



**FROM THEORY  
TO PRACTICE:  
SKILLUP  
BRIDGES  
THE GAP IN  
NIGERIA'S  
EDUCATION  
SYSTEM**



**O**n a quiet Sunday morning in Lagos's Magodo Phase 2 district, while much of the city eases into its weekly rhythm, a group of young professionals gathers at RCCG The Secret Place.

They arrive not only with Bibles but also with notebooks, laptops, and workbooks in hand. The atmosphere is less ceremonial, more charged with focus, curiosity, and ambition. Here, faith meets pragmatism in a bold experiment reshaping the future of work and leadership in Africa.

That experiment is SkillUp a transformative capacity-building programme launched in January 2025 by RCCG The Secret Place in partnership with Africa Tech Hub. What began as a local initiative within a church community is fast becoming a blueprint for how African societies can prepare their young professionals to compete and thrive in a turbulent global economy.

SkillUp's philosophy is deceptively simple: young people need more than technical knowledge. They need clarity, confidence, character, and the street-smartness to navigate real-world challenges.

"We are raising a generation of purpose-driven leaders who will change the story of Africa," says Sean Olabode Badiru, convener of the programme and lead pastor of RCCG The Secret Place. "SkillUp is about equipping our youth with the mindset and values to drive innovation, influence culture, and inspire transformation not only in their industries but also in their communities."

The curriculum is ambitious. In just eight months, participants have journeyed through modules on Self-Discovery & Personal Mastery, Business Model Development, Communication, Emotional Intelligence, Conflict Resolution, and Team Collaboration. Far from lecture halls, these are immersive experiences: personality tests that reveal hidden strengths, live case studies drawn from local realities, and structured workbooks for building business models. The focus is action, not abstraction.

For Oluwatobi Kolapo Olajide, the difference was immediate. "The Business Model Development course has been transformative, empowering me to launch my own business and equipping me with the expertise to support SMEs in achieving their growth potential," he says. "The key insight I've gained is the importance of adaptability and iteration. I now embrace flexibility and continuously refine my strategies as markets shift."

Others describe more personal transformations. Opemipso Amusan, for instance, credits the programme with reshaping how he approaches challenges: "One major shift for me has been moving from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. I now approach challenges as opportunities to learn rather than setbacks." That shift, he explains, has boosted his confidence and sharpened his communication skills, even pushing him to revive a long-postponed side project.

For Bright-Seden Favour, the programme offered a chance to confront shyness and discover her voice. "My communication skills have really developed, and as a shy person, presentation wasn't part of my skill set but that isn't the case anymore," she says. What made it even more practical was the timing: "My busy schedule never allows me to finish courses I pay for, but with SkillUp, it's just Sundays and I get to combine it with my Sunday service. It's a win-win situation."

The subtle lessons are just as powerful. Ikhine Mary Ekata notes that a deeper understanding of Emotional Intelligence reshaped both her work and personal life. "It shifted my focus from trying to understand people's emotions so I could get them to do what I want, to genuinely understanding them because they deserve to be understood."

Accessibility is another defining strength. "What distinguishes SkillUp is the grassroots teaching," says Genevieve Obiorah Anulika. "I can relate to the facilitators' lessons and practice them immediately in my work and life. It's not abstract it's practical."

The programme's design is part of its secret. Sessions are deliberately set for Sunday mornings, running from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m., making them part of participants' weekly rhythm. Facilitators mostly professionals within RCCG The Secret Place volunteer their expertise as trainers and mentors. The result is a blend of accountability, relatability, and accessibility rarely found in conventional corporate training.

This model is filling a gap left by Nigeria's education system and corporate sector. With youth unemployment stubbornly high and employers lamenting unprepared graduates, SkillUp offers a bridge between theory and practice. Unlike many donor-driven interventions, the initiative is funded primarily by its management team, who also provide seed grants for viable business ideas. The underlying belief: skills are powerful, but access to opportunity makes them transformative.

But what sets SkillUp apart most is its ethical foundation. Its core values integrity, mastery, purpose, agility, community, and transformation ensure that professional growth does not compromise personal character. That matters in a nation where corruption and weak institutions often derail progress.

The stakes could not be higher. Africa's population is expected to double by 2050, with more than 60 percent under 25. Without opportunities, frustration fuels disillusionment and migration. With the right preparation, however, this youth bulge could become Africa's greatest advantage.

SkillUp, still modest in scale, offers a glimpse of that possibility. It shows that transformation doesn't always need to come from governments or foreign aid. Sometimes, it begins in small communities with vision, faith, and a refusal to accept mediocrity.