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Quarterly Newsletter



**INVESTING IN THE FUTURE,
ONE ENTREPRENEUR AT A TIME**

Content

Message from Executive Director	03
KIC inaugurates new office in Tamale	04
KIC Board Chair interacts with students from University for Development Studies	05
Country Director of Mastercard Foundation pays working visit to KIC	05
KIC Board pays working visit to selected KIC Business	06
KIC introduces inaugural Agriculture Innovation for Africa (AIA) Conference	07
KIC AgriTech Challenge supporting entrepreneurship for young people through Market Research Tours	09
KIC Agritech Challenge Classic 2023 holds campus level pitch events	10
KIC signs MOU with Bolgatanga Technical University	11
KIC, partners, provide agricultural kits for School Farm Competition	12
Young Agripreneur Forum (YAF) launched	14
Women's Bootcamp community outreach programmes	15

Message from Executive Director



Benjamin Gyan-Kesse
Executive Director

This quarter, KIC continues to expand in its growth trajectory, as we work to strengthen our businesses by focusing on tailor-made entrepreneurship capacity building for young people, whilst ensuring readiness-to-work skills, team building, networking and coaching for KIC businesses.

KIC continues to create impact and mindset change through our programme implementation. This year, our AgriTech Challenge has seen a record expansion of 2000 young people participating from 10 regions across 10 partner universities. Pitch events to determine winners from the competition have been organised in preparation for the Zonals and Final pitch competitions.

To encourage more women participation, KIC introduced the campus-based engagements to encourage more women participation,

and we have gone further to engage farmer-based organisations at community level with entrepreneurship skills. The School Farm Competition is also gaining traction with more than 201 schools participating across the country.

To further promote innovation and encourage long term impact for KIC businesses in the AgManufacturing sector, I am pleased to announce that KIC signed an MOU with Bolgatanga Technical University during this quarter. I'm also happy to announce that the KIC Board paid a working visit to some of our businesses and were impressed at the growth of these businesses.

Our stakeholder efforts at bring young people into the focus on policy and industry practice on innovation, agriculture and digitalisation, this year, KIC introduced the inaugural Agriculture Innovation for Africa (AIA) Conference, bringing together key stakeholders in the industry to discuss the opportunities, trends and impact of the participation of young people within the agricultural value chain.

To further deepen our engagement, we also participated in the Africa Food Systems Summit in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and the Global Entrepreneurship Congress in Melbourne Australia, shaping stakeholder and industry practice around youth empowerment, employment opportunities through entrepreneurship and agricultural value chains.

At KIC, we are committed to empowering young people, and it gives us joy to see these businesses, more importantly for women led businesses or women co-founded businesses thrive and succeed as Agri Start-ups, and MSMEs.

We continue to work with all our partners and stakeholders to providing opportunities for young people to thrive and find employment opportunities while harnessing their innovations.

Wishing you an enjoyable read.



KIC inaugurates new office in Tamale

Kosmos Innovation Center (KIC) has organised an inauguration ceremony for the opening of its offices and incubation center in Tamale on the 6th July 2023. The event was attended by Honourable Alhaji Shani Alhassan Shaibu, Northern Regional Minister, Joe Mensah, KIC Board Chair, Benjamin Gyna-Kesse, Executive Director for KIC, Representatives from ACDI/VOCA, district assembly officials, traditional authorities, regional representative of USAID as well as other development agencies located in the Northern Region, among others.

With support from Feed the Future Ghana Market Systems & Resilience (MSR) a USAID funded program, KIC has set-up the incubation hub in Tamale to further reach young people and entrepreneurs within 17 districts across 4 out of the 5 Northern Regions of Ghana with capacity building, coaching and program implementation.

The MSR project will strengthen commercial relationship between actors, improve the rural entrepreneurship ecosystem to enable greater market participation, particularly for women and youth, expand the availability of agribusiness services and link targeted policy initiatives to improve local economic governance.

Speaking at the event, Honourable Alhaji Shani Alhassan Shaibu, Northern Regional Minister, said: "The opening of a KIC office and business incubation hub here in Tamale would provide young people entrepreneurial skills, adding on to the other initiatives that have been started by government and other development partners

present in the region, as well as promote entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Joe Mensah, Board Chair for KIC highlighted that KIC's strategic vision is to support youth entrepreneurship within the agricultural sector in Ghana by focusing on creating, nurturing and developing youth led businesses that address key issues within the agricultural value chain.

Speaking at the event, the Executive Director of KIC, Mr. Benjamin Gyan- Kesse reiterated KIC's commitment to bring about transformation within the agricultural value chain, through its coaching, mentoring and seed funding support, thereby equipping young people with market readiness skills to be economically empowered and contribute towards development in their communities.

As part of the inauguration ceremony, there was a visit to Kodu Technologies, a KIC supported business.

Through its partnership with the USAID MSR project, KIC aims to build collaborative partnerships towards development and sustainable and viable agricultural value systems.

In August this year, KIC has started phase of the Feed The Future Programme, with the call for applications for the Agri Biz Build Programme.

KIC Board Chair's Interaction with students from University for Development Studies

Mr. Joe Mensah, KIC Board Chair and Senior Vice President and Head of Ghana Business Unit, Kosmos Energy, had a mentoring and coaching session with some students from University for Development Studies, earlier this quarter on 6th July, 2023. This happened along the sidelines of the commissioning event for the new KIC office in Tamale. During his interaction with them, he highlighted the need for them to work on achieving their dreams and goals through focus, diligence, determination and consistency.



Mr. Joe Mensah

KIC Board Chair and Senior Vice President & Head of Ghana Business Unit, Kosmos Energy giving an inspirational message

Country Director of Mastercard Foundation pays working visit to KIC

On 27th September, Kosmos Innovation Center had the honour of hosting Ms. Rica Rwigamba, Country Director for Mastercard Foundation, Ghana. Mr. Benjamin Gyan-Kesse, Executive Director of Kosmos Innovation Center welcomed Ms. Rica Rwigamba and the Mastercard Foundation team. He presented on KIC's programme pathways for providing young



Ms. Rica Rwigamba, Country Director for Mastercard Foundation, Ghana, with Mr. Benjamin Gyan-Kesse, Executive Director of Kosmos Innovation Center and other KIC Staff

people with employment opportunities within the agricultural sector through coaching, mentoring, and investor readiness programmes, whilst supporting innovation. KIC also shared some of the success stories and testimonials from KIC supported businesses and start-ups. Through our partnership with the Mastercard Foundation, KIC is training the next generation of young leaders and entrepreneurs in Ghana's agriculture sector.

KIC Board pays working visit to selected KIC Businesses

The Board of Directors for Kosmos Innovation Center (KIC), has paid a site visit to Maku Foods and Grow For Me, two of KIC supported businesses. The visit created the opportunity for the KIC Board to interact with the co-founders and some of the young people who have been employed by these organisations. The delegation from the Board was led by the Board Chair, Joe Mensah, and Benjamin Gyan-Kesse, Executive Director for KIC.

Speaking about impact of joining the KIC programme, Caroline Amanor, co-founder and



Board of Directors for Kosmos Innovation Center at Maku Foods Processing Plant

CEO of Maku Foods mentioned that KIC's AgriTech Challenge Pro had led to the growth of her business, citing the insights from the trainings, coaching and skills acquired by being part of the programme.

"We started very small. We were introduced to the KIC programme, and since we joined we have learnt a lot. We were part of the winners for the 2022 AgriTech Challenge Pro competition and through the seed funding we received, we have been able to invest in building the business and purchasing more equipment for processing our ingredients into ready- to cook condiments and spices. KIC helped position our business for growth and investor readiness," she said.

On his part, Nana Opoku Agyeman-Prempeh, co-founder and CEO for Grow For Me mentioned how the funding support received through KIC's partners has enabled them to scale up their commodity trading business and input financing for their rice farmers in Asutua.

"We decided to partner with KIC to leverage on their skills, network, expertise and partnerships. We have been able to grow our business substantially

and also create employment opportunities for young people."

Speaking about the impact of KIC, Benjamin Gyan-Kesse, Executive Director of KIC, mentioned that KIC's commitment to transforming the agricultural sector through youth employment has led to the creation of 36 businesses through KIC's programmes.

KIC remains committed to supporting scalable business ideas within the agricultural sector, by encouraging young people to see the opportunities within the sector. So far, KIC has trained more than 1500 young people.

Grow For Me is a commodity and input financing, aggregation and trading platform. It enables individuals to participate in farming and commodity trading.

Maku Foods deals in ready-to-eat foods including shito and green pepper sauce, and also ready-to-use products like ginger & garlic paste, onion-pepper paste; chicken, fish, meat marinades; and 'kelewele' spice mix.



Board of Directors for Kosmos Innovation Center at office of Grow For Me



KIC introduces inaugural Agriculture Innovation for Africa (AIA) Conference

The Kosmos Innovation Centre (KIC) and its partners have hosted an Agricultural Innovation for Africa (AIA) Conference, a platform that ignites transformational dialogue to share insights on propelling food security and innovation within Ghana’s vibrant agribusiness sector, for youth and agri-MSMEs.

The inaugural AIA conference, held under the theme “Empowering Youth Start-ups & Agri-MSMEs: Advancing Food Security through Innovation & Collaboration,” gathered a multitude of distinguished decision-makers, thought leaders, industry stakeholders, and professionals with the shared goal of addressing critical agricultural challenges across Ghana and the broader African landscape.

In his welcome address, Benjamin Gyan-Kesse, Executive Director for KIC, underscored the importance of adopting agtechnology and empowering youth start-ups within the agricultural value chain to contribute significantly towards the continent’s development.

“A key objective of this conference is to promote and drive youth involvement in agriculture and entire agribusiness value chain for that matter. By nurturing a transformative dialogue that champions the role of youth start-ups and agri-MSMEs in shaping the future of agribusiness, the conference has set a remarkable precedent for future endeavors in the field” he stated.

On his part, Hon. Yaw Frimpong Addo, Deputy Minister for Crops, Ministry of Food and Agriculture emphasized government’s commitment to fostering an environment conducive to agricultural innovation and sustainable growth, especially for youth start-ups and Agri-MSMEs.

“As a Ministry, we are committed to the vision of ensuring a modernized agriculture culminating in a structurally transformed economy and evident in food security, employment opportunities and reduced poverty.

Young people and Agri-MSMEs will play a critical role in this regard. Our programmes, and strategies have been developed to ensure particular attention is paid to Youth led start-ups and agri-MSMEs”, he added.



In his remarks, the Board Chair of KIC, Joe Mensah highlighted the need for collaboration in the agricultural sector, while harnessing local knowledge, technology, and sustainability, by



focusing on the opportunity the agricultural innovation for Africa conference provides especially for young people.

The two-day conference provided a platform for a series of panel discussions on reshaping the trajectory of African agriculture. Notable discussions encompassed promoting an enabling ecosystem for digitalized agriculture and innovation in Africa, analyzing the impact of governmental policies on the growth and sustainability of Agri-MSMEs and youth-led startups, gender mainstreaming in Agriculture, and delving into the efficacy of financial support programs for agri-businesses.

Others include the role of standardization and certification in promoting agri-business in the local and international markets, as well as the role of mechanization in agriculture.

KIC's dedication to creating a forum for meaningful dialogue and the exchange of ideas is evident through the resounding success of the conference's maiden edition. The event not only catalyzed discussions but also planted the seeds for actionable strategies to enhance food security and elevate the approach to African agriculture. With a united focus on innovation, collaboration, and sustainable growth.

The second day of the conference also hosted a Deal Room where agribusiness pitched to potential investors. More than 30 agribusinesses including KIC start-ups also participated in the exhibition that was organised as part of the conference.

This maiden edition of the Agricultural Innovation for Africa Conference was supported by Kosmos Energy, ITC, IDH, Agra, Absa, RMG, Blue Skies, Ceres, Voltic among others. Media partners for the event included Joy FM, My Joy online, Joy News, Global Media Alliance and its partners Happy FM and Y Fm.





KIC AgriTech Challenge supporting entrepreneurship for young people through Market Research Tours

Following successful applications for the 2023 KIC AgriTech challenge, students have been enrolled to take part in the programme, across 10 different universities in 10 regions of the country.

After a rigorous selection process across the partnering universities, AgriTechies have embarked on their market research tours. These tours are a critical aspect of the programme, where students meet with industry players across different value chains to identify some of the opportunities, challenges and come up with business ideas.

Through the Market Research Tours, students have formed great ideas that have gone on to be nurtured into Market Viable Products (MVPS). The students receive feedback and coaching.

Speaking about the impact of this phase of the programme on the business ideation, Ayeshatu Ameen, Co Founder and Marketing Lead of Jaasgrow, a KIC start-up from the 2022 AgriTech Challenge Classic, said: “The market research and feedback received from the market testing has helped our team to improve our production process. I learnt a lot and met many key industry players.”

KIC AgriTech Challenge Classic is a 7-month program that identifies young people who are interested in setting up a business and provides them with a system of training, workshops, and support to develop their business ideas. The program uses coaching and market research tours to encourage participants to take a fresh

look at the agriculture value chain and identify new areas with potential business opportunities.

Winners from the AgriTech challenge classic competition will go on to join the Agri Tech Challenge Pro, an accelerator program aiming to support young entrepreneurs to launch and grow commercially viable, scalable solutions to key problems in the agricultural sector. The program aims to drive technology and innovation



as a catalyst to enhancing productivity, improving yields, and creating more jobs within Ghana’s agricultural sector.

In his remarks about the programme, Benjamin Gyan-Kesse, the Executive Director for KIC said: “KIC is committed to developing young entrepreneurs to transform the agricultural sector in Ghana with innovation and cutting edge AgriTech. At KIC, over the years we have seen business ideas develop through the AgriTech Challenge Classic, grow and progress unto other KIC mentorship programmes.”

Through the KIC and the Mastercard Foundation partnership, the AgriTech Challenge Classic expects to train about 4,880 young people across the partner universities from 2022-2025, collaborating with regional academic partners such as universities.



KIC Agritech Challenge Classic 2023 holds campus level pitch events

The 2023 KIC Agritech Challenge Classic is in the pitch stage of the competition. Different university campuses have organised their pitch events for all the business ideas, following the students' experience during the recently completed market research tours phase.

KIC is committed to empowering young people to become entrepreneurs by providing them with the needed coaching and mentoring to transform their ideas into viable products or services within the agricultural sector, using innovation and technology. Since its inception, KIC has trained more than 3500 young people.

The first stages of the pitches are took place at campus level for each of the 10 participating universities. The universities include the University of Ghana (UG), in Greater Accra, SD Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies (SDD-UBIDS), in the Upper West region, University of Cape Coast (UCC), in the Central region, the University for Development Studies (UDS), in the Northern region, and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in the Ashanti region.

Ho Technical University (HTU), from the Volta Region, Bolgatanga Technical University (BTU), from the Upper East Region, Takoradi Technical University (TTU), from the Western Region, Koforidua Technical University (KTU), from the Eastern Region and University of Energy and Natural Resources (UENR) from the Bono Region.

With a select group of Ideation Team members from the respective regions, the AgriTech teams are receiving expert advice to fine tune their business ideas. Ideas that progress onto the next stage of the challenge will then progress onto the testing of their Market Viable Product on the marketplace. This will enable them to fine tune these business ideas and whiles gathering market insights on market share, pricing, competitor landscape, as well as identifying the target group consumer. The final stages of the AgriTech Challenge Classic will involve Zonal pitches, culminating into a final pitch competition, where winners announced will progress onto the AgriTech Challenge Pro competition.



KIC signs MOU with Bolgatanga Technical University

KIC announced a partnership with the Bolgatanga Technical University, on 17th August 2023. The event took place at an MOU signing ceremony on the sidelines of the inaugural Agricultural Innovation for Africa Conference organised by KIC.

Under the agreement, Bolgatanga Technical University will provide technical support to KIC businesses in the Northern regions who manufacture agricultural machinery and hardware. Currently, there are two KIC start-ups Kigo and King Tractor who have produced tractors. The partnership will include maintenance, hardware replacement and general servicing of these equipment.



The MOU signing ceremony marks the beginning of a dynamic partnership between Kosmos Innovation Center and Bolgatanga Technical University. This collaboration will see both institutions working together to bridge the gap between academic excellence and real-world applications, harnessing the power of innovation to address local challenges and create meaningful economic opportunities for the community.

The collaboration aims to stimulate economic growth by supporting the emergence of new businesses and startups. By nurturing local talent and fostering a culture of innovation, Kosmos Innovation Center and Bolgatanga Technical University aspire to contribute to the economic transformation for young people.



Highlighting the importance of the partnership, Benjamin Gyan-Kesse, Executive Director for KIC said, “This partnership will enable KIC businesses to be supported to drive innovations and support the agricultural sector, while promoting entrepreneurship. We aim to empower the next generation of innovators and problem-solvers, ultimately contributing to the socio-economic development of the region.”

Speaking on behalf of Bolgatanga Technical University, Prof. Daniel Oppong-Sekyere, Associate Professor of Crop Science at the university said:

“At Bolgatanga Technical University, we are glad that this partnership will help students to invest in technology and knowledge transfer to support the agricultural industry whilst providing job opportunities for young people. This partnership with Kosmos Innovation Center opens up a world of possibilities for our students and the community. Through joint initiatives, we will nurture creativity, build practical skills, and create pathways for sustainable growth.”

The signing of this MOU is a testament to the commitment of both Kosmos Innovation Center and Bolgatanga Technical University to fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and technological advancement.

Kosmos Innovation Center is committed to empowering young people to develop innovative solutions within the agricultural sector and agri-adjacent sectors.

KIC, partners, provide agricultural kits for School Farm Competition



Kosmos Innovation Center has donated agricultural kits including personal protective equipment (PPE) to a total of 201 junior and senior high schools across 11 regions participating in this year's School Farm Competition, including schools for special needs. Other items provided to the schools include hoes, rakes, matchets, watering cans, quality seeds and agrochemicals. The items were distributed to introduce the students to the appropriate usage of agricultural inputs.

The School Farm Competition, started as an initiative of Blue Skies Foundation, to create awareness about agriculture among young people and create a pipeline of talent within the agricultural sector with focus in three regions in the south. In 2022, through KIC's partnership with

Mastercard Foundation, KIC partnered with Blue Skies to scale up the programme and to reach more schools nationwide.

The School Farm Competition introduces students in junior and senior high schools to agriculture innovation by focusing on horticulture. The students learn from concepts such as nursing seedlings, to transplanting, cultivation beds and the right application use of approved chemicals and fertilizer, as well as the use of PPE.

Through the practical experience, the programme seeks to create change in mindset about seeing agriculture as a form of punishment to seeing it as an economic viable activity.

Prior to the programme roll-out for each year's school, the teachers are trained on the good agricultural practices and innovative ways to



introduce farming to young people. The initiative ends with an award ceremony where deserving schools, teachers, and students are given prizes to appreciate their commitment and enthusiasm towards the project, and the impact made on the students and communities at large.

Through the programme, participating schools have supported their students to see the benefits of farming. It has also enabled schools to support their canteen. Some of the yields have also been sold externally and the proceeds have been used to support development in the school.

For 2022, winning schools for the School Farm of the Year (JHS Category) include: Anyinam AME Zion JHS (2nd Runner up); Cape Coast School for the Deaf & Blind (1st runner up); and the Winner for this category was Adoe Basic School. The winning schools for the 2022 Best School



Farm of the Year (SHS Category) included the following: Akwamuman SHS (2nd Runner up); Atweaman SHS (1st Runner Up); the Winner for this category was Kwahu Tafo SHS.

In his remarks about KIC's long-term strategy on youth involvement in agriculture, Mr. Benjamin Gyan-Kesse, Executive Director said:

“ At KIC, we seek to change the negative image young people have about agriculture in

Ghana over the past years. We want to spread the culture of farming among Ghanaian youth, helping them to see agriculture as economically viable, and we are doing this through the School Farm Competition. Through our partnership with the Mastercard Foundation, we have been able to scale up the programme this year to reach more schools.”

KIC remains committed to creating mindset change about agriculture among young people.



Young Agripreneur Forum (YAF) launched



The Young Agripreneur Forum (YAF), an initiative of KIC has been launched with 10 partner universities. YAF is a student-led interactive forum where tertiary students can share and exchange ideas, interests and engage in activities pertaining to agriculture. YAF will provide capacity building and practical skills training for students, invest in changing the mindset and perceptions of young people and position

agripreneurship as an exciting career of choice. After successful launch events, Agri-Talks have been organised across different campuses. The events have been organised to throw more light on the opportunities for agricultural development for young people. Some field visits and practical training sessions on food processing have also been organised.



Women's Bootcamp community outreach programmes

KIC organised a Women's Bootcamp at community level to support women groups and farmer-based organisations and community women-based groups with entrepreneurship skills. Resource Persons introduced young female participants to alternative livelihood resources such as soap making, as well as supporting them to establish Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs).

These skills will support household and income livelihoods, as a way of helping farmers adapt to changing climatic conditions that result in decreased production.



Stakeholder Engagement



KIC delegation at AGRF 2023



From middle: Founder and CEO of Global Entrepreneurship Network with KIC Team and Representatives of Zambia Development Agency at GEC 2023



Team Ghana at GEC 2023



Deputy Minister for Education, Hon. Gifty Twum-Ampofo with KIC Executive Director at GEC 2023



Portfolio Manager and Executive Director, KIC at GEC 2023



Representatives of NEOMA Business School Global Executive MBA visit KIC

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