

Empowering Change: How Chevening Transforming Energy Access Scholars are Preparing to Power the Future: Reflections from the 2024/2025 Chevening TEA Scholars

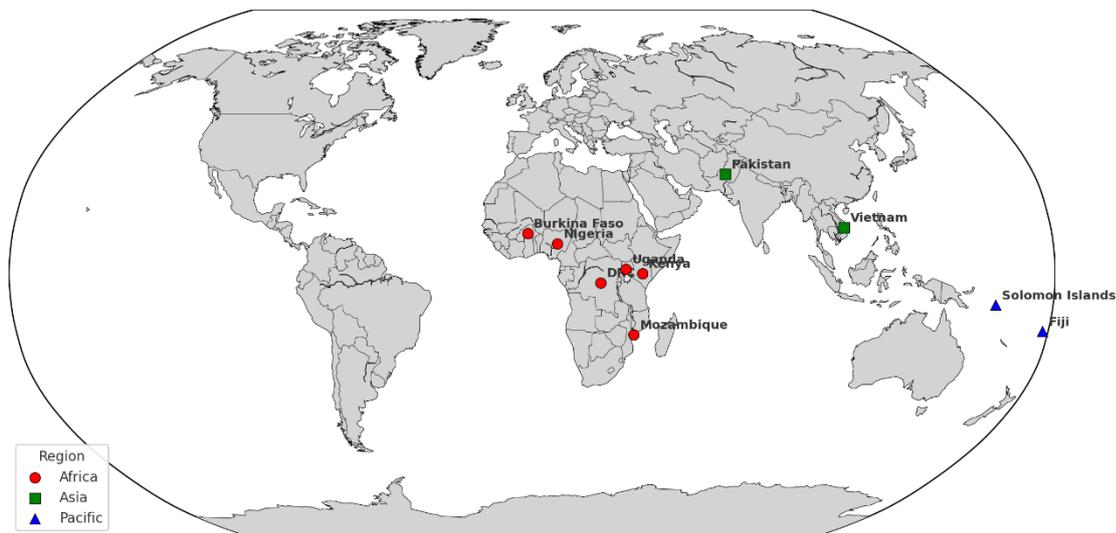
Our 2024/2025 Chevening Transforming Energy Access (TEA) Scholars at the welcome event held at the Carbon Trust London office.



A JOURNEY OF LEARNING AND PURPOSE

In 2024, a diverse group of passionate young professionals from across Africa, Asia and the Pacific arrived in the United Kingdom with one shared goal: to study an energy related master's degree and to create positive change by sustainably addressing energy access challenges in their home countries.

Our twelve scholars from the 2024/2025 academic year come from nine countries spread across the globe.



The **Chevening TEA Scholarship Programme** is a fully funded master's programme, designed to nurture the next generation of young leaders, who will be at the forefront of the global transition to clean, affordable, and reliable energy.

Launched in 2023, the Chevening TEA Scholarship programme aims to invest in the growth of future leaders in the energy sector. Between academic years 2023/24 – 2025/26, the scholarship has

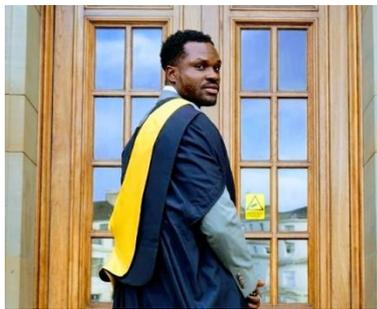
supported and funded 30 emerging leaders to pursue energy related master's degrees in the UK that aligns with TEA thematic areas, ultimately building the skills, networks, and expertise needed to accelerate progress towards Sustainable Development Goals 7 and 13 (SDG 7 and 13).

LIFE AND LEARNING IN THE UK

Over the past year, these scholars have immersed themselves in academic and non-academic activities, gaining both the technical and non-technical skills they will need to drive meaningful changes when they return home.

Uchechukwu Okoro, who studied a master's in **Sustainability and Renewables at the University of Dundee**, and worked on a framework to assess the viability of mini-grid portfolios across Nigeria for his master's thesis, stated:

"Studying in the UK has shown me a different way of learning that schooling can be hassle-free, collaborative and an ultimately enjoyable experience."



For many of our scholars, this is their first experience living abroad. The transition has been inspiring as well as challenging for our scholars. From navigating new cities and cultures to adapting to UK academic systems, the journey has been full of discovery.

Deisy Pinto, who studied a master's in **Renewable Energy and Power Systems Management at City St. Georges, University of London**, remarked:

"I was surprised at how expensive and fast paced life in UK can be. However, through my course and extracurricular activities such as joining the gym, becoming a member of the STEM and beekeeping community, I was able to build a community of friends during my time in the UK."



Our scholars pursued a diverse array of degrees including, **Economics and Policy of Energy and Climate Change, Energy Systems and Data Analytics**, and **Global Energy and Climate Policy**. In addition to the lecture-led aspects of their degrees, our scholars' master's theses covered areas such as:

- Carbon financing in Africa
- Wind energy integration using energy system modelling tools
- ESG performance variability across sectors and regions using Refinitiv ESG scores
- Feasibility analysis of hybrid solar PV with integrated batteries for off-grid applications, and
- SDG 7 linkages on a local level

Many of the scholar theses are directly linked to energy challenges in their home countries. For example, **Thi Nguyen** from Vietnam explored the role of wind energy (and energy storage systems) in meeting Vietnam's electricity demand growth. While **Abdoul Rouamba** explored how oil price uncertainty shocks affect GDP, inflation, and exchange and interest rates in South Africa. The recommendations included diversifying South Africa's economy and reducing oil dependence, whilst scaling-up renewable energy investment and strengthening macroeconomic policy frameworks.



Uchechukwu Okoro at one his frequent hikes to the Scottish Highlands during his time at University of Dundee

BUILDING A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

The Chevening TEA Scholarship Programme structure allows for blending academic study with personal and professional development. Beyond academics, the scholars formed strong bonds through extracurricular activities, university life, and attending TEA events. Our scholars actively participated at the annual TEA Delivery Review Workshops, visited some TEA partners, joined working groups, and attended partners meetings. These activities and more helped the scholars to network and create meaningful connections with industry leaders and government representatives, as well as helping our scholars link theory with real-world applications.



Two of our scholars, Deisy Pinto and Agatha Ankunda visiting the [TEA@Sunrise](#) lab at Swansea University, where cutting-edge solar innovation is taking shape.

"The TEA platform has significantly contributed to my personal and professional growth through access to industry partners that have enriched my experience and opened valuable pathways for career development.

Through TEA, I have secured 5 meaningful opportunities, including an apprenticeship placement, a conference speaking engagement to present my dissertation findings, and multiple collaboration and future partnership prospects. i.e. **Women in Renewable Energy Association, Uganda** to partner with the **TEA@Sunrise Women in Solar Energy Group.**”

Expressed, **Agatha Ankunda** who studied a master’s in **Economics and Policy of Energy and the Environment at University College London.**

She continued:

“I have also been invited by the TEA@Sunrise team to participate in the upcoming TEA@Sunrise Symposium in Malaysia this January. During the symposium, I will contribute to discussions on scaling up next generation technologies; exploring viable business models that create social value to drive their adoption particularly within the context of emerging economies.”



As the academic year progressed, our scholars partook in the Chevening TEA Research Workshop, hosted in collaboration with [TEA Learning Partnership](#),(TEA-LP) an event that brought together our scholars and TEA-LP students from universities across Africa, the Pacific Islands and South Asia to present their thesis topic, share ideas and insights, and discuss how they plan to apply their learning after their studies, setting the stage for collaborations to continue beyond graduation.

PREPARING FOR IMPACT

As they wrap up their graduation events and prepare to return to their respective countries. The Chevening TEA Scholars are more than just students; they are future leaders of a cleaner, fairer, and more sustainable energy world, equipped with not just a master’s degree, but also a mission to accelerate clean, inclusive energy systems that transform lives and economies.

Some envision launching clean-energy startups; others hope to return to their previous careers, either in the public or private sector. What unites them is a deep sense of responsibility to apply what they have learned for the benefit of their countries and communities.

Uchechukwu Okoro hopes to go back to working as a consultant in energy project development. While **Deisy Pinto** aspires to apply her analytical mindset to a job in energy economics and infrastructure and becoming a mentor for young Mozambicans looking for scholarships.

Agatha Ankunda is keen to find a job in energy access. In her own words:

“I am strongly committed to advancing universal energy access. I envision a future in which all individuals, particularly across Africa, have access to reliable and affordable electricity, recognizing it as a critical enabler of socio-economic development.”

She intends to continue volunteering with the **Women in Renewable Energy Association, Uganda**, driven by her commitment to advancing **women participation** in the energy space.

FINAL REMARKS

For many of our scholars, the Chevening TEA Scholarship programme has expanded their professional network, boosted their confidence and given them the opportunity to attain a world class education. Their journeys embody what the TEA programme is all about: empowering people with the knowledge, tools, and networks to deliver lasting change.

Deisy Pinto remarked:

“Thanks to Chevening and TEA I was able to pursue my master’s in the UK and more than the master’s is the experience of living in the UK, the connections I’ve made and my TEA mentor, Dr Azizat, she has been there for me and helped me throughout the journey, from having regular meetings once every two weeks, to guiding me on me on my dissertation and career path and some personal challenges.”

Uchechukwu Okoro echoed similar sentiments:

“I am grateful to FCDO, Chevening and TEA as this whole experience was only made possible by them. I’m glad that such a platform exists for people to get the experience, knoweldge and networking opportunities that I’ve gotten. These organisations have a chapter in my history and will forever be a part of my journey.”

WHAT’S NEXT FOR THE TEA CHEVENING SCHOLARSHIP

As we bid farewell and best of luck to our second cohort of Chevening TEA Scholars, we welcome our third cohort of ten individuals who will be studying at universities across the UK. This fresh wave of students aspires to become future leaders in the global energy sector and in the next year will study subjects from Climate Change Law and Policy to Engineering, and Technology Innovation.

Over the 2025/26 academic year, our new scholars will be supported through the programme, including one-to-one mentorship, participation in TEA and public speaking workshops, and collaboration opportunities with students from other scholarship bodies. We look forward to seeing the results from an impactful year of study.