# SAMS 2023: A Stage for Young Talent, a Community of Encouragement

Bamenda, Cameroon | 16–17 December 2023

Thirty-nine mentees shared their creativity and skills as mentors, volunteers and guests gathered in Bamenda to celebrate a year of learning.

On 16 and 17 December 2023, the Smiles Africa Mentorship Summit brought people together in Bamenda to celebrate young talent and the care that helps it grow. The gathering at Hope Baptist Conference Hall, Ndamukong, marked the close of the year's mentorship programme.

Thirty-nine mentees shared work and performances spanning arts and crafts, dance, spoken word, singing, culture and technology. The exhibition gave their learning a public stage, with mentors, volunteers and guests there to recognise the effort behind each contribution.

## Time to reflect, room to shine

The first day included a retreat, offering a shared time for faith and reflection. The second day brought the skill exhibition, performances and educational conversations together. Guest speakers joined in person and online to explore volunteering, entrepreneurship, education, talent, technology and branding.

Mentees from the pastry department prepared refreshments with guidance from their mentors. Their contribution was another way to share what they had learned, bringing a practical skill into the experience of everyone gathered.

## Celebrating the people behind the learning

Awards recognised mentees, mentors and volunteers. Around 20 volunteers, including mentors, helped bring the gathering to life, contributing their time and knowledge to a celebration centred on young people.

The summit also brought new connections. A partnership with AfrikSpark was established to support internship opportunities for graduates of the web development programme, linking the celebration of learning with possibilities beyond the summit.

To every mentee who shared their work, every mentor who offered patient guidance, and everyone who helped make space for this gathering: thank you. SAMS 2023 was a moment to recognise young people's creativity and to stand beside them with encouragement as they continued their journey.