

Innovative Italian-Designed Crib “Kokono”, Manufactured in Uganda, Protects Newborns from Accidents and Malaria

The crib is made entirely from highly biodegradable plastic, engaging BioPro Global, LLC., a US-Based company

UNITED STATES, October 9, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- An innovative, multi-purpose crib, designed and patented in Italy by [De-LAB](#) (a benefit corporation based in Milan, which specializes in consultancy in the development cooperation and Purpose Economy), manufactured and distributed locally in Uganda, made of biodegradable plastic, which protects newborns from exposure to malaria and other potential causes of death: this is [Kokono](#), a sustainable entrepreneurship project with a unique impact, which has its roots in sub-Saharan Africa.



Kokono Crib

To date, 1,500 cribs have been produced and distributed to the poorest areas in Uganda, from the slums of Kampala to rural regions. This number is soon to double thanks to a scale-up strategy promoted by De-LAB and Amref Health Africa, which has recently won funds under the “Sprint. Supporting solutions under the Innovation for Development Project” grant by Fondazione Cariplo and Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo. Now the founder of De-LAB, Lucia Dal Negro, aims to attract new financial partners to expand the project.

How Kokono works

Kokono comes with a mosquito net that protects children from 0 to 12 months from potential exposure to infectious diseases carried by mosquitoes – including malaria, which still accounts for 20% of the continent's mortality rate – as well as from other threats such as accidents in the home or suffocation caused by a lack of a safe place for infants, and attacks from animals such as insects, reptiles and rodents. These are the main causes of child mortality, which every year in Uganda affects 200,000 children under the age of five; 45,000 of them die within the first month

of life. In addition to being a safe carrier for babies, Kokono is also environmentally friendly: the plastic contains an organic polymer that enhances the biodegradability* in biologically active end-of-life anaerobic or aerobic environments.

“Kokono is a model that can be replicated in all the vulnerable regions in the African continent and the world, because it comes from the bottom up, from listening to the needs of the poorest families”, says Lucia Dal Negro. Dal Negro, born in 1984 in Verona, has an academic background in development cooperation and a PhD in International Relations. In 2019 she was elected ‘Female Role Model of the Year’ for Southern Europe as part of the Global Startup award, and among other things she sits on the Advisory Board of the Fondazione Giannino Bassetti with a focus on ‘Inclusive Health’.

“It's a solution that combines social and environmental sustainability with economic sustainability”, Dal Negro continues, “since it creates a virtuous production and sales cycle in Uganda, with great potential in terms of economic and employment benefits for the local population. This is why De-LAB is looking for new partners, including financial ones, who believe in and want to invest in Kokono”. Every dollar invested in Kokono is proved to generate \$2.88 in social return on investment (SROI), and this is without including the positive environmental impacts, which evidence will appear in the next years.

History and partnerships

The story of Kokono – which means ‘empty pumpkin’ in a Ugandan dialect – began in 2018, when the idea was refined with its end-users through a series of focus groups involving almost 200 people across four Ugandan districts: the capital Kampala, Hoima, Fort Portal and Gulu. This exploration highlighted the need for a multi-purpose design – Kokono can be used as a bassinet, as a crib, as a bathtub, and as a playground – and an affordable price for low- to middle-income end users.

After the first phase of conception, prototyping and development, De-LAB acquired the industrial mould to mass-produce the crib thanks to a grant from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS). After a break due to the pandemic, in 2021 product design was completed and the local supply chain identified, and De-LAB registered the invention patent and the ‘Kokono’ trademark in Italy and abroad. BioPro Global, LLC., a US-Based company helped assist with enhancing the biodegradability of materials without compromising the physical, functional or aesthetic properties of the Kokono Cribs.

The following year, production and sales began, promoted locally in collaboration with the Italian Embassy in Uganda. A retail space was opened in Muyenga, a district of Kampala, with funding from the Cariplo Foundation's Coopen grant. In the meantime, thanks to the partnership between De-LAB and the Italian and Ugandan branches of NGO Amref Health Africa, the cribs have been distributed in disadvantaged areas, including the Kawempe slum.

More recently, a partnership was set up with UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund, the UN agency for sexual and reproductive health – to distribute a number of Kokono cribs to refugee camps in Uganda. The country has more than 1.5 million refugees out of a population of 45 million, one of the highest rates in the world.

About De-LAB

De-LAB is a benefit corporation specialized in consulting on corporate social responsibility and development cooperation.

Giulio Todescan

Blum

[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/660642110>

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.