

INNOVATION FOR AFRICA

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

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Message from Executive Director

Dear Partners and Stakeholders,

We are pleased to share with you some key highlights for Q3, on KIC's work in transforming the lives of young people through capacity building in entrepreneurship and agribusiness. This Quarter, KIC's AgriTech Challenge Classic embarked on Market research tours, a critical component of the program that exposed young people to the industry, allowing them to find solutions to some of the challenges. We are also pleased to announce that KIC's Start-up KoduTech emerged as winner at the Go Getazz Prize being recognised for their sustainable innovation.

Working together with our partnering universities, we upscaled the Young Agripreneur Forum (YAF) to introduce many young students to opportunities in agribusiness through value addition, animal husbandry and food processing. Bringing together our network of alumni across the various regions of the country,

KIC is pleased to announce that its alumni executive chapters have been inducted across the country to ensure networking and sharing of ideas among young people.

As part of our engagement with industry stakeholders, KIC was pleased to organise the 2nd edition of the Agricultural Innovation for Africa Conference, on the potential for youth start-ups .

KIC Leadership was also recognised for stirring contributions to social development and social impact as an NGO.

We continue to deepen our impact. By the end of the quarter, more than 7,000 AgriTech Participants have received training from KIC. Also, more than 42,000 young people have been trained under the School Farm Competition.

Also, more than 11,000 young women have been equipped with entrepreneurial skills through the Women's Bootcamp, Empower Her Program.

We wish you a pleasant read and welcome your feedback.

Wishing you a pleasant read.



Benjamin Gyan-Kesse
Executive Director

Benjamin Gyan-Kesse wins CEO of the Year, for NGO Category



Mr. Benjamin Gyan-Kesse, Executive Director for Kosmos Innovation Center has been adjudged CEO of the Year, NGO Category, at the just ended 2024 Ghana CEO Awards held at the Kempin Benjamin Gyan-Kesse receiving award

The Award recognises Mr. Gyan-Kesse's contribution to promoting youth entrepreneurship through his strategic leadership of the Kosmos Innovation Center Ghana. Under his Leadership, the organisation has recorded tremendous success while supporting young people to create or adapt sustainable technologies to safeguard the environment and promote agricultural activity.

Receiving the award, Mr. Gyan-Kesse dedicated the award to partners, stakeholders and young entrepreneurs.

He added: "KIC is committed to supporting young people to realise their dreams of becoming agripreneurs. Working together with start-ups and Agri-MSMEs to develop eco-friendly solutions for the environment, KIC and its partners are investing in sustainable technologies within the agricultural value chain.

It is our responsibility to innovate for a greener, more sustainable world for generations to come."

Kosmos Innovation Center (KIC) is a non-profit organization that invests in young entrepreneurs and small businesses. We empower entrepreneurs to turn their ideas into viable, self-sustaining businesses and we work alongside promising small businesses to help them scale and reach their full potential. Since its inception in 2016, more than 18,000 young leaders have been trained in business skills and entrepreneurship through participation in our programs.

The 3rd edition of the Ghana CEO Awards, organized by Globe Productions, was under the theme "CEOs for Climate: Steering towards a Greener Future. It brought together CEOs and business leaders from across the business community.

Market Research Tours are a critical component of the KIC AgriTech Challenge Classic



Kosmos Innovation Center (KIC) continues to empower young entrepreneurs through its renowned AgriTech Challenge Classic Program, working in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation. At the heart of this program are the Market Research Tours, an essential component designed to foster entrepreneurial thinking while exposing participants to the realities and opportunities within Ghana's agricultural landscape.

The AgriTech Challenge Classic, KIC's flagship initiative is a 7-month program, that equips young Ghanaians with capacity building and mindset change about agriculture. Participants are provided with the tools to identify challenge within the agricultural sector, solve problems, while building sustainable agritech and agribusinesses. Through the Market Research Tours, participants embark on immersive field visits to various agricultural regions and businesses across the country. These tours serve as a hands-on learning experience, allowing participants to witness firsthand the challenges and opportunities in the sector, from farm operations to agribusiness value chains.

Kosmos Innovation Center (KIC) continues to empower young entrepreneurs. The participating universities for this year's Challenge include University of Ghana (UG), Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), University of Cape Coast (UCC), Bolgatanga Technical University (BTU), Takoradi Technical University (TTU), Ho Technical University (HTU), Koforidua Technical University (KTU), University of Development Studies (UDS), SD Dombo University of Business & Integrated Development Studies (UBIDS),

, University of Energy and Natural Resource (UENR), C. K. Tadam University of Technology and Applied Sciences; Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development; Damongo Agricultural College; Kwadaso Agricultural College; Ejura Agric College and Mechanization Center and Ohawu Agricultural College.

During the tours, participants interact with farmers, agribusiness owners, and other key stakeholders, gaining valuable insights into the needs and demands of the agricultural market. This exposure is key in shaping their entrepreneurial ventures, ensuring that their business ideas are rooted in real-world needs and have the potential to scale and drive impact.

Speaking about the significance of the Market Research Tours, Benjamin Gyan-Kesse, Executive Director for Kosmos Innovation Center noted, "The market research activity is pivotal to the ideation process for the agritech teams participating in the AgriTech Challenge Classic. The tours not only provide participants with an opportunity to understand the agricultural sector better but also challenge them to think creatively about solutions to the problems they encounter on the field."

Through these tours, young innovators are inspired to think beyond conventional agriculture, exploring how technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship can be harnessed to tackle pressing issues such as food security, sustainability, climate change and efficiency within the agricultural sector.

Alternative livelihoods and skills training for women groups across Ghana



Under the Women's Bootcamp program, KIC launched a youth-focused training initiative targeting adolescent girls and young women, to impart young people with essential and alternative livelihood skills, soft skills and entrepreneurship capabilities to enable them earn decent living, provide all year-round employment instead of depending solely on agriculture which is seasonal in most parts of the country. A total of 2019 young women were trained and received start-up kits to initiate income-generating activities, providing self-employment opportunities and fostering local job creation. This intervention was implemented across multiple regions covering various districts within these regions. These includes Eastern, Volta, Oti, Central, Upper East and West, and the Ahafo regions.

By the end of September, the program had reached 9335 women (5418 in Quarter one, 2048 in Quarter two and 1869 in Quarter three). In Quarter one, 153 starter packs were distributed. In Quarter two, direct credit support through leverage microfinance was given to 2521 women. Indirect support within the same quarter stood as 10,376. In Quarter three, 1866 starter packs were distributed.



KIC AgriTech participant wins 2024 Presidential Pitch



In a remarkable achievement, Samuel Naamgwinaa, a first-year student pursuing a Diploma in Electrical and Electronic Engineering at the University of Mines and Technology (UMAT), has emerged as the overall winner of the 2024 Presidential Pitch. Samuel's innovative creation, the "Smart Switch," captured the attention of Ghana's president, the judges and audiences alike, earning him top honors in a 3-day competition, which took place between 20th – 23rd August 2024.

The Smart Switch is an automated system that allows users to remotely control their light consumption, significantly reducing energy wastage and contributing to Ghana's energy conservation efforts. Samuel's pitch stood out for its ingenuity, ease of use, and seamless integration into existing systems, leaving a lasting impression on the panel.

This year's Presidential Pitch attracted over 300 applicants, with only 10 finalists making it to the final round. Samuel not only claimed the ultimate prize of GHS 200,000 but also received an additional GHS 50,000 pledge from the President, on 23rd, the final day of the pitch, who was notably impressed by Samuel's presentation and the depth of his innovative thinking.

Samuel's journey to this victory began with his participation in the 2024 KIC Agritech Challenge Classic, representing Takoradi Technical University. In an interview with KIC Program Officer Anthony Agee-kum, Samuel credited the Challenge for playing a pivotal role in his success. "The KIC Market Research Tours, Capacity Building Trainings, particularly on Business Concepts, and the Pitch Decks shared by Ato Ulzen-Appiah and other resource persons were crucial in my preparation for the final pitch," he explained. "Although I had participated in similar pitches before, I rarely won prizes. However, since joining the KIC Agritech Challenge, I have been empowered through its structured capacity-building programs, inspiring me to aim for and achieve success this time around. I extend my sincere appreciation to KIC, the Takoradi Technical University team, and the Mastercard Foundation for their unwavering support."

Looking ahead, Samuel expressed enthusiasm and optimism about the future of his KIC Agritech journey. He and his team are now focused on developing a new concept that applies the same automation principles to the agricultural sector, with the goal of benefiting smallholder farmers in the Western Region and across Ghana.

The 25-year-old young man's story is a testament to the transformative impact of the KIC Agritech Challenge Classic, which continues to nurture young innovators and equip them with the tools and knowledge needed to excel, even beyond the borders of the Challenge. His success not only highlights the importance of such initiatives but also serves as an inspiration to aspiring entrepreneurs and innovators across the country.

Young Agripreneur Forum(YAF) provides entrepreneurship training for young students across the country



To inspire the next generation of agricultural entrepreneurs with work-readiness skills, the Kosmos Innovation Center (KIC) and the Mastercard Foundation have extended the Young Agripreneurs Forum (YAF) to six additional institutions. These orientations aim to establish YAF chapters on their campuses, fostering a mindset shift towards agriculture and encouraging more young people to engage in agricultural activities. The 6 new colleges include: C. K. Tadam University of Technology and Applied Sciences; Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development; Damongo Agricultural College; Kwadaso Agricultural College; Ejura Agric College and Mechanization Center and Ohawu Agricultural College.

The newly formed YAF associations have already embarked on intensive hands-on training in various agribusiness ventures. These include oyster mushroom production, creating recycled woven slippers from agricultural materials, honey production, and seed production. The initiatives are designed to equip young people with essential income-generating and employable skills, enabling them to explore diverse opportunities within the agricultural sector. They also aim to empower them to become self-reliant entrepreneurs, capable of sustaining and expanding their agribusiness ventures.

YAF members undergo mushroom training. The establishment of YAF chapters and the subsequent training programs represent a significant step towards fostering a new generation of innovative and entrepreneurial individuals within the agricultural sector.

By providing practical skills and resources, KIC is not only promoting sustainable agriculture but also contributing to the economic empowerment of young people.

Speaking about the impact of the Forum, Benjamin Gyan-Kesse, Executive Director, reiterated the need for empowering young people by equipping them with relevant entrepreneurship skills that can support and enhance the agricultural sector.

“ At KIC, we are committed into transforming young people into agripreneurs, by introducing them to employment opportunities within the entire agricultural value chain. Through these initiatives, KIC continues to demonstrate its commitment to driving agricultural innovation and creating lasting impacts in communities by equipping young agripreneurs with the tools they need to succeed.

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.

KIC Alumni Fellowship National and Regional Executives inaugurated

The Kosmos Innovation Center (KIC) has recently conducted an induction for Executives of the KIC Fellowship to provide networking within the entrepreneurship ecosystem for all alumni from KIC programs such as the AgriTech Challenge Classic, Pro, Business Incubation and Business Booster programs. This initiative seeks to unite KIC Fellows to capitalize on the myriad of opportunities available for young people in the agricultural sector.

After a selection process for the KIC Fellowship executives, the orientation for all executives, responsible for managing the KIC Fellowship across the country, took place in July 2024. This orientation was meticulously designed to ensure ownership and active participation by the Fellows. During the orientation, several critical topics were covered such as: overview of the KIC Fellowship's objectives, mission, and vision; explanation of the fellowship structure and the key roles of representatives; training on the safeguarding policy, KIC brand, and communication guidelines, among others. The session concluded with the KIC Fellowship Representative Oath of Office, solidifying the commitment of the executives to their new roles.

Speaking at the induction ceremony, Benjamin Gyan-Kesse, Executive Director for Kosmos Innovation Center said: "KIC is committed to your growth journey as entrepreneurs and start-ups. As Fellows, you represent a network of entrepreneurs across the country and your efforts at bringing them together to ensure continued engagement, exchange of ideas and networking will help to further grow and build your respective businesses, start-ups and provide key insights on the business landscape."

Experienced Fellows, who have already established successful agribusiness ventures, will be engaged as mentors. Their role is to guide and support young and upcoming Fellows, fostering an environment of knowledge sharing and skills development.

Working together with partners like the Mastercard Foundation, Kosmos Innovation Center is committed to promoting entrepreneurial development to provide employment opportunities for young people within the agricultural sector. Through KIC's initiatives more than 18,000 young people have been trained in entrepreneurship.



KIC Start-up, Kodu Tech wins Go Gettaz Award



In a remarkable achievement, Dr. Mohammed Faried, a fellow of the Kosmos Innovation Center and the Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder of Kodu Technology, has emerged as one of the grand prize winners for the 2024 GoGettaz Agripreneurs Prize Competition at the Africa Food Systems Forum held in Kigali, Rwanda, this September.

Kodu Pad, a groundbreaking invention put together by himself and team, captured the attention of judges and audiences alike leading this significant achievement.

The product is an ecofriendly sanitary pad manufactured from agricultural waste such as the fibers of bananas and plantains. Kodu Pad is not only sustainable but has proven to be a healthier option as opposed to other products.

Dr. Faried's pitch, which stood out for its ingenuity, landed him a prize of USD 50,000 for the scaling of his business.

The 2024 edition of the GoGettaz Agripreneurs Prize which received about 2000 applications, selected its winners from among 12 finalists hailing from 11 different African countries through a rigorous process.

This journey to victory for Kodu Technology, producers of the Kodu Pad, began some years ago when Dr. Faried and team participated in the AgriTech Classic Challenge of the Kosmos Innovation Center. Through tailor-made capacity building sessions and mentorship programmes, they honed their skills and refined their innovation. Looking ahead, Dr. Faried on behalf of his team, expressed enthusiasm and optimism about the future of Kodu Pad. He and his team are now focused on improving the banana fiber extraction procedure, one of the biggest challenges of the project.

To players in the nation's agricultural ecosystem, the success of Kodu Technology is testament to the transformative impact of the Kosmos Innovation Center, which continues to nurture young innovators and equip them with the tools and knowledge needed to excel.

GoGettaz Africa is a partnership initiative co-founded by Yara International and the Econet Group. The competition identifies young African founders of high-potential agrifood businesses between the ages of 18 to 35, and supports them with investment, leadership development, mentorship, visibility and partnerships to scale their ventures.

2nd edition of the Agricultural Innovation for Africa Conference organised



Kosmos Innovation Center (KIC) and its partners have organised the second edition of the Agricultural Innovation for Africa (AIA) Conference to highlight the empowerment of the next generation of agripreneurs, youth start-ups and Agri-MSMEs. Organized by the Kosmos Innovation Centre (KIC) and its partners, the two-day conference under the theme, ‘Empowering Youth Startups and Agri-MSMEs in Africa: Addressing Climate Change, Innovative Financing, Market Efficiency, and Gender Mainstreaming for Sustainable Food Systems’ was held from August 28-29,2024 at the auditorium of the University of Professional Studies.

The conference and exhibition event brought together diverse players in the agricultural sector to rethink the future of agricultural innovation, youth employment, and food security in Africa.

Delivering the keynote address, Country Director for AGRA, Dr. Betty Annan, acknowledged the role of youth start-ups in building transformative food system on the continent, and the need for efficient stakeholder action, collaboration and engagement to ensure youth initiatives within the sector contribute to effectively addressing key challenges related to climate change, access to market and gender empowerment.

“To realize the full potential of youth startups in agriculture, there is the need to create an enabling environment that supports their growth and success. To scale their solutions, the requisite investment, mentorship, and policies that prioritize youth-led enterprises are critical,” she added.

On his part, Executive Director for KIC, Benjamin Gyan-Kesse highlighted the need for while harnessing local knowledge, technology, and sustainability by supporting youth-startups and Agri-MSMEs.

“In today’s rapidly evolving agricultural landscape, the key to sustainable growth lies in our ability to collaborate across sectors, integrate local knowledge, and leverage innovative technologies,” Benjamin Gyan-Kesse said.

He added, “Youth and Agri-MSMEs continue to remain at the forefront of innovation and change in agriculture. By supporting these young innovators through conferences such as these, we are strategically positioning ourselves to champion the course of navigating the daunting challenges of food systems”.

The two-day Conference also included an exhibition and youth career fair held in collaboration with Jobberman to address the disconnect between Ghana’s youth and the burgeoning opportunities in agriculture. There was also the Deal Room Experience, which provided over 30 startups and Agri-MSMEs, including KIC Businesses, the opportunity to pitch their businesses to potential investors to scale up and grow. A workshop was also organised on some of the existing technology tools for implementation of traceability within agricultural value chains.

Bringing together over 500 participants both in person and online, AIA 2024 was supported by Kosmos Energy, AGRA, International Trade Centre, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, IDH, Callighana, Frontline Marketing, Leverage Microfinance Company Limited, Absa Bank, First National Bank, Access Bank, Standard Chartered Bank, African Regent Hotel, Promasidor, and Mazeera Restaurant. Media Partners were Happy FM and YFM.

Picture Gallery from Agricultural Innovation for Africa Awards

