

AGRF 2023: Heifer International Centres Youth, Innovation, Partnerships at Heart of Transforming Africa's Food Systems

Heifer International asks stakeholders at AGRF 2023 to back youth-driven innovations, technology, and strategic partnerships to boost Africa's food systems.

DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA, September 6, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Heifer International](https://www.einpresswire.com/), a leading global nonprofit working to end hunger and poverty in low- and middle-income nations while prioritising environmental sustainability, has called upon stakeholders in Africa's agriculture sector to enhance their backing for youth-driven innovations, technology adoption, and the establishment of strategic partnerships. These initiatives aim to bolster smallholder farmers and communities, ultimately raising incomes and catalysing a transformation in the continent's food systems.



Adesuwa Ifedi, Senior Vice President of Africa Programme, and Surita Sandosham, Chief Executive Officer, both of Heifer International, at the AGRF Summit.

Heifer International made this call at this year's Africa Food Systems Forum (previously known as [AGRF](https://www.agrforum.org/)), where it hosted side events, networking forums, and participated in several panels that centered discussions around transformative solutions for Africa's agriculture. The AGRF 2023, taking place September 4-8 in Dar es Salaam, is Africa's leading venue for agriculture stakeholders to come together and agree on practical actions to transform food systems and end hunger.

More than 3000 attendees from over 70 countries attended this year's summit, where more than 350 experts and policymakers engaged stakeholders on ways that Africa can build back better food systems and strengthen the continent's food sovereignty - with youth and women at the centre.

Heifer International has been working with farmers and communities in Africa for nearly 50 years to help them build sustainable and resilient food systems that can withstand shocks and stresses. Part of the organisation's work in the continent is innovative investments in young Africans working on transformative solutions and products within the agriculture ecosystem that have strengthened smallholder farmers' outputs, increasing women participation in agribusinesses, and enhancing climate-smart practices.

Adesuwa Ifedi, Senior Vice President, Africa Programs, Heifer International, speaking to global stakeholders at the event, said: "Our profound experience of partnering with smallholder farmers and communities has provided us with a unique perspective – one that harnesses the innovation and energy of young innovators, alongside the limitless potential of technology, to craft scalable and enduring agritech solutions tailored to the unique needs of smallholder farmers. The impact of these have been transformative - driving heightened productivity, amplified incomes for farmers, job creation, unlocking commercial capital fostering agripreneurs, and elevating the capabilities of our food systems."

According to Ifedi, concerted efforts need to be made to boost Africa's food systems urgently to be able to accommodate the continent's forecast population of 2.5 billion people by 2050.

"The good news is that in the face of this challenge, we are endowed with two critical tools – our youth and technology," she said. "Africa possesses the youngest population globally, with nearly 40% of the continent's population aged 15 or below, as of 2022. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, an estimated 500 million people will be under 25 years old by 2050. Within these massive numbers, we see a reservoir of energy, ingenuity, and determination being leveraged to solve societal problems across the continent."

Heifer International also advocated for increased innovative capital for young innovators working on transformative solutions for the agriculture ecosystem. Speaking during the organisation's side event at the summit on September 4 that had youth innovators, policymakers, experts in finance and technology, and other stakeholders in attendance, Tewodros Ayele, Country Director Ethiopia, Heifer International, said: "Through various initiatives, we have provided innovative capital to young professionals developing and deploying tech innovations that are enhancing smart farming and food production across the continent. The impact of the various programs we have partnered with these young innovators on is heartwarming and encourages us to do more."

Ayele identified one of such initiatives as the [AYuTe Africa Challenge](#), one of the most ambitious agriculture competitions on the continent which empowers and supports young professionals who are developing and deploying tech innovations that are reimagining farming and food production across the continent.

"Since 2021, we have awarded up to US\$1.5 million annually to our AYuTe Champions," said Ayele. "Our support doesn't end there. We also deploy a team of expert advisers—accomplished

business veterans—to support AYuTe Africa Champions as they translate this funding into aggressive business expansion strategies. We believe innovative capital includes everything that helps these young agripreneurs innovate beyond their talent. It is a sum of the assets, tangible and intangible, that power them. It includes financing, networks and partnerships, human capacity, and mentorship.

Traditional funding avenues often fall short in meeting the unique demands of young agripreneurs. It's here that innovative financing steps in – crowdfunding, impact investing, venture capital – these approaches have the potential to unlock the door to funding that can drive groundbreaking change. This is not just about providing financial support; it's about recognizing the potential for high returns – not only in terms of profits but also in terms of social and environmental impact.”

ABOUT HEIFER INTERNATIONAL

Since 1944, Heifer International has worked with nearly 43 million people around the world to end hunger and poverty in a sustainable way. Working with rural communities across Africa for nearly 50 years, Heifer International supports farmers and local food producers to strengthen local economies and build secure livelihoods that provide a living income. Heifer is currently operating in 19 countries across Africa, Asia and the Americas. For more information, visit <https://www.heifer.org>.

Chinedu Ozordi
Lantern Comitas
[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Twitter](#)
[LinkedIn](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/654063604>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2023 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.