



New year
New goals
Same drive

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EDITOR'S NOTE

I have always believed that the start of a new year is a time for reflection and renewal, and an opportunity for us to set new goals and strive for success. A new year is like a clean new slate and we are the artists that have the power to create whatever masterpiece we can envision, with every stroke of our brush.

In this edition of TEFCircle, Our Founder, Mr. Tony O. Elumelu CFR pens a heartfelt message to African entrepreneurs, as he celebrates the entrepreneurial spirit of Africa and its continued growth. The past year have brought numerous wins for Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurs and other entrepreneurs across Africa; from building successful startups to international recognition, and we are thrilled to showcase their achievements.

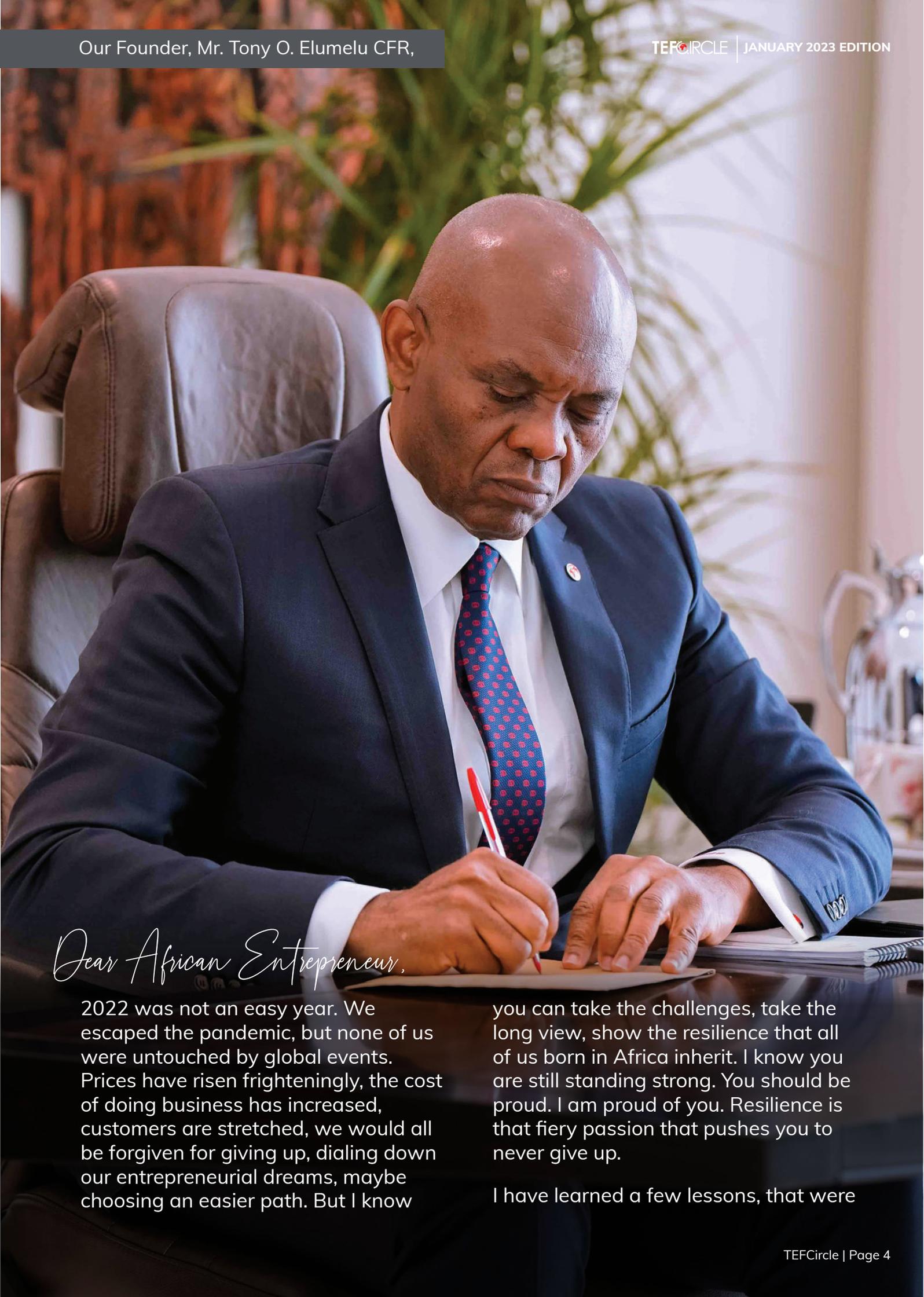
This edition spotlights some of the latest beneficiaries of the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme, as they reflect on the inspiration behind their entrepreneurship journey, and what this new milestone means for them and their business in 2023 and beyond.

Our partner spotlight for this edition is on Esther Angulu, Programme Manager – Social Inclusion at Sightsavers. We discuss the \$200,000 partnership between Sightsavers and the Tony Elumelu Foundation to empower African entrepreneurs who are thriving with disabilities.

As we look ahead to 2023, we recognize the need for continued focus and effort to maximize opportunities for growth. African entrepreneurs must remain innovative, adapt to the changing market and technological landscape, and maintain a strong commitment to their businesses and communities.

I hope this edition will serve as a source of inspiration and practical advice for African entrepreneurs as they continue to blaze the trail and drive economic progress on the continent.

Chidinma Nwaukwa



Dear African Entrepreneur,

2022 was not an easy year. We escaped the pandemic, but none of us were untouched by global events. Prices have risen frighteningly, the cost of doing business has increased, customers are stretched, we would all be forgiven for giving up, dialing down our entrepreneurial dreams, maybe choosing an easier path. But I know

you can take the challenges, take the long view, show the resilience that all of us born in Africa inherit. I know you are still standing strong. You should be proud. I am proud of you. Resilience is that fiery passion that pushes you to never give up.

I have learned a few lessons, that were

crucial to my success, and I think you will find them helpful on your journey:

Don't be afraid to push the envelope.

Did the tough environment cause me to retreat? No, on the contrary, now is the time to challenge your plans, go that bit further, maintain the course. We took a big step at the Foundation. For the first time, my team and I journeyed to the Democratic Republic of Congo to announce the selection of African entrepreneurs, who successfully met all completion requirements for the 2022 Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme.

We wanted to show we are truly pan African, highlight the role governments and policy makers must play in sharing, indeed lightening, your burden. We will be partnering more and more with African governments to promote entrepreneurship within their country.

Give back!

I was born in Africa, raised in Africa, studied in Africa, worked in Africa, and achieved success in Africa. Beyond business success, always look for ways not only to give back, but also to empower the generation coming behind us, so that they can go even further than we have. It can be big or small, as simple as giving advice, becoming a mentor, broadcasting your success – yes broadcast, we need more beacons of African excellence, share your experience, let your voice be heard.

Continue to define what success looks like to you.

At the Tony Elumelu Foundation, we created an institution with a single focus: young African entrepreneurs. Twelve years ago, we knew that if we equipped young people with the tools and the opportunities to succeed, this was the only

sustainable, dignified way to create a path to prosperity for all; substituting hand-outs for self-reliance and pioneering a 21st century philanthropy.

Earn your luck!

I am a product of luck and hard work. I know first-hand that these factors are inextricable, if you want to succeed. Entrepreneurship is years of hard work, long hours, and unquantifiable sacrifices. Your capacity to thrive and remain committed, despite temporary setbacks, will have significant impact in realising your dreams.

A new year presents a clean slate – whether in your business, personal life or relationships. It is your chance to set goals, commit to them, and prepare your mind for the discipline that is required for growth and success. This is why on this first day of 2023, we are once again opening the 2023 Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme Application portal on [TEFConnect.net!](https://TEFConnect.net)

All aspiring entrepreneurs from all 54 African countries are encouraged to apply for the opportunity of a lifetime, to receive \$5,000 non-refundable seed capital, world-class business management training, mentorship, and access to key networks and markets.



TEF ALUMNI CORNER

In this issue of TEFCircle, we spotlight some of our TEF Alumni from the recently concluded 2022 TEF Entrepreneurship Programme. They share the inspiration behind their journey towards entrepreneurship, the impact of the Tony Elumelu Foundation on their entrepreneurship journey and their plans for 2023, as beneficiaries of the US \$5,000 seed capital from the Foundation.

Abayomi Soetan

What influenced your journey into Entrepreneurship?

My journey into entrepreneurship started during my postgraduate studies. My dissertation was on the determinants of Persons with Disabilities' participation in Agricultural Activities. I learned how People with Disabilities like myself have been participating in agriculture and I naturally developed a keen interest in agriculture, spurring me to cultivate maize and cassava in 2021 and 2022. However, now I am more interested in Agricultural Processing and food packaging.

Can you tell us about your business?

I am into agriculture and agricultural processing. I have started acquiring the necessary equipment to process Cassava into Garri by June 2023. I will also be processing yam into yam flour (for pounded yam).

How did you hear about the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme and what motivated you to apply?

I heard about the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme through the Sightsavers Inclusion Employability WhatsApp group. The admin of the group, Mr. Razaq Adekoya encouraged everyone on the platform to apply and I happen to be one of the lucky ones.

What was the application process like and how did you feel when you were shortlisted as a beneficiary?

The application process was a bit complicated for me but the Tony



Nigeria



Agriculture

Elumelu Foundation organized YouTube sessions hosted by the Entrepreneurship Programme Manager, which made the process easier. We attended a number of digital webinars facilitated by experts who were invited by the Foundation to elucidate areas that were not too clear. The topics they covered included financial management in business, business plan writing, how to deliver a convincing pitch, marketing and sales tactics to employ in our businesses and also how to price our products.

I was elated when I saw my name on the list of shortlisted beneficiaries released by the Tony Elumelu

Foundation. I will be forever grateful for this opportunity.

What are the three key learning points you got from the programme that you will be applying in 2023?

The major learnings I got from the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme that will greatly benefit my business in 2023 are:

First is the importance of perseverance. Entrepreneurship has its ups and downs, and I learned that to be successful in business, we must keep reviewing our business plans to adapt, improvise and persevere for the business to survive, break even and thrive.

The second thing is record keeping. I have never really been good at keeping records but thanks to the training from the Foundation, I was able to develop an Excel format to start keeping my records and I plan to adhere to it throughout 2023 and beyond. I also learnt the importance of creating folders for receipts and invoices of goods going out.

The last thing I learned was a bit of digital marketing, and I will be investing more in e-commerce by selling on Facebook, WhatsApp and other online platforms in 2023, once I launch my business products (yam flour and Garri).

What are your plans for the USD 5,000 seed capital from the Foundation and how will it impact your business?

The US \$5,000 seed capital from the Tony Elumelu Foundation will go into renting a bigger place for my business, purchasing processing equipment such as grinders, dehydrators, a 5.5 KVA

generator, and the employment of two staff to handle activities such as yam and cassava peeling, as well as packaging finished products. The seed capital will help my business to have a steady cash flow that can be used to develop other products in the near future.

Lorraine Letsema Motlogelwa

What influenced your journey into entrepreneurship?

I've always been a team sports player from a very young age and found purpose in being a part of something greater than myself, which ultimately led me to develop a great interest in entrepreneurship. It brings me joy when I can identify a problem and provide a solution to it. Growing up I'd always look for opportunities at every place I went. An example is back when I attended netball training, I noticed that most people would forget their water bottles and/or run out of water during training therefore I decided to carry a case of water bottles with me and sell them during training. Being a sports person has boosted my confidence in many ways and helped build my leadership skills which have been efficacious in my entrepreneurial journey. I'm one person who thrives in difficult situations and constructive criticism brings out the greatness in me, this has helped augment my business knowledge.

Can you tell us a bit about your business?

Lethatha Holdings offers affordable and easily accessible organic fertilisers that provide health benefits for crop production as compared to inorganic fertilisers that are expensive, mainly imported and contain toxins. Our target customers are mainly farmers and landscapers. The company is at an early stage and with the US \$5,000 seed capital from the Tony Elumelu Foundation, we will be able to develop and grow the business to achieve the



Botswana



Agriculture

company's objectives.

How did you hear about the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme and what motivated you to apply?

My friend who is also a beneficiary of the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme introduced me to the Foundation. We are both entrepreneurs so she encouraged me to apply for the grant. I have been running the business on a very small scale due to lack of funds therefore when I heard of the Foundation I saw it as an opportunity to grow the company to become a sustainable business.

What was the application process like and how did you feel when you were shortlisted as a beneficiary?

The application process was quite

straight-forward, I did not encounter any challenges. It took about 20-30 minutes to complete the application. Although I was confident about my application, business plan and elevator pitch presentation, I was ecstatic when I received the news that I had been shortlisted as a beneficiary because the Tony Elumelu Foundation grant will have a great impact in my company.

What are three key learning points you got from the programme that you would be applying in 2023?

Time management, Financial management and marketing. These will be our main focal points to help our company build a strong business foundation and to become a greater enterprise in the future.

What are your plans for the US \$5,000 seed capital from the Foundation and how will it impact your business in 2023?

We plan on purchasing a double mode extrusive granulator production machinery that will improve efficiency in the business. We will also invest in branding, advertising and marketing to ensure our product communicates our vision. This will help the company reach a larger audience and possibly attract more customers.

Samuel Nyabiba

What influenced your journey into entrepreneurship?

My family reared animals, and we often had to walk to towns that were hundreds of kilometers away to purchase animal feed. This activity negatively impacted our productivity, also the animal feed were very expensive. My parents were very hard working but we were still living hand to mouth - this was what gave me the urge to change my story.

Can you tell us a bit about your business?

Obwansu Feeds Company is an enterprise that produces dairy, poultry and pig feed in Thika, Kenya. We produce high quality nutritious feed. We have set up a production factory that is equipped with milling and mixing equipment for animal feed. We convert raw materials into various nutritious feeds. We have four well branded walk-in Agro-shops strategically located in Thika and Kiambu town where local farmers can easily access any quantity of our highly nutritious feeds, saving 40% cost and time.

How did you hear about the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme and what motivated you to apply?

I heard about the program from a TEF Alumni. Going through the TEF Entrepreneurship Programme, I was hoping to be selected in that cohort. With the kind of training and skills I have acquired from the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme, which will be implemented



Kenya



AgriTech

in my company, I am confident of success. I am also creating networks with other Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurs which will make the expansion of the company faster and effective. The seed capital will also unlock a lot of potential as we will acquire large capacity equipment and grow our team.

What was the application process like and how did you feel when you were shortlisted as a beneficiary?

The process requires 100% effort in attending the business trainings and attending the masterclass sessions. I was a bit anxious during the announcement of the selected entrepreneurs - I was so excited and grateful being among the lucky selected winners.

What are three key learning points you got from the programme that

you would be applying in 2023?

I learnt;

A) A business requires a well-coordinated and motivated team to reach its milestones and goals.

B) I should be resilient especially when things seem not to be working and come up with a system that will work. Try out different processes.

C) When you put in the hard work, luck will get you in the way. Keep doing the right thing and work towards the vision.

What are your plans for the US \$5,000 seed capital from the Foundation and how will it impact your business in 2023?

We will use the US \$5,000 seed capital from the Tony Elumelu Foundation to set up a bigger production factory. We will purchase 3 milling machines, 2, 10-tonne capacity mixers and weighing & sewing equipment. We will increase weekly production from 10-tonnes to 500-tonnes to meet growing demand. We plan to hire 8 youths to help with the production of feeds and 4 marketing agents to collect field orders from farmers and agro-shops. We will set up our Agro-digital shop and a mobile payment platform. We project to break-even in 2.5 years.

Aanuoluwapo Omoleye

What influenced your journey into entrepreneurship?

The desire to see inclusion and representation in the educational field influenced my social entrepreneurship journey. Out of the hundreds of books I read while growing up, I only got to read just one book that portrayed a deaf character. The book made me feel represented, and I want every student out there to feel the same way. We have a long way to go in ensuring that no child is left behind because this path to inclusion begins with us, and that is why I am here.

Can you tell us a bit about your business?

AbleBooks Africa aims to produce several varieties of illustrated story/picture books for African (especially Nigerian) children with disabilities in nursery, primary and secondary schools.

The books would portray children with disabilities as the main characters and provide a sense of belonging that regular story/picture books do not offer. This idea will solve representation issues and incorrect portrayal in the educational system while enabling the children to relate to each story.

These books would be in several varieties and would cater to diverse categories of disabilities, especially deaf/hard of hearing, physically challenged, blind, neurodivergent children, and children with albinism.

How did you hear about the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme and



what motivated you to apply?

I heard about the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme in 2019 but did not apply until 2022. I thought, “You can use this opportunity to make a change, empower yourself and influence many children.” I knew I would gain a lot from the free business training, and I am thankful to the team at Sightsavers, who saw me through this process.

What was the application process like and how did you feel when you were shortlisted as a beneficiary?

The TEF Entrepreneurship Programme was a fantastic learning process. The rich training improved my overview of entrepreneurship and set me on this path. It was also inclusive for me as every part of the training was adequately scripted and captioned. It felt amazing to be shortlisted because

that meant my idea was valuable and worthy of investment.

What are three key learning points you got from the programme that you would be applying in 2023?

Be prepared for opportunities, use effective partnerships, and work towards sustainability. These three learning points would be very beneficial in this entrepreneurship journey.

What are your plans for the US \$5,000 seed capital from the Foundation and how will it impact your business in 2023?

I plan to use the seed capital to acquire the needed resources to bring the enterprise from zero to something. I am getting this without any expectation of paying back, which would put me on a great path to success. As a startup funded by the Tony Elumelu Foundation, it will gain credibility and create more opportunities for growth and exposure.

I wholeheartedly appreciate the Foundation for this rare opportunity to bring my idea to life.

TEF PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

In this issue of TEFCircle, we spotlight **Esther Angulu, Programme Manager – Social Inclusion for Sightsavers**, one of the Tony Elumelu Foundation's partners. We discuss Sightsavers' focus as an organisation, and their impact on African entrepreneurs through the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship programme.



Sightsavers

Esther Angulu,

Programme Manager – Social Inclusion

It is good to catch up with you Esther. How have you been and what does life look like as the Programme Manager – Social Inclusion for Sightsavers, one of the Foundation's partners?

Thank you for having me on your platform, it is a real pleasure! It has been amazing. I feel blessed coming into the role as Social Inclusion Programme manager for a highly reputable organisation like Sightsavers. I thought this was going to be challenging to settle in, coming into a different organisational culture, different mindsets, and ways of working. But when I came in, the

organisation made it easy for me to blend in quickly. Having to manage different projects and tasks at the same time is exciting, and a tad challenging but I have received the maximum support from the Country Director, my line manager, team members, and the management team. I am surrounded with very hard working, and creative team members who make my job smooth. Sightsavers has a unique way of making staff feel at ease in their roles, which makes you look forward to coming to work each day.

Sightsavers recently entered a \$200,000 partnership with the Tony Elumelu Foundation to empower entrepreneurs who are thriving with disabilities. What are some desired outcomes from this partnership?

In 2021, one of our economic empowerment portfolio ambitions was the public private partnership. We want to co-create interventions that economically empower people with disabilities to contribute to and benefit from society and national development. Partnering with the Tony Elumelu Foundation is one of the most exciting things that happened to us last year, and we are grateful for this partnership.

It is our hope that through Tony Elumelu Foundation's tailored programme, participants with disabilities will have access to quality training, mentoring opportunities and meet other entrepreneurs who can add value to their businesses.

Most importantly, once they start their businesses, they can be role models to other people with disabilities who are aspiring to start and run their own businesses.

What are some of the unique challenges that individuals thriving with disabilities face when it comes to running a successful business in Africa?

Access to finance, access to skills and access to the market are the three major problems for entrepreneurs in developing countries, but there are exceptional challenges that people with disabilities face when it comes to labour market participation.

People with disabilities are more likely to be living in poverty, making it harder to finance or start a business. There is reluctance on the part of financial institutions to give loans to individuals with disabilities, as they may believe they are less likely to pay the loan back. Secondly, we talk about a lack of business knowledge and skills. As a result of inaccessible and non-inclusive education systems, people with disabilities are often not equipped with the skills and information they need to manage a business. Thirdly, entrepreneurs with disabilities may lack the self-confidence to successfully run a business in Africa. This may be due to past experiences of discrimination which they have had to grapple with for years.

What aspects of the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme do you consider to be most beneficial to the beneficiaries of this partnership?

All the aspects! Most importantly, the trainings and mentorship. We know from our past experience that a combination of mentoring and soft skills plus business advisory skills would potentially increase the business survival rate for entrepreneurs. We have done this in the past with people with disabilities going into waged employment and it has worked successfully. The seed funding will go a long way in giving these individuals the financial stability that entrepreneurs need to sustain themselves and thrive.

How has Sightsavers fared in its mission to protect sight and fight for disability rights?

Sightsavers has been advocating for the rights of people with disabilities since the organisation was founded in 1950. We're proud that this work has grown over the years, and we have now supported 289,000 people with disabilities to find employment and supported over 117,000 children with disabilities to get an education. We



promote equal opportunities for people with disabilities through inclusive education, improving access to health services, economic empowerment projects and supporting people with disabilities to engage in political processes and have their voices heard in decision-making.

We partner with organisations of persons with disabilities to ensure people with disabilities have a meaningful say in the development and implementation of our projects.

One of the most interesting things we have done and are still currently doing is partnering with the private sector companies to include people with disabilities in their corporate programmes, access funding and receive mentorship so that they can improve their financial situation and live as independently as possible.

Are there any significant milestones or accomplishments by Sightsavers that you can share with us?

Our CEO was in Nigeria towards the end of last year, and she met with the CEO of TEF. We signed a partnership agreement with Tony Elumelu Foundation to include people with disabilities in the seed funding programme. But that is not the best part! We are also matching the funds which Tony Elumelu Foundation is giving out to individuals with disabilities. We are very excited to partner with you and hope that this continues so that other private sector companies can follow this path and create more opportunities for people with disabilities.

Sightsavers is excited about our growing relationship with the private sector. We have demonstrated to

private companies that mainstreaming disability inclusion into their value chain is not expensive, and it benefits their businesses and the community. In the past three years, we have initiated and strengthened relationships with the likes of Diageo (Guinness Nigeria), Unilever, Coca-Cola Beverage Africa, Standard Chartered, Access, MTN. These companies are becoming a model for championing disability inclusion. For example, thousands of farmers with disabilities are now contracted to supply sorghum into the brewery subsidiary of Diageo - a powerful example of an inclusive value chain. Just like we signed an agreement with the Tony Elumelu Foundation, we have done the same with companies like Guinness Nigeria.

Secondly, we established the first IT Bridge Academy in Africa, which supports young people with disabilities to acquire industry recognised certifications in computing, and links them to companies to work internships.

Across our social inclusion programmes, we are working to ensure people with disabilities can access health, education and employment and participate in society on an equal basis with others. We regularly engage with and influence high level policy, for example our advocacy work around the Global Disability Summit in 2022. We also supply expertise, for example we supported the first WHO report into health and disability, published at the end of 2022.

THE TONY ELUMELU ENTREPRENEURSHIP



TEF Circle is the Tony Elumelu Foundation's monthly publication sharing updates on our alumni, partners, mentor network, and our activities in the global entrepreneurship ecosystem.

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