AFRICA

THE FUTURE IS NOW

FUTURE FORWARD: AN INITIATIVE OF ASHOKA AND THE MASTERCARD FOUNDATION
In 2012, Ashoka and the MasterCard Foundation partnered to harness the energy of African social entrepreneurs and young African changemakers with the Future Forward initiative.

**The goal:** identify social innovations and employ youth.
FAST FACTS

NUMBER OF YOUTH WHO DIRECTLY RECEIVED A SERVICE
491,447

NUMBER OF YOUTH WHO SECURED EMPLOYMENT
233,599

FUTURE FORWARD FELLOWS

- Anglophone West Africa: 24%
- Francophone West Africa: 28%
- South Africa: 32%
- East Africa: 16%

Regional Distribution of Fellows

- 36% female
- 64% male
JOBS BY INTERVENTION METHOD

- **Training for New Industries**: 490
- **ICT Training**: 42,881
- **Online Training**: 8,000
- **Tertiary**: 25,554
- **Job Matching and Mentorship Services**: 35,705
- **TVET (Formal and Informal)**: 120,969

**Distribution of Beneficiaries by Type of Employment**
- **Formal**: 62%
- **Self**: 22%
- **Informal**: 16%
The Future Forward initiative identified 25 Ashoka Fellows and provided them with capital, capacity support, and networking opportunities. This enabled the Fellows to scale social innovations and transform youth employment in the communities in which they work.

As a result of their initiation into the Fellowship and the subsequent activities of Future Forward, over 76% of the Fellows report creating policy change and securing employment for over 230,000 African youth.
EVERYONE A CHANGEMAKER

Ashoka’s vision is to enable "An Everyone a Changemaker World" where every citizen has the skill and will to be a changemaker.
WHAT IS A CHANGEMAKER?

Creative problem solvers who feel empowered to lead a change for the common good. Some changemakers build organizations that can show us the way to affect change and address deep rooted problems. These individuals, also called social entrepreneurs, have an entrepreneurial mindset and tackle social problems at the root cause with innovative and practical solutions. Ashoka’s focus on finding the world’s leading social entrepreneurs is also to enable them to become role models for changemaking.

WHAT DOES CHANGEMAKING HAVE TO DO WITH YOUTH EMPLOYMENT?

The Future Forward initiative’s focus on improving the livelihoods of young Africans enabled Ashoka to unlock the knowledge, patterns and insights of numerous Ashoka Fellows working in economic development, youth empowerment, and education in Africa. We found social innovators redefining the story of Africa’s youth: creating new norms in which every youth thrives and is trusted to lead. Six shifts were identified and shared in public forums across Africa. And in each of these forums were young changemakers ready to drive new initiatives and build on the insights.

The changemakers will be the ones who help drive the mindset shifts about Africa’s youth story and make a lasting impact.
Since 1980, Ashoka has elected over 3500 Fellows and is the largest and oldest global Fellowship dedicated to the advancement of systems changing social entrepreneurs. 13% of the Fellows, more than 450, have been elected in sub-Saharan Africa across a range of fields.

The partnership between Ashoka and the Mastercard Foundation identified 25 social entrepreneurs in 10 African countries to join the Fellowship. With a three-year living wage stipend that enabled them to focus wholly on a new idea and gain connections, networks, and opportunities as part of their election, the partnership provided unprecedented support to create a cohesive Fellowship around improving youth livelihoods. It enabled Fellows to meet with like-minded individuals across the continent, share broadly their approaches to youth development, work meaningfully with young people, and engage in activities and programs to change ideas about how young people grow up.

Beyond the Fellows, Future Forward supported a pan-African challenge for youth innovations in employment, enabled 12 Fellows to experience the Ashoka Globalizer process focused on scaling impact, and facilitated the development of two iterations of a blended course on the Future of Work that launched Ashoka’s Youth Champions network in Africa. The culmination of all of this was the knowledge and insights of the Future Forward network featured in Youth Unstuck: Innovations in Youth Livelihoods and Leadership, an innovation guide that provides a roadmap to enabling a better future for Africa’s youth.
HOW ASHOKA ENABLES SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS TO CHANGE SYSTEMS

PEER SUPPORT
Fellow Exchanges on Youth Employment
Regional Changemaker Summits

NETWORK ACCESS
Connection to 3400+ Ashoka Fellows worldwide

VISIBILITY
Webinars, Social Media Outreach, Impact Articles, Media Partnerships
Local and International Speaking Opportunities

CAPACITY BUILDING
Impact Measurement Trainings
Media Training
Personal Coaching

INVESTING
Living wage stipends
Connections to funding partners
SYSTEMS CHANGE

Ashoka’s model emphasizes collaboration, scale and partnership. A significant measure of the Fellowship’s impact is the successes beyond youth employment. It includes transformation in the systems they change. Systems change tackles the root cause of a social problem in such a way that it changes the way systems operate.

Systems change alters structures in a society.
FELLOWSHIP SPOTLIGHT:
ASHOKA GLOBALIZER ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN AFRICA

Chief among the supports provided for Future Forward Fellows was the Ashoka Globalizer program. The Ashoka Globalizer on Youth Employment in Africa enabled Fellows to expand the vision of their projects and helped them identify patterns in their initiatives in order to develop effective strategies to spread impact. The Globalizer program helped Fellows see how the impact they make locally can have widespread systemic change.

WHAT IS GLOBALIZER?

Ashoka Globalizer identifies the Fellows in the Ashoka network who have the greatest potential for catalyzing global systems change.

FUTURE FORWARD SUPPORTED:

12 Fellows to go through the Globalizer advisory process

10 weeks of mentorship with teams comprised of senior advisors and management consultants that led to the production of scaling strategies.

14 strategy thought partners to hear Fellows’ scaling strategies and give input, contacts, advice at the Globalizer Summit on Youth Employment in Cape Town, South Africa.

“It was a stretching experience that taught me and my team a lot. I also feel it gave me the green light on the big wild dreams I have been having. The mentorship process was extremely valuable to me and the time spent with strategy thought partners crowned it all. I have left Globalizer with more insight and resolve to do much more.”

- Esther Eshiet, Afterschool Centre for Career Development, Nigeria
THE POWER OF THE NETWORK

"Many hands make light work."

—Tanzanian proverb
Among the most powerful supports that Fellows benefit from is Ashoka’s vast network of social entrepreneurs. On any given day, WhatsApp, Skype, LinkedIn, or Google Hangouts chats are occurring among Ashoka Fellows. The financial support Fellows receive is often equal to the support given as part of a network of powerful social entrepreneurs. The Ashoka network keeps spirits high and Fellows report staying optimistic because they receive counsel and support from other Fellows who have similar experiences.

“Meeting other Fellows let me know that there were people out there just as crazy as I am.”

—Dorien Beurskens, Young Africa

Ashoka’s network enables social entrepreneurs to examine their solutions beyond a country level to a regional or even continental level. Fellows are linked to 460 Fellows in Sub-Saharan Africa. Because of the Ashoka network, Fellows recognize that their gaps can be filled through collaborative efforts for more impact.

The network also provides unique opportunities to forge collaborations. Regina Honu credits collaborating with Ashoka Fellows as a major driver of her success. “I am constantly engaged with other fellows. The engagement has led to collaborations that helped me expand and think differently about my work and the impact that I can achieve.”

Fellows exchange ideas and resources without the typical drive toward competition often associated with the social sector. The emphasis is that there is a shared responsibility among Fellows to help one another succeed.
For Ashoka and the Mastercard Foundation, impact cannot only be measured by how many projects scaled, how many youth gained employment, or how many jobs were created, but also by what would happen if the partnership did not exist.

With this in mind, Future Forward’s impact extends beyond traditional metrics to understanding the best practices and models that influence the cultural and social fabric of African communities. The Fellows’ work and the work that the partnership has engaged in to identify patterns, highlight approaches, and spread the Fellows’ models is part of an ongoing mindset change conversation happening across the Ashoka network in Africa.

*Mindset change*: utilizing African-specific practices to solve African problems; rethinking systems that impede social progress; and cultivating and promoting African potential to spur educational and economic innovation.

The impact of *mindset change* is not easily quantified and measured. Yet, it is instrumental in understanding the dynamic impact of the Future Forward initiative.
“The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.”

- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Nigerian writer, TEDGlobal 2009

The partnership between Ashoka and the Mastercard Foundation evolved from an initiative to identify the most innovative approaches to create jobs in Africa to one that is now about rethinking how we tell the story of youth in Africa. The timing of the initiative enabled Ashoka to contribute systems-change thinking and approaches in the ongoing conversation about Africa’s employment crisis. By identifying and supporting social entrepreneurs working on solutions in agribusiness, technology, healthcare, climate change, and gender equality, Ashoka and the Mastercard Foundation helped fuel a movement.

"Social entrepreneurs are individuals with innovative solutions to society’s most pressing social, cultural, and environmental challenges. They tackle major issues and offer new ideas for systems change."

– Ashoka
SIX PARADIGM SHIFTS FOR TRANSFORMING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND LEADERSHIP

OLD PARADIGM

1. Unpaid work and handouts offered in a way that creates a culture of dependency.

2. Classroom based, theoretical, or rote education. Apprenticeships or internships that do not teach diverse sets of skills. Entering workforce without relevant work experience of translatable skills.

3. Youth apply for jobs before understanding personal strengths; skills training, job-matching, and financing are prioritized without attention to health.

4. Formal job market of established wage-job options. Jobs are selected in fields that are too saturated, without adequate preparation, or without knowing the full range of options.

5. Age groups remain in silos and lose out on support systems needed to succeed. Insufficient mentorship and apprenticeship opportunities.

6. Youth are served with a top-down approach and either thought of as "the problem" or "the future."

NEW PARADIGM

Don't Exploit You or Create Entitlement: Reward Meaningful Contributions.
Finding creative ways to ensure young people receive compensation, paid through real or virtual currency. Youth also pay to participate, driving ownership of processes.

Design Classrooms Without Walls: Ensure Youth Rapidly Skill-Up through Community Problem-Solving
Real-world, hands-on, project and team based. Youth are better equipped with the necessary skills and resilience to succeed.

Promote Purpose and Holistic Health as Foundational for Career Development
Consider multiple pathways based on skills-alignment: holistic education and self-discovery is a must-have, not nice-to-have ingredient for ensuring the resilience of youth, and the resilience of their careers.

Redefine What Counts as a "Good" Job
Elevating informal jobs, nontraditional fields, and entrepreneurial options.

Revive Intergenerational Teamwork
New ways to form sustained relationships and collaboration, with explicit intention of supporting the younger generation towards success. The results: a restoration of cross-generational collaboration.

Don't Just Serve Youth - Trust Youth to Lead
Youth make real decisions, have their voices heard consistently, and are meaningful contributors to their communities as a result of youth leadership roles, adult champions, and experiential learning.
The Fellows elected as part of the Future Forward partnership are using their social innovations to rethink the conversation of work. Catherine Njeri, Instructor from Ashoka Fellow Paige Elenson’s Africa Yoga Project, Kenya states, “I knew that I wanted to do something for my community.” Catherine admits that she was more interested in a free 10-day trip to the North Coast than she was in the yoga training. However, after going through 200 hour yoga training, she saw yoga as a viable way to heal her personal trauma and serve her community. Subsequently, she found work with purpose. Through the work with Africa Yoga Project, Catherine became a changemaker, an individual who sees a gap in the society and gathers the tools and resources to fill it.

“I see [youth] lacking leadership skills in [our] society. I stepped in and fill the gap and work on training yoga teachers being leaders in the society.”

Catherine's thinking exemplifies the approaches of Future Forward Fellows to enable youth from all walks of life to find purposeful careers, not just wages.
TRUSTING YOUTH TO LEAD

In Mitchell’s Plain, Cape Town South Africa, Ashoka Fellow Marlon Parker takes “trusting youth to lead” to the next level. His organization, RLabs, helps communities strengthen themselves through training, innovation, and entrepreneurship. It is a space for the township’s young people to gather—many of them unemployed, school dropouts, and hanging out on streets where crime is rampant.

The lessons at RLabs always lead to young people viewing themselves as the owners of value that they can bestow on their community, and on an employer who will pay them for it. “We realized that every young person can create value, in their communities,” Parker said.

“At RLabs, we teach them that they can sell that value in the community. The important thing for young people is to remember, ‘create value first, and once you’ve created value, then realize that the time you are spending can actually capture value for you—you can earn some money through that’.”

RLabs is helping young people "reframe" their role in society this way, so that they see that they already possess value that they can cultivate, and offer to employers. As businesses also see and experience this value in the young population, it will go a long way toward addressing the problem of youth unemployment.
REDEFINE WHAT COUNTS AS A GOOD JOB

The need to come up with sustainable solutions to provide electricity to millions of residents spurred the creation of Ashoka Fellow Abubaker Musuuza’s Village Energy. The business employs a network of local handymen to train rural youth and electricians to install solar panels in homes and businesses. Rather than assume that Africa would electrify in the same manner as the west, Abubaker bypassed the electric grid system.

His operation provides electricity to thousands of Ugandans—many of them in places where a grid may fail to reach. The networks of local handymen train and certify rural youth to sell and repair panels. Abubaker’s Village Energy is an innovative, sustainable business model that is transforming the informal sector work in rural Uganda and redefining opportunities for young people who have traditionally been left out of the formal economy.
"Education is the most powerful weapon, which WE can use to change the world."

- Nelson Mandela

At the time that Ashoka and the Mastercard Foundation launched the Future Forward Fellowship initiative, the primary focus was to identify social entrepreneurs who were tackling youth unemployment. Eventually, the partnership provided a roadmap for understanding the mindsets needed to change youth development in primary, secondary and tertiary classrooms as well as in the numerous youth organizations serving youth across the continent. It also provided deep lessons in designing pan-African initiatives that tackle other societal-level challenges.
EDUCATE FOR AFRICAN CHANGEMAKERS

If your plan is for one year, plant rice. If your plan is for ten years, plan trees. If you plan for one hundred years, educate children.

-Confucius

It is widely held that Africa’s education systems are struggling to prepare young people for the 21st Century. The key skills of creativity, teamwork, empathy and leadership are just as key to success in the new job market as the traditional literacies.

Changing Africa’s educational system hinges on focusing on innovative ways to produce new graduates at scale while ensuring they have the hard and soft skills needed to meet the demands of emerging markets.
Ashoka’s contribution to this work in Africa now builds on the insights and approaches of Fellows and changemakers who are part of its Changemakers Schools, Youth Venture, and Future Forward initiatives. Through a four-stage process, Ashoka focuses on unearthing leaders in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions and those innovating in non-traditional youth organizations, coalescing knowledge, and connecting people across a vast network.

1. Find and select Schools, Youth Champions, Youth-Championing Organizations and Universities dedicated to promoting changemaking

2. Support the network to develop tools and resources to scale and grow ideas

3. Connect changemaking leaders in education and youth development with policy makers and influencers to collaborate to change systems

4. Produce knowledge products to share these insights, solutions and approaches across the globe
How can we support collaboration that enables women to actively participate in the economy and reach their full potential?

The approach developed for the Future Forward initiative informs the design of other challenges Africa face, such as empowering women and girls. Women and girls in Africa continue to face cultural and social norms blocking them from full economic and social participation. These have serious consequences for women, including discrimination in hiring, harassment and physical violence, restrictions on mobility, lack of rights to control income and own property, and unequal share of unpaid care work.

The most common solutions to overcome these barriers have been the promotion of jobs and women becoming entrepreneurs. These alone are not enough to overcome deeper structural and systemic barriers. Ashoka’s Fellows selection process, vast network, unique approaches to distilling knowledge and skills in convening for collaborative impact will enable us to contribute to closing the gender gap.

My vision is to see every young woman and girl pursue their dreams and reach the top of whatever career path they choose.”

- Regina Honu, Soronko Solutions
After 35+ years of electing the world’s leading social entrepreneurs, Ashoka knows a lot about what it takes to become one. The Everyone a Changemaker vision is centered around getting the world to understand that:

a. Everyone can be a changemaker and

b. Core changemaking skills need to be taught early

When Ashoka embarked on the Future Forward initiative, the work to transform how young people grow up in Africa had just begun. Youth Venture, a program to equip adolescents with tools and skills to be social innovators was in its early stages. The Changemaker Schools network of schools dedicated to educating young people for changemaking in Africa had just begun. While all began as disparate programs with different agendas and outlooks, they have merged to become a singular network of changemakers focused on the future of Africa’s youth.
FUTURE FORWARD
ENABLED ASHOKA TO:
Coalesce knowledge around youth changemaking and see practical examples of changemaker skills: young people who are leading, creating their own jobs, employing others, thinking creatively about the economic environment, and applying social business models to their own profits. As a result, Ashoka can create a learning journey about youth livelihoods that draws a direct line between the core skills of a Changemaker School and the outcome of that skill on livelihoods.

Shift thinking from "youth serving" to "youth championing." This is language that the Ashoka’s team in Africa now applies to the wide network of youth leaders, Ashoka Youth Champions, who are co-leading with Ashoka to make an Everyone a Changemaker world.

Gain access to new regions, new organizations, and new teams of people who have been brought into the network for mutual benefit. For example, Ashoka now engages the Young African Leaders Initiative, the Young African Leadership Academy and Network and social entrepreneurship programs at many African universities.

Increase visibility through the investment in new tools like online courses, online toolkits, webinars, and twitter chats that enabled Ashoka to share the models of Future Forward Fellows broadly throughout existing networks. Ashoka is emerging as a thought leader with more shareable content to spread our message to global audience.

Deepen partner relationships that has enabled new thinking about collaboration and co-creation. Ashoka is focused on new initiatives that focus not just on finding the best innovations, but about ensuring the creation of enabling environments for more collective impact.

Build new operational capacities and financial infrastructure for county teams in Africa to enable local management of partnerships.
Inspiration:
Knowing that too many don’t have access medicine

What keeps you inspired?
The need to provide millions of people with medicine

Before the Ashoka Mastercard Future Forward Fellowship I did not know:
I could not change the world quickly.

After the Ashoka Mastercard Future Forward Fellowship I know:
Change is difficult; private sector and entrepreneurship will solve development problems.
What should everyone know about the Future Forward initiative to solve youth employment?

It’s a transformative program.

How does your project uproot the system and create systems change?

Our model focuses on creating access hubs in hard-to-reach vulnerable communities. Youth are core employee base of the company. We employ youth because they are earlier adopters and influencers of technology. They are essential part of driving the shift in access and distribution of medicine using the model. Also, our project employs women – young girls, mothers, and grandmothers. Women are primary drivers of healthcare in families, and by extension the community. Having women and girls as central part [of our] business enables us to sustain our distribution and access model.

What is the most significant change you foresee for youth work?

I expect to see more youth embrace the entrepreneurship challenge versus the job challenge, creating jobs rather than looking for one. I see the mindset shift and them bringing this spirit to the emerging market.

Describe how your project scaled during Future Forward.

We diversified our technology and made it more responsive to the market. We moved from selling to hospitals to selling directly to the patients.
What’s happening now in your industry that is shaping the future for youth employment?
Privatization is accelerating opportunities. Healthcare entrepreneurs will usurp the government’s role in health care and health management.

What do you see as the most significant contribution of your work in terms of youth and youth employment?
I’ve employed 50-60 youth since the inception of the project.

What do you believe has been the greatest impact of your work?
Some of the youth that I’ve employed have gone off and started companies. Now, they serve under-resourced communities.

What’s the vision for youth in the next 15 years?
I see more youth-led ventures in all sectors – the arts, technology, health, and education.

How is the Ashoka Mastercard Future Forward Fellowship different?
Early stage investment: the Fellowship really believed in the idea and they put money into the early stage.

Finish this statement: The future of Africa is … NOW.

What’s next?
Scaling and building a stronger team with the best of the best.
Inspiration:

Making sure women and girls have choice to reach their full potential.

What keeps you inspired:

Living on the continent keeps me inspired challenges of electricity, water, and transportation keeps me working. It makes me want to be a part of the solution.

Before the Ashoka Mastercard Future Forward Fellowship I did not know:

I did not know how to harness all my power. I knew I was powerful, but the Fellowship helped me focus my power.

After the Ashoka Mastercard Future Forward Fellowship:

I really understand the importance and value of collaboration. I know that everyone is capable of being a changemaker.
How does your project uproot the system and create change?

Before the project, tech and girls did not go together. The project helped change the mindset. To think of women in tech and as technology entrepreneurs is a new concept.

What is the most significant change you foresee for youth work?

The most significant change I see is young people starting businesses. Many young people who worked with us started their own initiatives and businesses.

Describe how your project scaled since the Ashoka Mastercard Future Forward Fellowship.

I partnered with the First Lady of Ghana. My program is now going to be offered in every school in the country. The project is now in Bukino Faso and it’s trained 600 girls.

What’s happening now in your industry that is shaping the future for youth employment?

Tech in Africa is youth-led. It’s a great place for the creative imagination of our young people.

What do you see as the most significant contribution of your work in terms of youth and youth employment?

I see lots of young women waking up to their ability in tech. Knowing that these girls may become entrepreneurs and provide solutions to Africa’s program is significant to me.
What do you believe has been the greatest impact of your work?

The mindset change among women is the greatest impact of the work. There is a shattering of the old mindset that girls should focus on fashion, cooking or other stereotypical girl activities. I see girl dreaming and thinking big.

What’s your vision for youth?

I envision Africans solving problems for the rest of the world, not just Africa.

How is the Ashoka Mastercard Future Forward Fellowship different?

Ashoka works on systems change. It’s not just about making your project work; it’s about undoing structures and addressing systemic issues, whether they are cultural, social, or economic. They also provide a lot of opportunities to engage and collaborate with other fellows.

The future of Africa is...BRIGHT.

What’s next for you, your project?

Part of my scaling project is development and implementation of the Soronko Academy. Attendees will learn technical coding and ICT skills, entrepreneurship skills, leadership and networking. We’re focusing on teaching tech to students with disabilities and we’re expanding to teaching boys. They are knocking down the door. So, we have to teach them too.
VICKIE WAMBURA
NAFISIKA TRUST
www.nafisikatrust.org

Inspiration:
I saw young people who did not have a way out becoming repeat offenders. I wanted to change that.

What keeps you inspired:
Seeing young people reintegrated into society keeps me inspired. Seeing them start businesses, being employed, and soaring keeps me inspired.

Before the Ashoka Mastercard Future Forward Fellowship I did not know:
I did not know how to think through systems change. I was just focused on doing good. I didn’t see how to move beyond impacting individuals.

After the Ashoka Mastercard Future Forward Fellowship:
I learned how to impact the system.
How does your project uproot the system and create change?

We created internal systems for prisons to collect data so they can better improve and track what’s going on in prisons. We’re moving away from the colonial model of policing and shifting the prison system to a service system model. Law enforcement is integrated into communities.

What is the most significant change you foresee for youth work?

I see youth being more motivated to create change.

Describe how your project scaled since the Ashoka MasterCard Future Forward Fellowship.

We’ve expanded our volunteer base, which is significant part of the plan to break the stigma associated with reentry citizens. The program started in one prison now we are in eight. We also have license to work in all prisons.

What’s happening now in your industry that is shaping the future for youth employment?

Prison is being seen as a viable form of rehabilitation. People are now referring to prisons as colleges because they can receive job skills or learn how to create and sustain a business. This will make a difference in the opportunities young people face when they re-enter their communities.

What do you see as the most significant contribution of your work in terms of youth and youth employment?

When young people leave a prison that has our program, they have tangible skills to get a job or they may even have a business plan..
What do you believe has been the greatest impact of your work?

Prisons do not just operate as holding cells. They operate as rehabilitation spaces and there is an atmosphere of learning.

What’s your vision for youth?

My vision is to see youth maximize their full potential despite their circumstances.

How is the Ashoka Mastercard Future Forward Fellowship different?

Ashoka stands out because it truly invests in the individual. The Fellowship focused on my personal development. It’s also big on systems change and expanding your vision.

The future of Africa is … young people fulfilling their full potential.

What’s next for you, your project?

The Makini Program to honor those making a difference in the correctional service space.
ASHOKA AND THE MASTERCARD FOUNDATION SUPPORTS THE NEXT GENERATION OF AFRICA'S LEADERS
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<th>Organization</th>
<th>Founding Social Entrepreneurs</th>
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<td>2020 Microclinics Initiative</td>
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<td>Fredrick Ouko Alucheli</td>
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<td>Verengai Mabika</td>
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Vision:
Educat ing
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