

September 2025 Impact Report

Grant Extension, Global Stage, & New Leaders



FROM THE DESK OF THE COO

September has brought a season of expansion and new opportunities to our partners and staff. 2025 has been marked by noticeable advancements and heartening accomplishments that we would like to report.

Our Women's Month webinar recently offered a timely opportunity to reflect and to celebrate, as did the closing of applications for our Women in Public Office, South Africa Programme (WIPO SA). They demonstrated the importance of communication and cooperation, evoking thought-provoking replies and active participation from our Futurelect alumni.

In East Africa, our impact is equally inspiring. This month, our East Africa office strengthened its commitment to transformative partnerships by joining forces with Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMWA) and the Network of Women in Politics (NOWIP) to organise a 3-day Feminist Political Training Workshop. During the workshop, 30 women and youth leaders gathered to break barriers, redefine leadership, and position themselves to contest Uganda's 2026 General Elections.

This initiative reflects how Futurelect creates a space for leaders to build solidarity, exchange experiences, and learn real-world skills to operate effectively in a highly charged political arena. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Futurelect's East Africa team, including Regional Director Natasha Kimani and Programmes Officer Maseke Rioba, for facilitating this workshop.

We at Futurelect are incredibly grateful to our funders, especially during a time of limited funding resources worldwide, which adds pressure to an already strained funding environment. Without funding support, we are unable to continue pursuing our goal of promoting ethical and responsible political and public leadership across the African continent.

We were also proud to commemorate the graduation of our sixth Southern Africa Public Leadership Programme (SAPLP) class in 2025. Seventeen fellows joined our growing alumni network, including a diverse group of young professionals already in active public life. This special participation reflects the strong connection between learning and real-time public action, where transformational learning is transformed into real-time action.

To maintain this momentum, we are pleased to welcome three new colleagues to our organisation: Jullieta Nthoki as Marketing and Communications Assistant, Suphile Majodina as Southern Africa Programmes Intern and Kamogelo Theldi as Writer. Their abilities and commitment will help Futurelect deepen its work and increase its reach. We look forward to celebrating many more triumphs with them as part of our team.

FUNDER SPOTLIGHT: OUR PARTNERS IN IMPACT

The invaluable work driven by Futurelect on the continent would not be achievable without the support of our numerous partners. We appreciate immensely the dedication of our funders, whose belief in Futurelect's mission continues to be phenomenal, especially as the financial climate across the globe continues to change.



We're thrilled to highlight our partnership with the Ford Foundation and celebrate the outstanding support of their programme manager, Lusako Munyembembe. When additional funds became available, Lusako saw the ripple effect of Futurelect's programmes and assisted us in securing additional funding, expanding our existing grant period until December 2026.

This is a relationship between funders who know their grantees intimately and, in turn, invest in them. Lusako's vision and the commitment of the Ford Foundation will enable us to reach farther and dig deeper as we work towards a more inclusive and democratic future.



Building on our successful Youth Civic-X Programme, this partnership sustains civic action between elections, giving young people, many of whom are first-time voters, knowledge and self-assurance to engage effectively in democracy. We believe youth and women leader development, along with civic education accessible to all, generates a virtuous cycle whereby empowered leaders and informed citizens fortify democratic institutions. We're collaborating with Constitution Hill Trust (WeThePeopleSA) and Radio Workshop to accelerate this work in youth-centred civic education programme initiatives that build sustainable participation and accountability.



We are also proud to collaborate with the FirstRand Foundation which is supporting our Women in Public Office Programme (WIPO SA), which empowers young women leaders to acquire technical skills, knowledge, and self-esteem for successful and accountable service delivery. As political representation of women is beset by numerous challenges, WIPO finds a central position for itself in advancing gender equity for leadership and compelling women to occupy a central position at the pinnacle of charting South Africa's democratic future. Investing in women leaders today prepares a future generation to effect systemic change and create a more equitable, accountable, and representative democracy.



Through its Expanded Democracy Support Programme (EDSP), Standard Bank supports three Futurelect's core programmes: WIPO SA, the Southern Africa Public Leadership Programme (SAPLP), and the Youth Civic-X Programme. This partnership promotes constitutional democracy and public accountability by equipping young and minority leaders to move into public office and actively build democratic institutions.

Futurelect expresses heartfelt appreciation for all our donors for their continuous passion for our mission and for sharing faith in the potential of ethical leadership to shape Africa's future.

PROGRAMME SPOTLIGHT

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN PUBLIC OFFICE, SOUTH AFRICA

This month, our attention swung firmly to the WIPO SA programme recruitment. This was spotlighted during our August Open Day Webinar, which coincided with Women's Month in South Africa.

Three of our alumni of the WIPO SA Programme, Mamello Sigasa, Mpumi Edward and Priscila Ferris, participated in the webinar to present their experiences of overcoming challenges in the political arena. Their testimonials formed a core part of the programme and played a significant role in motivating women leaders to apply for the 2025/26 cohort.

WIPO SA is an important programme intervention and learning platform for women who aim to hold elected office. It is designed to support women through the special challenges they face when seeking and holding positions in public office. The programme is offered in a comprehensive package focusing on three leadership areas:



Image: The inaugural Women in Public Office, South Africa 2023/24 Programme cohort with the Futurelect team.

Transformational learning - internal, personal leadership work and development.

Transactional learning - public leadership skills-based content.

Political Systems Learning - political and government institutional knowledge and understanding.

The programme is at the core of Futurelect's vision of promoting gender equality and responsible leadership. By enabling greater representation of women in public office, we assist in creating a more representative and inclusive democracy.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

SMART GROWTH AND FINANCIAL EFFICIENCY

Our Marketing and Communications team has greatly secured and effectively utilised essential resources to achieve reach and impact this month. This has enabled us to expand our messaging to a broader audience while demonstrating a responsible and conservative approach to marketing expenditure.

We are proud to call out two notable successes that maximised our reach and effectiveness digitally.

Google Ad Grant Optimisation: We have been effectively utilising a Google Ad Grant, which provides up to US\$10,000 of free search advertising for core outreach and recruitment. Obtaining this grant three months ago has enabled us to reach prospective programme applicants and partners.

TechSoup Partnership for Wix: Demonstrating excellent financial planning, our team successfully negotiated a substantial discount on our site platform through TechSoup. This entitles us to a 70% discount on our Wix platform subscription, critical to optimising our online activities. This utilisation of non-profit resources means that more donor funds go directly to programme implementation and impact.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

NOBUNTU HLAZO-WEBSTER (SOUTHERN AFRICAN PUBLIC LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME 2020)

This month, we're proud to spotlight an alumna whose commitment to public service best reflects that of the Futurelect mission, Nobuntu Hlazo-Webster.

As a 2020 Southern Africa Public Leadership Programme (SAPLP) graduate, Nobuntu's spirit of service is a powerful motivator for her work and leadership. Currently a Member of Parliament in South Africa, she is motivated by a strong belief that women should have equal representation in all those platforms where pivotal decisions are made, from parastatals to national politics.

She is grounded by her own "true north," something we advocate for in Futurelect's programmes: discovering your moral compass and authentic voice in public life to lead from a place of intention.

Nobuntu's work highlights a crucial dilemma: although 56% of registered voting citizens are female, no woman has served as President of South Africa.



Image (Left to right): Malebo Kobe (MP, South Africa), Futurelect Founder and CEO Lindiwe Mazibuko, Futurelect Alumna Nobuntu Hlazo-Webster (MP, South Africa), Futurelect Alumna Nonkululeko Hlongwane-Mhlongo (Executive Director at Female President Academy), Rivonia Circle's Tessa Doms, pictured at the [Cost of Politics in South Africa Report Launch](#).

She contends that representation is more than a matter of numbers; it is about developing political parties and platforms that empower women to lead from the front and into positions of actual change, rather than being relegated to chapters of support or leagues of kindness.

Her story inspires our entire community. Once our leaders realise their own ethical grounding, actual and fearless change is achievable.

EAST AFRICA IMPACT

FORGING POLITICAL CHANGE THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

In September, our East Africa office collaborated with Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMWA) and the Network of Women in Politics (NOWIP) to present a life-changing workshop.

We organised a 3-day Feminist Political Training Workshop from 1 to 3 September, aiming to break down boundaries and redefine women's leadership. This training brought together 30 potential women and youth leaders, who gathered, interacted, and learned as they set their sights on contesting Uganda's 2026 General Elections.

These leaders, selected from aspirational groups such as the Inter-Party Women's and Youth Platforms, were all committed to leading with integrity.



Image: Futurelect's Programmes Officer for East Africa, Maseke Rioba (left), with Regional Director for East Africa Natasha Kimani (center) and Hon. Christine Namuyanja (right) pictured during the Akina Mama wa Afrika workshop held in Uganda.

This collaboration illustrates how Futurelect empowers safe environments where leaders develop solidarity, exchange experiences, and acquire real-world skills needed to understand and operate in a highly charged political world.

FUTURELECT'S PRESENCE ACROSS THE GLOBE

CLINTON GLOBAL INITIATIVE 2025

This month, our Founder and CEO, Lindiwe Mazibuko, addressed the main stage of the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) 2025 Annual Meeting, expressing the urgent need for African governance transformation. She emphasised striking demographic dissonance: "Halls of power are frequently controlled by a specific leader -older, male, affluent. 60% of Africans are young and under 25 years, yet its leader is a 63-year-old."

Futurelect's mission aims to address this gap by equipping women and young people to run for public office.



Image: Futurelect's Founder and CEO Lindiwe Mazibuko pictured with Former President of the United States, Bill Clinton during the Clinton Global Initiative 2025

ATHENS DEMOCRACY FORUM 2025

Further solidifying our global advocacy, our Founder and CEO, Lindiwe Mazibuko, alongside Head of Marketing and Communications, Shaunei Gerber, presented at the Athens Democracy Forum 2025. Futurelect highlighted our success in civic education and our mobile learning App at the forum. These efforts have already proved staggering reach:

170,000+ Downloads to date since October 2023.

Reaching 3 Million+ of South African Youth through social media.

Interacting with 200+ Student Council Leaders across Africa.



Image: Shaunei Gerber (left), Futurelect's Head of Marketing and Communications with Founder and CEO Lindiwe Mazibuko (right) at the Athens Democracy Forum.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER & CEO

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF AFRICAN DEMOCRACY

September's accomplishments, ranging from securing long-term funding with our partners to commemorating the legacy of alumni such as Nobuntu Hlazo-Webster, all reflect our belief that a thriving democracy is only as strong as its ethical leadership. Democracy works; we just need better leadership. At a time when democracy is in peril around the world, our capacity to demonstrate the enormous potential of accountable government by and for the people lies in nurturing leadership that is committed, demonstrates integrity, and is capable of delivering. You can help us advance democratic change by recommending a candidate for an upcoming Futurelect.

If you know a young, ethical leader who is looking to move from potential to impact, please submit their details so they can apply.



Go to our website:

<https://www.futurelect.org/programmes>

Email us: info@futurelect.org

We sincerely appreciate your ongoing support for our vision and mission.

Lindiwe Mazibuko
Founder & CEO