



# ABOUT SCOA



## THE INSPIRATION

While spending a summer in Dubai, Ryan became acquainted with a group of Nigerians who showed him around the city and invited him to Lagos, Nigeria. The next year while in Lagos on a research trip, Ryan was blown away by the opportunities present across Nigeria and the continent. Upon returning to Harvard, he realized that there was a huge gap in support for students at western universities looking to engage professionally with Africa and a demand for an organization like SCOA.



## THE FOUNDER

A recent graduate of Harvard, Ryan studied history and Middle Eastern Studies, in addition to African Studies and foreign languages. He is the CEO of SCOA, GradPal ([gradpal.io](https://gradpal.io)), a tutoring and college admissions consulting company, and Prosper Frontier ([prosperfrontier.com](https://prosperfrontier.com)), a consultancy firm. Additionally, Ryan is the Senior Non-Resident Scholar at the Harvard Center for the Study of African Societies & Economies (CSASE), and he is involved in a number of other for-profit and nonprofit endeavours. Ryan is bullish on African potential and remains interested and engaged in frontier markets around the world.





**SCOA IS  
CONNECTING THE  
FUTURE OF THE  
WEST & AFRICA TO  
THE LEADERS OF  
TODAY**



 **SCOA** FOUNDATION **OUR TEAM**



**Dominic  
Mensah**

Board Member



**Madonna  
Okpaleke**

Co-Founder



**Ryan  
Jordan**

CEO & Co-Founder



**Marcus  
Montague-  
Mffuni**

UK Operations



**Sokhnadiarra  
Ndiaye**

Francophone  
Operations



**Logan  
Rager**

US Outreach

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# THE PROBLEM: MISUNDERSTANDING AFRICA

Common Headlines: Corruption, Poverty, Violence, Immigration, & Instability

Most US/Western undergraduate and graduate students don't understand Africa. They don't have enough information, don't have regular contact, and lack the knowledge and confidence necessary to build an ecosystem conducive to successful partnerships and sustained investment.

This problem affects:

- Private Sector (Corporate): Cautious investors don't understand local talent, opportunities, or practices.
- Public Sector: Concerns about identifying the "right" partners necessary for ensuring stability makes investors and future US ambassadors etc. hesitant to develop bilateral political relations.
- Citizenry and Civil Society (Development): Perpetuate harmful stereotypes that hinder mutually beneficial relationships, such as thinking that, "all Nigerians are scammers"



# OUR VISION: WORKING UP

- 01** Cultivate the know-how needed to establish successful political & business relationships, generate returns, and make a positive impact in Africa.
- 02** Build strategic networks to inspire future mutual trust and investor confidence.
- 03** Learn from established figures and institutions on the continent and facilitate knowledge transfer.
- 04** Create project work and internship experiences so that students studying at top Western universities can plug into Africa.





# SCOA'S PROGRAM

## During US Academic Term (September through May):

- Optional standing projects consisting of light consulting and project work with teams from across the SCOA network.
- Speaker series and events designed to inform students about the African environment and expose them to prominent figures.
- Potential conferences in the US

## During Summer Term (June through Middle of August):

- 6–8 week internship experiences on the ground in Africa undertaken with African partners. The aim of these experiences are to provide a hands on education in regional business practices, the legal environment, political realities, and more.

# MENTORSHIP INITIATIVE

80%



*80% of the students we asked said they would like a mentor and better networks in Africa. Only 20% of the students said they had someone in mind for this role that they could approach.*

20%



Over the course of the 2024-2025 academic term (September 2024 through May 2025), SCOA aims to select leading Africans in both the public and private sectors to engage in our mentorship initiative, which will connect current and former African presidents and leaders, politicians, CEOs and business executives, and impact leaders to the most promising members of the next generation.



Additionally, we will feature members of our mentorship initiative at events and talks throughout the Ivy League University system, at major university conferences (African Business Conference etc.), and more.



# THE HARVARD AFRICAN PRESIDENTIAL LEGACY INITIATIVE (HAPLI)

Being discussed in conjunction with a true African visionary, His Excellency, former President of Ghana, John A. Kufuor, and the Kufuor Foundation, SCOA has begun developing a research initiative to document the contributions and legacies of Africa's current and former Presidents and Prime Ministers. This effort, in proposed partnership with Harvard and Oxford University, will give African leaders the opportunity to craft their legacies and work with researchers directly.

Please note that this project is still in initial proposal and planning stages



# WHY SCOA

Other nonprofits exist in Africa, but SCOA reverses the model. Africa doesn't need Westerners coming to Africa to tell Africans how to do things. Africa needs strategic partners who understand local dynamics and are plugged into local networks. SCOA brings the next generation of western graduates to Africa so that they may learn, establish partnerships, and invest in long-term institutional relationships.



## Interactions

- SCOA will be the first African-focused nonprofit to connect all of the top universities, increasing dialogue and leveraging network effects. Connecting with one SCOA member connects partners to the whole network.
- SCOA only partners with premier institutions in the West and Africa, so students have a value generating experience and become connected at the highest levels with their African counterparts in their fields.



## Quality & Knowledge Transfer

- SCOA only takes current students at both the undergraduate and graduate level from the best schools.
- These students have demonstrated a capacity for performing at the highest levels and have the bandwidth to engage



## Investment Potential

- By recruiting from only top universities, SCOA makes an informed bet that these students will graduate and lead in several important sectors over the next several years.
- This includes: Banking, Finance, Technology & AI, Law, Government & Foreign policy, Medicine, Media, etc.

# OUR PARTNERS

Africa has 54 countries comprising of over 1.4 billion people with a GDP (2023) of 3.1 trillion USD. The US alone has approximately 333 million people with a national GDP (2022) of 25.44 trillion USD. The potential benefits for better strategic relations, primarily through immersing future American and Western leaders in African business and government, is unprecedented.

Additionally, SCOA is currently in discussions regarding establishing a physical presence in Ghana, Rwanda, and South Africa. SCOA welcomes partnerships with and in every African country and does not advance individual nation's policy or business at the expense of any other nation.

## Private Sector (Corporate)

Give students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with promising industries, learn industry specifics, and build a network that they can rely on to bridge Western equivalents. This is especially important in terms of facilitating knowledge transfer.

## Public Sector

Place students with public sector institutions so that they may familiarize themselves with national practices, become sensitive of local dynamics (so that future errors in international relations may be avoided), and create networks to facilitate investment and bilateral ties.

## Civil Society/Impact (Development)

Empower students to bring their expertise and education to leading African thought institutions and social impact initiatives. Allow for this collection of Western knowledge and best practices to work with, adjust to, and build upon local realities.





# PARTNER BENEFITS: SLIDE 1/2

## Branding:

- Partners can showcase top-tier ties with students from leading universities.
- Partners and partner opportunities will be published to SCOA members across the most elite university ecosystem and elsewhere as SCOA builds its brand and profile.

## Investing in Future Relations:

- Upcoming SCOA members will be industry leaders and future key persons and key decision makers. Through SCOA, our African partners can also pair and connect their preferred people to the US ecosystem.
- SCOA offers the opportunity to, at a low cost and low risk, present national projects and institutions favorably while undergraduate and graduate students are still young and open to formative experiences and new networks.



# PARTNER BENEFITS: SLIDE 2/2

## Access Knowledge Capital:

- Partners can tailor their requests for SCOA support to get undergraduates and graduates capable of providing real value to the partner's project or mission.
- By enabling these connections, SCOA partners are likely to accumulate further opportunities and networks in the West.

## Plug Into Ivy Networks:

- Working with SCOA will enable grassroots network building through university infrastructure.
- Sustained connections may well lead to further engagement and the establishment of new ties between partner institutions and established bodies of the University itself, such as access to advanced scholar/professional programs, MOU's with leading university think tanks, policy institutes, and labs, etc.
- Allows partner institutions to stay informed of trends regarding African students studying at premier US institutions and encourages them to deepen their ties back to the continent.

# Our Journey

Fact finding mission to understand whether there is enough support on the continent. Fantastic response from governments and private partners. SCOA is registered in September, 2024.

Over 20 verbal and planned agreements and MOUs with private and public institutions across Africa (Nigeria, Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, Namibia, Botswana, and South Africa), including at the Presidential, Vice-Presidential, Supreme Court, & Ministerial levels.

Students will dive into full projects for the first time and will be looking at securing their summer internships. The mentorship program will begin and will highlight African government figures, top CEOs, and impact leaders.

SCOA aims to launch partnership initiatives in Francophone and Lusophone Africa beginning in January 2025.

**April 2024**

SCOA begins with Harvard Chapter being formed and 7 chapters being built across the Ivy League Schools.

**Summer 2024**

Recruitment at universities, exploring the first projects, and building more chapters at Oxford, Yale, Brown, UChicago, Georgetown, MIT, and CalTech.

**September through  
December 2024**

SCOA will register as a 501C3 during this time.

**January through  
March 2025**

First on-the-ground experiences occur. Summer educational experience at partnered universities followed by internship programs across Africa for selected students.

**Summer 2025**

# OUR FUTURE

## Growing in Both Directions

In our first year, SCOA aims to prove the model from the US to Africa, & in two summers (2026) SCOA aims to replicate the program in the other direction, bringing African students to the US, UK, & Canada to learn valuable skills and build strategic relationships with local partners in the West.

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# Thank You for Joining Us

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