TEFCIRCLE

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THE NEW PHILANTHROPY

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TEFCircle is the Tony Elumelu Foundation's proprietary publication, providing updates on our alumni, partners, mentor network, and activities across the global entrepreneurship ecosystem.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Dear Reader,

In this edition of TEF Circle, we explore how the Tony Elumelu Foundation is reimagining philanthropy by placing entrepreneurs at the centre of Africa's development. From advancing women-led green businesses through our IYBA-WE4A Programme being implemented across eight countries to championing inclusive entrepreneurship and strengthening diplomatic partnerships, our work continues to demonstrate what becomes possible when opportunity meets ambition.

We also celebrate the alumni turning bold ideas into thriving businesses and the mentors helping entrepreneurs build for lasting impact. As we prepare to unveil our 15-Year Impact Report, we reflect on a simple conviction that has guided our journey: Africa's entrepreneurs do not need charity; they need the capital, knowledge and opportunities to build sustainable businesses and create jobs on the continent.

Happy Reading!

Chidinma Nwaukwa
Editor-in-Chief, TEFCircle



THE BIG STORY

Beyond Giving: Reimagining Philanthropy Around Opportunity and Enterprise

Philanthropy is evolving. And as the world faces increasingly complex economic, social and technological challenges, the question is no longer simply how much we give, but what that support makes possible.

This month, at the Brazilian Philanthropy Forum 2026 in São Paulo, Tony Elumelu Foundation CEO Somachi Chris-Asoluka



We can achieve much more by coming together than doing it in isolation

brought an African perspective to this conversation, sharing lessons from TEF's work empowering entrepreneurs across the continent and making the case for a more inclusive, locally rooted and partnership-driven approach to development.

Speaking at the Forum, Somachi reflected on the philosophy of Africapitalism, coined by TEF Founder Tony O. Elumelu, CFR, and its belief in the private sector's role in driving Africa's development and creating shared prosperity. At the heart of this philosophy is a conviction that African entrepreneurs can and must play a leading role in transforming the continent.

For TEF, this means moving beyond seeing young people as beneficiaries of development to recognising them as builders of it. Through the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme, entrepreneurs receive access to capital, training, mentorship and networks to build sustainable businesses that can create jobs, generate revenue and contribute to their communities and economies.

The scale of this approach demonstrates the potential of catalytic philanthropy. Since 2015, TEF has trained millions of young Africans and funded thousands of entrepreneurs across all 54 African countries, with their businesses collectively creating jobs and generating billions of dollars in revenue. Each entrepreneur supported represents not only an individual opportunity, but the potential to unlock opportunities for others.

Technology is also playing an increasingly important role in making that opportunity more accessible. Through TEFConnect, TEF's digital platform for African entrepreneurs, the Foundation connects entrepreneurs to knowledge, mentors, investors, markets and business opportunities. But as Somachi highlighted, technology must be designed to widen opportunities rather than deepen existing inequalities. From making learning self-paced for women entrepreneurs to improving accessibility for entrepreneurs living with disabilities and enabling participation in underserved communities, inclusion must remain central to digital transformation.

Operating across 54 countries has also reinforced another important lesson: scale should not come at the expense of context. While entrepreneurs across Africa may

operate in very different markets and environments, their fundamental needs for capital, knowledge, networks, and opportunity are remarkably universal. The challenge is to build systems that can scale while remaining flexible enough to respond to local realities.

The conversation in São Paulo also highlighted an opportunity for stronger collaboration across the Global South. Africa and Latin America share many development priorities, from entrepreneurship and youth employment to inclusive innovation and locally led development. Greater knowledge exchange and partnerships between both regions can create new pathways for shared learning, investment and impact.

Ultimately, the future of philanthropy may not be about doing more of the same at greater scale. It may be about rethinking how capital, technology, partnerships and people come together to create a lasting agency.

As Somachi reflected, "We can achieve much more by coming together than doing it in isolation." For the Tony Elumelu Foundation, that means continuing to invest in Africa's entrepreneurs while building bridges with partners around the world, because when people are empowered to build, the impact can extend far beyond the original intervention.

Watch her session here: https://youtu.be/7-jZzq4G9DM?si=8cno8HUQZ-ufCcy9



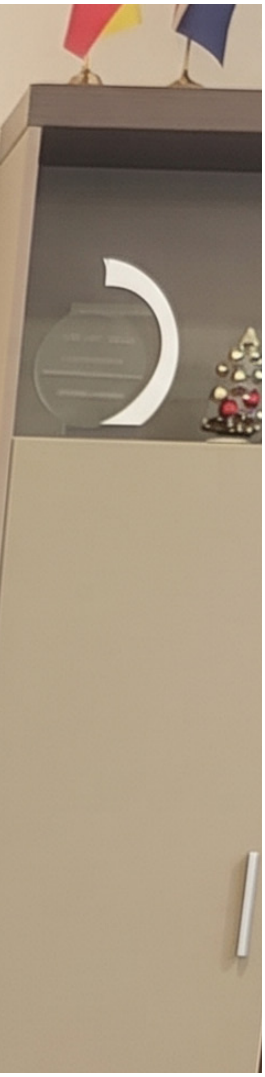


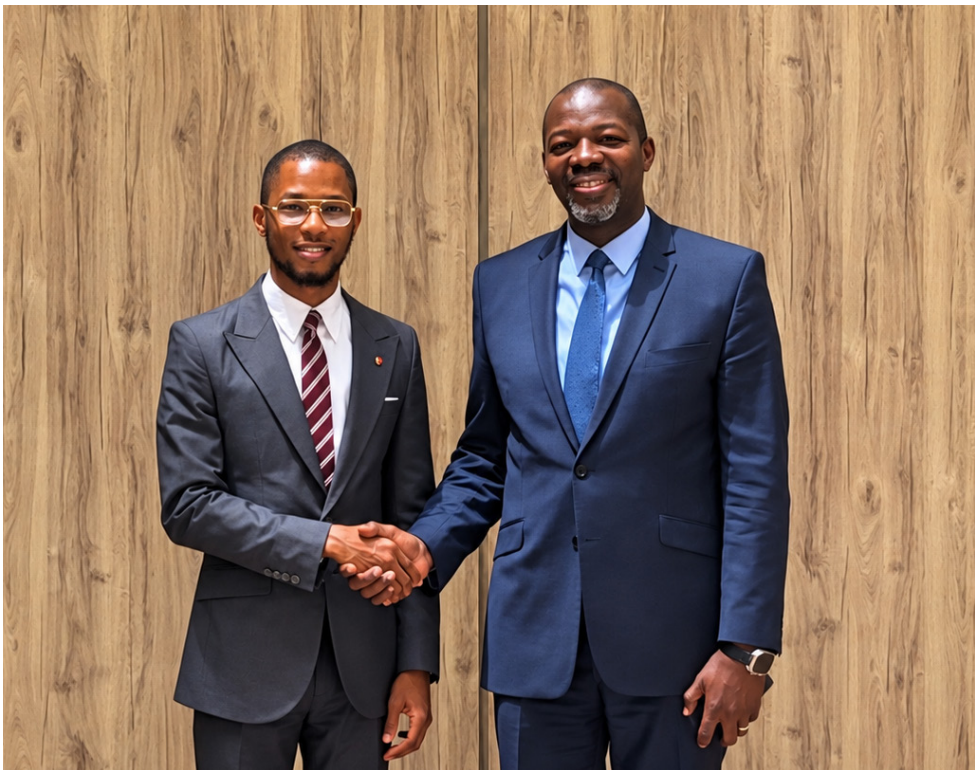


STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENTS

The Tony Elumelu Foundation's Embassy Tour Deepens Africa's Diplomatic Ties

The Tony Elumelu Foundation continues its Embassy Tour, with Director of Operations Dr Hakeem Onasanya leading a series of high-level courtesy visits to diplomatic missions and regional institutions across Africa, strengthening strategic partnerships and showcasing the Foundation's catalytic role in empowering African entrepreneurs and driving economic transformation across the continent.





Deepening Ties Across the Continent

In one round of engagements, Dr Onasanya met with Mr Saleh Ould Sidi Mohamed El Khalifa, Head of Mission of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to Nigeria; Ambassador Phillip Odida (R) of Uganda; H.E. Mohsen Antit, Ambassador of Tunisia; Ms Lindi Mminele, Deputy High Commissioner of South Africa; H.E. Francisco Edu Ngua Mangue, Ambassador of Equatorial Guinea; and Mr Imad Mohammed Matooq Aboud, Head of Mission for Libya, all to Nigeria.

In a further round, he met with Mr Cisse Karim, First Counsellor at the Embassy of Côte d'Ivoire; H.E. Nicolas Auguste Nyouky, Ambassador of Senegal; Mr Gaoussou Touré, Chargé d'Affaires ad interim for Guinea-Conakry; Ambassador Carlos Manuel Moreno, Chargé d'Affaires ad interim for São Tomé and Príncipe; Rev. Tunde Johnson Spencer, Counsellor for Political and Security Affairs at the Embassy of Liberia; and Dr Kalilou Sylla, ECOWAS Commissioner for Economic Affairs and Agriculture, all to Nigeria.

Why Diplomacy Matters to Entrepreneurship

Each visit builds on the one before it, part of a deliberate strategy to deepen collaboration with African diplomatic missions and regional institutions. These are not ceremonial meetings. They are the groundwork for the cross-border collaboration that African entrepreneurship ultimately depends on: easier market access, stronger policy alignment, and governments who see entrepreneurs not as a development statistic, but as the continent's most reliable engine of growth.

The engagement with ECOWAS, in particular, signals the Foundation's ambition to work not only country by country, but through the regional institutions positioned to scale impact across borders.

Together, these conversations are building a more connected entrepreneurial ecosystem, strengthening the diplomatic architecture that allows African entrepreneurs to trade, scale, and grow beyond their borders. It is a reminder that the work of empowering a continent builder happens in many rooms, not only in the ones where the seed capital changes hands.







OFF THE TARMAC

Eight Countries, One Mission: Advancing Women Entrepreneurship Through The IYBA-WE4A Programme

Building a credible entrepreneurial ecosystem requires more than selecting promising businesses. It requires meeting entrepreneurs where they are, understanding their realities and ensuring that opportunities reach the women they are designed to support.

The Tony Elumelu Foundation commenced the IYBA-WE4A Physical Verification Exercise, taking the programme's verification process directly





into communities across eight African countries.

The exercise has taken the TEF team to Mozambique, Malawi, Tanzania and Senegal, with engagements continuing across Kenya, Cameroon, Togo and Uganda.

Across these countries, the physical verification exercise provides an opportunity to engage directly with prospective beneficiaries, validate business information and gain deeper insight into the entrepreneurs and enterprises at the heart of the Investing in Young Businesses in Africa: Women Entrepreneurship for Africa (IYBA-WE4A) programme.

The initiative reflects the Tony Elumelu Foundation's commitment to a people-centred approach to programme delivery. Beyond verification, being on the ground creates space to understand local entrepreneurial ecosystems, engage stakeholders and strengthen the systems that enable women entrepreneurs to build and grow sustainable businesses.

Through IYBA-WE4A, the Tony Elumelu Foundation and its partners are supporting women entrepreneurs in Africa's green economy with business management training, mentorship and non-refundable seed capital, helping them turn promising ideas into viable enterprises while contributing to green growth and job creation.

As the TEF Squad continues across all eight

countries, the physical verification exercise marks another step in ensuring that Africa's women entrepreneurs are at the center of the opportunities created for them.

On the Ground in Mozambique: Meeting the Women Building a Greener Economy



The 2026 IYBA-WE4A Physical Verification Exercise began in Maputo, Mozambique, taking the #TEFSquad directly into the businesses and entrepreneurial ecosystems at the heart of the programme.

In partnership with the European Union, GIZ, the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the exercise offered an opportunity to meet prospective women entrepreneurs face-to-face, understand their businesses and hear first-hand about the journeys, challenges and ambitions behind their applications.

For the Foundation, the value of being on the ground goes beyond verification. It is about seeing the businesses beyond the application form: understanding how they operate, the communities they serve and the opportunities they are working to create.

The visit also brought the team back into the wider entrepreneurial ecosystem. In Maputo,

the #TEFSquad met with GIZ Mozambique as the verification exercise got underway, reinforcing the partnership supporting IYBA-WE4A and its focus on equipping women entrepreneurs with the knowledge, mentorship, networks and support needed to build sustainable businesses.

The team also connected with the TEF Alumni community in Mozambique, meeting entrepreneurs whose businesses reflect the breadth of innovation emerging across the country.

Among them was Matilde Rungo, a 2024 TEF Alumna and founder of Ragro Tech Advisory. Through technology and AI, Matilde is helping businesses improve efficiency and innovation while developing solutions for Mozambique's agricultural value chain. Her work demonstrates how technology can be applied to address local challenges and unlock new opportunities across traditional sectors.

The team also visited Isaltina Felizardo Nhaume, a 2024 TEF Alumna and founder of Isa Pintos, an agricultural enterprise focused on sustainable poultry production. Through responsible breeding, animal welfare practices and high-volume production, Isa Pintos supplies fresh eggs and premium poultry directly to consumers, while building a business around the potential of Mozambique's agricultural sector.

From agricultural technology to sustainable poultry production, both entrepreneurs demonstrate how Mozambique's young business leaders are reimagining traditional sectors, creating economic opportunities and building solutions rooted in local needs

Beyond the programme's direct beneficiaries, the team visited long-time partners UNICEF to explore opportunities for deeper collaboration around youth entrepreneurship, skills development and green innovation. The conversation builds on the Foundation's work through BeGreen Africa, co-created with UNICEF Generation Unlimited and the IKEA Foundation to equip young green entrepreneurs with training, mentorship and funding to build sustainable businesses.

As the 2026 programme advances across Cameroon, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo and Uganda, the physical verification exercise is putting faces and stories to the ambition behind the programme.

In Mozambique, it began with a simple but important principle: to build opportunities for entrepreneurs, we must first meet them where they are.



Malawi: Building Africa's Future, One Enterprise at a Time



From Maputo, the #TEFSquad travelled to Lilongwe, Malawi, continuing the 2026 IYBA-WE4A Physical Verification Exercise and bringing the programme closer to the women entrepreneurs at its heart.

Across the engagement, the team visited women-led businesses, met entrepreneurs in their working environments and gained a closer understanding of the ideas, challenges and opportunities shaping their journeys. Being on the ground offered a perspective that documentation alone cannot provide: seeing how businesses operate, the communities they serve and the solutions entrepreneurs are developing in response to local needs.

The verification exercise also created space for meaningful conversations about ambition, and about the role that access to capital, knowledge, mentorship and networks can play in helping women take their businesses further.

For the Tony Elumelu Foundation, physical verification is more than a step in the selection process. It is an opportunity to listen, learn and understand the realities behind each business, while identifying women entrepreneurs with the potential to create jobs, strengthen communities and contribute to more inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

The team also connected with the TEF Alumni community in Malawi, meeting an entrepreneur whose journey reflects what becomes possible when African founders are backed to build.

Among them was Admore Chiumia, a 2018 TEF Alumnus and founder and CEO of Green Impact Technologies, which is helping expand

access to clean energy for low-income communities across Malawi and Zambia. When Admore joined the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme, his company had just three employees and two sales agents. With US$5,000 in seed capital, mentorship and business training, Green Impact Technologies strengthened its operations and scaled its vision.

Today, the company has 30 full-time employees and 255 sales agents across both countries. It has sold more than 50,000 solar products, helping over 200,000 people access solar home systems for lighting, communication, cooling and productive activities. Its work now extends from solar fridges and water pumps to converting agricultural waste into cooking gas, turning clean energy into better livelihoods and stronger communities.

Admore's ambition speaks to the purpose of IYBA-WE4A: "We want to build an Africa that is self-reliant, no longer donor-dependent, but building enterprises that can grow the economy."

In Malawi, those conversations brought the spirit of the programme to life: entrepreneurs building businesses today, while creating new possibilities for their communities and the future.



Tanzania: Verifying the Ambition Driving Dar es Salaam's Women Entrepreneurs



The #TEFSquad arrived in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, for the next leg of the 2026 IYBA-WE4A Physical Verification Exercise, taking the programme directly to the women entrepreneurs at its centre.

Over the course of the exercise, the team engaged with participants in the Investing in Young Businesses in Africa – Women Entrepreneurship for Africa (IYBA-WE4A) Programme, gaining deeper insight into their businesses, their journeys and the impact they are creating within their communities.

For the Tony Elumelu Foundation, physical verification is more than a step in the selection process. It is an opportunity to move beyond documentation, understand how each business operates, the community it serves and the potential it holds, while identifying women-led enterprises ready to create jobs and contribute to more inclusive economic growth.

With the exercise successfully completed, Dar es Salaam becomes the latest stop on a journey that is putting faces and stories to the ambition behind IYBA-WE4A, one business, one entrepreneur, at a time.

Senegal: Strengthening Inclusion Through Entrepreneurship



In Dakar, Senegal, the #TEFSquad continued the 2026 IYBA-WE4A Physical Verification Exercise, meeting women entrepreneurs and gaining a closer understanding of the businesses they are building.

The exercise was hosted at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar, where the team connected with women entrepreneurs participating in the programme. Beyond verifying businesses, it offered an opportunity to meet the women behind the ideas: entrepreneurs building solutions, creating opportunities and contributing to the growth of their communities.

Implemented in partnership with the European Union, GIZ, the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), IYBA-WE4A is supporting women entrepreneurs across Senegal and seven other African countries to turn ambition into sustainable businesses and lasting impact.

Beyond the verification exercise, the team met with Cheikh Ibrahima Seck, Country Director of Sightsavers' Senegal Country Office, to discuss a shared vision for building a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem across Africa. The partnership with Sightsavers continues to demonstrate the power of collaboration in breaking down barriers, ensuring that entrepreneurs living with disabilities have access to the resources, networks and opportunities they need to succeed. Together, the two organisations are helping create pathways for ambitious entrepreneurs to build thriving businesses, create jobs and contribute meaningfully to economic development within their communities.

For the Tony Elumelu Foundation,

entrepreneurship remains one of the most powerful tools for driving inclusive growth, and the Foundation remains committed to working with partners who share its mission of leaving no entrepreneur behind.

Which country's next — Cameroon, Kenya, Togo, or Uganda?









PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Sight Savers

Some of the most important barriers to entrepreneurship are never written into a business plan.

For millions of Africans living with disabilities, the obstacle is not ambition, capability or ideas. It is access: to training designed with them in mind, to networks that don't overlook them, and to capital that reaches them on the same terms as everyone else. Closing



Inclusive entrepreneurship is not charity. It is the recognition that talent is universal, even when access is not.

that gap is the shared work of the Tony Elumelu Foundation and this month's Partner Spotlight, Sightsavers.

A Partnership Built on Shared Conviction

Sightsavers is an international organisation working to prevent avoidable blindness, advance equality for people with disabilities, and advocate for lasting change. Since 2022, its partnership with the Foundation has advanced progress against five Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs 4, 8, 10, 11 and 17, by ensuring entrepreneurs with disabilities are not a side note to Africa's entrepreneurship ecosystem, but full participants in it.

What the Partnership Delivers

Through the TEF Entrepreneurship Programme, every African entrepreneur, including those living with disabilities, has access to the same core resources: business training and mentorship delivered through TEFConnect and TEF's expert mentor network, non-refundable seed capital to launch or scale a business, and access to TEF's pan-African network of partners, industry experts and alumni. The Foundation's selection process is deliberately built to evaluate ideas on their merit, their growth potential and their social impact, not on the ability or disability of the entrepreneur behind them.

Sightsavers strengthens that foundation with something equally critical: advocacy. By working to shift perceptions and dismantle structural barriers, the partnership helps ensure that inclusive entrepreneurship is not a program feature, but a standard.

The Proof Is in the Businesses Built

Abayomi Soetan, an agricultural processing entrepreneur, used his TEF seed capital to rent a larger facility, purchase processing equipment and hire two staff, while building the financial literacy and digital marketing skills to grow sustainably. Aanuoluwa Omoleye, founder of AbleBooks Africa, is using her seed capital to produce illustrated storybooks that place children with disabilities at the centre of the narrative, for the first time, in many of the classrooms they'll reach.

Neither entrepreneur needed accommodation to succeed. They needed the same access every entrepreneur deserves, and the professional guidance to use it well.

Why It Matters

Inclusive entrepreneurship is not charity. It is the recognition that talent is universal, even when access is not. Through the Sightsavers partnership, the Tony Elumelu Foundation continues to close that gap, one entrepreneur, one business and one barrier removed at a time.




nclusion sociale
oyons en un monde où chaque être
a le droit d'étudier, de gagner sa vie, et
eureux. Nous œuvrons pour un monde
ns stigmatisation et sans discrimination.
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Sightsavers



TEF IN THE NEWS

Sting of Innovation: How a Kenyan Agripreneur Is Building a Global Bee Venom Business

Across Africa, entrepreneurs are finding extraordinary value in overlooked resources, and few illustrate this better than 2024 Tony Elumelu Foundation Alumna Patrice Murugi Wachira, whose work is reshaping Kenya's beekeeping sector.

Featured by AGRA, Patrice is recognised for building Patvention Ltd., a Nyeri-based agritech company that is transforming an age-old industry by helping farmers unlock a far more valuable product than honey: bee venom.

The idea took root in the GoGettaz agripreneur





competition, Patrice's first real exposure to the world of investors and innovation. It left her asking a question few in Kenya's beekeeping sector had seriously considered: could bees produce something more valuable than honey? The answer was yes. Bee venom, also known as apitoxin, is prized by pharmaceutical manufacturers for its anti-inflammatory properties and by the cosmetics industry for its skin-rejuvenating effects, with global demand valued at up to USD 520 million in 2023/24 and projected to surpass USD 600 million by 2033.

Harvesting it safely, without harming the bees, was the harder problem. Patvention's answer was to invent the solution itself: a locally manufactured, patent-filed device that uses light and sound to attract bees, then a mild electric pulse, harmless to the bees, to trigger venom release onto a glass plate. After 30 to 40 minutes, the venom dries into a fine powder, ready to be collected and stored. The device retails at KSh 30,000, roughly 20% cheaper than imported alternatives, and a second patent is now in progress for an improved, solar-compatible model built for off-grid farmers.

Patrice's entrepreneurial journey reached a pivotal milestone when she joined the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme. Through the Foundation's US$5,000 non-refundable seed capital, business training, mentorship and access to Africa's largest entrepreneurial network, she strengthened Patvention's investor-readiness and accelerated the company's growth, support that later helped secure a grant from the Aga Khan Foundation and a USD 75,000 equity investment from the Jasiri Accelerator Program.

Today, Patvention's improved devices yield approximately one gram of venom

per week per hive, and the company's reputation is growing organically, with inbound inquiries from Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda. Patrice estimates that as supply reliability is proven, export prices could rise to USD 40 per gram, lifting farmer payouts to USD 20 per gram and transforming beekeeping into a genuinely competitive, full-time livelihood.

The feature by AGRA celebrates more than a single invention; it highlights an entrepreneur building an entirely new value chain around an overlooked resource. Patrice's journey demonstrates how locally developed innovation can solve local challenges, expand economic opportunities and connect African produce to global markets.

By transforming an underused by-product into a thriving export business, Patrice is helping shape a future where Africa's farmers earn more from what their land, and their hives, already produce.

From KSh30,000 to 60+ Jobs Created: How One Kenyan Entrepreneur Built a Manufacturing Business



Across Africa, access to capital remains one of the biggest determinants of whether a small business stays small or grows into something transformative. Few stories illustrate this better than that of 2015 Tony Elumelu Foundation Alumnus Kenneth Kariuki, CEO and Co-Founder of SevenTwenty Holdings.

Featured by Africanews as part of a wider segment on Kenyan SMEs and financing

challenges, Kenneth's journey with SevenTwenty Holdings, a local manufacturer of metal accessories, illustrates how access to capital can help small businesses grow despite a financing environment that still treats SMEs as high-risk borrowers.

SevenTwenty Holdings launched with around KSh30,000, supplemented by loans from family and friends. The business reached a pivotal milestone when it received a grant from the Tony Elumelu Foundation, support that helped Kenneth strengthen operations and accelerate the company's growth at a critical stage.

Today, SevenTwenty Holdings has expanded from a single product to more than 40 and grown its team from two employees to over 60, creating meaningful employment within its community. The company's growth mirrors a wider challenge facing Kenyan SMEs: while guarantee schemes and industry bodies like the Kenya Association of Manufacturers continue pushing for more favourable financing conditions, including interest rates below 10%, entrepreneurs like Kenneth demonstrate what is possible even before those reforms are fully in place.

The feature by Africanews highlights more than one company's growth, it points to a broader truth about African enterprise: when entrepreneurs are given even modest access to capital, paired with resilience and the right support, they can build businesses that create real, lasting opportunity.

Kenneth's journey from a single product and a small loan to a 60-person manufacturing business is a powerful reminder of what becomes possible when African entrepreneurs are backed to build.





THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Rethinking Philantrophy: TEF CEO, Somachi Chris-Asoluka Calls For Greater Global South Collaboration at Brazillian Philanthrophy Forum

At the Brazilian Philanthropy Forum 2026 in São Paulo, Tony Elumelu Foundation CEO Somachi Chris-Asoluka shared an African perspective on the future of philanthropy, the role of entrepreneurship in development, and why stronger partnerships across the Global South can unlock greater impact.



Africa's young people cannot simply be positioned as beneficiaries of development. They must be recognised as builders of it.

Philanthropy is changing.

Across the world, organisations working to advance the public good are confronting a rapidly shifting landscape shaped by technological disruption, climate change, economic inequality and changing social realities. For philanthropic institutions, the question is no longer simply how to respond to these challenges, but how to rethink the models, partnerships and instruments through which lasting impact can be created.

It was against this backdrop that leaders from across the philanthropic sector gathered in São Paulo on 27 August for the Brazilian Philanthropy Forum 2026, convened under the theme **"Philanthropy: Between Essence and Reinvention."**

Representing the Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF), CEO Somachi Chris-Asoluka brought an African perspective to the conversation, sharing lessons from the Tony Elumelu Foundation's work supporting entrepreneurs across the continent and making the case for a more inclusive, locally rooted, and partnership-driven approach to development.

Trending

$4.2 Billion in Revenue. 1.5 Million Jobs. Why The Tony Elumelu Foundation's Bet on African Entrepreneurs Is Paying Off

For Somachi, reinvention must not mean losing sight of philanthropy's fundamental purpose.



It must mean finding better ways to advance it.

Shift from philanthropy to agency

Speaking during a panel discussion at the Forum, Somachi reflected on the origins of the Tony Elumelu Foundation and the philosophy of Africapitalism, a word coined by our Founder, Tony O. Elumelu, CFR.

Established in 2010, the Tony Elumelu Foundation was built around a clear conviction: African entrepreneurs can and must play a leading role in transforming the continent.

That conviction is rooted in our founder's philosophy of Africapitalism: the belief that the private sector has a critical role in Africa's development by investing in strategic sectors not only for profit, but for shared prosperity.

The philosophy challenges the traditional separation between commercial success and social impact.

Businesses can generate returns for shareholders while creating opportunities for employees, communities and wider economies. Philanthropic capital, similarly, can do more than address immediate needs; it can help unlock the potential of individuals who can go on to create value for others.

This philosophy sits at the heart of TEF's approach to entrepreneurship.

"We believe that the transformation of the African continent will not come from the private sector, the corporate, government, and it will not come from international development agencies, but it will come from our entrepreneurs," Somachi Chris-Asoluka

Africa is the world's youngest continent, with a median age of 17. For its rapidly growing young population, the need for economic opportunity is immediate.

"These young people need economic opportunities. They need jobs, and they cannot wait for these jobs to come," she said.

The implication is clear: Africa's young

people cannot simply be positioned as beneficiaries of development. They must be recognised as builders of it.

Investing in entrepreneurs, investing in economies

Since 2015, the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme has sought to turn this philosophy into action by providing entrepreneurs with the combination of capital, knowledge, mentorship and networks required to build sustainable businesses.

The scale of the intervention is significant.

Through its programmes, the Foundation has trained 2.5 million young Africans, funded 27,000 entrepreneurs with more than US$130 million in direct funding, and supported businesses that have collectively created 1.5 million jobs and generated more than US$4 billion in revenue.

For TEF, these figures represent more than programme outputs.

They demonstrate what can happen when philanthropic capital is deployed to unlock entrepreneurial agency.

"This is revenue that did not exist before we intervened in these young people," she said.

The point speaks directly to the Forum's central conversation about reinvention.

The question is not only how much capital philanthropy deploys, but what that capital makes possible after it is deployed.

When an entrepreneur receives funding, develops a business, employs people, and generates revenue, the impact can extend far beyond the original intervention. Capital begins to circulate through communities and economies, creating additional opportunities along the way.

This is the catalytic potential of philanthropy: using relatively targeted interventions to unlock much broader economic and social value.

Technology Should Widen Opportunity, Not Deepen Divides

Our CEO Somachi Chris-Asoluka also reflected on one of the defining forces reshaping development today: technology.

As a last-mile implementer, The Tony Elumelu Foundation works directly across all 54 African countries. This requires both a deep understanding of local realities and the ability to connect entrepreneurs across vast geographical, economic, and cultural contexts.

Technology has become an important part of that equation.

The Foundation developed TEFConnect, its proprietary digital platform connecting African entrepreneurs and members of the diaspora to business tools, knowledge, mentors, investors, partnerships, marketplaces and one another.

But Somachi stressed that digital transformation must be approached with intentionality.

"We don't want to use technology to deepen divides that already exist, to deepen inequalities that already exist," she said. "We want to make sure that we're using technology to make opportunity more inclusive and more widespread."

That principle has shaped the evolution of TEFConnect.

The platform has been designed to accommodate entrepreneurs living with disabilities, who represent 15% of TEF's entrepreneurs, ensuring that accessibility is embedded into the digital experience

rather than treated as an afterthought.

The Foundation has also adapted the platform in response to the experiences of women entrepreneurs.

When TEF first launched its entrepreneurship programme, applications were initially being completed by young men and women in roughly equal numbers. Yet while 70 per cent of male applicants completed their applications, fewer than 30 per cent of women did.

The disparity prompted a closer examination of the barriers women were facing.

The answer was not simply to encourage more women to participate. It was to redesign the system around their realities.

Women entrepreneurs explained that they were balancing entrepreneurship with childcare, household responsibilities, and other demands on their time. A training platform designed primarily around conventional working hours therefore created an additional barrier.

TEF responded by making its learning content self-paced, enabling entrepreneurs to access training around their lives rather than requiring their lives to conform to the platform.

It is a small but powerful illustration of human-centred thinking in development: sometimes the barrier is not a lack of ambition or willingness to participate, but a system that has been designed without sufficiently understanding the people it is meant to serve.

The same principle applies to entrepreneurs in rural and underserved communities.

Where digital penetration and affordability remain challenges, technology must not become another mechanism for exclusion. TEFConnect has therefore been designed to be low-data and accessible, helping entrepreneurs in remote communities participate in the digital economy.

Scale Should Not Come At The Expense Of Context

Operating across 54 countries presents another challenge: how can an organisation achieve continental scale while remaining responsive to local realities?

There is no single African entrepreneurial experience.

Markets differ. Regulations differ. Infrastructure differs. Languages, cultures and economic conditions differ.

Yet the need for opportunity is remarkably universal.

"African entrepreneurs are no different from the entrepreneurs here in Brazil and in Latin America," Somachi observed. "All entrepreneurs need the same things."

They need funding.

They need people willing to believe in them.

They need opportunities to demonstrate what they can do.

And they need ecosystems that allow their businesses to grow.

This creates an important distinction between standardisation and scale.

Scale does not necessarily require every entrepreneur, community or country to receive the same intervention in exactly the same way. Rather, it can mean creating systems and infrastructure that are sufficiently strong to operate at scale while remaining adaptable enough to respond to local realities.

For organisations working across different contexts, flexibility becomes essential.

As Somachi later noted, organisations should remain committed to their missions while being willing to adapt how they pursue them.

"What I think is important is that you should be flexible, you should be adaptable," she said. "I don't think that it's as important as how you get there, as long as the results are identical to what you want to see for your community."

The principle is particularly relevant to philanthropy, where complex social problems rarely have neat or linear solutions.

Impact Must Be Built Into The DNA

Somachi also offered a practical message for smaller organisations working to create change.

Impact measurement and communication should not be treated as something reserved for organisations that have already achieved scale.

"Impact should be in the DNA of the organisation," she said. "Everything that you do, you should create the data, create the records, and create the visibility platforms to show the world the impact that you're creating in your own small corner."

The advice speaks to an increasingly important reality within the philanthropic sector.

Impact is not only about what an organisation achieves. It is also about its ability to understand, demonstrate and communicate that achievement.

Building these systems from the beginning enables organisations to learn from their work, strengthen accountability and make a stronger case for future investment and partnerships.

But Somachi paired this emphasis on evidence with another principle: humility.

Organisations must continue to learn.

"Never be satisfied or complacent with what you know," she urged, encouraging smaller organisations to remain open to other experiences, perspectives and approaches.

Expertise in a particular community or terrain is valuable. But it becomes even more powerful when combined with the willingness to listen, adapt and learn from others.

Africa is open for partnership

As the Forum explored the balance between philanthropy's enduring purpose and the need for reinvention, Somachi's message offered a distinctly African proposition.

Africa does not need to be viewed solely through the lens of its challenges.

It is a continent of young people, entrepreneurs, markets, ideas and possibilities — and its development will increasingly be shaped by Africans themselves.

"Africa is the future for the world," Somachi said. "And we're open for business, open for partnerships, open for investment, open for dialogue."

That openness extends beyond the continent.

The future she envisages is one in which Africa and Latin America, alongside other regions of the Global South, can build stronger relationships, exchange knowledge and create new pathways for shared prosperity.

It is also a future in which philanthropy is not defined solely by the act of giving, but by its

ability to catalyse agency, unlock potential and build systems that allow people to create lasting value for themselves and their communities.

That may ultimately be what reinvention means.

The essence remains the same: advancing the public good.

But the tools, partnerships and people at the centre of that work are evolving.

And as Somachi reflected at the Brazilian Philanthropy Forum, the opportunity is not to build that future in isolation.
"We can achieve much more by coming together than doing it in isolation."

For the Tony Elumelu Foundation, that means continuing to invest in Africa's entrepreneurs while building bridges with partners and institutions around the world.

Because the future of philanthropy may be global.

But the solutions will be stronger when they are locally rooted, entrepreneur-led and built together.

Watch her session here : https://youtu.be/7-jZzq4G9DM?si=8cno8HUQZ-ufCcy9

Women Entrepreneurs: Engineering Africa's Next Industries



For too long, African women entrepreneurs have been filed under "informal." Small traders. Side hustles. Businesses assumed to stay small because that is where they started.

The truth is more disruptive. Women across the continent are not running side businesses — they are engineering new industries, from biotech to medical manufacturing to sustainable agriculture, in spaces the market had written off as unprofitable or impossible.

For over fifteen years the Tony Elumelu Foundation and partners have been betting on that truth. Now more women are receiving seed capital, training and mentorship.

More importantly, they are redefining what African enterprise looks like.

Proof Beyond Policy

Patrice Murugi Wachira, founder of Patvention Limited in Kenya.

TEF Alumna Patrice grew up in a family of beekeepers who, like most, sold only honey. She saw the value being left inside the hive. Her patented device safely harvests bee venom, a substance worth far more than honey in pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, while her recycled-plastic beehives cut costs and waste. She is now training other beekeepers, especially women, to access a market they were locked out of.

Evangelista Chekera, founder of Passion Poultry in Zimbabwe.

High chick mortality was treated as an unavoidable cost of poultry farming. TEF Alumna Evangelista treated it as an

engineering problem. Her chick-brooding device, powered by agricultural waste, cuts chick mortality by up to 95%, and both it and a companion processing device now hold regional IP protection. Her company already supports hundreds of smallholder farmers across Zimbabwe.

Nneile Nkholise, founder of iMed Tech in South Africa.
Prosthetics and medical devices built for other patients, in other countries, often do not fit the people who need them here. TEF Alumna Nneile is changing that, designing and manufacturing custom prosthetics, bio-implants and medical devices locally, using biomedical engineering and 3D digital design, and opening a historically male-dominated field to more African women engineers.

These are not isolated cases. They reflect a wider trend: across the Foundation's portfolio, 46% of entrepreneurs supported by TEF are women, with 85% retaining full control of their businesses. 52% of jobs created are filled by women proof that when women scale, entire communities rise.

These are not "micro" enterprises. They are macro-impact ventures, revealing the multiplier effect that follows when women are given real tools to build.

From Aid to Africapitalism

What distinguishes the TEF model is its philosophy: this is not aid, it is investment. It is Africapitalism in practice.

Women reinvest up to 90% of their income back into their families and communities. Backing women-led enterprises therefore creates ripple effects that aid alone could never replicate.

Aligning with Global Goals

This model is a tested blueprint for turning local action into global change. It aligns directly with:

SDG 5 (Gender Equality) — creating equal entrepreneurial opportunities.
SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) — driving job creation through SMEs.
Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want — building inclusive, sustainable value chains.
Through ventures like Patvention, Passion Poultry and iMed Tech, we see global goals translated into local, tangible realities.

The Bigger Challenge

If three women can reshape beekeeping, poultry farming and medical manufacturing with $5,000 in seed capital and the right mentorship, what happens when 25,000 women receive the same backing?

That is the challenge now facing governments, investors and corporates: to scale what already works. Aid dependency has had its era. The next belongs to entrepreneurs, and women are already leading it.

Women Entrepreneurs as Africa's Competitive Edge

Patrice, Evangelista and Nneile are proof that women are not marginal players in Africa's economy. They are its competitive edge, redefining what African innovation can produce and where it can come from.

The future of Africa's prosperity will not be found only in its oil or its minerals. Increasingly, it is being engineered, one hive, one brooder, one prosthetic, by the hands of its women.



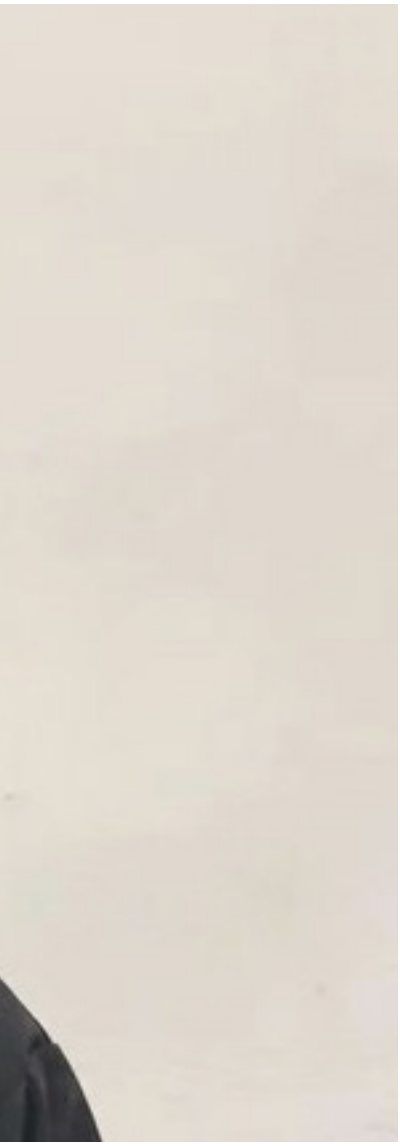


ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Hyacinth Orji, Founder Quick Waka, 2018 Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneur

Hyacinth Orji believes Nigeria's next major e-commerce opportunity may already be operating from the neighbourhood shop. Recognising that thousands of small businesses, from food vendors and pharmacies to local retailers and traders, form the backbone of the economy yet remain largely outside the digital systems shaping modern commerce, he founded Quick Waka to bridge that gap.

Through the marketplace and logistics platform,



businesses should not have to become large companies before they can benefit from the digital economy.

Orji is helping informal and small businesses connect with digital consumers while providing them with practical tools to participate in online trade. His vision is clear: businesses should not have to become large companies before they can benefit from the digital economy.

Hyacinth Orji saw a digital gap hiding in everyday commerce

Nigeria's informal economy is deeply embedded in everyday life.

For many small businesses, however, customer acquisition still depends heavily on physical visibility, personal networks and word-of-mouth recommendations. That model can work, but it can also limit a business's ability to reach customers beyond its immediate surroundings.

As consumer behaviour changes, that limitation becomes more significant.

Customers increasingly expect to discover products online, place orders digitally and have purchases delivered to them. Yet a small vendor may not have the time, technical knowledge or resources to build an e-commerce operation independently.

Hyacinth Orji recognised that the problem was not necessarily that these businesses were resistant to technology.

Many simply lacked the infrastructure that would make digital participation practical.

His experience in business and logistics

helped him see the opportunity from both sides: customers wanted convenience, while vendors needed visibility and a reliable way to fulfil orders.

Quick Waka emerged from that intersection.

What is Quick Waka?

Quick Waka is a Nigerian technology-enabled marketplace and logistics platform designed to help local businesses connect with customers online.

Rather than expecting informal businesses to build sophisticated digital operations themselves, the platform brings several parts of the commerce journey together.

Quick Waka supports businesses with functions including:

- Vendor onboarding and product listings
- Online product discovery
- Order management
- Logistics coordination
- Last-mile delivery
- Digital access for traditionally offline businesses

The model is particularly relevant to businesses such as restaurants, pharmacies, grocery retailers and other local merchants.

By combining a marketplace with logistics, Quick Waka addresses two connected problems at once: how customers find local businesses and how businesses get products to those customers.

That integration matters.

An online storefront is of limited value if a vendor cannot reliably fulfil an order. Similarly, delivery infrastructure is less useful if customers cannot easily discover the businesses behind it.

Quick Waka is designed around the full journey.

Making digital commerce practical for small businesses

For a large retailer, moving online can involve dedicated technology teams, digital marketing budgets, inventory systems and established delivery networks.

A small neighbourhood business operates differently.

The owner may be managing sales, inventory, suppliers and customers simultaneously. Adding a complex e-commerce system to that workload can create another barrier rather than solve one.

This is where Hyacinth Orji's approach becomes particularly relevant.

Quick Waka is built to reduce the amount of digital infrastructure individual vendors need to create and manage themselves.

Instead of asking every small business to build its own online ecosystem, the platform creates shared infrastructure through which multiple vendors can participate in digital commerce.

That model has implications beyond convenience.

It can give businesses greater visibility, expose them to customers outside their immediate physical location and introduce more structured processes for receiving and fulfilling orders.

For entrepreneurs operating on thin margins, those incremental efficiencies can matter.

The Tony Elumelu Foundation helped move Quick Waka from vision to growth

Building a marketplace that connects businesses, customers, and logistics requires more than a good idea.

It requires capital to build technology, test assumptions and develop operations—and business knowledge to determine which opportunities are worth pursuing.

Through the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme, Hyacinth Orji received US$5,000 in seed capital, alongside business training, mentorship and access to the Foundation's pan-African entrepreneurial network.

The support gave Quick Waka additional resources to strengthen its operations and develop its technology as it pursued a larger market opportunity.

For Orji, the programme also provided access to a wider community of African entrepreneurs navigating many of the same challenges: limited resources, evolving markets and the need to build businesses capable of creating sustainable value.

The Foundation's contribution sits within the broader journey, but the business remains driven by Orji's understanding of the problem and his determination to solve it.

Quick Waka is building a bridge between offline and online commerce

The impact of digitalisation is often measured through transactions, platforms and user numbers.

For Hyacinth Orji, however, there is another measure worth considering: how many businesses that were previously invisible online can now be discovered digitally.

Quick Waka has supported hundreds of registered vendors and reached thousands of users, according to the business information provided.

That represents more than another group of online sellers.

It represents businesses gaining access to a new customer channel.

The platform's logistics operations also create economic opportunities for people involved in delivery, field operations, customer support and digital business management.

In this way, the company's model extends beyond e-commerce.

It connects different parts of a local commercial ecosystem—vendors, customers and delivery operators—through a common digital infrastructure.

The entrepreneur behind the platform understands the businesses he wants to serve

The strongest digital products often begin with an observation about human behaviour.

For Orji, that observation was that many local businesses already had something customers wanted.

The missing piece was often the ability to be found and served through the channels customers were increasingly using.

A local food vendor might have loyal customers but little online visibility. A neighbourhood pharmacy might serve its surrounding community but lack a digital ordering channel. A small retailer might have useful products but no efficient way of reaching customers beyond passing foot traffic.

These are not necessarily failures of entrepreneurship.

They are infrastructure gaps.

Quick Waka is Orji's attempt to close some of those gaps without requiring small businesses to abandon the way they already operate.

The ambition is not to replace Nigeria's

informal markets.

It is to give them another layer.

Why Hyacinth Orji's work matters

Digital transformation can create new opportunities, but it can also widen existing inequalities if access to technology is limited to businesses that already have capital, skills and infrastructure.

That makes digital inclusion an important part of Nigeria's e-commerce story.

If online commerce is to become a meaningful driver of broad-based economic participation, small businesses need pathways into the ecosystem.

Hyacinth Orji is building one such pathway.

Through Quick Waka, he is working to make digital visibility, order management and delivery infrastructure more accessible to businesses that have traditionally depended on physical markets.

The significance extends beyond individual vendors.

When more small businesses can participate in digital commerce, customers gain more choice, local supply chains can become more connected and new economic activity can emerge around technology and logistics.

Looking ahead: bringing more of Nigeria's everyday economy online

Nigeria's digital economy is still evolving.

The next chapter will not be written only by large technology companies or established online retailers. It will also be shaped by entrepreneurs who understand how millions of everyday transactions happen.
Hyacinth Orji is building in that space.

His vision for Quick Waka is rooted in a simple but consequential proposition: the businesses that keep neighbourhoods running should have a place in the digital economy too.

The opportunity is therefore bigger than putting shops online.

It is about creating the infrastructure that allows local businesses to be discovered, ordered from and connected to customers without losing the strengths that made them valuable in the first place.

For Hyacinth Orji, the future of Nigerian commerce is not a choice between the traditional market and the digital marketplace.

It is the possibility of connecting the two.



Patrice Murugi Wachira, Founder Patvention Limited, 2024 Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrpreneur



Most people think beekeeping is about honey. Patrice Murugi Wachira saw something far more valuable.For generations, honey has been the product most closely associated with beekeeping. Yet inside every hive lies another resource with extraordinary commercial potential—bee venom.

Used in pharmaceutical research, cosmetics and specialised medical applications, bee venom commands significantly higher market value than honey.

Despite growing global demand, few African beekeepers have had access to the technology needed to harvest it safely and sustainably.

Patrice Murugi Wachira saw an opportunity to change that.

Through Patvention Limited, the Kenyan entrepreneur is helping transform traditional beekeeping into a technology-enabled agribusiness, enabling farmers to generate new income streams while protecting one of agriculture's most important pollinators.

Patrice Murugi Wachira is proving innovation can begin with tradition

Growing up in a family of beekeepers, Patrice Murugi Wachira developed an early appreciation for the role bees play in agriculture and rural livelihoods.

But she also recognised a challenge.

Many beekeepers relied almost entirely on honey sales, leaving significant value within the hive untapped.

Rather than accepting that limitation, she founded Patvention Limited to modernise beekeeping through practical innovations designed specifically for African farmers.

Her goal was not to replace traditional practices but to enhance them through technology that improves productivity, creates additional revenue streams and supports long-term environmental sustainability.

Patvention is changing how beekeepers create value

At the heart of Patvention's work is a patented bee venom collection device that uses gentle electrical stimulation to encourage bees to release venom onto a collection plate without harming the insects. The technology also

incorporates smart monitoring features that help improve collection efficiency while protecting colony health.

The company has also developed durable beehives manufactured from recycled plastic waste, offering farmers weather-resistant and pest-resistant alternatives to conventional wooden hives while contributing to plastic waste reduction.

Together, these innovations are helping reposition beekeeping as a high-value enterprise capable of serving industries far beyond food production.

By expanding opportunities in pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and specialised agricultural products, Patvention is enabling farmers to earn more from every hive while supporting healthier bee populations.

The Tony Elumelu Foundation helped accelerate Patrice Murugi Wachira's entrepreneurial vision

A significant milestone in Patrice Murugi Wachira's entrepreneurial journey came when she joined the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme.

Through the programme, she received US$5,000 in seed capital, business training, mentorship and access to the Tony Elumelu Foundation's pan-African entrepreneurial network.

The support strengthened Patvention's ability to refine its business model, expand its innovations and position the company for long-term growth.

Beyond financial investment, the programme connected Patrice with a community of entrepreneurs building scalable solutions to Africa's most pressing challenges, reinforcing the Foundation's belief that entrepreneurship is a catalyst for sustainable development.

Empowering farmers, especially women

Technology creates the greatest impact when it reaches the people who need it most.

Alongside product development, Patrice Murugi Wachira works closely with beekeepers through practical training programmes that encourage the adoption of modern beekeeping practices.

A particular focus has been expanding opportunities for women, helping them participate in an agricultural value chain that has traditionally offered limited access to high-value markets.

By combining innovation with knowledge sharing, Patvention is helping farmers improve productivity while building more resilient rural livelihoods.

Why Patrice Murugi Wachira's work matters

Healthy bee populations are essential to agriculture.

Beyond producing honey and other hive products, bees play a critical role in pollinating crops that sustain food production worldwide.

Patrice Murugi Wachira's work demonstrates that protecting pollinators and improving farmer incomes are not competing priorities—they reinforce one another.

Through Patvention, she is creating technologies that help farmers increase earnings, reduce waste and participate in higher-value agricultural markets while encouraging sustainable beekeeping practices.

Her journey reflects a broader transformation taking place across Africa, where entrepreneurs are using innovation to unlock new opportunities within traditional industries. Looking ahead

The future of African agriculture will increasingly depend on entrepreneurs who recognise value where others see limitations.

Patrice Murugi Wachira is among a new generation of innovators proving that beekeeping can become far more than honey production.

As Patvention continues to expand its technologies and support more farmers, the company is helping redefine what modern African agribusiness can achieve.

For Patrice Murugi Wachira, every thriving hive represents more than healthy bees.

It represents new income for farmers, stronger agricultural systems and a future where African innovation creates value that reaches global markets.



Aristide Chabi, Founder Groupe CTAD, 2017 Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneur



Aristide Chabi understands that access to information can shape the trajectory of academic discovery. For a student seeking a dissertation, a researcher searching for scientific literature, or a university safeguarding decades of scholarly work, the ability to access knowledge quickly and efficiently is often the difference between progress and stagnation.

Recognising the challenges posed by fragmented archives, limited accessibility, and inadequate preservation of academic resources, Aristide Chabi identified an opportunity to transform how knowledge is shared and retained in Benin.

Drawing on his background in Cellular Biology and Immunology, he saw technology not simply as a tool for digitising documents, but as a means of redefining the relationship between students, researchers, institutions, and knowledge itself.

Through Groupe CTAD, Aristide Chabi is developing digital infrastructure that enables academic resources to move beyond physical archives, creating a more accessible, searchable, and sustainable ecosystem for learning and research.

Aristide Chabi saw a problem beyond the classroom

The challenge was never simply a shortage of information.

Benin has produced generations of students, researchers and academics whose work represents a valuable intellectual resource. The difficulty was making that knowledge easier to find, preserve and share.

For students, accessing dissertations, scientific publications and other academic works could require navigating physical libraries and institutional archives. For universities, managing large collections of research material created its own administrative and preservation challenges.

Aristide Chabi understood that these were not isolated inconveniences.

They represented a larger question about who gets access to knowledge and how easily that knowledge can move from one person to another.

His response was to build a digital platform capable of helping academic institutions and learners manage and access intellectual resources more efficiently.

Groupe CTAD is building a digital gateway for academic knowledge

Through Groupe CTAD, Aristide Chabi has developed digital solutions that support the digitisation, organisation and distribution of academic resources.

The company's work includes:

- Digitising academic and intellectual works
- Creating digital archives for institutions
- Providing online access to educational resources
- Supporting the organisation and preservation of research outputs
- Developing digital platforms for students and academic communities
- The significance of this work lies in what happens after digitisation.

Once academic resources become digitally accessible, they can be searched, organised, preserved and shared beyond the physical location where they were originally stored.

That can make research more efficient for students and researchers while giving institutions better tools to manage their intellectual output.

In this sense, CTAD is not simply building an education platform. It is contributing to the infrastructure through which knowledge can circulate.

From scientific training to entrepreneurial problem-solving

Aristide Chabi's background in science has influenced the way he approaches entrepreneurship.

His training in Cellular Biology and Immunology exposed him to the importance of research, evidence and access to reliable information. That experience helped shape his understanding of the relationship between knowledge and development.

For him, improving access to academic resources is ultimately about more than convenience.

Students who can find relevant research more easily have more opportunities to learn. Researchers who can access existing work can build on it. Institutions that preserve their academic output can strengthen their contribution to future scholarship.

The technology therefore becomes a means to a larger objective: helping more people participate in the production and use of knowledge.

The Tony Elumelu Foundation helped turn the idea into an enterprise

A strong social idea still needs a viable business model to survive.

As 2017 Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme alumni, Aristide Chabi received US$5,000 in seed capital, alongside business training, mentorship and access to the Foundation's pan-African entrepreneurial network.

For Groupe CTAD, the support came at an important stage in the company's development.

The funding and business support helped Aristide strengthen the enterprise behind the

idea, develop its digital infrastructure and pursue a model capable of serving students and academic institutions.

The experience also placed him within a wider community of African entrepreneurs building businesses around problems that affect their communities.

For the Tony Elumelu Foundation, the role is one of enabling the entrepreneur's ambition. For Aristide Chabi, the opportunity was to turn a problem he understood deeply into a business capable of addressing it at scale.

Making knowledge more useful and more sustainable

Digital access matters, but sustainability matters too.

For a platform built around academic resources, long-term value depends on more than putting documents online. Institutions need systems that can help preserve, organise and share their research outputs, while businesses need sustainable models that allow those systems to continue evolving.

Groupe CTAD has developed revenue streams around areas including platform access, institutional partnerships, publishing services and educational programmes.

This commercial foundation is important because it allows the company to approach digital education not simply as a social intervention, but as an enterprise capable of sustaining its operations and continuing to invest in its technology.

The result is a model where impact and commercial viability can support one another.

Aristide Chabi is thinking beyond academic archives

For Aristide Chabi, access to knowledge is only one part of human development.

Through Groupe CTAD, his broader work has also extended into areas including personal development, entrepreneurship mentoring, sexual education, environmental awareness and student support.

These initiatives reflect a wider philosophy: education is not simply about storing information.

It is about helping people understand that information, apply it and use it to make better decisions.

That perspective places Aristide's work within a broader conversation about the role of entrepreneurship in human development—particularly in a continent where young populations are creating enormous demand for accessible education, skills and information.

Why Aristide Chabi's work matters

The value of knowledge increases when it can be shared.

A dissertation sitting unnoticed in a physical archive has limited reach. The same research, properly digitised and made accessible through an effective platform, can become a resource for another student, researcher or institution.

That is the opportunity Aristide Chabi is pursuing.

By helping digitise and organise academic resources, Groupe CTAD is contributing to a more connected knowledge ecosystem in Benin. Its work also reflects a larger opportunity for African entrepreneurs: building digital infrastructure that solves problems created by the continent's rapid transition to a more connected economy.

For Aristide, the technology is important. But the people who gain access to what that technology makes possible are the real measure of its value.

Looking ahead

Africa's education systems are expanding into a digital era, but digital transformation is about more than putting classrooms online.

It is also about creating the infrastructure that allows knowledge to move.

Aristide Chabi is building in that space.

Through Groupe CTAD, his ambition is to make academic and intellectual resources easier to access while helping institutions preserve and share the knowledge they create.

The broader lesson from his journey is straightforward: sometimes the most important innovation is not creating new knowledge, but making existing knowledge easier for more people to find.

In Benin, Aristide Chabi is building a business around that idea—and in doing so, helping turn knowledge from something stored in places into something that can move between people, institutions and generations.



MENTOR SPOTLIGHT

Barbara Kiama

Some of the best mentors are shaped by the mentorship they never had.

Barbara Kiama stepped into entrepreneurship straight out of university, without a guide to help her navigate the early, costly mistakes every founder makes alone. Rather than let that gap define her, she built a career designed to close it for others.



This is what distinguishes TEF mentorship: it is not encouragement alone, it is structured, expert guidance from professionals who have built and led real ventures.

A Career Built on Rigour

Barbara brings 17 years of experience in entrepreneurship development to her work as a TEF Mentor, including 11 years in training design and delivery, and six years leading programme development, coordination and management within a creative industry organisation. As founder of The B.A Fashion Hub, she leads programme development, business development and operations, designing curricula that integrate technical skills, entrepreneurial thinking and professional competencies to prepare young people for real labour-market entry, not just employability in theory.

Her approach is defined as much by partnership-building as by teaching. Barbara has worked with ten textile and creative-industry players to secure career pathways, access to international markets and employment opportunities for her trainees, and led a partnership with the Awjaama Cultural Centre in Eastleigh, Nairobi, to train a group of Somali refugee women in income-generating enterprise skills. Each partnership reflects the same instinct: that training is only as valuable as the doors it opens afterward.

Precision, Applied to Mentorship

That professional discipline carries directly into Barbara's work as a TEF Mentor. Paired with an entrepreneur in Rwanda, she guided her mentee through the fundamentals many founders skip past too quickly: defining the business problem with precision, stress-

testing the solution, and articulating a value proposition that could hold up under investor scrutiny. That clarity went on to inform the mentee's pitch, business plan and long-term strategy.

This is what distinguishes TEF mentorship: it is not encouragement alone, it is structured, expert guidance from professionals who have built and led real ventures. With more than 80% of businesses failing within five years, that expertise is not a value-add. It is the difference between an idea and a company built to last.

Barbara's own beginning, without that support, is precisely why she now insists on delivering it, rigorously, to every entrepreneur she mentors.

Karin Jesuis



Some mentors bring a single area of expertise. Karin Jesuis brings a career that spans continents, sectors and some of the most consequential rooms in African public life.

A Career Built Across Sectors

Karin is an executive management professional with more than 25 years of experience across both the private and public sectors. She is the owner of HMK Consult Global, a firm specialising in complex

projects across healthcare, executive management, strategy development, investment monitoring for funds and trusts, aviation training, project management and IT security, with a team that has delivered results across the world.

She also serves as Senior Director of Projects and Physical Planning, and as Chief Steward of the Sustainability Council, where she is helping position her institution as a sustainability influencer across Nigeria, Africa and beyond.

Her professional contributions extend well beyond management consulting. Karin was project manager for the pilot of South Africa's New Health Insurance Act in the Western Cape, drafted the Sandton Declaration and the legal framework for the Unification of Africa, and contributed to Ukraine's healthcare system development and South Africa's Natural Farming Bill.

She is also a founder trustee of both the South African Women's Entrepreneurs Network and the WHEAT Trust, institutions built specifically to expand opportunity for women across the continent.

That record has earned recognition at the highest levels, including a Special Recognition Award from President Nelson Mandela for her contribution to entrepreneurship and financial upliftment in Africa, alongside the Global Leadership Excellence Award and a place among Cambridge Institute's most influential people in the world.

Why She Mentors

Karin has been a TEF Mentor for the past three years, drawn to the Foundation after reading about the first TEF Forum. As she puts it, Tony Elumelu "had started the ball rolling for Africa's emancipation," and she wanted to be part of it, an extension of work she had already done alongside President Nelson Mandela and President Thabo Mbeki to create opportunity for women and youth.

What keeps her engaged is what she sees in her mentees: their passion, determination and focus, often in the face of real obstacles. Her guidance goes beyond the TEF curriculum, drawing on her own training programmes and hard-won lessons to help entrepreneurs sharpen their thinking. Her advice to every founder she works with is characteristically direct: do your homework, know your return on investment, study your competitors, and stay adaptable.

That same rigour, Karin says, has sharpened her own business thinking too, proof that in TEF's mentorship model, the exchange of expertise runs in both directions.



ANNOUNCEMENT

The Tony Elumelu Foundation Set to Launch Its 15-Year Impact Report at UNGA81

The Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF) will launch its 15-Year Impact Report on the sidelines of the 81st United Nations General Assembly (UNGA81) in New York this September, marking a significant milestone in the Foundation's journey as the leading philanthropy empowering young African entrepreneurs.

The launch will follow TEF's first in-person Board Meeting of 2026 and will bring together Foundation Board Members, strategic partners, development stakeholders and global

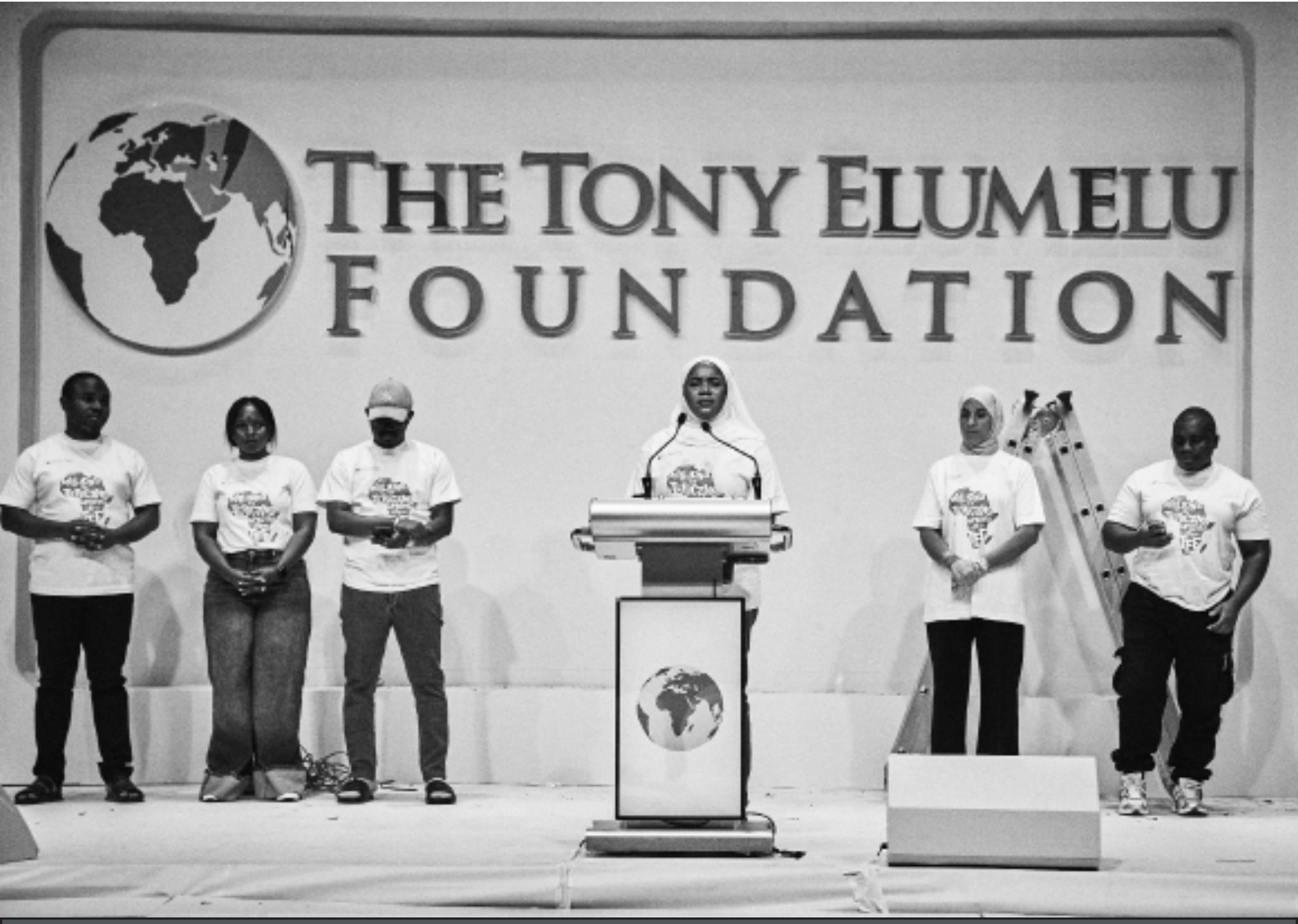
leaders to reflect on 15 years of investment in African entrepreneurship and look ahead to the Foundation's next phase of impact.

Since 2015, TEF has funded more than 24,000 entrepreneurs across all 54 African countries, creating over 1.5 million direct and indirect jobs and generating more than US$4.2 billion in revenue. The Foundation has also announced plans to fund an additional 3,200 entrepreneurs by the end of 2026. The 15-Year Impact Report will document this journey in full, capturing the entrepreneurs supported, businesses built, jobs created, and communities transformed, while highlighting the role of sustained, long-term investment in driving inclusive and sustainable economic growth across the continent.

As part of the milestone, the Foundation will also welcome two new appointments to its Advisory Board: Fatou Haidara, Deputy to the Director General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, and Kartik Jayaram, senior partner at McKinsey & Company. They will join an Advisory Board that includes Fatou Assah of the International Monetary Fund, H.E. Badr Jafar, the United Arab Emirates' Special Envoy for Business and Philanthropy, Per Heggenes of the IKEA Foundation, and Professor Paul Gompers of Harvard Business School.

The event will also feature testimonials from TEF partners and alumni, including Heirs Energies, UNICEF Generation Unlimited, Sightsavers, UNDP, Afreximbank, and entrepreneurs from the Foundation's BeGreen Africa programme, offering first-hand perspectives on what sustained partnership and investment can achieve.

The launch of the 15-Year Impact Report reinforces the Foundation's long-standing commitment to entrepreneurship and private-sector-led development as the most effective catalysts for Africa's economic transformation, fifteen years after TEF made what Founder Tony O. Elumelu, CFR, has called a simple bet: that young Africans did not need charity, they needed capital and someone willing to back them.



TEF CIRCLE

www.tonyelumelufoundation.org