

Heifer Africa's AYuTe Challenge Winners Amplify Impact of their Agritech Solutions with MIT Solve Innovators Program

Heifer Africa, in collaboration with MIT Solve, developed the program to support young African agritech innovators to grow their businesses

LAGOS, NIGERIA, January 25, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Fourteen young African innovators with groundbreaking agritech solutions which emerged from the [AYuTe Africa Challenge](#), an initiative of Heifer Africa, have been invited to participate in the second edition of the MIT Solve Innovators Program. Heifer Africa, in collaboration with MIT Solve, developed the program to support young African agritech innovators with additional technical capabilities to grow their businesses and be successful, amplifying the impact of their solutions for smallholder farmers across Africa.



Young innovators power smallholder farmer to improved productivity

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Adesuwa Ifedi

These young innovators, winners of the 2023 national edition of the AYuTe Africa Challenge, representing 7 African countries - Rwanda, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya - will spend six months harnessing the program's resources and network to create impact at scale. They will combine knowledge gained during the program, interaction with peers across the globe, and the innovative capital provided by Heifer Africa to achieve faster business expansion.

“The 2023 national champions of the AYuTe Africa Challenge represent the continent's vibrant youth in the

agritech landscape,” said Dayo Aduroja, Heifer’s Youth and Innovation Lead, Africa. “Their emergence as winners of the competition marked the beginning of a journey with Heifer Africa of co-creation, mentorship, and access to capital. Participating in this MIT Solve Innovators Program is one step of the journey towards enhancing their solutions, scaling its impact on smallholder farmers, and unlocking sustainable commercial capital.”

During the program, the participants will receive expert guidance and support through capacity building workshops, thereby helping them improve their business models and find faster means of scaling their innovations. They will also use the opportunity to connect with a global community of peers and investors, leading to collaboration and funding opportunities. At the end of the program, these young entrepreneurs will be armed with the tools they need to upgrade their skills and build more sustainable and impactful businesses.

[Heifer International](#), a leading global nonprofit, is working to end hunger and poverty in low- and middle-income countries while prioritizing environmental sustainability. The organization has worked with smallholder farmers in Africa for 50 years to enable them to improve productivity and enhance their livelihoods.

One key focus for the organisation in Africa is the amplification of youth-led innovative agritech solutions that power smallholder farming communities towards building more resilient and prosperous businesses. The AYuTe Africa Challenge identifies and empowers promising tech-driven solutions that address the day-to-day challenges faced by smallholder farmers. Heifer Africa holds the belief that the future of Africa's agriculture relies on fostering opportunities for young African innovators. This involves igniting ground-up innovation among the youth, thereby reshaping the agricultural landscape and positioning agriculture as an aspirational career for the future.

[Adesuwa Ifedi](#), Senior Vice President, Africa Programs, Heifer International, said: “Young African innovators are vital for transforming the continent’s agricultural landscape, and those who have emerged through our AYuTe ecosystem over the years have clearly defined this exciting path. We are proud to support them in every way, including via this MIT Solve Innovators Program, to acquire all the tools they need to reach more smallholder farmers while creating thriving agribusiness ecosystems. We are encouraged by the progress and impact that these organisations are already making. These entrepreneurs are improving incomes for smallholder farmers, attracting more youths to farming and the agribusiness ecosystem and enhancing job creation in agriculture – all critical elements that help us as we build better food systems for Africa.”

One of the innovators, Tajudeen Yahaya, an AYuTe Africa Champion from Nigeria, built Extension Africa to help counter the declining efficiency in production by rural farmers across the continent. Extension Africa’s platform connects farmers to a network of business advisory agents that help implement innovative farming methods, increasing yields and improving livelihoods.

Mr. Yahaya said learnings and experiences from the ongoing program has so far positioned them better to improve the contribution of their solutions to the continent's agricultural sector. "The prestige and global platform that MIT provides is felt across every facet of this program, and this has made collaboration, knowledge-sharing and strategic networking easier and more impactful," he said. "Emerging through the AYuTe Africa family to benefit from this sort of invaluable mentorship made possible by Heifer Africa has really catalysed massive improvements to our work and business model. We are all excited about the future."

According to Ms. Ifedi, Heifer Africa's support for these innovators will extend beyond the MIT Solve Innovation Program and span across strategic partnerships that position their solutions firmly on the path to sustainability and scale. "The power of collaboration and investment in Africa's homegrown solutions to the challenges faced by smallholder farmers is unmatched," she said. "We will continue to centre these sorts of strategic partnerships and welcome all stakeholders to join us as we transform Africa's agriculture via these young visionaries."

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About Heifer International

Since 1944, Heifer International has worked with nearly 46 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>.

About AYuTe Africa Challenge

One of Africa's most ambitious agriculture competitions, the AYuTe Africa Challenge is an initiative by Heifer International which combines the power of African youth with the many possibilities of emerging technologies to support smallholder farmers across the continent grow their businesses and incomes. The annual competition awards cash grants to the most promising young agritech innovators across Africa. Heifer International's support for these innovators also extends beyond this by leveraging strategic partnerships and innovative capital to help the AYuTe Africa Champions translate this funding into business expansion strategies. For more information, visit www.ayute.africa.

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