

AYuTe NextGen: 2024 Winners Announced, Offer Glimpse into Africa's Agriculture Future

AYuTe NextGen 2024 brought together young agritech innovators and agripreneurs from across Africa, as well as stakeholders in agriculture and youth development

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The world got a taste of the future of agriculture in Africa on Tuesday when the winners of the 2024 AYuTe Africa NextGen were announced at the inaugural AYuTe NextGen gathering in Kigali, Rwanda.

Themed 'Reimagining Africa's Agriculture in the Next 50 Years', AYuTe NextGen brought together young agritech innovators and agripreneurs from across Africa, as well as stakeholders in the continent's agriculture and youth development sectors. AYuTe NextGen is an initiative of [Heifer International](#), a global non-profit working to end hunger and poverty through sustainable agriculture.

Three young agritech entrepreneurs were honoured after triumphing in a youth-focused competition aimed to spur a tech-led revolution in Africa's agriculture.

The 2024 AYuTe NextGen first place winner is Thur Biotech, an Ethiopia-based agritech company. Founded by Samson Alemu, the firm produces sustainable bacterial biofertilizers that can replace chemical fertilizers and offers more efficiency for smallholder farmers while preserving soil quality.

The second place winner is Silo Africa, a Kenya-based agritech company. Founded by Eliud Rugut, it serves smallholder farmers with digitised grain silos which mitigate post-harvest losses, safeguarding the households of smallholder farmers against climate impacts.



Winners of AYuTe NextGen 2024 receive recognition for the impact of their innovations on Africa's smallholder farmers



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Surita Sandosham

The third place winner is Extension Africa, a Nigeria-based agritech company. Founded by Tajudeen Yahaya, it provides data-driven private extension services using technology to transform rural youth into an agribusiness extension workforce, connecting smallholder farmers at the last mile to global agribusinesses, business advisory and capacity building on sustainable innovative farming methods.

Attended by cabinet members from host country Rwanda, as well as global and regional stakeholders, Heifer

International says the epochal event was held to inspire a new generation of young agripreneurs and innovators throughout Africa, driving a forward-looking vision for the next 50 years of agricultural transformation on the continent.

In his keynote address, the Rwanda Minister of State for Agriculture and Animal Resources, Honourable Eric Rwigamba, noted that the youth are the future. “We cannot reimagine the future of Africa’s agriculture without young people or technology,” he said. “I am inspired by the innovations of all the 15 AYuTe NextGen finalists and I look forward to seeing their impact on the continent. I must also appreciate Heifer International for this important work and congratulate them on their global 80th year anniversary, 50 years of working in Africa and 24 years in Rwanda.”

Entries for this year’s AYuTe Africa NextGen were taken from amongst the finalists of national competitions in several countries. Having passed through various stages of rigorous technical assessments, five competitors emerged to pitch their ideas to a distinguished panel of judges at the event. Each finalist showcased an innovative agritech solution with the potential to transform the livelihoods of Africa’s smallholder farmers. After considering the presentations, and assessing the innovative ideas against set metrics, the judges reached a verdict and winners of the AYuTe NextGen Class of 2024 were announced.

Mr Alemu thanked Heifer International for the support he has received since joining the AYuTe ecosystem. “I strongly believe that the future of Africa’s agricultural transformation lies with tech-led empowerment of smallholder farmers, and I have never been more convinced of this than today. Heifer’s support so far has enabled us to build on our innovation and expand operations,” he said. “With this further validation of the importance of our work, we look to the future with optimism. This win propels us further on the path of sustainably scaling our operations and reaching more smallholder farmers across Africa.”

Presenting the awards to the winners, Surita Sandosham, President and CEO of Heifer International, urged them to consider themselves as architects of a transformed agricultural landscape. “At Heifer International, we are energized by the tremendous potential we see in

young African innovators,” she said. “Their creativity and dedication to developing cutting-edge solutions that empower smallholder farmers in Africa is exactly what the continent needs to build a more secure and prosperous future. We are honoured to play a role in amplifying and scaling their work and look forward to the transformative impact of their innovative ideas on agriculture.”

Also speaking at the event, [Adesuwa Ifedi](#), Heifer International’s Senior Vice President of Africa Programs, said: “The winners today illustrate the ingenuity and determination of Africa’s young innovators that inspire us in the course of our work with them. Through AYuTe Africa NextGen, we are providing the needed funding, capacity, mentorship, and networking opportunities that empower these visionaries to translate their ideas into tangible and sustainable solutions that can impact millions of lives.”

The inaugural AYuTe NextGen is part of activities lined up this year by Heifer International as it celebrates 80 years of supporting smallholder farmers globally and 50 years in Africa. The winners unveiled at the event join an elite group of AYuTe Champions who are changing the face of tech-led disruptors improving smallholder farmers’ livelihoods.

One of them, Hello Tractor, is Heifer’s implementation partner on its Mechanization for Africa initiative. Hello Tractor has achieved global acclaim for its tech-led pay-as-you-go affordable tractor rentals to smallholder farmers across Africa. The initiative, in its pilot phase, increased incomes of farmers in three countries by as much as 227%, while birthing an energised agribusiness ecosystem that has unlocked millions of dollars in commercial capital and created hundreds of jobs for young people.

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