



Building the Foundations

# Pilot Phase Report 2025





## Our Mission

**We break career barriers for young professionals by equipping them to become effective, agile leaders ready for meaningful roles in social and environmental impact.**



**While, delivering B2B solutions for sustainable supply chains, sports events, and healthcare, enabling every community to take action.**

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# Letter From Our Founder

Own Your Voice Academy  
Pilot Report 2025

Own Your Voice Academy was born from the story of a Young Woman who aspired to work within the Environmental & Social Impact Sector, but upon graduation, massive Job Market Disruptions affected younger generations from securing employment, and consequently, she became part of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

Frustrated by the Hiring System that seemed to support the recruitment of a particular age group, she did not want to give up on her life mission in line with Environmental Protection & Social Innovation. She wanted to Protect the Endangered Species (marine and wild animals), so future generations can remain in awe by the beauty of planet earth, while ensuring Athletes could continue to compete in sporting events amidst Climate Disruptions.

After spending some time in USA, she witnessed firsthand that access to quality healthcare was not universal. Being a cancer survivor, she became deeply committed to advancing health equity, while inspiring communities to act on climate change.

Based on these challenges, she felt a deep concern for younger generations. Seeing companies set unrealistic recruitment expectations and fail to clear the entry-level pathways, she resolved that it was up to someone to provide youth with the foundation to thrive: bridging the gap between education and the workforce.

In order to achieve this, she knew that offering multi-disciplinary experiential learning workshops was the way to go, especially within the versatile job market.

This start-up's momentum comes from a strategic choice: Be Curious, Be Bold, Be You, and Own Your Story for change and innovation to prosper. This year, we attempted various pilot initiatives to spark a chain reaction for change to occur.

This report showcases the power of our community. From the beginning, a small team with limited resources aspiring to achieve what the world deems impossible.

Our commitment to action and systems change is unprecedented.  
And after one year of iteration,  
we are just getting started.



Sabrina De Angelis,  
Founder of Own Your Voice Academy



# OUR JOURNEY & THEORY

Own Your Voice Academy  
Pilot Report 2025

## *OF CHANGE*

At the heart of Own Your Voice Academy, we ensure youth and underrepresented communities are never sidelined, unlocking their potential to lead meaningful change.

### Activities

Training Youth Leaders

Environmental Awareness Projects

Innovation Challenges & Hackathons

Mentorship

Community & Policy Engagement

### Expected Outputs

Train 50+ Youth in leadership, data analytics, and communication skills

5 Youth Teams, each develop at least one actionable environmental project idea

Plan to organize 2 innovation challenges or hackathons during the year

At least 5 Teams paired with mentors for guidance on projects or skill development

Youth plan 5 community initiatives and generate recommendations that could influence local policies.

### Strategic Goals

Equip Youth with the skills & confidence to lead positive change in their communities

Increase Youth with understanding of sustainability and foster hands-on environmental action

Foster creative thinking & entrepreneurial problem solving to real-world challenges.

Connect Youth with mentors to support skills, projects, and career-growth

Support youth-led initiatives that drive community impact and sustainable practices

The idea stage of Own Your Voice Academy was initiated in 2023, and the start up was officially registered in January 2025.

# How We Are DRIVING CHANGE

Own Your Voice Academy drives change by equipping youth with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to actively address environmental & social challenges in their communities. We do this through three key approaches:

1. **Empowering Youth Leaders:** We provide training in environmental leadership, data analytics, and communication skills, equipping youth to take initiative and lead impactful projects as a team.
2. **Fostering Innovation and Action:** Through hackathons, innovation challenges, and workshops, youth develop creative solution to sustainability issues within sport events and healthcare facilities.
3. **Enabling Community & Policy Impact:** We support youth-led advocacy and awareness initiatives that influence community behavior, promote sustainable practices, and contribute to local policy improvements.

**Additionally, based on interns' research, we develop B2B consulting packages tailored to the needs of sports events and healthcare supply chains, helping organizations implement sustainable practices whilst balancing profit and optimizing operations.**

# KEY *INSIGHTS*

## From our 1st Year

This year our priority was to build a strong internal team and to pilot our summer soccer hackathon. We believed once we had a strong internal team, acquiring clients/participants wouldn't be that hard.

Unfortunately, given we were new and didn't have social proof yet nor were we partnered with a renowned organization, people hesitated to enroll into our 4-5 weeks hybrid hackathon.

Despite not receiving any participants, we were a finalist for Sport+ Award.  
A first step into showing credibility.

In parallel with the Summer Soccer Hackathon, my grant writing team and I submitted grant applications which were in turn unsuccessful due to the various Federal Environmental & Education cuts, making it difficult to secure those grants. Another, hurdle we faced is not being an NGO or non-profit and most grants required the company being a non-profit to secure them. Very few grants available for for-profit social enterprise like our LLC.

Later on during the year we launched a new pilot initiative: Ocean to Art Contest, but given we only received 2 submissions we extended the deadline to February 20, 2026.  
Lastly, towards end of 2025, we started to recruit for our research internship roles for 2026.

While we were recruiting our internal contributor team, we attracted and retained many African Americans, Black Africans and Caribbeans, while a Deloitte Report revealed many companies struggled to attract and retain this ethnic group. For an early-stage start up, this was impressive.

**250+**

Total applicants for fundraiser, sales, brand ambassador, outreach, and internship roles.

**13**

Total Team Members known as Contributors

**8**

of our Contributors were African Americans/Caribbean.



# ENVIRONMENTAL *YOUTH* LEADERSHIP *INITIATIVE*

The Environmental Youth Leadership Initiative empowers young people to become leaders in sustainability while preparing them for impactful careers across multiple disciplines, including environmental management, environmental advocacy, health, sports, and other related field. Through hands-on projects, immersive workshops, and mentorship from experts, participants gain practical skills, real-world experience, and leadership capabilities that make them career-ready.

By tackling pressing challenges such as climate change, wildlife conservation, plastic pollution, and sustainable practices in sports and health, participants develop a multi-disciplinary perspective that equips them to drive positive change in their communities.

The initiative offers hands-on experiences through programs like the Summer Soccer Hackathon, the Ocean to Art Contest, and a structured Internship Programme, giving participants the knowledge, confidence, and practical skills needed to pursue meaningful careers at the intersection of environment, health, and sport, while promoting healthier, more sustainable lifestyles.





# SUMMER SOCCER HACKATHON

***The Summer Soccer Hackathon was our first pilot online event inviting passionate young innovators (15-25 years old) to join a unique virtual experience focused on developing sustainable solutions that address environmental challenges in soccer events.***

The pilot was designed to test the feasibility of launching a summer experiential learning event focused on sustainability, leadership, and sport-based collaboration. The primary objectives were to assess demand, validate outreach strategies, and evaluate operational readiness for future programming.

Outreach was conducted through email and social media marketing, while the facilitation materials, learning objectives, and session structures were fully developed in advance of the planned delivery.

Despite outreach efforts, the pilot did not attract registered participants by the event date, and the live delivery was therefore not conducted. We tried to iterate and shorten the original 8 weeks to 5 weeks and then to 1 week with no luck - thinking that could be a possible reason why we couldn't acquire clients.

This outcome provided valuable early-stage learning regarding market readiness and communication strategy. The pilot revealed the need for clearer communication of tangible participant outcomes, a more diversified outreach approach, and stronger engagement with institutional or community partnerships, as outreach relied primarily on YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn, limiting reach to the intended audience.

While the pilot did not progress to live delivery, it served as a critical validation step. The insights gained have directly informed program refinement and reduced risk for future implementation, strengthening the overall model for scale and partnership.



# OCEAN TO ART CONTEST

***Learning from the Summer Soccer Hackathon informed a strategic pivot in engagement approach. The founder recognized that requesting monetary participation at an early stage may have limited engagement and therefore launched the Ocean to Art contest without an entry fee to reduce barriers and encourage broader participation.***

Importantly, the Ocean to Art contest was designed as an inclusive engagement model. By prioritizing visual and creative expression over written submissions, it created accessible participation pathways not only for creatives, but also for individuals with limited literacy, learning differences such as dyslexia, or those who communicate more effectively through non-verbal forms. This approach offers an alternative avenue to express perspectives and emotions related to ocean and plastic pollution beyond text-based formats.

During the pilot outreach phase, discussions were held with the World Economic Forum to explore potential collaboration. While a formal partnership was not established, the organization expressed support for the initiative.

In parallel, Leaders of Today provided visibility by promoting the Ocean to Art contest within its network, resulting in two participant submissions. Based on this initial engagement and in order to allow additional time to expand outreach and partnerships, the contest submission deadline was extended from 18 December 2025 to 20 February 2026.

In addition, two potential partnerships were identified during the pilot phase and are currently under discussion. These relationships will be further explored to assess their potential contribution to outreach, participation, and program delivery in 2026.

Overall, the Ocean to Art contest pilot generated key insights into effective outreach, partnership opportunities, and accessibility-driven design. These findings will inform the refinement of the contest model and support more impactful engagement in 2026.



# THOUGHT LEADERSHIP APPROACH

## **Mission:**

Empower young professionals and diverse voices through experiential, inclusive learning.

*Own Your Voice Academy establishes thought leadership by combining expertise in environmental sustainability at the intersection of sports and health with a strong focus on youth & community empowerment.*

*The Academy prepares young professionals to be career-ready, providing opportunities to develop practical skills, build portfolios of their work, and engage in creative, inclusive initiatives. Through pilot programs, workshops, and contests, Own Your Voice Academy not only shares knowledge but also empowers participants to innovate, lead, and make meaningful impact in their communities and future careers.*

*Our Leadership Approach is in alignment with the following 5 Themes:*

**Experiential  
Learning**

**Career Readiness**

**Inclusive  
Engagement**

**Strategic  
Partnerships**

**Advocacy**



# ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP APPROACH

Own Your Voice Academy  
Pilot Report 2025

**Own Your Voice Academy** develops environmental leadership by combining lessons from elite sports teams with experiential, inclusive learning.

This approach empowers young professionals to develop practical skills, lead projects, and build portfolios of their work, preparing them to be career-ready while making measurable contributions to environmental challenges. By applying teamwork, discipline, and strategic decision-making to sustainability initiatives, participants gain confidence, resilience, and actionable leadership experience.

Our environmental leadership model is guided by six action-oriented principles inspired by team sports and high-performance leadership:

## Decentralized Play

*Empower every team member to make decisions on the spot, encouraging initiative, ownership, and confidence on and off the “field.”*

## Own Your Role

*Be accountable for your role and its impact on the team*

## Lead in Every Direction

*Lead peers, support leaders, and collaborate toward shared goals.*

## Cover Your Teammates' Blind Spots

*Anticipate challenges and support teammates when needed.*

## Adapt & Pivot

*Adapt strategies quickly to overcome challenges.*

## Mission-Focused Strategy

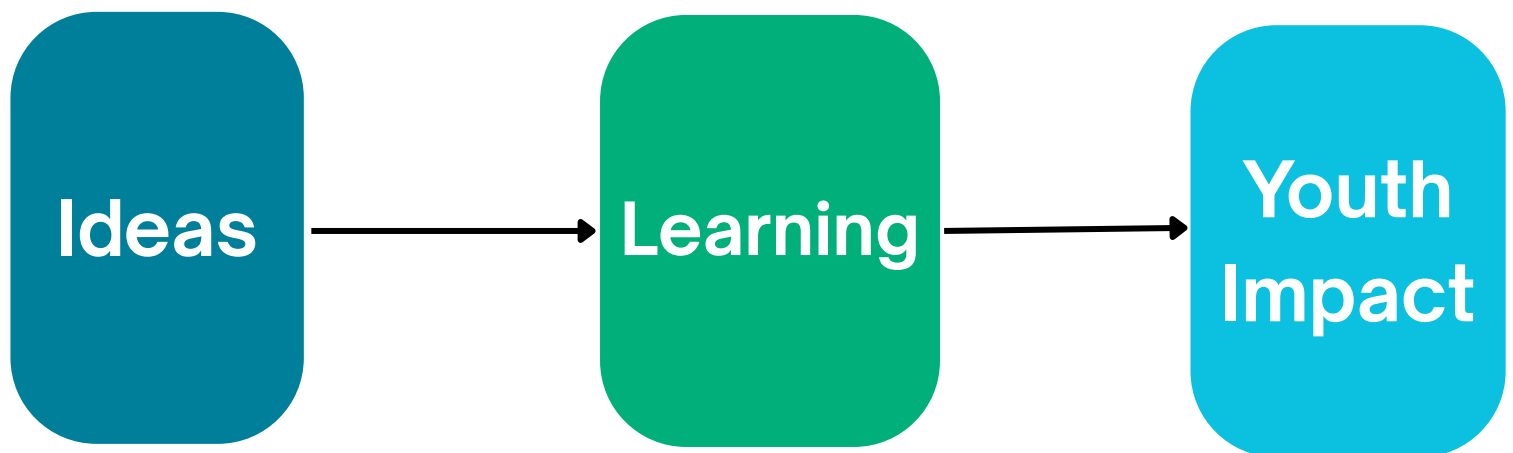
*Align actions with the mission to drive measurable impact.*

# ALIGNING WITH **SDG**



**Our programs are designed to translate leadership skills into measurable impact on key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through hands-on initiatives like hackathons and creative contests, participants take action on challenges such as climate change, ocean health, and sustainable communities.**

Additionally, Our Approach Combines Youth-Centered Programs with Advocacy to Break the Endless job application cycle and Enhance Equitable Access to Education and Health Services, while promoting Sustainable Practices.



**This approach ensures that every program contributes meaningfully to SDGs 4, 10, 12, 13 and 14, while future partnerships will expand reach and outcomes.**





***Own Your Voice Academy was shortlisted for the Next-Generation Trailblazer category of the Sports Positive Awards 2025.***

***This recognition celebrates Our Academy's innovative approach to empowering young professionals through sport and environmental leadership, fostering measurable impact and inspiring the next generation of sustainability leaders.***



# Funding, Partners, and Our 2026 Goals

*Driving Growth and Opportunities for Young Professionals*



**Funding & Operations**



**Full-Time Team**



**Agricultural Initiatives  
for Sports Events & Hospitals**

## Career-Ready Internships

— Breaking Barriers to Entry-Level Jobs —



**Hands-On Experience**



**Real-World Skills**

## Strategic Partnerships & Impact



In 2026, Own Your Voice Academy aims to secure funding and build strategic partnerships to expand our impact. Funding will support operations, hiring full-time team members, and program expansions, including agricultural initiatives linked to sport events and reducing food shortages in hospitals.

Our internship program is designed to make youth career-ready without unnecessary barriers, giving them hands-on experience and real-world skills. Strategic partnerships will help us scale hackathons, contests, and experiential learning, ensuring measurable environmental and social impact.

With funding and partnerships in place, 2026 will be a year of growth, opportunity, and meaningful outcomes for young professionals.



# Support Our Work!

Together, we can create impact and break the barriers to  
Gen-Z hiring.

*Fund our Work Today:*  
[ownyourvoiceacademy.org/crowdfunding-campaign](https://ownyourvoiceacademy.org/crowdfunding-campaign)

Own Your Voice Academy

