	East & Southern Africa — landscape grants, strong evidence base required
Youth Empowerment Fund (EU / Global Youth Mobilisation)	SDG Youth Action	€500–5,000	Youth-led SDG initiatives globally — rolling quarterly calls
Fursa Beta Grant — Youth Employment	Employment Readiness	US\$15,000	Africa-wide — March 2026 cycle

6.2 Stream 2: Peace & Security

Funder / Programme	Stream	Value	Geography / Notes
UN Peacebuilding Fund — Youth, Peace & Security window	YPS / Mediation	US\$300,000–2m	Africa-wide; aligned UNSCR 2250 — open to CSOs partnering with UN agencies
UNAOOC Youth Solidarity Fund	Intercultural Dialogue	US\$25,000 (seed)	Youth-led peacebuilding — annual call (August deadline)
PeaceNexus Foundation — Organisational Development	Peacebuilding capacity	CHF40,000	West & Southern Africa — November cycle (recurs annually)
USAID Southern Africa Mission	Violence Reduction	US\$500,000+	South Africa / SADC; apply via USAID SAFERnet and annual NOFO cycle
EU Civil Society Fund — Southern Africa	Peacebuilding & Governance	€50,000–300,000	SADC CSOs — via EU Delegation Pretoria annual call
Environment and Peace — PeaceNexus	Conflict-sensitive environment	CHF15,000–45,000	West & Central Africa — February 2026 deadline (recurs)

6.3 Stream 3: Maternal Health & Community Wellbeing

Funder / Programme	Stream	Value	Geography / Notes
UNFPA Maternal and Newborn Health Thematic Fund	Maternal / Newborn Health	Programme partnership	Sub-Saharan Africa — apply via UNFPA ESARO Johannesburg as implementing partner
Netherlands HIV-Instrument 2026–2030	Adolescent / Reproductive Health	€98.7m envelope	Southern Africa — local NGO SRH integration — multi-year instrument
Grand Challenges Africa — Women's Health Innovations	Reproductive / Maternal Health	US\$100,000–200,000	Pan-African; Science for Africa Foundation — December cycle (recurs annually)
Grand Challenges Canada — Youth Mental Health	Mental Health (Youth)	CAD\$300,000–1.5m	Ghana, Morocco, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania — March 2026 deadline
Gates Foundation — Maternal & Child Nutrition	Nutrition / Maternal Health	Various tiers	Global open call — bold innovations with pathway to scale
Commonwealth Foundation Open Grants	Health Equity	Up to £60,000 (2 years)	Commonwealth member states — October cycle (recurs annually)

6.4 Stream 4: Digital Inclusion & Innovation

Funder / Programme	Stream	Value	Geography / Notes
LEAP-SE (EU–Africa Sustainable Energy & Digital)	Digital / Clean Energy	Up to €1.5m	EU–Africa multi-country consortia — joint research & innovation projects
Africa Digital Rights Fund — CIPESA	Digital Rights	US\$5,000–25,000	East & Southern Africa — November cycle (annual)

UNICEF Venture Fund — Climate Innovation Challenge	Tech for Climate/Health	US\$100,000	Global open call — October cycle (recurs)
GSMA Connected Society Fund	Digital Access	Varies	Mobile ecosystem — apply via GSMA Innovation Fund for digital inclusion
Interledger Foundation Fellowship 2026	Digital Financial Inclusion	US\$72,000 + US\$20,000 project	Global — June 2026 deadline
SADC Green and Digital Transition (ESTDEV)	Digital Transition	€50,000–150,000	Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia — January 2026

6.5 Cross-Stream & Institutional Funders

Funder / Programme	Stream	Value	Geography / Notes
Gauteng Dept of Social Development — NPO Call	All streams	Competitive	Gauteng-registered NPOs — annual call (October deadline)
Gauteng Partnership Fund — CSI Projects	Education / Youth	Up to ZAR100,000	South African NGOs — rolling CSI project grants; November cycle
Gautrain Management Agency — Social Investment	Community / Education	Not specified	Alexandra, Johannesburg — March 2026 deadline
SADC Green Economy Fund (EU-backed)	Multiple	€300,000–950,000	SADC member states — co-financing of 10% required
German IKI Medium Grants	Climate / Youth	Up to €8m	Cross-sectoral climate with social dimension — January 2026 deadline
Corporate CSI: Anglo / Nedbank / Standard Bank	All streams	ZAR100,000–5m	South Africa-based; annual CSI windows — Section 18A PBO certificate essential

6.6 Funding Strategy

Year 1 — Proof of Concept (US\$5,000–50,000 range):

Prioritise Gauteng DSD NPO Call, Trevor Noah Foundation, UNAOC Youth Solidarity Fund, PeaceNexus Foundation, and Africa Digital Rights Fund. These grants build track record, generate impact data, and satisfy the 'prior experience' requirements of larger instruments.

Years 2–3 — Scale Grants (US\$500,000+):

With 12–18 months of delivery evidence and registered NPO/PBO status, CADS will be positioned to apply to Mastercard Foundation, USAID, UN Peacebuilding Fund, UNFPA, and the Netherlands HIV-Instrument — all of which require demonstrated implementation capacity.

Corporate CSI Strategy:

South Africa's corporate CSI ecosystem is one of the most developed on the continent. CADS should develop dedicated corporate partnership proposals for Anglo American, Nedbank, Standard Bank, Absa, and MTN foundations. A Section 18A PBO certificate is essential to unlock tax-deductible donations.

7. IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS — 90-DAY PLAN

To move from concept to operational reality, CADS should prioritise the following within the first 90 days:

- Legal registration — File NPO and NPC registration with DSD and CIPC respectively. Initiate PBO application to SARS for Section 18A status.
- Board constitution — Identify and formally appoint founding Board members (7 minimum). Prioritise diversity of geography, gender, sector, and generational representation.
- Secretariat establishment — Secure initial operating premises in Johannesburg. Appoint Executive Director and programme leads.
- Year 1 funding applications — Submit to Gauteng DSD NPO Call, Trevor Noah Foundation, UNAOC Youth Solidarity Fund, and PeaceNexus Foundation within the first 60 days.
- Partnership development — Initiate formal MOU conversations with SA Department of Basic Education, Gauteng Department of Health, and at least two tertiary institutions (UJ, Wits).
- MEL system development — Develop Theory of Change, indicator framework, and data collection tools before first programme activity begins.
- Communications launch — Develop CADS website, LinkedIn presence, and funder-facing programme briefs. Register on the SA NPO Portal and SANGONET.

Key Resources:

UNFPA ESARO Johannesburg: unfpaesaro.org | Gauteng DSD: socdev.gpg.gov.za | Funding roundups: africanngos.org | Mastercard Foundation: mastercardfdn.org | UN Peacebuilding Fund: unpbf.org | PeaceNexus: peacenexus.org/grants