

Wawira Njiru named recipient of the German Africa Prize 2026

Njiru recognised for transforming school feeding into economic infrastructure, creating jobs, strengthening local food systems and feeding 660,000 children.

BERLIN, GERMANY, August 19, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Kenyan social innovator and nutritionist Wawira Njiru is the recipient of the German Africa Prize 2026, awarded by the [German Africa Foundation](#) in recognition of her pioneering approach to reimagining school feeding as economic infrastructure. Through [Food4Education](#) (F4E), the not-for-profit social enterprise she founded in 2012, Wawira Njiru works alongside families, schools, smallholder farmers, and governments to build scalable national systems that combine school feeding with local food production, job creation, and economic development.

Food security has never been more urgent as conflicts such as the Iran war or the Russian war against Ukraine, climate volatility and fragile supply chains put pressure on food systems worldwide. Against this backdrop, the jury of the German Africa Prize recognises Njiru's work in connecting food security with economic participation and strengthening local value chains.



Wawira Njiru, Founder and CEO of Food4Education



Kids Queue to Tap2Eat at Mwiki Primary

“Wawira Njiru demonstrates that school feeding can be much more than simply providing meals. With Food4Education, she has created a system that reaches children, involves families and strengthens local economic cycles. Her idea and her commitment have led to an African solution to a global challenge,” explains Claus Stäcker, President of the Jury of the German Africa Prize and Director Programmes for Africa at Deutsche Welle. The prize will be presented on 4 November by the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Reem Alabali Radovan, at the Allianz Forum in Berlin.



Giga Kitchen Cooks at Work

What began as a project providing meals for just 25 schoolchildren now reaches more than 660,000 children at over 1,900 schools across Kenya, with more than 200 million meals served and counting. Unlike traditional aid-dependent models, F4E designs and delivers school feeding as a locally rooted system sustained by shared investment: family contributions, government funding, and catalytic philanthropy work together to secure long-term financial sustainability. Tap2Eat, F4E's digital platform, lets families contribute toward meals through wearable NFC wristbands or cards, and enables precise planning of procurement, production and distribution across its kitchens, including the solar- and steam-powered Giga Kitchen in Nairobi. The result: F4E provides a nutritious meal for roughly 30 cents, with food waste held under two per cent.

Wawira Njiru, Founder and CEO of Food4Education, highlights: "For too long, school feeding was treated as charity. We have proven it is economic infrastructure. What we have built in Kenya shows what is possible when African solutions are designed around our own realities and built to work at scale. African governments are no longer asking us how many children we can feed. They are asking how many jobs we can create, how many farmers we can connect to markets, and how much of their own budget is reinvested in local communities. That is the shift this prize recognizes: Africa is building a school feeding economy, and F4E is accelerating it."

About 80 per cent of what F4E serves comes from local smallholder farmers, giving them a reliable buyer for their produce. Its growing operations now employ more than 6,000 people, the majority of them women and young people, many in their first formal employment, working as kitchen managers, food-safety scientists, logistics and supply-chain specialists, and software engineers.

Wawira Njiru's approach is increasingly attracting attention beyond Kenya, demonstrating the potential of African-built solutions to scale across borders while preserving local ownership and

adaptation that make them sustainable. Building on 14 years of experience in Kenya, where it is set to reach one million children with daily meals by 2027, F4E is now sharing its lessons, technology, and operational expertise through partnerships with African governments. In Zambia, for example, it is supporting the government to strengthen a nationally led school feeding system.

The German Africa Prize has been awarded by the German Africa Foundation since 1993. It honours outstanding individuals from African countries who make exceptional contributions to democracy, peace, sustainable development, research and innovation, cultural exchange and human rights. The recipients are selected by an independent 20-member jury. The Chair of the Jury is Claus Stäcker, Head of Africa Programmes at Deutsche Welle. The award ceremony is conducted by high-ranking representatives of Germany's constitutional bodies. Through the award, the Foundation highlights individuals whose ideas and work provide inspiration for global challenges beyond their countries of origin. The German Africa Foundation is a non-partisan foundation committed to promoting a nuanced understanding of Africa in political discourse and among the German public.

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