



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

APRIL – JUNE 2026



FROM THE FOUNDER: TO THE BOY BEHIND THE MASK

Dear Boy,
Yes, You.

Somewhere along the way, someone looked at your tears and said, "Stop that." Not because you were wrong, but because they were uncomfortable. You were told to be strong before you even understood what strength meant. You were handed silence instead of language. Pressure instead of protection. And somewhere in all of that, you learned the lessons no one meant to teach you:

That crying makes people turn away. That fear must be swallowed. That softness is something to grow out of. But I want you to know this: nothing was wrong with you.

You were a child responding honestly to a world that demanded too much, too fast. Your tears were never a weakness; they were intelligence. They were your body doing exactly what it was designed to do: saying, "I need help."

If no one has told you this before, hear it now.

You were never meant to carry everything alone. And you still don't have to.

So you adapted. You became good at pretending: pretending you're fine, pretending things don't hurt, pretending you don't care. You learned which parts of yourself were "acceptable" and which ones needed to stay hidden. You laughed when you wanted to scream. You stayed quiet when you needed to speak. Not because you were fake, but because you were surviving. People see your silence and call it calm. They see your distance and call it maturity. What they don't see is the weight you carry inside your chest. So let me tell you something important: the mask kept you safe, but it is not who you are.

You are allowed to be more than what the world could handle at the time. You are allowed to take the mask off slowly, safely, in your own way. You don't owe anyone hardness to earn your place here.

www.mendaya.org

Emmanuel Adebayo,
Founder, Mendaya



Mendaya x Akhin Africa Light Up the Streets of Akhin Village

Fashion took to the streets, and this time, it walked with purpose. In a vibrant celebration of creativity, resilience, fearlessness, courage, and independence, Mendaya partnered with Akhin Africa to bring our signature fashion show experience directly to the street and homeless participants at Akhin Village

The result was nothing short of magic: 22 confident young people, dressed in bold, colourful, one-of-a-kind pieces, owned the runway and reminded everyone watching that creativity knows no address.

But the real story began long before the runway lights came on.

In the weeks leading up to the show, our youngsters didn't just prepare; they mobilised. They walked from tailor shop to tailor shop, collecting textile waste that would otherwise have been burned or dumped into the environment. Scraps that once meant pollution and waste became something else entirely: possibility. In total, they gathered over 50 kilograms of discarded fabric, breathing new life into material the world had already thrown away.

Through hands-on design and styling, that waste was transformed into vibrant, wearable art and showcased with pride at the Akhin Street Fashion Show.



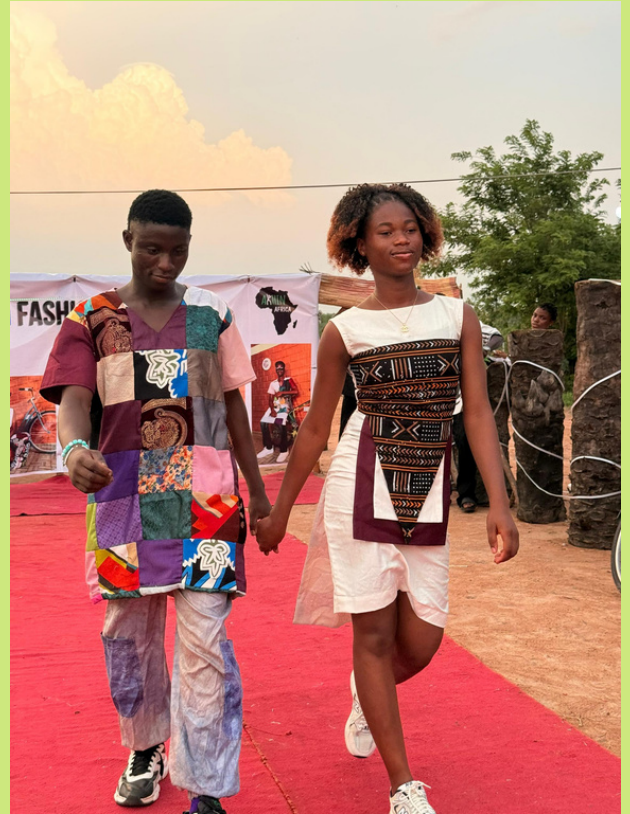
For the young people involved, this was more than a fashion event. It was a firsthand lesson in what's possible: that waste can become a tool for creativity, that creativity can become a livelihood, and that confidence can be stitched, quite literally, from what others discard.

At Mendaya, we believe every young person deserves the chance to see their own potential. On that runway, in those colourful clothes made from castoff fabric, 22 young people didn't just walk; they showed a whole community what transformation looks like.



Visible Creativity

The Runway In Pictures



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What If Nature Designed Our Clothes?

Fashion is often taught as the art of making clothes. At Mendaya, we believe it begins with understanding the story behind every fabric.

Through our partnership with Akhin Africa, we launched a Sustainable Fashion Design Training that invited participants to see fashion through a completely different lens. They didn't just learn how to sew—they learned how to think like nature.

Together, they explored questions that are rarely asked in fashion classrooms: Where do our clothes come from? What happens when they are no longer wanted? How can we design without creating waste?

From drafting zero-waste patterns to transferring patterns onto fabric, participants immersed themselves in the craftsmanship of bespoke tailoring, slow fashion, and custom-made garments as sustainable alternatives to today's fast-fashion culture.



At one point, a participant curiously remarked, "But other tailors just cut clothes directly. They don't do all of this." That simple question opened the door to one of the workshop's most powerful lessons: every thoughtful pattern, every careful measurement, and every intentional cut is an opportunity to prevent textile waste before it is ever created.

By the end of the training, participants had discovered that sustainable fashion is not just about making beautiful clothes—it is about designing responsibly, respecting resources, and recognising that the most sustainable waste is the waste that is never created.



A Story Of Impact

Monday is 15 years old. He started school late because both his parents were massacred in a village attack in Kaduna South.

In school, he sat quietly at the back of the classroom, avoided participation, and simply endured each day. Everything changed when he joined Mendaya. He was introduced to play, pencils, colours, threads, scissors, fabric waste, and a sewing machine, with one simple instruction: Draw and create your dream shirt and whatever you imagined. He sketched, cut, stitched, and created with growing confidence. A boy who had learned to disappear was beginning to show up. By the end of the program, Monday proudly designed and stitched his own colourful shirt and presented it at our street fashion show, modelling his creation in front of over 300 community members. Afterwards, he looked at us and said, "Uncle, thank you. I never thought I would be this happy again since my parents were killed. You made me believe in myself. I believe now that I can do anything I imagine." Monday is now actively participating in school and was among the best-performing students in his last examination.



Donate Now

Every Dream Needs a Home. Your donation helps establish the first male-centred creative hub and School of Sustainable Fashion.

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Monday's story is not unique. It is the story of countless boys and young men across Nigeria who are surviving abuse, violence, and abandonment with nowhere safe to turn. This is the story Mendaya exists to change.

Right now, our participants learn under a tree, in an open compound, rain, sun, and all. It's time for that to change. They built confidence, creativity, and community. Imagine what they could build with a safe, structured space to call their own, express themselves and build their dream