

CONCEPT NOTE

# WiM-Africa NextGen Program:

Building Africa's Future Leaders in the Minerals Sector

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**Institution:** Women in Mining Africa (WiM-Africa)

This Concept Note serves as a guiding framework for the design and implementation of the WiM-Africa NextGen Program across all national and regional chapters. It is intended to support the development of country-specific proposals, results frameworks (logframes), budgets, and implementation plans, as well as to guide program delivery across schools, mentorship platforms, and youth engagement initiatives.

Chapters and partners are encouraged to adapt this framework to their local context while maintaining alignment with WiM-Africa's continental strategy and program objectives.

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## 1. Background and Rationale

Africa holds a significant share of the world’s mineral resources, including gold, diamonds, copper, lithium, and other critical minerals essential for global economic development and the energy transition. Despite this resource endowment, participation across the mineral value chain remains largely informal, with limited structured pathways for young people—particularly women—to enter, grow, and lead within the sector.

Across many African countries, early exposure to the extractive sector is minimal. Educational systems often do not integrate practical understanding of mineral resources, value chains, environmental responsibility, or enterprise opportunities linked to the sector. As a result, young people transition from school into adulthood without the awareness, skills, or networks required to engage meaningfully in one of the continent’s most strategic industries.

At the same time, women remain underrepresented across all levels of the mining ecosystem. While many are active within mining communities, their participation is often confined to informal roles with limited access to information, finance, markets, and formal structures. This structural gap continues to constrain inclusive growth and economic transformation.

The WiM-Africa NextGen Program has been designed as a **continental response to these challenges**, providing a structured, **end-to-end pipeline that begins at early education and extends through leadership development, enterprise creation, and professional placement**. The program seeks to reposition young Africans—notably girls and young

women—as informed participants, skilled professionals, and future leaders within the mineral sector.

## 2. NextGen WiM Program Objective

The overarching objective of the WiM-Africa NextGen Program is to establish a **sustainable and scalable pipeline of young African leaders and professionals** equipped with the knowledge, skills, networks, and opportunities required to participate effectively in the minerals sector and its associated value chains.

The program aims to strengthen early awareness, build technical and leadership capacity, facilitate access to opportunities, and support the transition from learning to enterprise and employment within a structured ecosystem.

## 3. NextGen WiM Program Structure and Components

The WiM-Africa NextGen Program is designed as a **multi-level, integrated framework**, engaging young people at different stages of their educational and professional journey.

At the foundational level, the program introduces early awareness and orientation through school-based initiatives such as the WiM-Africa **Future Minerals Leaders Club**, targeting **primary school pupils**. These interventions focus on building curiosity, environmental awareness, and foundational understanding of natural resources and their role in national development.

At the intermediate level, the program expands into **secondary school engagement** through leadership academies and structured learning platforms that introduce students to mineral value chains, environmental and social governance principles, and career pathways within the sector. This stage emphasizes leadership development, critical thinking, and early career orientation.

At the advanced level, the program engages **tertiary institutions**, including universities and technical colleges, through partnerships that support specialized learning, research engagement, and professional exposure. Students at this stage are linked to opportunities for internships, mentorship, and industry engagement.

The program further extends into **scholarship and fellowship pathways**, designed to support high-potential young women and men in pursuing education and specialized training in mining-related disciplines, environmental management, engineering, and mineral economics.

A key component of the program is the facilitation of **internships and industry placements**, connecting young participants to mining companies, consulting firms, laboratories, and related institutions. This enables practical exposure and strengthens the transition from education to employment.

In parallel, the program promotes **entrepreneurship and enterprise development**, supporting young people—particularly women—to establish and grow businesses within the mineral value chain. This includes engagement in areas such as trading, value addition, services, and cooperative development.

Across all levels, the program integrates **mentorship, networking, and leadership development**, ensuring that participants are supported by experienced professionals and connected to broader continental and global platforms.

## 4. NextGen WiM Implementation Approach

The WiM-Africa NextGen Program will be implemented through a decentralized, country-driven delivery model led by WiM-Africa’s national chapters in partnership with governments, educational institutions, development agencies, and private sector actors. Strategic coordination and quality assurance will be provided by the WiM-Africa Secretariat to ensure alignment with continental objectives and standards.

Country and regional chapters are encouraged to develop context-specific proposals, partnerships, and implementation plans based on this framework to advance program delivery within their respective jurisdictions.

Delivery will be anchored within schools, universities, and community structures, ensuring accessibility and contextual relevance. Each country chapter will adapt the program to reflect its national priorities, dominant mineral resources, and institutional landscape, while maintaining alignment with WiM-Africa’s continental framework.

The program will be supported by standardized tools, including implementation manuals, training resources, monitoring systems, and reporting platforms, to ensure consistency and quality across countries.

Strategic partnerships will play a central role in implementation, particularly in facilitating access to training, funding, technical expertise, and industry opportunities.

## 5. NextGen WiM Expected Outcomes

The WiM-Africa NextGen Program is expected to deliver transformative outcomes at individual, community, and continental levels.

**At the individual level**, young participants will demonstrate improved awareness of the mineral sector, enhanced leadership and technical skills, and increased readiness to pursue careers or enterprise opportunities within the value chain.

**At the community level,** the program will contribute to more informed and responsible engagement with natural resources, improved gender inclusion, and the emergence of youth-led initiatives linked to local economic development.

**At the continental level,** the program will contribute to the development of a diverse and inclusive talent pipeline, strengthening Africa's capacity to manage its mineral resources sustainably and competitively.

## **6. Alignment with WiM-Africa Strategy**

The NextGen Program is fully aligned with WiM-Africa's Strategic Focus Areas, particularly **Coalition Building and Capacity Development**, and **Economic Empowerment and Sustainable Development**.

It directly contributes to key elements of the Seven Point Program Agenda, including the NextGen initiative, ESG and climate resilience, research and data development, and value addition within mineral value chains.

## **7. Partnership and Funding Opportunity**

The WiM-Africa NextGen Program presents a significant opportunity for collaboration with development finance institutions, governments, private sector actors, and philanthropic organizations seeking to invest in youth empowerment, gender inclusion, and sustainable economic development.

Support is sought to scale the program across multiple countries, strengthen institutional partnerships, expand scholarship and internship opportunities, and develop infrastructure for training and value addition.

The program offers a structured, scalable, and impact-driven platform capable of delivering measurable outcomes aligned with continental and global development priorities.

## **8. Conclusion**

The WiM-Africa NextGen Program represents a strategic investment in Africa's future. By building a structured pathway from early awareness to professional and entrepreneurial participation, the program seeks to transform how young people—especially women—engage with the continent's mineral wealth.

It is both a response to existing gaps and a forward-looking platform designed to ensure that Africa's next generation is not only aware of its resources, but fully equipped to lead, manage, and benefit from them.

The program provides a scalable model for countries to build inclusive, future-ready participation in Africa's mineral economy.

## **9. HOW CHAPTERS CAN USE THIS DOCUMENT**

This Concept Note is designed as a practical guide for WiM-Africa national and regional chapters to initiate and scale NextGen interventions within their respective countries.

Chapters are encouraged to develop country-specific proposals based on this framework, engage local stakeholders including schools, universities, and government institutions, and adapt program components to reflect national priorities and mineral contexts. They are also expected to implement school-based, mentorship, and youth-focused initiatives aligned with the program structure.

This document may also be used to support engagement with development partners, funding institutions, and private sector actors.