GRAND-GURU ENCLAVE

A Hybrid Community for Intergenerational Transfer of Knowledge and Laughter to Combat Loneliness

Image by Grey Elderly Care Initiative.

GENEVA GRADUATE INSTITUTE

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THE CHALLENGES OF LONELINESS

ABSTRACT

Loneliness can have severe implications for an individuals' mental and physical well-being, with increased risks of depression and anxiety as immediate effects. The unavailability of robust social support networks in urban Nigeria further exacerbates the problem. Grand-Guru Enclave aims to create a hybrid (virtual and in-person) community for intergenerational programs targeting grands (60+) and Gen-Z (17–25) where social connection, meaningful interactions, and mutual learning can be used to combat loneliness. Intergenerational relationships strengthen social bonds, advance compassion and understanding, and foster a sense of belonging, ultimately contributing to achieving Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 4: **"Good Health and Well-Being"** and **"Quality Education."** The Grand-Guru Enclave (GGE) will be piloted in Lagos, Nigeria; it is intended to be scaled up to all of Nigeria's states, sub-Saharan Africa and adapted by other isolated nations, such as Sweden, The United Kingdom, Japan, and Italy.
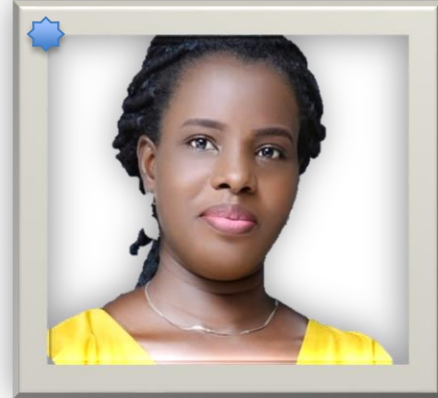
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Keywords: Loneliness Intervention; Intergenerational Programs: Hybrid Community Model; Community Cohesion, Gen-Z

MEET THE TEAM

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Promise Delight Udochukwu
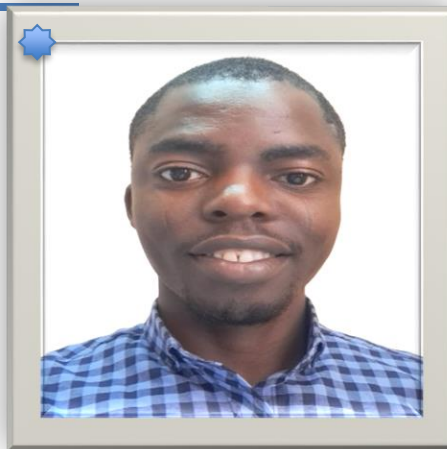
Alhassan has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Climate Change and Food Security from the University for Development Studies, Ghana. He is a lifelong learner, environmental sustainability activist and an astute problem solver who aspires to be on the forefront of industry advancements. He is at present, a Masters student at the Pan African University of the African Union (PAUWES) - Algeria, an intern with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and team lead for Net-Zero Africa.

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Lawrence Blay

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ABBREVIATIONS

Gen-Z…………………………………………………………. Generation Z (1997-2012)

Grand…………………………………………….…. Preferred term for seniors (1960+)

GGE……………………………………………….…….....Grand-Guru Enclave

BBC………………………………………….…………. British Broadcasting Corporation

"The most terrible poverty is loneliness, and the feeling of being unloved." By Mother Theresa

1.0. INTRODUCTION

The Grand-Guru Enclave is an afrocentric social enterprise that seeks to build a hybrid community where grands (60+) and Gen-Z (17–25) may meet to engage in meaningful interactions and mutual learning with a deliberate intent to combat loneliness in all its forms. Not everyone is immune to loneliness; if anyone is. Although loneliness can manifest in a variety of ways, it can have profound and pervasive effects. It is regarded by many as one of the most significant public health challenges. Loneliness has recently come to be recognized by local governments and health organizations as a significant social determinant of health and as a public health priority. In 2018, the UK Government published its first national strategy on loneliness. (UK Government, 2018).

Loneliness can lead to a number of health issues, the reason being that connectedness is likely to be a stress regulator that incentivises healthier behaviors. People with less social connections who suffer from severe and moderate loneliness are at greater risk of premature mortality (Tilvis *et al*., 2011). It increases the risk of poor health outcomes and impacts people's quality of life, cognitive function, physical function, health status and leads to increased mortality (Bolton, 2012; Musich *et al*., 2015; Courtin & Knapp, 2017).

Increased loneliness was positively associated with higher systolic blood pressure among older adults in the USA (Hawkley *et al*., 2010). People feeling lonely are more likely to report impaired sleep, poor diet, less mobility, less resilience and greater risk of smoking and addiction (Durcan & Bell, 2015; Cacioppo *et al*., 2015). They are also more likely to relate to feelings of pessimism, vulnerability, worthlessness, lower self-esteem and lower levels of interpersonal control (Griffin, 2010; Morgan, 2017). Mental Health Foundation *in 2018* found that more than half of 18-24-year-olds experience depression when they feel lonely, with 42% saying it leads to anxiety. 67% say their mental health worsens as a result of feeling lonely. The stigma of loneliness remains the greatest barrier to getting help; with 46% saying they would be too embarrassed to talk about it and 52% feeling they ought to cope with the problem themselves. Loneliness can contribute to stress, anxiety, depression, paranoia, and cognitive decline – and it can be both a cause and effect

of other mental health problems (YouGov, 2018). Among older Nigerians in a qualitative study, loneliness was linked to suicidal thoughts amongst other troubling outcomes (Ojembe & Kalu, 2018). There is a widely held belief that skills that were acquired over a lifetime of employment tend to fade away once they are not regularly utilized, which leads to a sense of being unuseful. There is always a genuine desire amongst retirees to use their skills in a "useful" manner rather than just participating in volunteer opportunities of a generic nature. Mr. Ade (a retiree) for instance said:

> *'I have a wealth of experience in management because I worked in a well-known establishment abroad. I retired and moved to Nigeria, with the hope of finding a volunteer job….. but guess what?.... there are no volunteer positions in this country. . .. This has contributed a lot to me being lonely, especially now that my wife is dead. Assuming I have a place to volunteer even for just a day. I will always look forward to that even though it is a day.' (Mr Ade, 62 years, widower)*

> *(Ojembe & Kalu, 2018)*

Individuals experiencing loneliness are 26% more likely to die prematurely than those with healthy social relationships, and this is associated with a wide range of mental and physical health conditions, (Holt-Lunstad *et al*., 2015) and are more likely to experience hearing loss, living alone, chronic illness, and the loss of friends or family (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020; Chiao *et al*., 2019; Maguire *et al*., 2019).

Understanding what might lead people to feel lonely and what keeps some people stuck in loneliness is crucial for the development of well-targeted successful interventions to prevent and mitigate the effects of loneliness (Qualter *et al*., 2015).

1.1. The Concept of Loneliness in Grands and Gen-Z

Loneliness is a universal human experience recognized since the dawn of time, yet it is unique for every individual. Loneliness is the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relationships is deficient in some important way, either quantitatively or qualitatively (Perlman & Peplau 1981). Loneliness can be treated as a unidimensional concept that varies primarily in its experienced intensity with three distinguished dimensions (Gierveld, 1987; Gierveld, 1989). The first concerns the feelings associated with the absence of an intimate attachment, feelings of emptiness, or abandonment.

This so-called 'deprivation' component is the core of the concept.

The second component refers to the time perspective (do people interpret their loneliness situation as being hopeless or as changeable and treatable; do they blame others or themselves for the situation they are in?). The third component involves different types of emotional aspects such as sorrow, sadness, and feelings of shame, guilt, frustration, and desperation (Shute & Howitt, 1990).

Most often, people tend to mistake or interfuse loneliness, isolation and solitude. Isolation is the objective absence of social contacts; it is as separated from other people's human existence. Loneliness as a subjective mental state depends little on the presence of contacts (de Jong-Gierveld, van Tilburg, & Dykstra, 2006). Loneliness can be manifested as a result of objective conditions and as a subjective feeling. Left untended, loneliness has serious consequences for cognition, emotion, behavior, and health.

1.2. Loneliness in Grands and Gen-Z in the Global Context
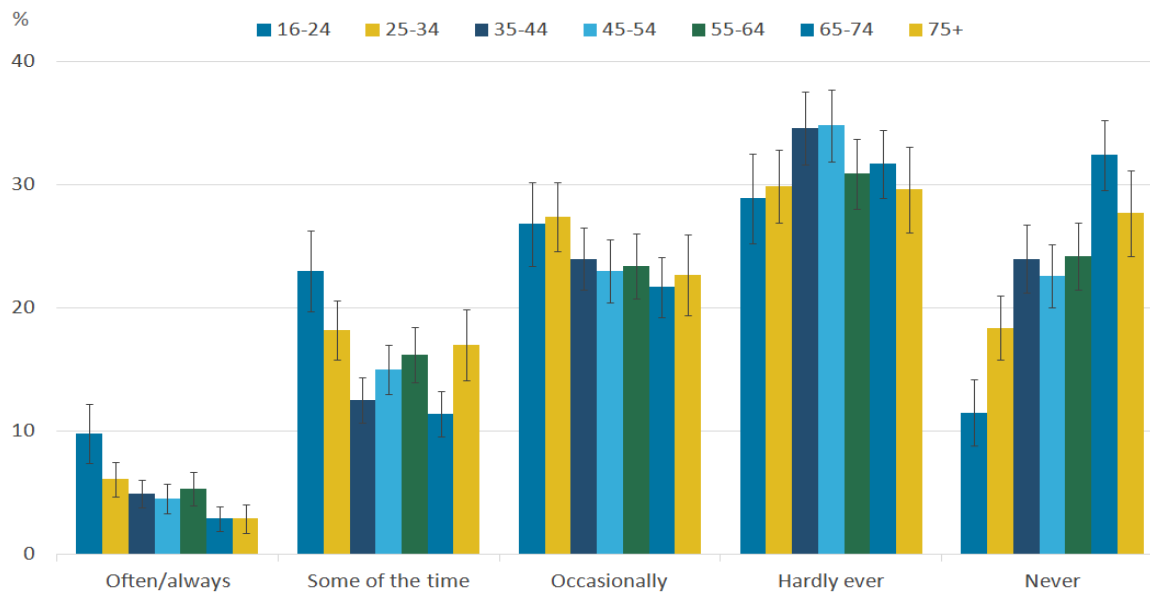
Figure 1: *Loneliness and age group in the UK*
Source: *Community Life Survey, August 2016 to March 2017*

Loneliness is a significant global concern that impacts people of all ages, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Globally, 40% of young adults feel lonely often or very often (BBC Loneliness Experiment, 2018). In 2017, the National Centre for Health Statistics reported that 73% of Gen Z's in the USA sometimes feel lonely with varying intensities, which corresponded with

cases of suicide and homicide, which were the second and third leading causes of death for persons aged 15–19 and 20–24 respectively, increasing to 56% between 2007 and 2017 (NCHS, 2017).

According to a global survey, about 33 percent of adults experience feelings of loneliness worldwide. Brazil had the highest percentage of people experiencing this, with 50 percent of respondents declaring that they felt lonely either often, always, or sometimes. Turkey, India, and Saudi Arabia followed, with 43 percent to 46 percent of respondents having experienced loneliness at least sometimes. On the contrary, the Netherlands, Japan, Germany, and Russia registered the largest share of interviewees which did not feel lonely (Number, 2021; Riley, 2022; Breit, 2023).

By 2050, the number of people aged 65 years or older is projected to grow from an estimated 524 million in 2010 to nearly 1.5 billion in 2050, representing around 16% of the total world population (UN World Population Prospect, 2019; Nelson, 2005). Young adults and older adults do not differ with regards to loneliness and both suffer from loneliness at similar rates in their everyday lives (Kovalenko, 2022). BBC Radio 4 in 2018 announced the results of The Loneliness Experiment, a nationwide survey conducted by BBC's All in The Mind in collaboration with Wellcome Collection. The survey results indicated that 16–24-year-olds experience loneliness more often and more intensely than any other age group. 40% of respondents aged 16-24 reported feeling lonely often or very often, while only 29% of people aged 65-74 and 27% of people aged over 75 said the same (BBC, 2018). While these results are inconsistent with some previous results (Nicolaisen & Thorsen, 2014), they are consistent with other known studies (Pinquart & Sorensen, 2001; von Soest *et al*., 2020) that suggest that both young adults and older adults have the highest levels of loneliness across the lifespan without much measurable differences between the two age cohorts.

1.3. Loneliness in the African Context

The overarching challenge associated with loneliness in Africa is the absence of robust social support networks, which is particularly pronounced among older adults and individuals residing in urban regions (Jones, 2018). Numerous factors contribute to this challenge of loneliness in Africa, including poverty, inadequate education and healthcare resources, as well as restricted availability of transportation and technology options (Brown, 2019; Johnson, 2021; Thompson *et al*., 2017). Loneliness can have severe implications for an individuals' mental and physical well-

being, with increased risks of depression, anxiety, and various chronic health conditions (Marinda *et al*., 2022). It can also lead to social withdrawal, decreased quality of life, and reduced social participation (Asante *et al*., 2018; Tesfaye *et al*., 2020).
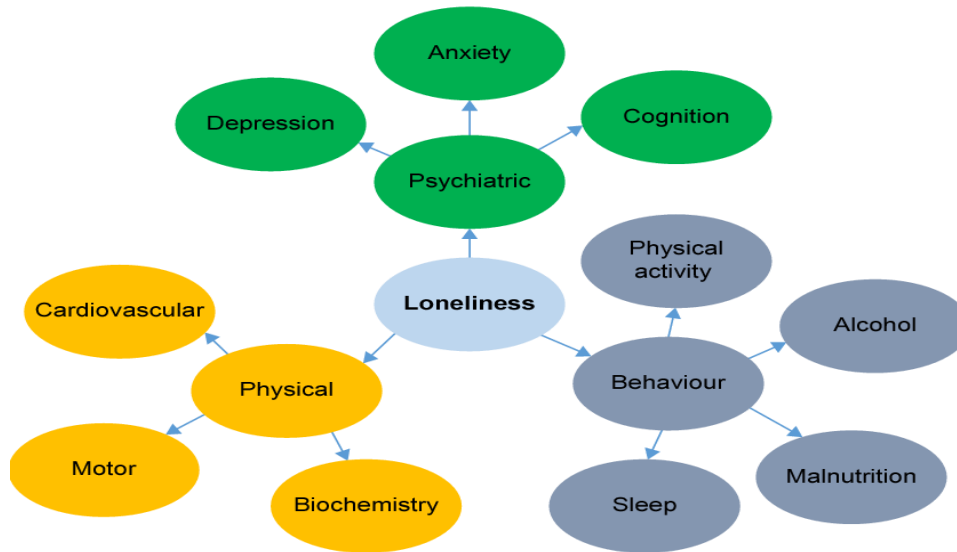
Figure 2: *Effect of Loneliness in the Elderly Population*
Source: *Crewdson (2016)*

Young people all over the world, particularly in Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean, are affected
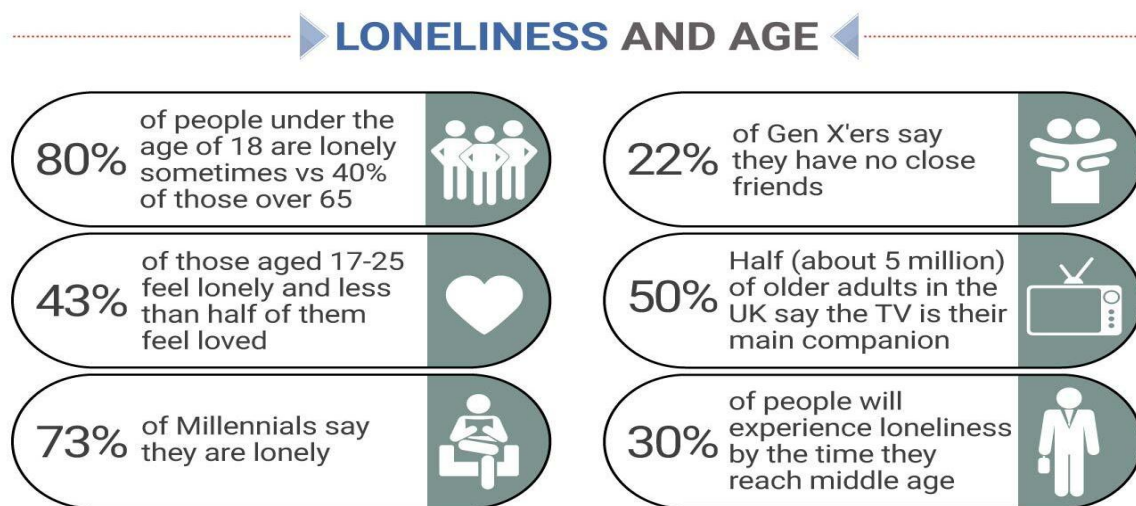
by the serious issue of adolescent loneliness. The high prevalence of loneliness among adolescents in these areas is attributed to elements such as rapid urbanization, social isolation, and restricted

access to mental health resources. Furthermore, social and cultural norms may make people feel even more alone and prevent young people from building reliable support networks, (Kenta Igami et. al., 2013). Efforts to address loneliness in Africa require a multifaceted approach. It is crucial to enhance social support networks by establishing community-based organizations and support groups such as intergenerational support systems (Abiodun *et al*., 2020).

Figure 3: Loneliness and age groups

Source: Barreto et al., (2021)

Motivation Behind Grand-Guru

Life they say is a gym membership with a very complicated cancellation policy. All one can do in this life is find the motivation to continuously forge forward. Our existence is evidence that we have our fair share of goals, aspirations and challenges we are grappling with and in a world where loneliness can subtly creep into the lives of individuals. The team behind this project has lived and felt its profound impact firsthand. Delight – the team lead, Maryam, David, Alhassan, and Lawrence are foreign students studying in Algeria and have experienced the burden of loneliness in a society where segregation is mandated by state law. Restrictions limit socialization opportunities to within classrooms or public spaces, and we have encountered the harsh reality of loneliness in our everyday lives.

Delight, who has a one-year-old baby (cute Daniel), faces even greater challenges. Due to the laws of the land, she is unable to reside in the school residence, where she would have the chance to connect and interact with her classmates. Instead, she must rent a separate apartment to accommodate herself and her child. Juggling the demands of both her studies and the responsibilities of caring for a toddler, Delight finds herself yearning for social interaction. Despite having kind-hearted and loving neighbors, the language barrier prevents meaningful communication, leaving Delight feeling increasingly isolated.

In times of desperate need for companionship, Delight reaches out to Maryam, her fellow student, for solace and company. However, Maryam's academic commitments often leave her unable to provide the support Delight craves at all times. Driven by our own experiences, the team is motivated to implement this project. Our collective aspiration is to create a platform that brings people together, transcending location, gender, age and societal barriers. By bridging the gap between different generations and providing opportunities for intergenerational connection and support, the project aims to combat the pervasive loneliness experienced by individuals like Delight.

Our team is ever-resolute to create a community that fosters a sense of belonging, empathy, and understanding among individuals who may feel isolated and overlooked. We firmly believe that no one should endure the pain of loneliness alone. By fostering meaningful interactions, leveraging technology, and embracing the wisdom and experience of older generations, our project aims to empower individuals to build genuine connections, find solace in shared experiences, and ultimately create a supportive community that uplifts and enriches the lives of all participants. Together, we strive to turn our own stories into a catalyst for change and create a brighter, more connected future for all who yearn for genuine human connection.

1.4. Problem Statement

As a result of the increases in the average life expectancy, the global population is aging and the number of people over 60 years is expected to double by 2050 (Bongaarts, 2009). As such, an increasing number of older adults are residing in aged-care homes, 40% of whom never receive visitors and face growing loneliness and isolation (Yaxley, 2017; Abrams *et al*., 2009; Levy, 2009; Nelson, 2005). The percentage of lonely high school seniors went from 26% in 2012 to 39% in 2017 (YouGov, 2019). In the UK, in a survey conducted by Action for Children, 43% of those aged 17-25 feel lonely, and less than half feel loved among those who used their services (Warwickshire County Council, 2023). More so, the Ministry of Health and Welfare found that 10% of South Koreans aged 13 to 64 felt lonely (Discovery Therapy, 2022).

In the case of Nigeria, the World Population Review 2018 reported that the average life expectancy in Nigeria, which is, unfortunately, the lowest in all of West Africa, is around 54.5 years, with men living an average of 53.7 years and women living an average of 55.4 years (World et al., 2018). Despite the specialised healthcare needs associated with ageing, it is not uncommon for families in Nigeria to take care of their elderly relatives at home. However, the increasing migration of working-class Nigerians due to harsh economic conditions and urbanisation is leading to a situation where senior care is either entrusted to paid caregivers, if affordable, or neglected altogether if unaffordable (Ong *et al*., 2012).

The inability of older adults to secure volunteer positions after retirement is another cause for the exacerbation of loneliness in Nigeria. This is consistent with previous works, which showed that volunteering prevents depression and loneliness and generally increases the well-being of older adults (Greenfield & Marks, 2004; Morrow Howell *et al*., 2003). Even though Nigerians seem to have great respect for old age, there is still evidence that many Nigerians exhibit an inherently ageist attitude (Okoye, 2012), with older adults often considered as an insignificant population group who do not have any meaningful contribution to make toward societal development.

In the sociocultural context of Nigeria, it is offensive for families to place their elderly parents in nursing homes, which may account for the absence of proactive policies promoting aging and wellbeing in Nigeria.

Learning new skills has been cited as an effective way of reducing loneliness. Such skills may not necessarily be high-skilled tasks: they could be craft-making, tailoring, or even making clay pots. Having older adults who have these skills and are willing to teach the younger generation pro bono can go a long way in promoting intergenerational interactions which would be another interesting approach to reducing loneliness (Ojembe & Kalu, 2018).

Therefore, the Grand-Guru Enclave steps in to bridge the various gaps noted above. We are an afrocentric Social Enterprise that seeks to build a hybrid community where social connection, meaningful interactions, and mutual learning between older adults (60 above) and the Gen-Z (17-25) would be a valuable weapon towards combating loneliness, addressing social isolation, promoting community cohesion and fostering intergenerational relationships for two target groups in Nigeria and Nigerians in the Diaspora.

2.0. BACKGROUND OF TARGET AREA: NIGERIA
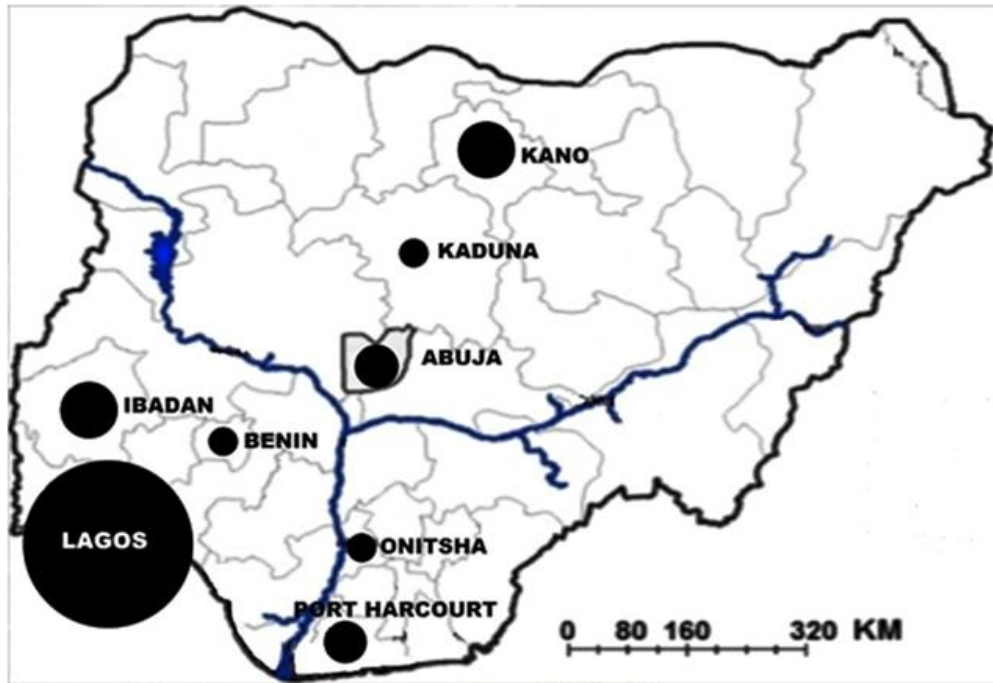
Figure 4*: Population size of Nigeria's largest cities.*
Source*: Abubakar and Dano, 2018*

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is one of the countries in West Africa with a total area of 923,769 square kilometers (356,669 square miles). It is the most populous country in Africa and the sixth most populous country in the world. Its population exceeds 230 million.

Nigeria is a federal republic with 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. Lagos, the second-largest megacity in Africa is one of the largest cities in the world.

Lagos is the most populous city in Nigeria. The estimated population for Lagos was more than 26 million in 2023; and around 30 million for the Lagos metropolitan area. Lagos is the 4th most populous city in the world, the most populous urban area in Nigeria and a major economic and financial center serving as a home to several multinational corporations. The city is full of energy, color and light; everyone is trying to make something out of their lives in a survival of the fittest

kind of space; this makes organic connection difficult and most people lonely. (Bearak, *et. al.*, 2023; Udobang, 2017).

2.1 Loneliness in Nigeria: Lagos Perspective

Figure 5: Lagos is Nigeria's largest, and busiest, city
Source: © peeterv / Getty Images

The practice of interdependence or shared living among families in Nigeria is assumed to eliminate loneliness among older adults and make the Generation Z have the feeling of belonging. However, due to the nature of Lagos, everyone is busy with trying to pay the bill, make ends meet and eventually get stuck in the traffic till midnight the next morning. Working class groups are forced to eat dinner and sometimes breakfast in traffic or at the office. This reduces the connection among family members. For instance, older adults cohabiting with children still feel lonely. This requires a greater effort of children and grandchildren to understand the historical importance of communal living and its implication for all the family members. In Nigeria, emigration, industrialization and job mobility has affected the communal shared practice of family members providing care for the older members of the family.

"The ability to interact with people breaks the ice for me, keeps me informed about current happenings and gets me going even when you get very old. Most times, I just walk around my neighborhood just to exchange pleasantries and have a cordial discussion that helps me from feeling so lonely". (Mr. George, 72 years)

(Ojemba and Kalu, 2018)

The networks of friends and family often provide a platform to reduce loneliness and now the families practice is getting weaker due to lots of factors. In an interview for Senior Citizens column on Independent Newspaper, former chairman, Rotary Club, District 911, Chief Olu Fadeyi disclosed that he and his wife discovered the secret to beating the 'Empty Nest Syndrome' by moving away from their Duplex to a smaller apartment in the same compound.

He said he had to move his domestic staff to the duplex while he and his wife stayed in the smaller apartment. According to him, the reason is that staying in a compact apartment doesn't spark any form of loneliness unlike when you stay in the duplex without the children. Madam Janet, a Nigerian grandmother complained that whenever she visited her son in Lagos, the children were always on their phones and tablets and hardly paid attention to her.

A phone interview with 19-year Vivian who resides in Lagos, Nigeria showed she had struggled with Loneliness since she was just nine. According to her, the journey to loneliness began at age

nine, when an uncle raped her, leading to a decrease in social life and a more insider approach. She experienced multiple rape cases, including one at her aunt's house, and was later raped by a new tenant.

Despite reporting the incidents, she was ignored and in self-defense, she eventually stabbed a molester multiple times. She lived her pain alone, living with a nurse and doctor under the same roof. On the night of her final exams, Vivian was raped by her aunt's visitor, who was arrested and released. This led her to try suicide four times, but never died. She started taking drugs to help her sleep, but eventually her body stopped responding to the effects of the medications. She complained about her situation, but was told to pray or pretend. She fell deep into loneliness and depression under a roof with lots of people, but nobody knew. To cap off the impact of loneliness on her, she became a hallucinator.

Vivian said she would cry herself to sleep, force a smile the next day and wallows in her loneliness alone.

"Yet I will come out and still smile outside, well I started doing things that will make me happy and I wrote lots of poems and I created a group for ladies with the same pain and I let out how I was helping myself to help them to heal in some aspect."
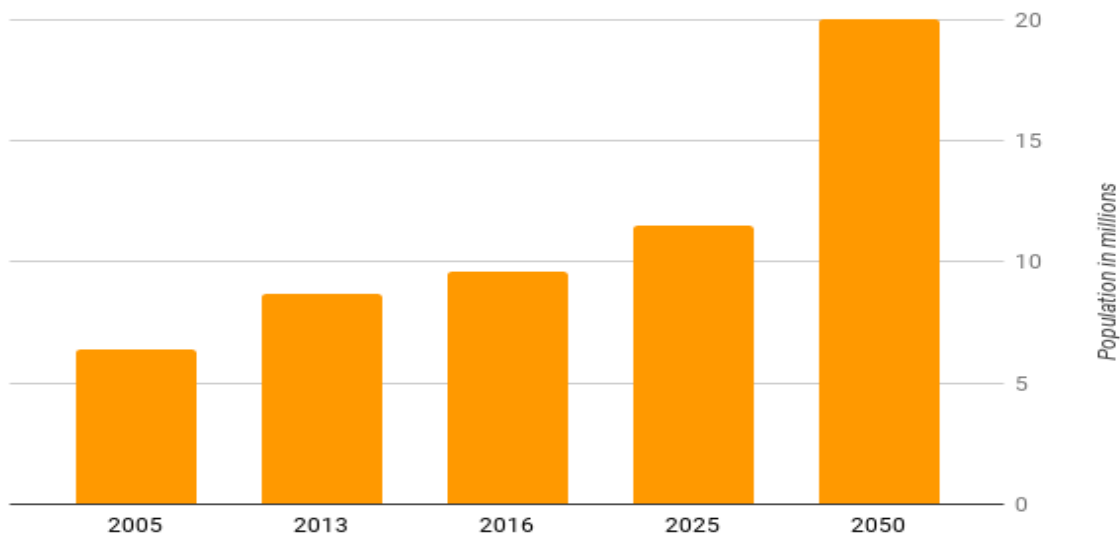
(Onodugu V, 2023)

Figure 6: *Elderly population growth in Nigeria*

Source: *National Population Commission & United Nations Population Division (2005)*

The elderly population growth in Nigeria is projected to increase more in 2050, searching for elderly homes in a few cities turned up very few results when trying to determine the number of elderly people in Nigeria.

There are currently about 14 homes in Ibadan, with one branch in Lagos, according to online records. According to Ifeoma Philip, a caregiver based in London, the statistics are dismal for a nation with more than 26 million citizens, with 10 in Lagos State, three in Calabar, two in Enugu, and a few in Abuja (Ononye, 2019).

2.3. Loneliness: Diaspora Perspective

For Nigerians, Nigerian culture is more adaptable and accessible. Greetings, small talk, family gatherings, Sunday rice rituals, and the joy they bring are all part of what make the average Nigerian person friendly and communal. Visits to family and friends are common in Nigeria, but the food that is consumed during those Sunday visits always tastes different when it is consumed with family or at a relative's house. Nigeria is home to a variety of ethnic and religious groups, but regardless of a neighbor's religious preference, meals are shared and eaten during the Ramadan and Christmas holidays. Every parent feels obligated to discipline a misbehaving child of another parent because of the notion that it takes a village to raise a child. To attend an "owambe", a popular Yoruba term used to describe Nigerian-style parties, Nigerians can prepare weeks ahead of it. Families can move and live together in a foreign country where the culture is different from what Nigerians consider to be a vitalizing experience, but eventually the separation brought on by the need to make ends meet forces members to take jobs that keep them away or busy and it seems worse for Nigerians who have recently migrated without relatives as they find life difficult and wallow in severe loneliness.

Loneliness is not location bound and this has been the case with some Nigerians in Diaspora. According to the blog post Titled *Loneliness: All My Nigerian Friends Living Abroad Have Experienced It; Mercy* narrated the ordeal of her Gen Z friends in Diaspora and how it affects them. For Nnenna her friend from the college, she wrote:

"Since Nnenna moved to the UK some months ago, I noticed her mood swings. Sometimes she'd be mirthfully bursting with energy, and then suddenly she would slump into a state of melancholy. Before she moved, we talked about the scourge of loneliness that Nigerians living abroad often speak of. I had hoped Nnenna wouldn't fall victim to its snare."

The loneliness faced by Nigerians in Diaspora usually crop up from the place of culture shock and failed attempt to integrate into a new territory, and the story of Felix validates this point. She wrote:

"I knew Felix to be a jovial and even-tempered extrovert but in his early days in the UK, he had very much felt like a square peg in a round hole."

As a response to the blog post Mercy made about her friend Nnenna, a guest responded:

I wish more people were aware of the reality of loneliness abroad, especially Africans who believe it's always greener on the other side. It's really not easy to move to a new country. I almost returned to Nigeria two months after my arrival for studies in France."

Once again, loneliness is not location bound and putting up a solution that can combat it requires an integrated and multifaceted one which Grand-Guru desires to offer.

3.0. INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND LONELINESS

An intergenerational program is a "vehicle for the purposeful and ongoing exchange of resources and learning among older and younger generations for individual and social benefits" (Ohsako, 2000). Studies have shown that intergenerational programs have a positive influence on everyone involved. Seniors feel energized from the interactions and less isolated, while youth can develop communication skills and enhance their self-esteem. Intergenerational connection is very significant and it was used by Tanyi *et al*., 2018; Kirsh *et al*., 2021; Wahab & Oludasa, 2014 to solve similar problems of loneliness.

Attached to intergenerational connection are the following benefits. Intergenerational programs can strengthen connections among different age groups and promote organized shared experiences, which may enhance the health of older adults by decreasing the risk of loneliness and social isolation (Weng, 2019; Murayama *et al*., 2015; Giraudeau and Bailly, 2019). An added advantage of intergenerational interaction over peer interaction is that it provides younger generations with an opportunity to break down ageist stereotypes, which will help in strengthening community cohesion (MacCallum, 2006; Hatton-Yeo & Betty, 2011).

Previous reviews have demonstrated the advantage of intergenerational interaction over peer interaction, including allowing younger counterparts to develop new communication skills and improved perceptions toward older adults (Gualano *et al*., 2018; Giraudeau and Bailly, 2019; Blais et al., 2017). Intergenerational connection unites older adults (those over 65 years) and young people under 21 years in activities that are mutually beneficial (Gigliotti et al., 2005). The concept generally entails the comparison of generations. Therefore, the rationale behind this program is to provide a solution through intergenerational connection between the two classes of people that might probably be faced with the challenges of loneliness.

Figure 7: Benefits of Intergenerational Activity

Source: What is intergenerational practice? (generationsworkingtogether.org)

4.0. GRAND-GURU ENCLAVE AS AN INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAM FOR COMBATING LONELINESS

We are introducing a social enterprise hybrid community that will revolutionize efforts to combat loneliness among elderly, Gen-Z in Africa and the diaspora in light of the difficulties covered in the previous section.

4.1. Target/Objectives

Project Goal: Combating loneliness by creating meaningful connection which is a fundamental part of what constitutes a good life at any age.

To combat loneliness amongst Nigerians in Lagos of age bracket (60+) and (17–25) by 2030 using a comprehensive intergenerational program which fosters meaningful interaction and knowledge transfer.

Specific Objectives

1	2	3	4	5
CONNECTION	**KNOWLEDGE SHARING**	**COMBATING SOCIAL ISOLATION**	**MENTORING**	**REAWAKENING**
Create an opportunity through which Gen-Z, retirees and other seniors can connect, share experience, and learn from each other.	Create a community where older adults pass down their knowledge and skills to the Gen-Z	Combating loneliness and social isolation among older adults in Diaspora by fostering social connections.	Empowering the Gen-Z with valuable insights, guidance, and mentorship from adults	Promote understanding, empathy and respect between different generations

4.2. Project Justification

Many of the issues teens and older adults deal with are mutual in nature, even though they seem miles apart. Both generations are searching for meaning and relevance; fighting feelings of loneliness, not fitting in or being marginalized; and focusing on issues around independence, self-determination, and currency in the world. Bringing these two age groups together allows them to share and learn from each other while discovering how much they are alike. That in turn sets the stage for developing empathy for one another and creating more connection across generations in all arenas. Consequently, enhancing social connectedness – that is, meaningful social interaction – is a well-documented method to alleviate and prevent loneliness (Barbosa *et al.*, 2019; O'Rourke *et al.*, 2018; Townsend and McWhirter, 2005).

While each GGE Best Practices program focuses on social connections, the programs offer a range of tactics to promote social engagement, combat social isolation, reduce loneliness, and improve the quality of life through participation in the arts, lifelong learning, technology, and intergenerational activities. Additionally, these initiatives promote engagement among elderly from diverse backgrounds and/or build partnerships involving community stakeholders to promote social engagement and building more cohesive communities. Intergenerational practice is inclusive, building on the positive resources that the younger and older have to offer each other and those around them. (Beth Johnson Foundation, 2009). This will meaningfully engage both generations to have a stronger sense of purpose in life, reduce feelings of loneliness, improve the quality of life, and combat ageist stereotypes and strengthen the social fabric between all of us (AARP, 2020).

4.3. The Foregoing Elder Care and Nursing Homes in Nigeria in the Fight against Loneliness.

Across Nigeria, there are numerous caregiving centers for the elderly. According to Obadina (2005), most of these institutions for the elderly are managed by churches, non-governmental

agencies, and communities and are targeted at mostly destitute elderly individuals. According to Adebowale *et al*., (2012), the Nigerian government has rather placed its focus on health care and primary health care. Residents of these centers look unkempt, tattered, frustrated, and unhealthy and their surrounding environment lacks proper maintenance, poor standard of accommodation, toilet facilities and food to mention but a few (Obadina, 2005).

Although living in a nursing home is meant to reduce loneliness, many elderly still describe a feeling of loneliness with negative implications such as associated loss of social skills and growing social isolation (Morlett Paredes *et al*., 2019). Ironically, elderly people may feel vulnerable in the nursing home because they reside there to prevent social loneliness but in reality, nobody there takes adequate care of them (Eskimez *et al*., 2019).

These explain why many older care homes and existing intervention projects are unable to reduce the prevalence of loneliness in Nigeria on a large scale. The realities of existing elder care and nursing homes reveal the current limitations in the reduction of loneliness in this region. Consequently, it is imperative to provide an intervention in Nigeria that will completely change the narrative on curbing loneliness in all forms and promote social engagements as a fundamental need for a healthy old age, particularly bonds derived from intergenerational programs and activities. This is where the Grand-Guru Enclave comes in. What difference will the Grand-Guru Enclave make in Nigeria? The answer is contained in our intervention approaches.

4.4. Intervention Strategy
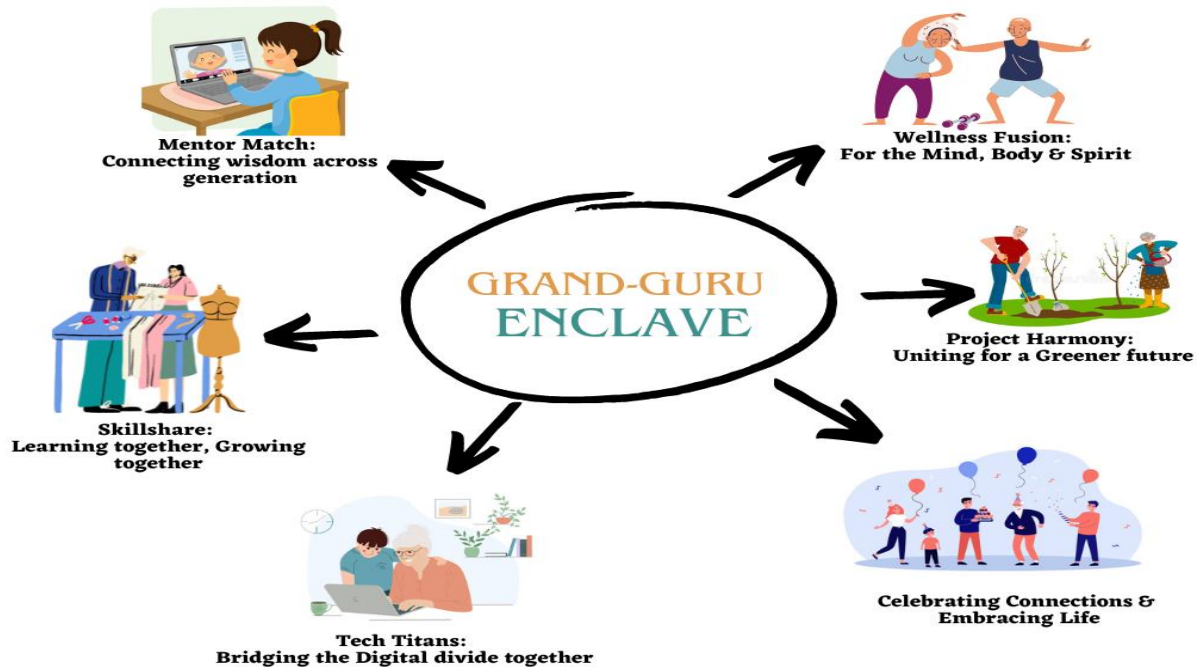
Figure 8: *Grand-Guru Enclave Intervention Strategy*
Source: *Grand-Guru Designs*

A. Mentor Match: Connecting Wisdom Across Generations

We are deliberate in our intent to create a platform for transformative leadership. Therefore, Mentor Match takes the shape of a mentorship program where Grands who by our definition are the aged and retirees who are willing to connect with the community, will be paired with Gen-Zs in a hybrid community arrangement based on their experience, sector of expertise, interests, and availability to interact with mentees. This relationship is expected to be continuously evolving thereby offering the mentors an opportunity to closely monitor the progress of mentees and guide their steps as they experience life. This essentially fills the life of the mentor with purpose eliminating the void created in their lives. By extension, it enables a mentor to relive his youth and leave his/her "if I had another chance at life moments" imprint in the dreams and aspirations of Gen-Zs.

B. Skillshare University: Learning Together, Growing Together

Our Grands are an embodiment of the finest individuals who have acquired diverse skills in areas that are relevant to the development of the generation Z. They possess experience, a rare skill that one only acquires by working at something over and over again. Industry relevant experience, one rarely acquires in the classroom. So Skillshare University which will mostly happen onsite will essentially offer the generation Z an opportunity to rediscover themselves and understand what it takes to really stand out in their respective careers. They will acquire skills that take years to master all thanks to the tutelage of our Grands. The end goal of the Skillshare University is to inspire the generation Z to be changemakers, entrepreneurs and visionaries who are constantly innovating, ever ready to stand up for social justice and ever solving problems in their communities.
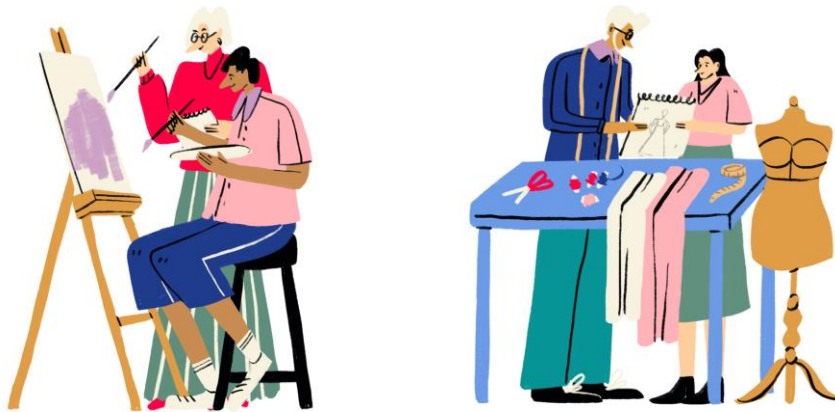
C. Wellness Fusion session for the Mind, Body, and Spirit

This activity will feature a Wellness Fusion session for the Mind, Body, and Spirit across generations. Exercising for good health and inspiring the minds at the same time will be of utmost focus in this session. The session will feature exercises like aerobics, taking a stroll, practicing Yoga, meditating or discussing healthy eating. The sessions will end with lighting talks to help motivate the generation Z. The session will also feature a live podcast session dubbed Life Chronicles: Tales of Inspiration which will be recorded and shared later on the digital community. We cannot underestimate the power of inspiration and more importantly, having someone tell his/her own story offers an opportunity for a person to relive and relish the beautiful moments, reevaluate the life-changing decisions they made and how that essentially shaped what they grew to become. This offers the needed motivation for young people to live better lives and also helps

Grands to interact with young people and create fresh memories. It will also incorporate activities such as our Intergenerational GameFest for the purposes of fun, laughter, and connection.

D. Project Harmony: Uniting for a Greener Future

The climate crisis is upon us and there is a need for us to act now. It is right to say that we are in the fight of our lives and we are losing because greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, global temperatures continue to increase and the world is gradually approaching tipping points where climate chaos might become inevitable.

There is no better way to act than to build the resilience of our communities to this challenge. So the entire community will meet once every month to engage in meaningful activities like clean-up exercises, tree planting, climate marches and much more to educate and effect some change in our communities. The diasporans will do the same where they are.

E. **Tech Titans: Bridging the Digital Divide Together**

Tech Titans bring together Grands and the generation Z in engaging and interactive technology training sessions, empowering both groups to harness the full potential of smartphones, computers, social media, and other digital tools. By bridging the digital divide and promoting digital literacy, this transformative activity equips Grands with the essential skills and knowledge needed to navigate the ever-evolving technological landscape and acquire skills to thrive in online businesses. Through meaningful connections and knowledge sharing, Tech Titans foster intergenerational connectivity, boosts confidence, and unlocks endless opportunities in the digital realm

F. **Celebrating Connections & Embracing Life**

In the grand tapestry of our community's story, we come together once a year to embark on a heartfelt journey of celebration, reflection, and gratitude. This extraordinary event serves as a poignant tribute, where we gather to honor the incredible life experiences, achievements, and profound impact created by our esteemed Grands. Amidst a joyous atmosphere, we bestow upon them the recognition they so richly deserve, reigniting the flames of their remarkable influence. Moreover, this cherished occasion provides a cherished opportunity for meaningful in-person interactions, fostering bonds that transcend generations and unifying us all with a shared purpose of making a profound difference in the lives of our young, one precious soul at a time.
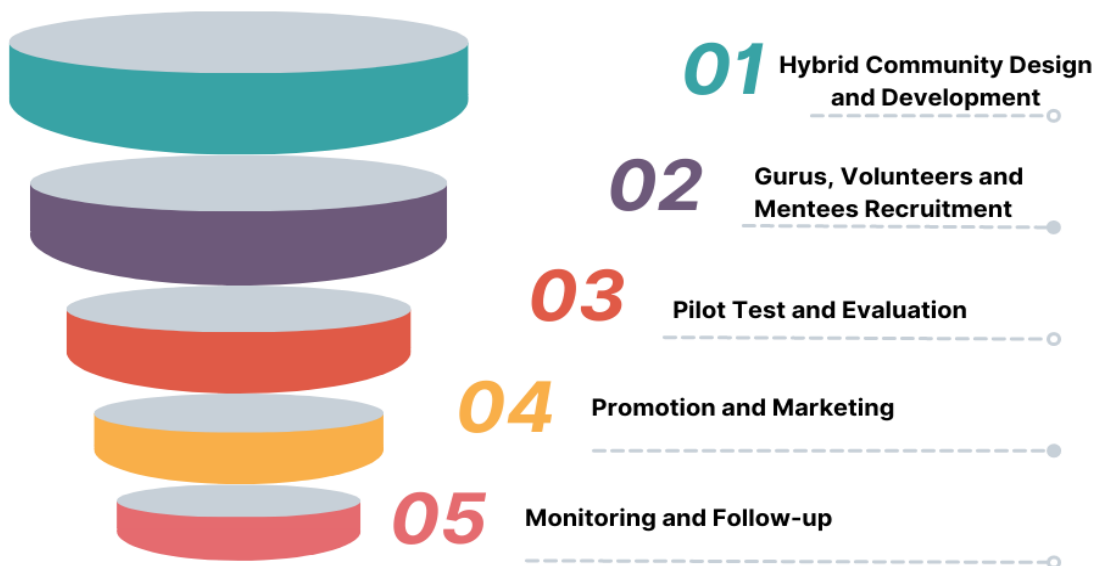
4.4.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Competitive Advantage	Grand-Guru Enclave	Competitive Programs
Hybrid Engagement Approach	Offers a hybrid engagement combining virtual and in-person interactions for continuous engagement, fostering meaningful relationships and knowledge exchange. Recognizes challenges of social media and promotes physical conversations.	Limited to either virtual or in-person interactions, missing out on the benefits of a hybrid approach and not addressing challenges posed by social media.
Embracing the Wisdom of Gurus	Celebrates the wisdom and experience of Gurus, treating them as invaluable repositories of knowledge. Creates a unique and enriching learning environment for mentees to benefit from their mentorship and guidance.	Does not specifically emphasize the wisdom of Gurus or tap into their expertise, potentially missing out on valuable learning opportunities for mentees.
Volunteer Engagement for Growth	Actively seeks to create more volunteer engagement, viewing volunteers as engines for growth and development. Volunteers play a crucial role in facilitating intergenerational interactions, organizing activities, and providing support.	Lacks a strong emphasis on volunteer engagement, potentially limiting the program's reach and missing out on the benefits of volunteer involvement.
Community Transformation	Aims to directly contribute to the overall transformation of the community by fostering intergenerational connections, promoting empathy and understanding, and building a sense of belonging.	Does not explicitly focus on community transformation, potentially missing out on the broader societal impact that can be achieved through intergenerational programs.
Leveraging Partnerships	Recognizes the power of partnerships and collaborates with like-minded organizations, educational institutions, community centers, and stakeholders to leverage expertise, resources, and networks.	Lacks a strong focus on leveraging partnerships, potentially limiting access to additional resources and expertise that could enhance program quality and scalability.

5.0. IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

01 Hybrid Community Design and Development

02 Gurus, Volunteers and Mentees Recruitment

03 Pilot Test and Evaluation

04 Promotion and Marketing

05 Monitoring and Follow-up

1. **Hybrid Community Design and Development**

For all in person sessions, we will need an office space to engage in these activities so a suitable space will be rented in Ikeja neighborhood in Lagos because it is the capital of Lagos and a major residential commercial and residential hub for this. This space will provide a large conferenc room for learning and other activities, a library, a studio room for podcast recording and airing sessions, a compound with lots of greenery and ample space for outdoor activities and exercising. The virtual platform on the other hand will require the recruitment of a team of software designers and developers who will help us to select appropriate technology and development tools to help develop the website and mobile application. These processes will run concurrently and will be

expected to have been completed in 3 months just in time for us to start the recruitment of Gurus in the next quarter. While these processes are underway, we will work assiduously on building and activating partnerships since these partnerships will form the pool wherein, we will recruit participants for our enclave.

2. Gurus, Volunteers and Mentees Recruitment

Advertisement and recruitment of Gurus, Mentees and Volunteers will employ existing channels and networks available to us to obtain the best outcome. We will reach out to our partners and encourage them to invite members within their networks to join our community. We will also embark on social media campaigns with the sole purpose of creating awareness about the Grand-Guru enclave, the cutting-edge services we offer and why everyone should join the train of happy folks who know no loneliness. We will reach out to networks like Associations of Retired People in Lagos, Senior Citizens Networks and Universities as well as VolunteerMatch networks for the purposes of recruitment.

3. Pilot Test and Evaluation

Grand-Guru Enclave will stagger the implementation of the different activities and pilot the project in Lagos Nigeria. We will collaborate with partners within our community to promote the program and application. We will also deploy surveys for mentees and Gurus to assess progress and outcomes and also evaluate the feasibility and impacts of the programs we are rolling out. We will also capitalize on the piloting phase to further consolidate strategic alliances with potential investors and local authorities to help secure additional financial and logistical support for the project.

4. Promotion and Marketing

Grand-Guru Enclave will identify appropriate promotion and marketing strategies and target social and mass media to maximize our reach. The meticulously crafted promotion and marketing strategy for the project will enable us to embark on an ambitious journey to achieve maximum reach and impact. By identifying the target audience, crafting captivating content, and establishing a compelling online presence, the Grand-Guru Enclave aims to magnify the virtues of mentorship,

illuminate the exceptional accomplishments of participants, and ignite a profound desire for engagement. Collaborations with influential figures, strategic partnerships with esteemed media outlets and educational institutions, and the orchestration of immersive events and workshops shall serve as catalysts, propelling the project's visibility and credibility to unprecedented heights. Rigorous monitoring and precise measurement of impact shall perpetually refine and elevate the marketing strategy, forging an indomitable path towards triumph.

5. Monitoring and Follow-up

Through systematic data collection, impact assessment, and evaluation tools, Grand-Guru Enclave will meticulously track the progress and measure the transformative impact of the project's activities. Embracing continuous monitoring, we nurture mentor-mentee relationships, offer unwavering support, and foster an environment of open communication and growth. Feedback and reflection fuel our relentless pursuit of improvement, while comprehensive reporting and documentation empower stakeholders with valuable insights.
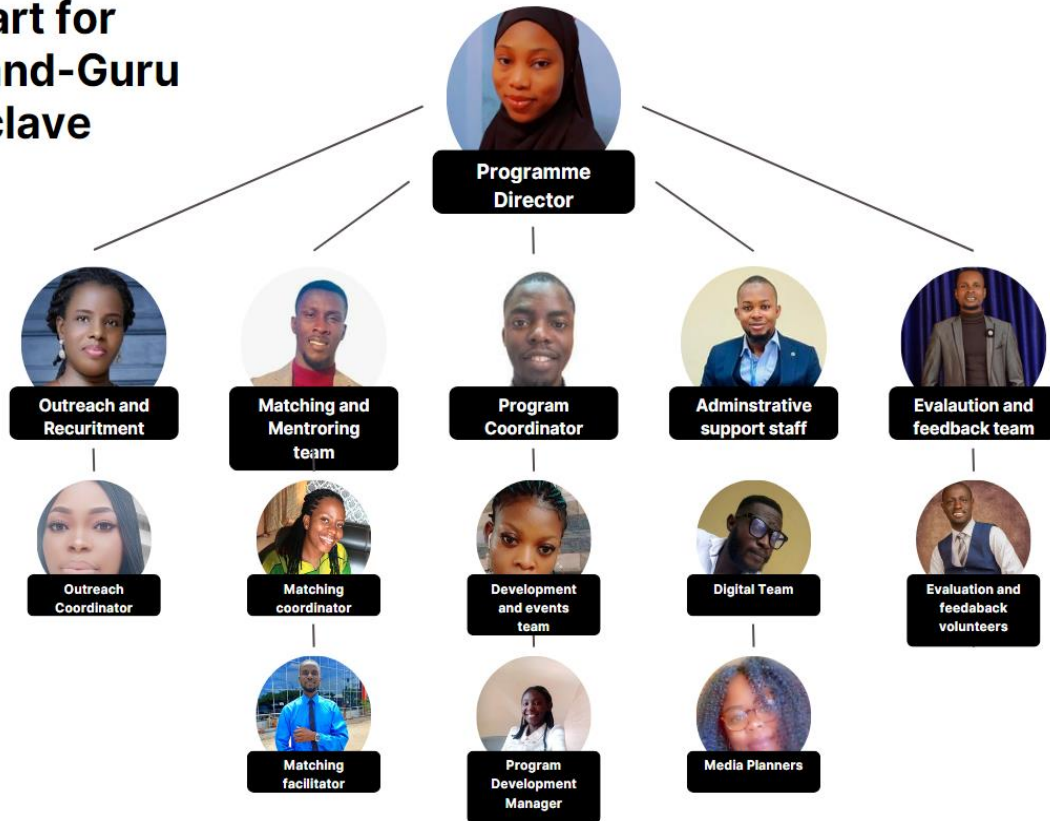
Organization Chart for Grand-Guru Enclave

Figure 9: *Organizational Flowchart*
Source: *Grand-Guru Designs*

MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

	INDICATOR	DEFINITION	BASELINE	TARGET	DATA SOURCE	FREQUENCY	RESPONSIBLE	REPORTING
Goal: Solve the problem of loneliness through intergenerational interactions	Number of intergenerational activities conducted	Total count of intergenerational activities organized	The program will roll out 3 activities and stagger the implementation of the remaining activities	Increase by 50 percent from baseline	Program records and activity logs	Monthly	Matching Coordinator	Monthly Program reports
Outcome: Improved social connections and reduced loneliness	Participant satisfaction rating	Participants' feedback on their satisfaction with the program activities and interactions	-	Maintain an average of 4 out of 5 rating	Post activity surveys	After each activity	Program Coordinator	Activity specific reports
Outputs: Number of Intergenerational activities conducted Participant satisfaction ratings Self-reported loneliness levels	Self-reported loneliness levels	Participants self-assessment of their loneliness levels using validated scales	Pre-program assessment of participant perception of loneliness levels using validated scales	Decrease loneliness score by 60 percent from baseline	Pre and post program surveys	Before and after program implementation	Evaluation team	Evaluation reports

Table 1: *Monitoring and Evaluation Framework*
Source: *Organizational document*

GRAND-GURU ENCLAVE POTENTIAL COLLABORATORS AND PARTNERS

GRAND GURU ENCLAVE POTENTIAL COLLABORATORS AND PARTNERS

COLLABORATOR	NATURE OF COLLABORATION	POTENTIAL ORGANIZATIONS
Retirement Communities	Mentor recruitment Venue for in-person activities	Coalition of Societies for the Rights of Older Persons in Nigeria The Nigeria Association of Retired People Senior Citizens Association of Nigeria
Schools and Universities	Student engagement Skill-sharing workshops Intergenerational projects	·University of Lagos Lagos State University ·Lagos City Polytechnic Senior High Schools
Non-Profit Organizations	Resources and volunteers Expertise in youth development and elderly care	·EL – Aged Care ·60 Plus Advocacy Initiative DEWDROP Foundation
Corporate Businesses	Funding support Volunteer engagement Expertise in specific areas	·Nigeria Pension Commission PharmaceutEvical companies
Local Government and Community Agencies	Support and guidance Potential funding opportunities	·Nigeria Pension Commission
Environmental Organizations	Collaboration on climate change projects Promoting sustainability	EcoPro Resources Limited Jawura Environmental Services
Tech Companies & Start-Ups	Tech training support and resources Virtual communication platforms	·LampNet Solutions ·Uplicom Media StateofArts
Community-Based Volunteer Groups	Volunteers for program implementation Spreading awareness	·VolunteerMatch The Creative Kids Zone

Table 2: Hyperlinked Potential Collaborators and Partners of GGE
Source: Organizational document

5.1. Virtual Community

Creating a virtual community for the Grand-Guru Enclave can greatly enhance the reach, connectivity, and engagement of the initiatives. Our virtual community will comprise the use of our organization's App and website which requires user registration and profiles and they will be able to share information about themselves and connect with others.
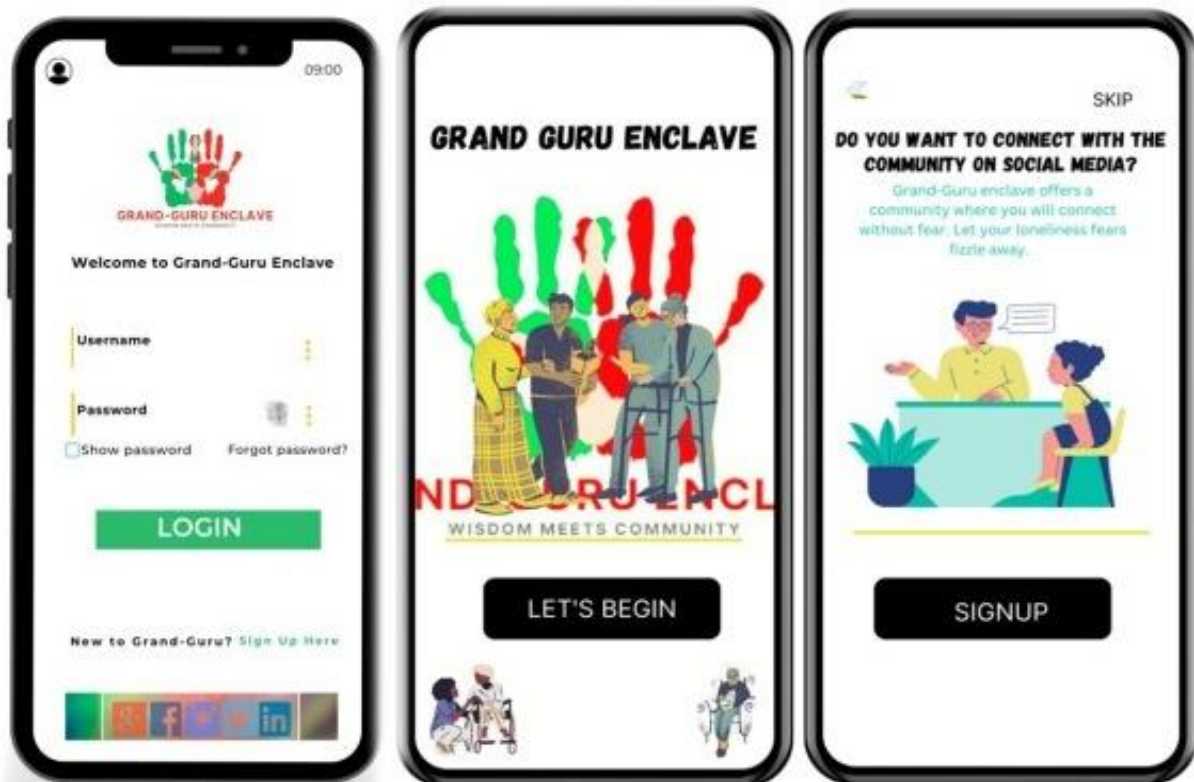

Figure 10a*: The mobile app sign in page for registered members and page for members to join our social media community.*
Source*: Grand-Guru Designs*

Figure 10b: *The page shows the instructions for new users, the account of a Nigerian GenZ in Diaspora and a retired bank manager who had been matched. The page also shows all the content/resources available in the community.*
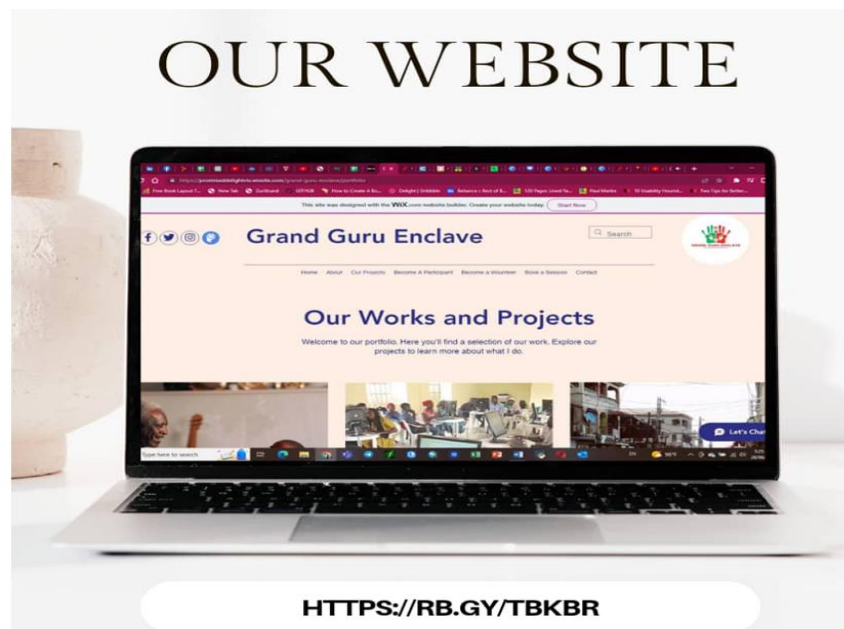*Source*: *Grand-Guru Designs*

Figure 11: *the community website for community updates and resources are made available distant participants/Diasporians*
Source: *Grand-Guru designs*

5.2 Grand-Guru Enclave (GGE) Program's
Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

HOW WILL THE GRAND-GURU ENCLAVE (GGE) PROGRAM CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)?

1 NO POVERTY

The GGE platform will enable interactions between the two generations and this will empower Gen Z by equipping them with practical skills, mentoring, and guidance, which will improve their employability and wealth creation potential, ultimately reducing poverty.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

GGE will prioritize care and supports exchange between generations. Grands will provide guidance, emotional support, and companionship to younger participants, promoting their mental well-being and resilience. In turn, Gen Z will contribute to Grands' well-being by offering assistance, technology guidance, and social connections.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

GGE will enhance social inclusivity among our participants, creating a platform for knowledge and skill exchange between different age groups where Grands benefit from the digital skills and knowledge of Gen Z, while Gen Z gains insights into the experiences and wisdom of Grands enriching their understanding of various subjects beyond the traditional educational systems, fostering mentorship relationships, promoting cultural exchange, crafts, and transfer of practical skills, creating an enriched educational environment that supports continuous lifelong learning.

5 GENDER EQUALITY

GGE will challenge stereotypes, foster mentorship, and empowerment, promote knowledge transfer, encourage intergenerational dialogue, advocate for gender equality, and nurture female leadership, creating a more inclusive and equitable society that empowers individuals of all generations, particularly women and girls.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

GGE will foster social innovation by combining the expertise and perspectives of different age groups (old and young). Our program will encourage creative problem-solving and the development of innovative solutions to address employment challenges, promoting sustainable economic growth and resilience.

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

GGE will address the digital divide by providing opportunities for Gen Z to share their technical knowledge and skills with Grands via our user-friendly digital platforms. This knowledge transfer will enhance the technological literacy of Grands, promoting digital inclusion. By sharing knowledge and experiences related to sustainable practices, Grands can contribute to adopting environmentally friendly and socially responsible approaches by Gen Z.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

GGE will foster collaboration and mutual support by nurturing relationships across age groups. Our program will build a cohesive enclave where everyone has an equal voice and opportunity to thrive. By breaking down generational stereotypes and promoting dialogue, our program will build bridges of understanding and empathy, reducing discrimination and promoting inclusivity.

13 CLIMATE ACTION

GGE will inspire collective action among our participants, teams, and volunteers to tackle climate change. Our program will promote collaborative environmental sustainability and green initiatives such as tree planting campaigns and clean-up drives among Grands and Gen Z, promoting not only a sense of belonging and purpose but also contributing to tangible actions that address climate change.

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

GGE will facilitate the transfer of values, traditions, and knowledge between generations. Grands will share their wisdom and experiences, passing on essential lessons about peace, justice, and good governance to Gen Z, ensuring the continuity of these principles.
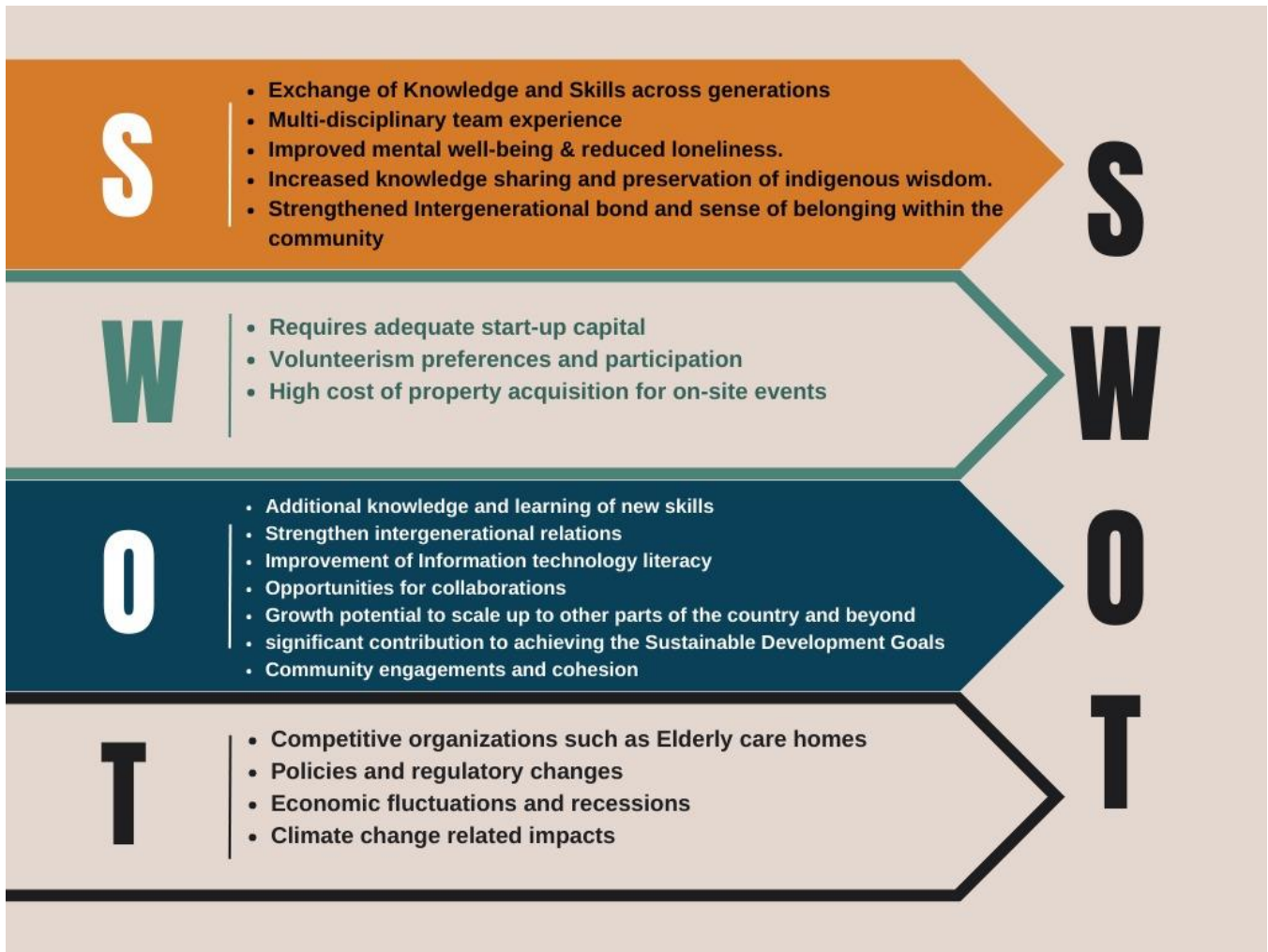
5.3. SWOT Analysis

Figure 12*: SWOT Analysis*
Source*: Organizational document*

5.4. Conclusion

Ever resolved to drive change and meaningful impact in Africa, Grand-Guru Enclave (GGE), emerges as a pioneering solution to address the pervasive issue of loneliness in Lagos, Nigeria. By recognizing the power of intergenerational connections and leveraging technology alongside in-person interactions, we have developed an innovative initiative that fosters care, support, and meaningful exchange between generations. GGE does not only prioritize the mental well-being and resilience of our participants but also creates an environment where both Grands and Gen Z can find solace, guidance, and companionship. Moreover, the adaptability and scalability of our program open doors for future developments and its potential expansion to other regions of Nigeria, thereby amplifying its impact and spreading the seeds of connection, empathy, and support throughout the country. Together, we can bridge the gap of loneliness, nurture stronger communities, and create a brighter future for all generations to come. We are out to inspire and effect change for we believe loneliness knows no color, gender, race or religion. Everyone can be a victim and in the name of inclusivity, we stand for humanity. Everyone deserves love, care and a reason to be happy and we are here to provide that.

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